

WESTMOUNT CHARTER SCHOOL EVALUATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Westmount Charter School is located in southwest Calgary and occupies a large portion of the Viscount Bennett Centre. The building is owned by the Calgary Board of Education and high school upgrading programs are offered through the other occupant of the building, Chinook Learning Services.

Mission

To meet the learning needs of gifted students and promote their social-emotional development in a congregated setting.

Vision

Westmount Charter School, as a partner in the best learning system in the world, will be recognized as the centre for excellence in gifted education.

Charter Elements

The essential elements outlined in the Charter are:

Definition

- Students are gifted when they perform, or show potential for performing, remarkably high levels of accomplishment in learning rate, depth of knowledge, and reasoning and problem-solving abilities when compared to others of their age, experience and environment.

Beliefs

- Gifted students are capable of exceptional performance, display a broad spectrum of characteristics and needs, require comprehensive specialized programming from teachers who have specialized training and/or experience.
- Parents are vital partners and community members have an important role in the education of gifted students.

Purpose

- The school will provide qualitatively differentiated programming and opportunities for each student to optimize his or her unique potential.

Student Outcomes

- maximum achievement in the Alberta curriculum;
- growth in identified multiple intelligences;
- improved ability to think critically and creatively, solve problems and conduct research;
- understand interrelatedness of knowledge; develop independence, self-direction and self-discipline in learning;
- develop self-awareness and acceptance of their capabilities, interests and needs;
- develop understanding, acceptance and appreciation for the capabilities, interests and needs of others.

Strategies:

- establish and maintain a school culture that values, promotes and recognizes excellence;
- foster the development of each student's full complement of intelligences;
- stimulate students to pursue higher level goals and aspirations;
- provide a safe, supportive learning environment that acknowledges similarities and honours differences;
- provide learning activities at an appropriate level and pace;

- provide a variety of learning activities that supplement or extend requirements of the curriculum;
- promote the development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving and decision-making, and independent study/research skills and processes;
- present content that is related to broad-based themes, issues or problems and serves to integrate knowledge within and across the various disciplines;
- provide students with opportunities to conduct individual or small group projects (investigations, inventions, artistic productions) of genuine interest;
- provide students with opportunities to demonstrate learning outcomes in individual and varied ways;
- expose students to a wide variety of fields of study, modes of expression, professions and occupations;
- provide students with access to many, varied and advanced human and material resources within and outside the school;
- assess student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal, criterion referenced and standardized instruments; and foster on-going professional development to enable school staff to enhance their ability to meet the needs of gifted students.

The Educational Plan includes:

- Differentiated programming within such organizational strategies as Advanced Placement, concurrent or dual enrolment, cross-grade or multi-age grouping, early entrance, grade advancement, independent study, seminars and tutorials;
- Curriculum that is accelerated, enriched and individualized through a Personalized Educational Programming Plan for each student.

Student Assessment Strategies include:

- student portfolios;
- interview and/or observational data;
- teacher-made tests;
- basic competencies checklists;
- provincial achievement tests (PATs) at Grade 3, 6, 9 and 12;
- Student Progress Reports;
- Personalized Educational Programming Plan;
- contracts or independent study records.

Sharing Innovation Strategies include:

- establishing a partnership with the Centre for Gifted Education, University of Calgary;
- welcoming university and college students for education, counseling and/or social work practicum experiences;
- attending and presenting at SAGE, Charter School and other educational conferences;
- networking with other Gifted Education programs both within and outside the province;
- participating in appropriate research studies and talent searches;
- presenting at and participating in Alberta Education sponsored forums; and
- encouraging staff to become actively involved in professional associations in their areas of interest.

The original charter for the school was given Ministerial approval in 1996 under the name of ABC Charter Public School reflecting its early connection with the Association for Bright Children. Subsequent five-year terms were granted by the Minister of Education and the current charter term extends to August 31, 2011. Initially offering classes for gifted Grade 1-3 children in Bridgeland School, and implementing a charter under the Calgary Board of Education, in 1998 the school began its operations under its own Charter School Board in a larger location on the old Currie Barracks in

southwest Calgary. The ABC School added Grades 4 and 5 that year and one additional grade each year until 2005 when the school offered its first Grade 12 class. In the 2001/2002 school year the school moved from the Currie Barracks to the Viscount Bennett Centre, and saw a significant increase in student numbers.

The expanded High School program was characterized by a focus on volunteerism, an expectation of all High School students, and by a multiple-intelligence approach to programming. Fine Arts programming was introduced, as were a multi-disciplinary approach to core subjects, an emphasis on differentiated and cross-subject, cross-grade professional learning communities for all teaching staff. During this time of expansion the name was changed to Westmount Charter School.

The school held its first Grade 12 graduation in 2006, with students receiving Gifted Education Diplomas according to their accomplishments in Academics, Community Volunteerism, School Leadership, and Performing Arts, in addition to their Alberta High School Diploma. The school is now implementing and extending Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

The enrolment is currently 1,057 students registered in Grades ECS to 12. Of these, 66 are ECS students so that the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student count for September 30, 2008 was 1,024. There is a staff complement of 97, providing 90.5 FTE positions. This includes 66.1 FTE teachers, including the principal, four vice-principals, a teacher/librarian, a resource teacher, a counselor and an early literacy resource teacher. The certificated staff is supported by 19.9 FTE non-certificated staff, including a secretary-treasurer, payroll and accounting staff, a communication coordinator, front office staff, teaching assistants and hall monitors. At the time of the evaluation, extra security staff had been hired on a contract basis.

The school is governed by elected Board of 10 directors who are members of the Westmount Charter School Society. The board has contracted for the part-time services of a Superintendent of Schools.

Terms of Reference

The *Charter Schools Regulation* requires the Minister to conduct a minimum of one evaluation of each charter school within the term of its Charter. There are four purposes to an evaluation of a charter school:

1. To provide evidence to the Minister and the board that the charter school is in compliance with provincial requirements and the requirements of the Charter, inclusive of charter amendments, approved by the Minister;
2. To report to staff, parents and the community the success of the charter school and to identify areas of strength and areas which require additional attention;
3. To focus the attention of the board and staff on the goals and objectives of the Charter and the need to establish and confirm measurable outcomes and measures; and
4. To facilitate continuous improvement in the charter school consistent with the Accountability Pillar of the Renewed Funding Framework.

There are seven essential questions that govern the evaluation:

1. Are provincial requirements being met?
2. Does the school meet the terms and conditions of its Charter?
3. Do the students, parents, teachers and community members see the school as being effective and successful?
4. Is the school financially viable?
5. Are innovative practices and approaches to student learning and other charter innovations being used, effective and being shared?
6. Is the school being governed effectively?

7. Is the school being administered effectively?

Processes

The findings of the evaluation were established using the following processes and activities:

1. Fourteen classroom visits were completed during the evaluation to observe instruction and student activities. Lesson plans, course outlines and records of student achievement were reviewed after the classroom observations had taken place;
2. Interviews were held with 18 teachers;
3. A sample of 35 parents, including the school council chairperson, were interviewed at the school to determine levels of satisfaction with the school and student progress;
4. A student survey was administered to all students in Grades 4-12 to determine satisfaction levels with the school program, organization and facility;
5. A staff survey was administered to all staff to determine satisfaction levels with school program, organization and facility;
6. A parent survey was administered to all families of students attending the school to determine satisfaction levels with school program, organization and facility;
7. Material prepared by the school was reviewed, including educational plans and results reports, handbooks and classroom schedules. Additional documentation and records regarding the school's administration and governance were examined on-site;
8. A member of the evaluation team attended a Board of Directors' meeting (November 17, 2008) and its related documents were reviewed;
9. Interviews were conducted with the board chairperson, two other board members, the superintendent, the secretary-treasurer and the principal and vice-principals to acquire information about the administration and governance of the school; and
10. A questionnaire was administered to all board members who attended the November 17, 2008 meeting to determine satisfaction levels with school program, organization and operation.

