



Educational Options in the Mitchell School District:

The Mitchell School District has been a leader, a pioneer even, in offering different instructional models for the children of our community. We have done so because every child is different and no one best instructional model exists that meets the needs of all children.

As our offerings have multiplied, however, it has become more difficult to make all parents and students aware of their options. Thus, please see a brief description of each option below.

Instructional Programs for Students Physically at School:

<u>Age-Specific Model</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">👤 In this model, students attend school in elementary classrooms for one grade per year, then move to the next grade level with a new teacher once promoted.👤 At middle school, student attend their home room, other classes, and ‘specials’ on a fixed schedule with a fixed curriculum. This model also covers the traditional high school experience. This model is what most people think of as the regular school setting. As in all of our instructional models, we take pride in differentiating instruction for all our students in the age-specific model period.
<u>Multiage Instruction</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">👤 This program exists at L.B. Williams and G.B. Rogers Elementary Schools. In Multiage, two grades of students, grades 1-2 and 3-4 at LBW and grades 3-4 and 4-5 at GBR, attend the same classroom and are sometimes referred to by the teacher as ‘youngers’ and ‘olders.’ Their curriculum, while not completely individualized, is differentiated to meet the specific needs of the children within the classroom
<u>Looping Classrooms</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">👤 This program exists at G.B. Rogers Elementary School. In this model, children have the same elementary classroom for two consecutive years. Thus, for example, a whole classroom of first grade teachers has Mrs. Smith for first grade and then that same classroom of students also attends second grade the next year with her as well.
<u>Flexible Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">👤 This program exists only at Longfellow Elementary. It consists of three learning dens, grades 2-5, creating close knit ‘families’ within each den. The teachers assess learners to see where each is at in their learning continuum and build lessons based on the needs of each learner. If a learner has proven mastery of a given standard, the learner may be exposed to higher leveled skills or may dig deeper into the content and apply their depth of knowledge. Each den consists of minors, majors, masters, and mentors. They learn to work collaboratively and mentor each other through various tasks. They celebrate learner successes in each den and praise each other on their academic accomplishments and Habits of Mind.
<u>Personalized Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">👤 This program exists only at G.B. Rogers Elementary School. It consists of a single group of 40-50 students, grades 1-5, who occupy 2 connected classrooms and who are taught by a team of two full-time instructors. The emphasis of the program is teaching the district’s curriculum but in an individualized way for each student. Thus, students are taught using different methods— demonstrations, individual and group instruction, real-life applications of content, student-initiated activities—with the teacher guiding each student through a learning plan designed around their needs, strengths, and comparative weaknesses.

<u>Mass Customized Learning</u>	 This program exists only at Mitchell Middle School and is available for English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. All other content areas are offered to the students in the traditional formats. The focus here is on mastery and self-paced instruction. Certified teachers facilitate and teach the instructional content to students in each of the four separate areas and students are encouraged to pursue their studies along lines they choose for themselves. MCL students frequently move past the 8 th grade curriculum, earning high school credits in any of the four content areas, allowing them to fit more classes into their high school schedules once they move, at the end of 8 th grade.
<u>Second Chance High</u>	 Students who have attended high school for at least one year at MHS but who have not, for any number of reasons, seen sufficient success to have prospects for eventual graduation may apply for enrollment in the Second Chance School, led by Mr. Shane Thill. If accepted—not all are—such students have significant amounts of their coursework through Second Chance instructors. These students are still part of the Mitchell School District and Mitchell High School and are eligible for extracurricular activities.
<u>Dual Enrollment</u>	 Dual enrollment courses are high school courses which also earn postsecondary (college) credit. These can be offered both in-person and virtually. Students at MHS with sufficiently advanced studies and who are preparing for college, perhaps by earning some credits in advance of high school graduation, may enroll in such coursework at MHS, Mitchell Technical College, Dakota Wesleyan University, or other institutions. Students who are interested in dual enrollment may pursue such studies by inquiring with an MHS guidance counselor.

As you can see, the Mitchell School District provides a wide range of different instructional offerings.

Instructional Programs Offered Virtually for Mitchell School District Students:

<u>eLearning</u>	 Normally offered during times of pandemic (as with the recent/current COVID-19 outbreak) or when a student has a particular, suitably serious situation which makes being physically in school impossible or very difficult, eLearning is the Mitchell School District’s live and recorded instruction from the classroom to students at home.  This might occur with a single student from a classroom (unable to attend due to exposure, as defined by the South Dakota Department of Health), a group of students from a classroom (parental choice due to pandemic concerns or concerns related to measures taken as a result of pandemic), or entire classrooms, buildings, or even the entire district. These latter cases would occur when District officials declare physical school closures but the continuation of instruction. In these cases, the teacher would teach the class live at the same time as the instruction would have occurred in the physical school schedule, with the option of recording the lesson as well for students who, for unavoidable reasons, could not attend live.  In eLearning, students would be as fully responsible for attendance, assignment completion, and testing success as they would have been had they been physically in the classroom.  Students would be held accountable for such through grading and promotion/retention decisions.
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<p><u>Virtual School</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 In some situations, the parent of a student prefers to work with their child(ren) at home by offering the school curriculum or some alternative curriculum that meets state standards and enjoys district approval, facilitated by a teacher assigned to the child's oversight entirely or for a specific class. 👤 Such students are provided a district computer, software packages made available to students physically in class, virtual instructional packages, as well as textbooks and school library access. 👤 They are also assigned to one of the classrooms in the school, appropriate to their level and content area. In such a case, the assigned teacher facilitates instruction but the parent does much of the day-to-day work with the child. 👤 Such students may attend as many or as few hours in their assigned school classroom as they or their parents wish. 👤 They are also eligible for extracurricular activities, assuming they meet grade and good conduct guidelines. 👤 Parents interested in this option should contact their building principal. 👤 Parents who elect this option must have their children remain in Virtual School for a semester at a time, but may switch to other instructional models at the end of any semester.
<p><u>Dual Enrollment</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Dual enrollment courses are high school courses which also earn postsecondary (college) credit. 👤 These can be offered both in-person and virtually. 👤 Students at MHS with sufficiently advanced studies and who are preparing for college, perhaps by earning some credits in advance of high school graduation, may enroll in such coursework at Northern State University, Mitchell Technical College, Dakota Wesleyan University, as well as others, and may use MHS technology to access such virtual instruction. 👤 Students who are interested in virtual Dual Enrollment may pursue such studies by inquiring with an MHS guidance counselor.