

Cremona School and High School Redesign

Through *Inspiring Education*, Albertans have stated their desire for a fundamental rethinking of the work of our high schools. Both the **High School Flexibility Enhancement Pilot Project** and **Moving Forward with High School Redesign** are examples of initiatives that bring to life the vision of Inspiring Education. This work is intended to enhance student engagement, improve student learning outcomes, and increase the likelihood of high school completion. It is also designed to bring all education stakeholders together to rethink how high schools can become increasingly student-centred and prepare students for their future.

After examining the philosophy behind high school redesign, Cremona School consulted with students and Cremona School Council to gauge the appetite for a redesign of how high school operates in Cremona. Based on the feedback received we created a proposal that was presented to the superintendent and his staff. We are now inviting parental and community feedback on this proposal as we move forward.

What does Cremona do well in high school?

We already have levels of high school completion that are much higher than the rest of the province. Our small size makes it harder for students to “slip through the cracks”. The teachers take ownership for the success of each student and are constantly working at ensuring they have what they need for graduation.

We generally have higher than average participation rates in the top academic courses. Our students challenge themselves by participating in some of the most rigorous courses in the Alberta Program of Studies and nearly all are successful.

Our small size means that students get to stay with the same teacher in the same subject for multiple years. Fewer days of instruction are lost to review or the reintroduction of classroom expectations. The teachers get to know the students very well and know what those students have been taught in previous years because they are the ones that taught it to them.

So why redesign?

The redesign is an attempt to make the high school experience more personalized for students. Currently every student is required to attend approximately 125 hours of class time for every five credit course they receive. This strict requirement does not address the fact that students learn at different speeds and through different methods. For instance, some students might be able to complete their math requirements in 100 hours while another student may require 150 hours to attain the same level of learning. High school redesign provides the flexibility that both these students need to focus on the aspects of their education that require the most attention.

What will it look like?

For the most part the Cremona High School redesign will not outwardly appear very different from what high school looks like now. The biggest change that parents will notice will be an alteration to the time table to include Flex Time – time where students get to choose the subject that they are going to receive help and instruction in.

Our current timetable (shown below) has three core classes in the mornings with each core class repeating once a week on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:40	Reading Block				
9:00-10:06	Core A				
10:08-11:14	Core B				
11:16- 12:22	Core C				
12:22-1:02	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:02-2:06	Opt A	Core A	Core B	Core C	Opt B
2:08-3:15	Opt A	Opt B	Opt A	Opt A	Opt B

Our Flex Time schedule would replace the repeating core classes with Flex Time and students would then choose which of the three core classes they will receive help or extra time in.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:40	Reading Block				
9:00-10:06	Core A				
10:08-11:14	Core B				
11:16- 12:22	Core C				
12:22-1:02	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:02-2:06	Opt A	Flex	Flex	Flex	Opt B
2:08-3:15	Opt A	Opt B	Opt A	Opt A	Opt B

What is the plan?

In general:

Flex time would not be optional in the first year.

- **Time is needed to build the culture – in parents, students and staff.**
- **Possibility of there being more student freedom as school year progresses.**

In the first week of each semester, every student will develop a learning plan with their teachers and parents that will outline their expectations for academic success. These will be personalized to each student's abilities and specific to their course load but in all cases place an expectation on each student to push themselves to a higher level of achievement.

Students and teachers would identify the subjects they believe they will require the most support in and tentatively create a "flex time" schedule that will best meet their needs.

At the beginning of each week students would sign up for their flex time classes.

- **Those lists would be distributed to teachers for attendance purposes.**
- **Changes can be made and lists updated and altered as the week progresses .**
- **Flex time schedules may be changed by staff to reflect student needs.**

Should a student demonstrate that they are meeting their learning goals, their plan will be reevaluated and flex time may be made partially or fully optional for those students.

If at any time, a student is not meeting their learning goals, the optionality of flex time would be removed.

How will we know if it's working?

- **At the end of each semester, student learning goals would be reviewed and evaluated as to whether or not the goals had been met.**
- **Success would be partially determined by the percentage of students who have met their learning goals along with overall academic averages and/or diploma/PAT results.**
- **Staff, students and parents would be surveyed as to their perceptions of the success and efficacy of the redesign/flex program.**

How might high school redesign look in the future?

Students in later years will have more opportunity to decide how they will choose to utilize flex time.

- **The school will always have the ability to adapt the schedule to meet needs and circumstances (i.e. diploma review, replacing classes lost to "red" days, etc.)**

Long-term, we envision a time in which there is a timetable that recognizes that different subjects require different amounts of teacher directed time.

- **I.e. A Social 30-2 class might only require a definite timetable of 45 minutes of instruction a day whereas Math 30-1 may require 75 minutes.**

We would like to invite parents and the community to provide comments on and questions about this proposal over the next few weeks. Staff will be available to answer any questions and collect feedback at the following events:

March 21 Family Dance at the school from 6:00pm until 10:00pm

March 27 Parent-teacher interviews (3:30pm- 8:00pm)and Community Discovery Night (6:00pm- 7:30 pm).

April 8 School Council Meeting 7:15 pm

April 15 Grade 9 Information Night 7:00pm (all high school parents welcome for the high school redesign presentation)

As always, parents and community members are welcome to ask questions or provide feedback by emailing the Cremona School Admin Team.

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