Please note that references in the document to "staff" include teachers, administrators and support staff, all of whom had the opportunity to respond to the survey questions. Where opportunities to respond were limited, the terms "teachers" or "administrators" are used.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A: Are Provincial Requirements Being Met?

1. The Alberta *Programs of Study* are being followed.

Yes No Unsure

Based upon interviews of principal and staff, and direct observation of teachers and their year and unit plans:

- All the teachers have access to the *Alberta Programs of Study*.
- All the teachers follow the *Alberta Programs of Study* when creating their day plans, unit plans and long-range plans.

2. Students participate in Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with principals and verified by teachers:

- An average of 98.2%, 97.8%, and 98.8% of students participated in the Grades 3, 6 and 9 PATs respectively, over the last five years.

- The school has a 98% to 99% participation rate in PATs in 2008.
- The school's participation rate in "academic stream" diploma exams is roughly twice the provincial average.

3. Required provincial documents are completed and submitted on time.

Yes No Unsure

Based on reviewing source documents and interviews with the principal and secretary-treasurer and verified by Alberta Education reviews:

- The Three Year Education Plan 2008-2011 (3YEP), the Annual Education Results Report 2006/2007 (AERR) the Budget Report Form (BRF) and Audited Financial Statement (AFS) were submitted on time.
- The Alberta Education reviews of these documents indicated the reports were in compliance.

4. Fees and school generated funds are appropriate and explained.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with the principal, vice-principal, superintendent and secretary-treasurer:

- Students are charged an instructional fee of \$250 in Grades 1-5, \$255 for students in Grades 6-8 and \$285 for students in Grades 9-12. There is a transportation user fee of \$750 per student.
- Parents interviewed indicated awareness and acceptance of the fees and the fees are outlined on the school web site.
- The AFS (2007/2008) reflects that the net SGF are \$376,000 which is appropriate.

5. Officials hired by the board (superintendent, secretary-treasurer, principal, teachers) are qualified.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with the superintendent, principal, vice-principal, secretary-treasurer and teachers, all staff are qualified:

- 100% of the teaching staff and the principal have Alberta teaching certification.
- The superintendent is a retired, experienced and well-respected public school superintendent.
- The secretary-treasurer has formal training and has extensive experience with managing school finances.

6. Requirements of the *Funding Manual for School Authorities* for the current school year are met.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the transportation policy and financial records and verified by interview with the secretary-treasurer:

- The AFS's & BRFs for the last two operating years were reviewed and are in order.
- The schedule of insurance coverage currently in place was reviewed and indicated appropriate insurance in place.
- The management letters provided by the auditor identified no significant weaknesses in managing the finances of the school.

7. Average class sizes meet Alberta Education Guidelines.

Yes No Unsure

Based upon interviews with the principal, teachers, parents and classroom observations, class lists and the CSI plan submitted to and approved by Alberta Education:

- The school is within the guidelines except for the K-3 classes.
- While the average class size in K-3 is 0.2 above the guideline, the trend is declining.
- The class sizes reported to the Alberta Education are:

Division	Alberta Education Guideline	Westmount Average Class Size 2006/2007	Westmount Average Class Size 2007/2008	Westmount Average Class Size 2008/2009
Grades K-3	17 students	18.0	17.3	17.2
Grade 4-6	23 students	21.1	21.1	22.5
Grades 7-9	25 students	20.2	21.2	22.3
Grades 10-12	27 students	21.7	19.2	21.4

8. The Charter meets the requirements and recommendations for instructional time.

Yes No Unsure

Based on the school calendar, timetables and the principal/vice-principal interview:

- The school provides more than the minimum required hours of instruction per year for all grades.
- The school is compliant with the provincial guidelines for subject areas.

9. The school's facility is appropriate to the provision of student programming.

Yes No Unsure

Based on observations, survey results and confirmed in interviews with staff, parents and board members:

- Based on an examination of the building, and confirmed in interviews with the principal/vice-principals, staff and parents, the present facility is appropriate for the provision of the student programming, but is not optimal. A greater concern is difficulty in securing the building.
- 74.1% of students surveyed were satisfied that the facility meets student needs.
- Survey results indicate that 75% of staff are dissatisfied that the facility meets student needs and 88.9% of teachers interviewed disagreed that stakeholders perceive that the facility meets student needs.
- Comments from teacher interviews indicated that while they were dissatisfied with specific parts of the facility such as the gym and the library, they believed that a bigger drawback was ensuring student safety and security.
- Interviews with administration, parents and board members confirmed that the school does not have adequate space for physical education and will need greater access to science labs in the future.
- Most instructional spaces are adequate; some are not. The library, for example, while spacious, still retains the smell of an automotive shop and houses noisy ventilation system equipment. The area under the gym has low ceilings, poor lighting and poor aesthetics.
- The major instructional limitation of the facility is the lack of dedicated science labs for senior high courses. This situation will be exacerbated by the expansion of Advanced Placement science.

B: Does the School Meet the Terms and Conditions of its Charter?

10. The specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the Charter are followed.

Yes No Unsure

Based on the Westmount school charter, school information documents, classroom observations, interviews with teachers and parents, surveys of staff and parents and examination of student records:

- Classroom observations, interviews with staff and a review of a sample of student work indicate appropriate activities reflecting charter philosophy and methods.
- These philosophies and methodologies include: a focus on the interrelatedness of knowledge, inquiry into real problems and issues that have wider societal implications, varying instructional

techniques to match the theory of multiple intelligences, a special focus on global issues, the development of a sense of community that focuses on ethical behaviour, scholarship, curiosity, discovery, creativity and active learning by both students and teachers.

- Examples of activities related to the charter were seen during classroom observations or discussed after the observation.
- All interviews, classroom observations and debriefing confirmed a methodology/philosophy consistent with the Charter.
- The school website clearly outlines how the characteristics of the Charter are implemented in the school setting.

11. The Charter is current.

Yes No Unsure

- The Westmount Charter was renewed in January 2006 by the Minister for a five-year period, effective September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2011.
- The superintendent and board member interviews confirmed that extensive discussions took place to re-define the definition of giftedness in the Charter after the previous evaluation.
- A review of board agendas and minutes indicated that the board is currently revising key board policy to ensure the school is effectively governed and the Charter mandate remains current.

12. The measurable outcomes and indicators of success are being evaluated and reported.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the AERR and the 3YEP and verified in the superintendent/secretary-treasurer interview:

- Required and local measures consistent with school goals are identified in the 3YEP and reported in the AERR.
- The students demonstrate high levels of achievement on the outcome measures established in the 3YEP.
- A review of the 3YEP confirmed that Westmount Charter School has a Charter goal with seven outcomes and measures and targets directly related to giving every student opportunities to optimize his or her own potential.
- A key focus of the school's professional development plan is to build capacity using the inquiry approach and to develop measures to assess the effectiveness of this approach.
- 14 of the 15 Accountability Pillar Achievement results are "very high."

13. Other charter requirements are evident in school operation.

Yes No Unsure

Based on principal and teacher interviews, and surveys of students and parents, charter elements are evident in school operation:

- Teachers have developed Teacher Professional Growth Plans (TPGPs) appropriate to the Charter focus of the school and are aligned with the school's professional development plan and 3YEP.
- The school is equipped with a generous ratio of computers including some "mobile labs" of laptops and some Smart Boards.
- 100% of the parents interviewed indicated approval of the appropriateness of classroom and grade organization.
- Parent comments indicated support for the flexible grade organization based on student ability.

14. Entrance and enrolment requirements are consistent with the Charter: clear, communicated and open.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the school information documents, the Charter, the policy on student admissions and verified in interviews with teachers, parents and board members:

- An information meeting is held for prospective parents and students in February. Prospective students are screened through completion of the CCAT, through a parent questionnaire, a teacher/community leader checklist and through an interactive assessment process where teachers observe their responses in pre-determined learning tasks.
- The school sets minimum requirements or benchmarks as criteria for entrance. The school has chosen not to require an individual psycho-educational assessment as this would be cost-prohibitive for some students.
- The school has developed information that is contained in brochures and posted on the website that outlines the entrance requirements. Parents sign an agreement of understanding as a condition of their child's enrolment in the school.
- Parent, principal and teacher interviews confirmed that the entrance and enrolment requirements are met. However, some teachers indicated that the area of giftedness is not apparent in the courses that they teach, while others suggested that some students who do not meet criteria are accepted if their parents are insistent. They see this as harmful for the child.

15. The Charter includes improved student learning outcomes that are, in turn, reflected in education planning and results reporting.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the Charter, the AERR and the 3YEP, and verified in teacher, principal, superintendent and board member interviews and by classroom observations:

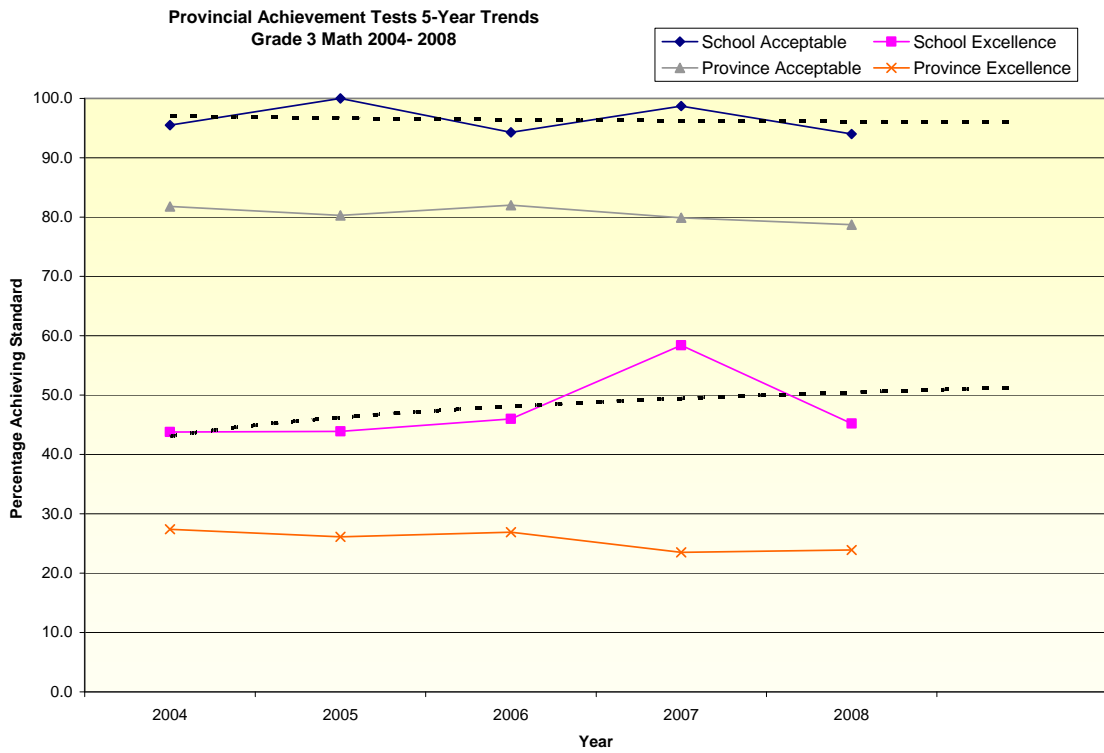
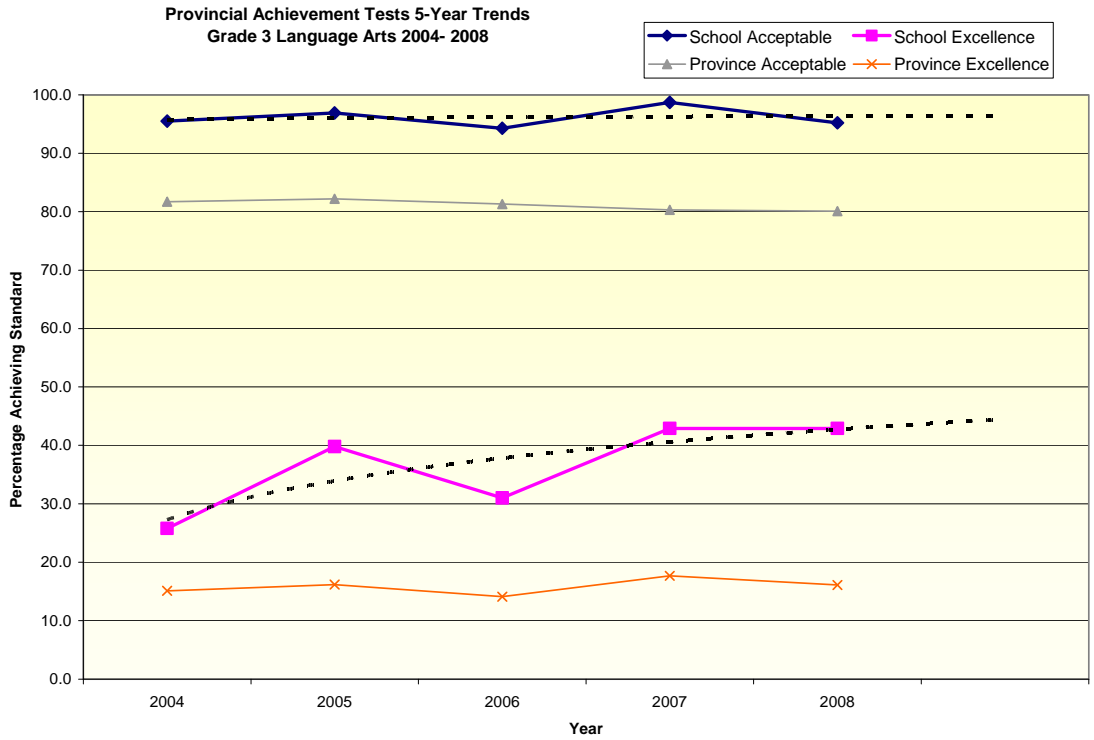
- The 3YEP Review Template indicates that outcomes for student learning are complete.
- Methodologies appropriate for providing an enriched educational experience are based on empirical research. These include curriculum compacting, cross-curricula projects, flexible skills grouping, extended independent work and tiered assignments.
- The school's mission clearly articulates the purpose of the school is to meet the learning needs of the students.
- 90.5% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that each child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending Westmount Charter School.
- 97.5% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the overall quality of education provided to the students.
- 96.9% of the students are satisfied with the education they are receiving at the school.

16. Student achievement, as measured by Provincial Achievement Testing and Diploma Examinations, demonstrates an upward trend over time.

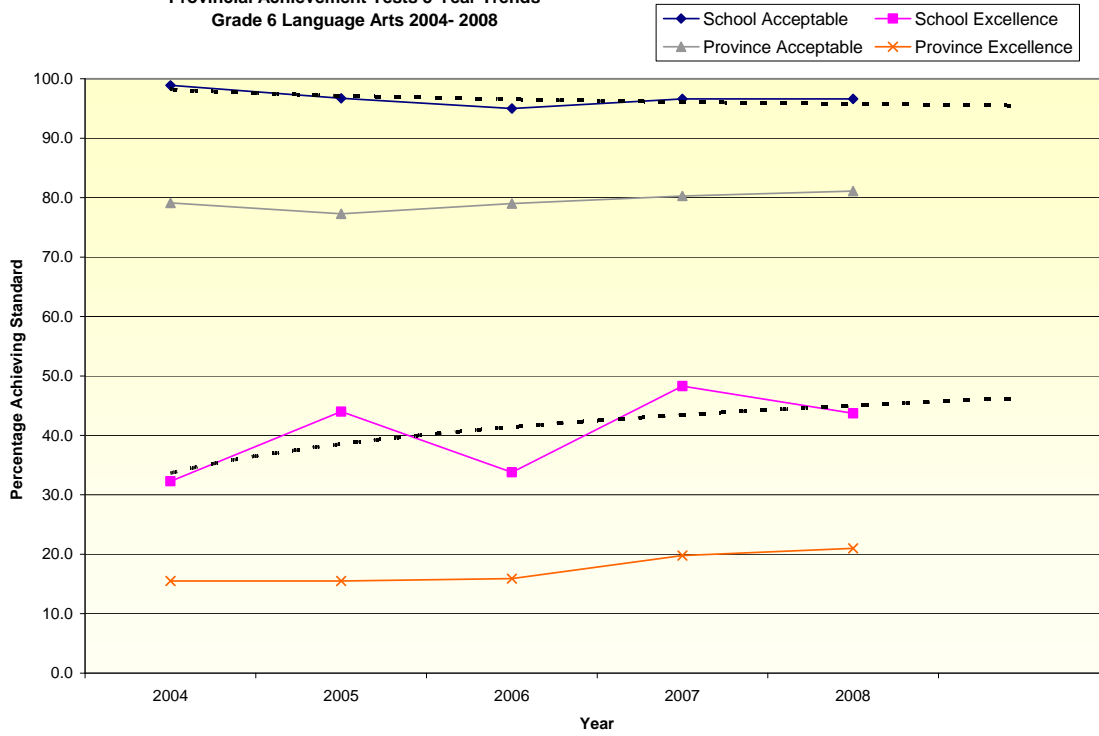
Yes No Unsure

- Five-year trends on PATs show high performance with the degree of variability expected from a relatively small sample.
- The school participation rates exceed the provincial participation rates.
- 16 of 18 PAT measures (Acceptable Standard/Excellence for nine tests) show an upward logarithmic trend over the last five years of results.
- With the exception of the Grade 9 Math in 2003/2004, Prior Levels of Achievement show that the students have exceeded the projected levels of achievement, and that the trend is increasing.
- Seven of 12 Diploma measures (Acceptable Standard/Excellence for six exams) show an upward logarithmic trend over the last three years of results.

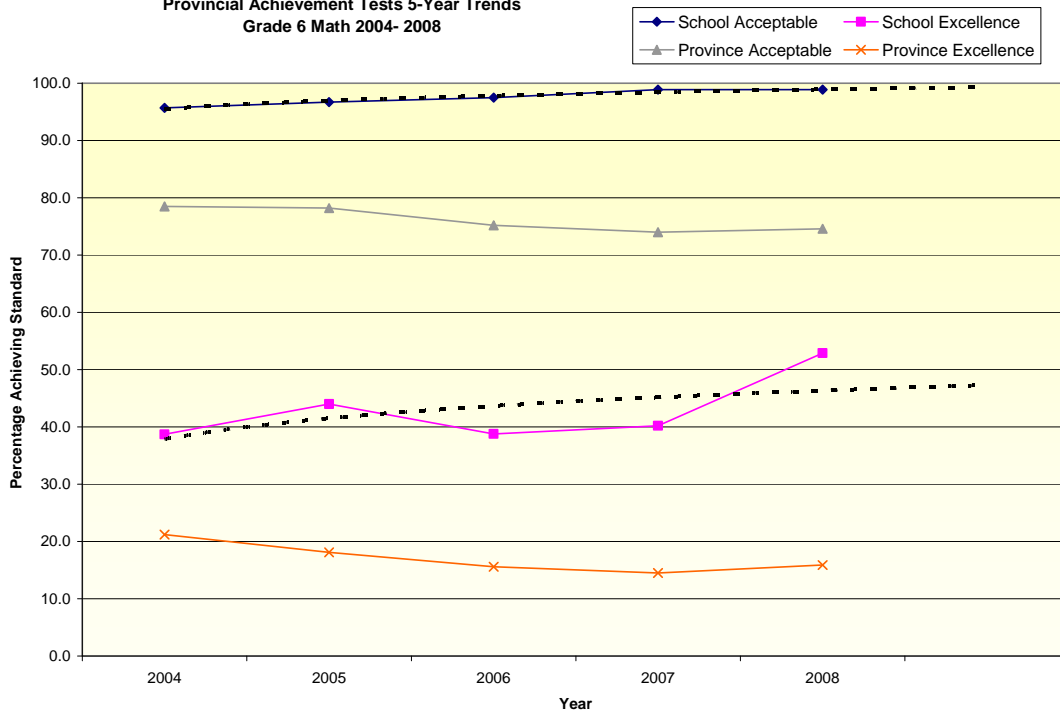
Results Tables

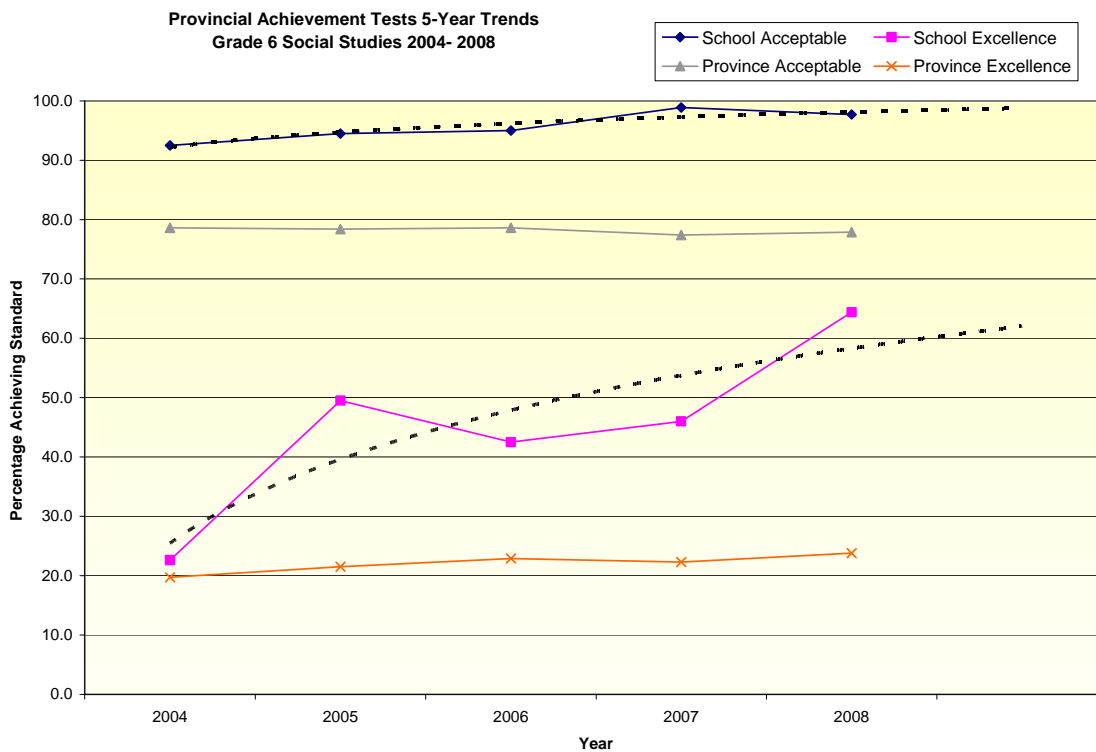
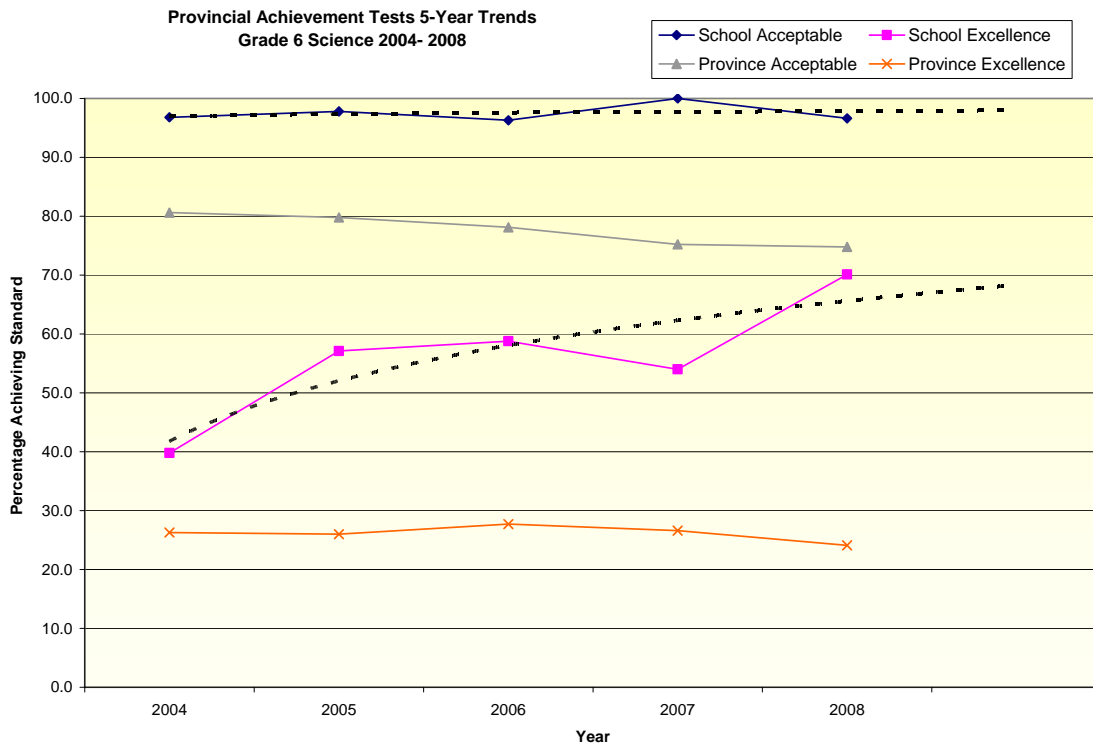


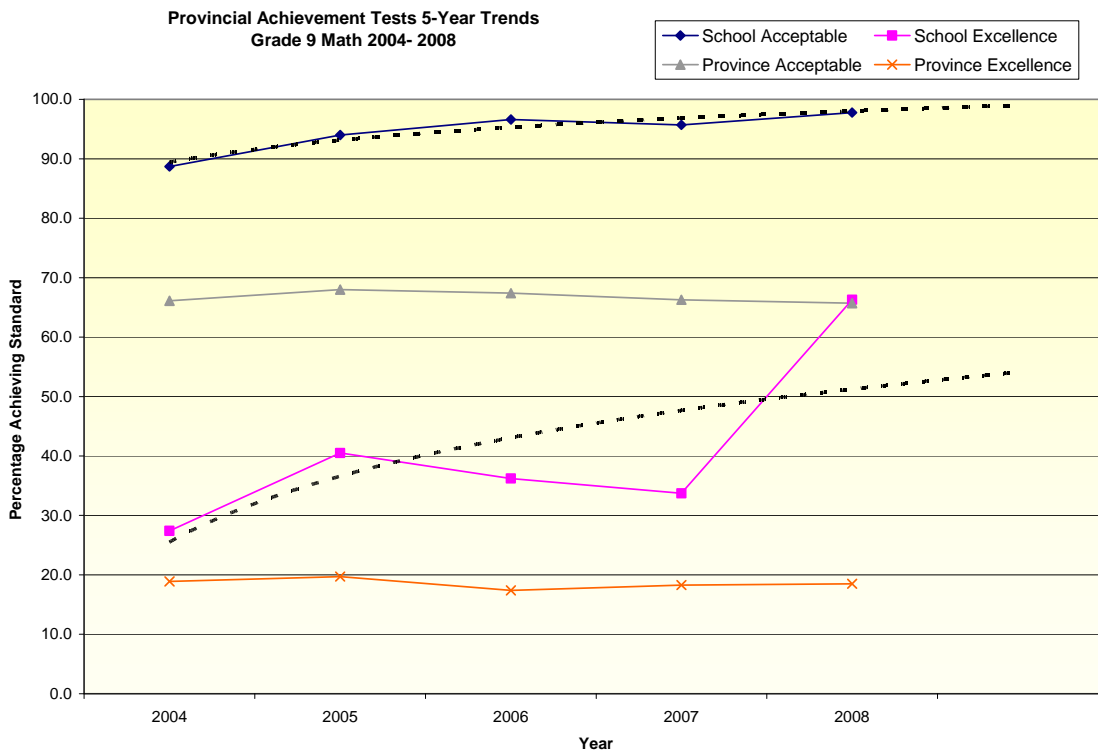
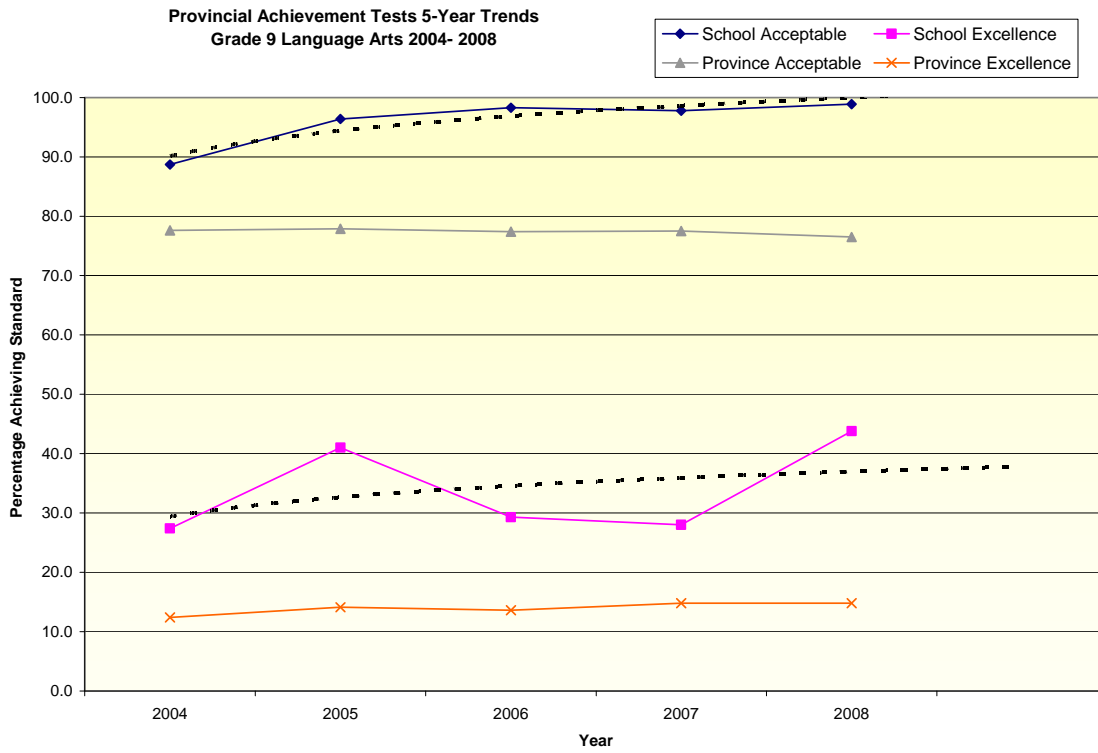
Provincial Achievement Tests 5-Year Trends
Grade 6 Language Arts 2004- 2008

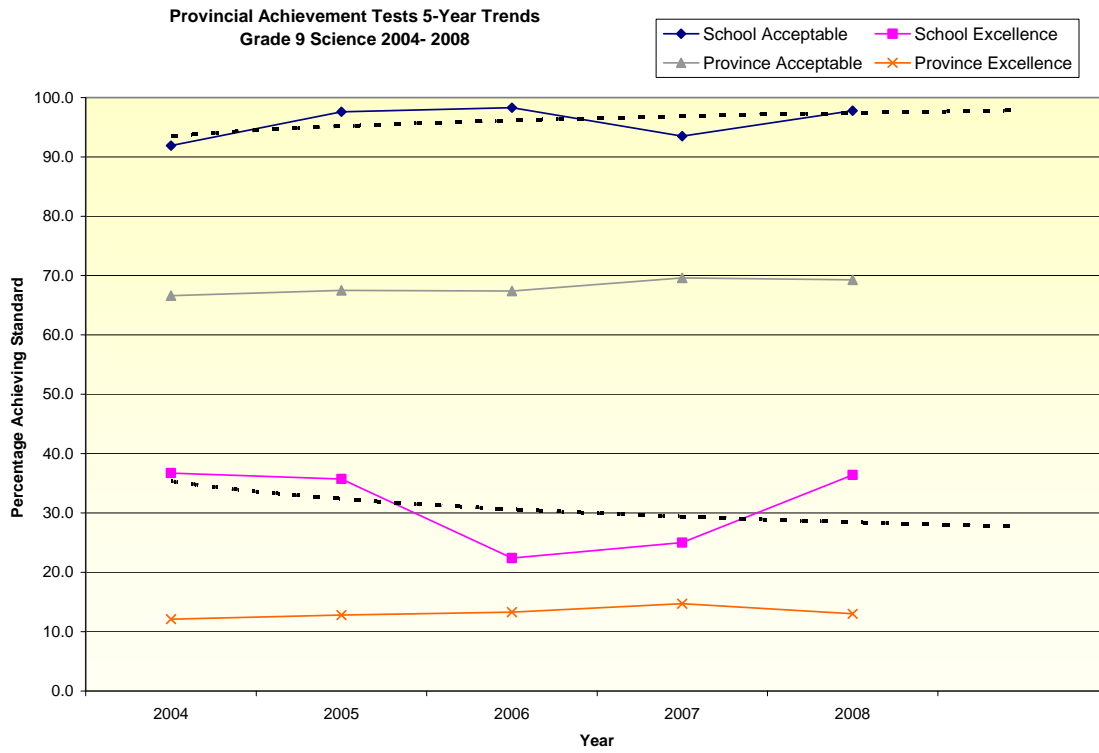


Provincial Achievement Tests 5-Year Trends
Grade 6 Math 2004- 2008



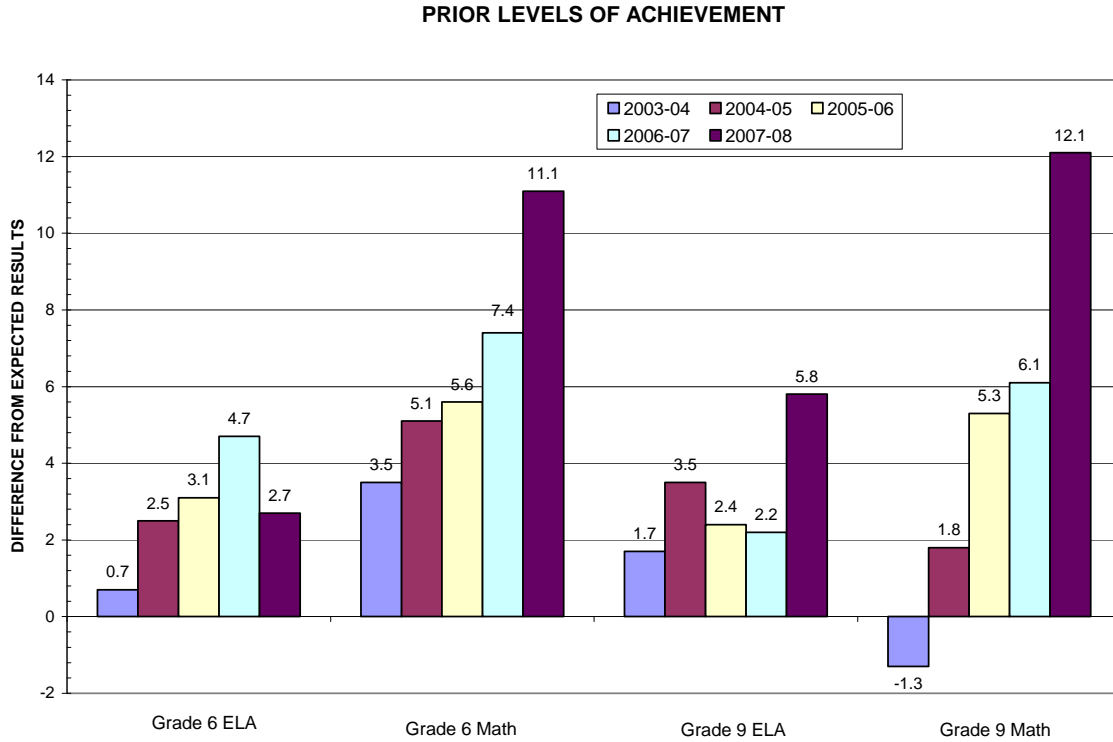




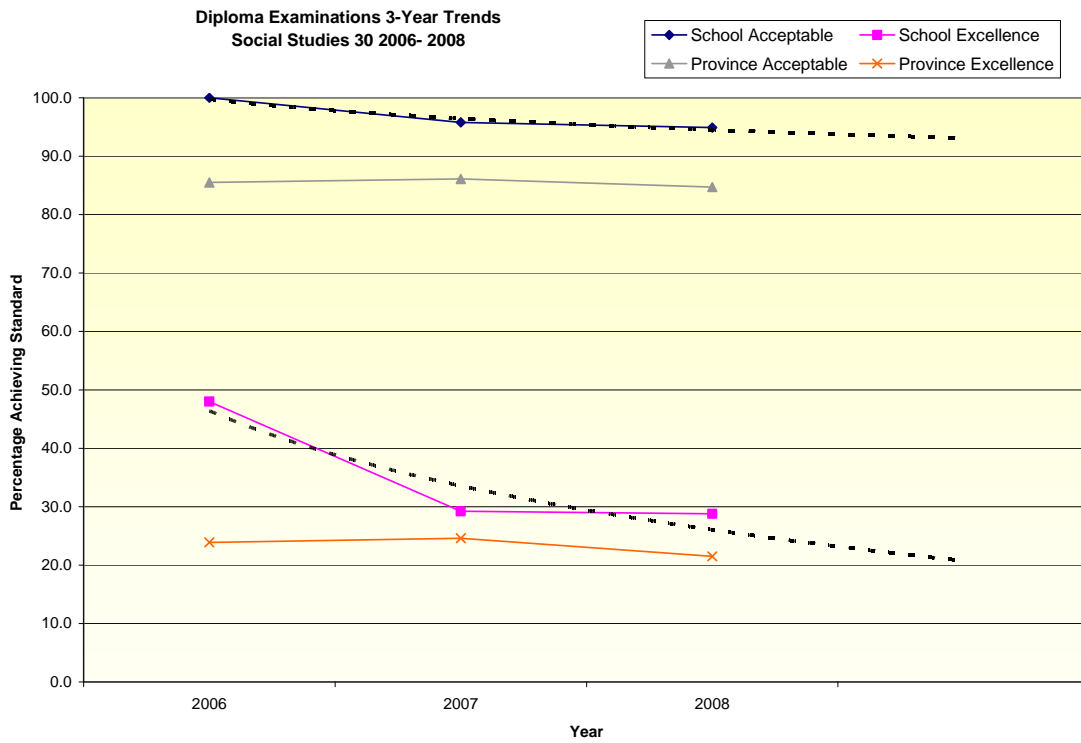
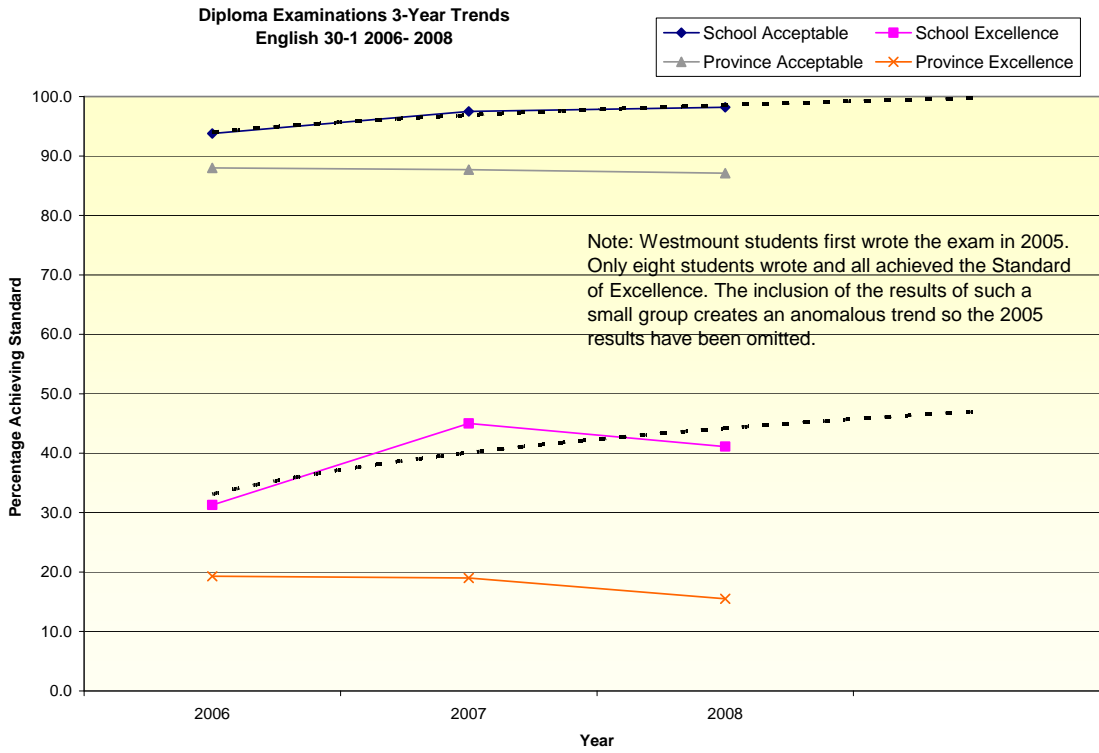


Note: The Grade 9 Social Studies trend chart is not available as the school is piloting the new program of studies.

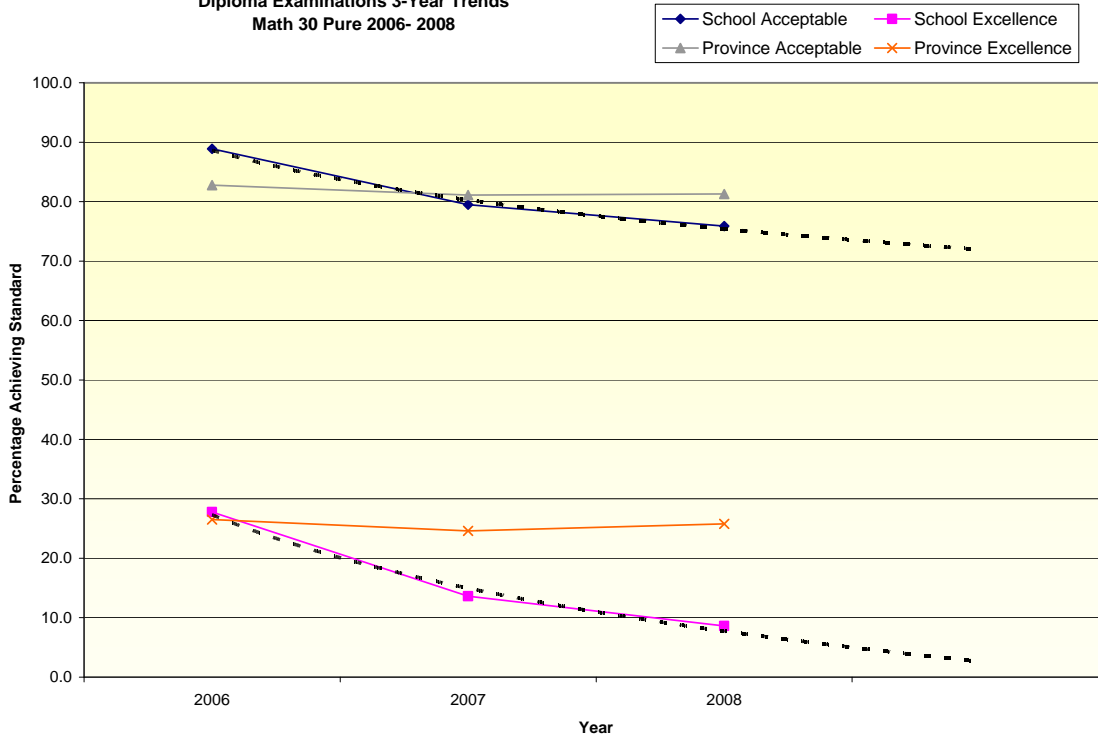
Prior Levels of Achievement



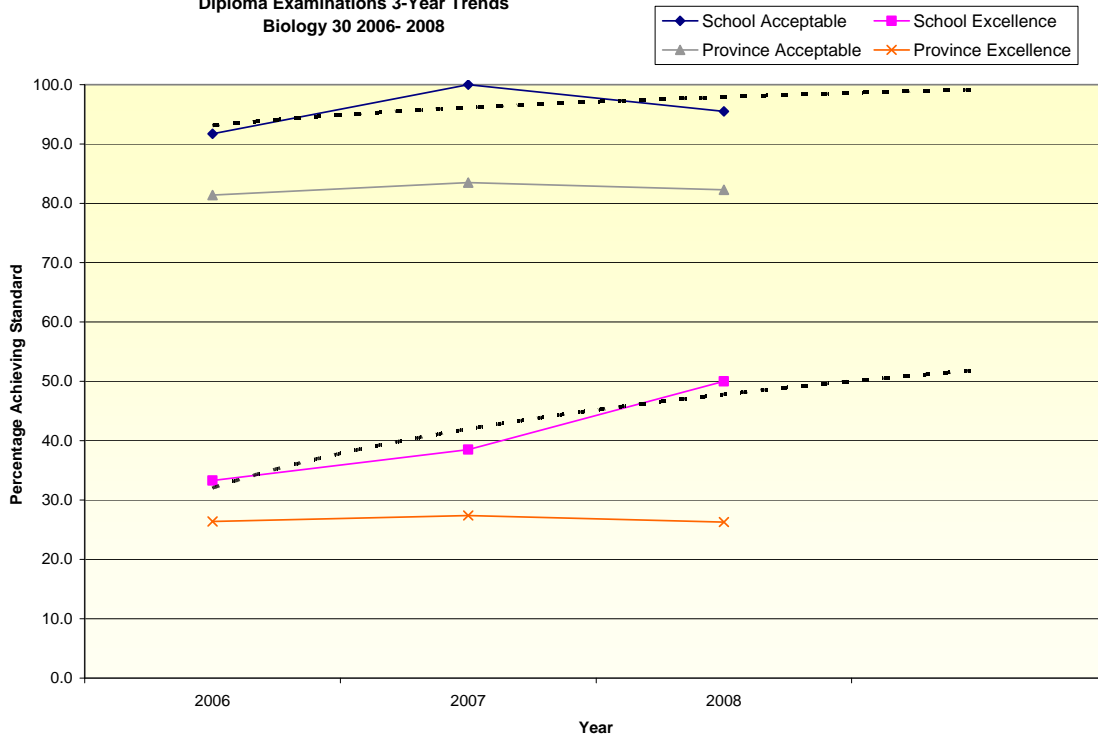
Diploma Examination Results



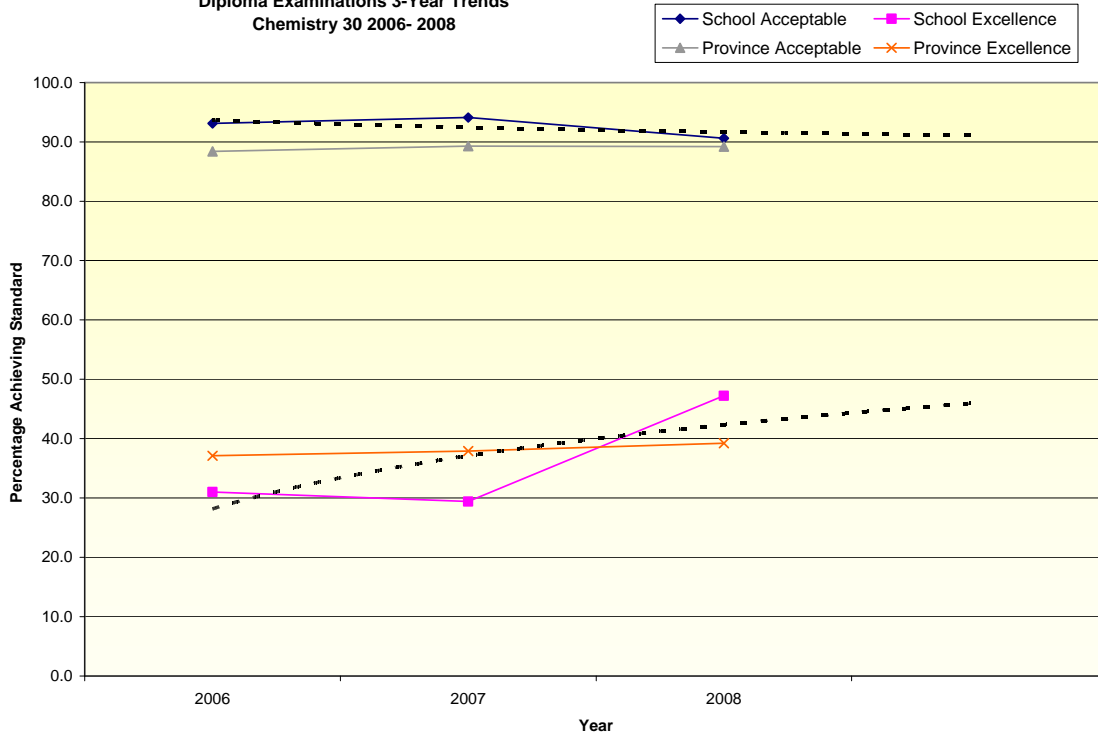
**Diploma Examinations 3-Year Trends
Math 30 Pure 2006- 2008**



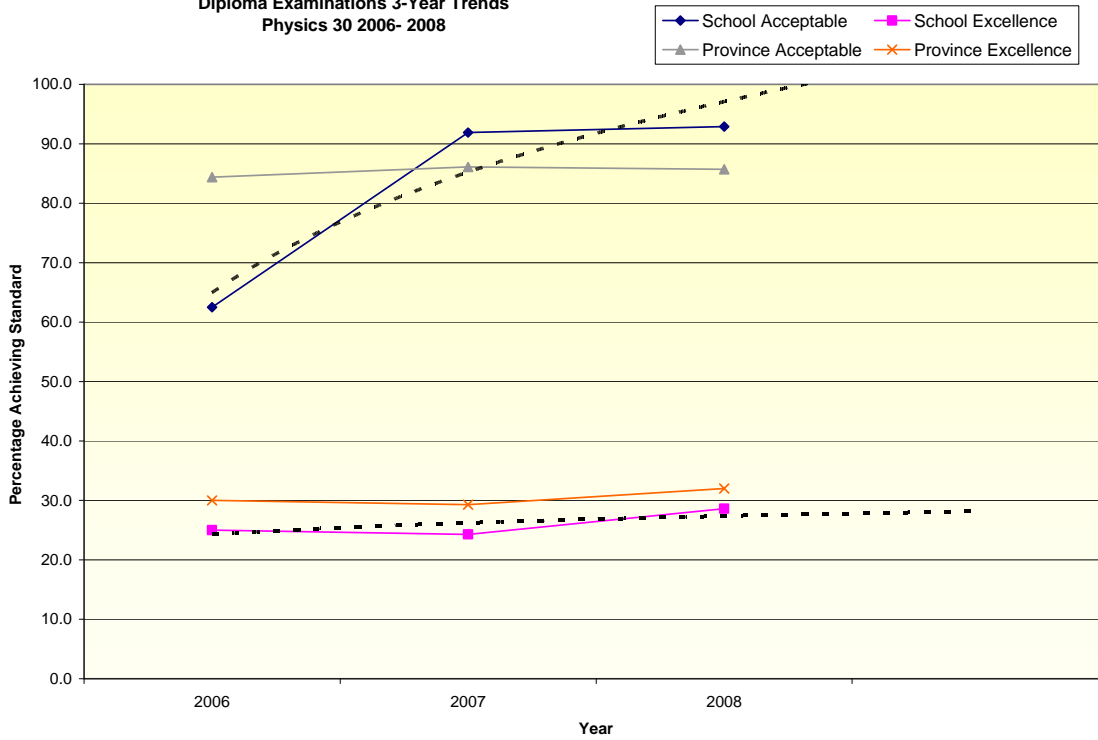
**Diploma Examinations 3-Year Trends
Biology 30 2006- 2008**



Diploma Examinations 3-Year Trends
Chemistry 30 2006- 2008



Diploma Examinations 3-Year Trends
Physics 30 2006- 2008



C. Do the Students, Parents, Teachers and Community Members See the School As Being Effective and Successful?

17. Students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them.

Yes **No** **Unsure**

Based on a review of board member, student, staff and parent satisfaction survey data, the AERR and verified by teacher, principal and parent interviews:

- Classroom observations confirm that teacher/student interactions are respectful and caring and that students are a community of learners in the classroom.
- Students were seen to be engaged in peer- and self-assessment activities.
- 75.4% of the students and 56.5% of parents indicated satisfaction with safety at school.
- 91.7% of staff are satisfied that the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff.
- Parents and students expressed very high satisfaction with behavioral expectations and implementation of these standards on a consistent basis.
- 85.5% of the students and 89.4% of parents surveyed indicated they are satisfied that the school has rules for the way students are expected to behave.
- 86.9% of the students and 93.2% of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied that they/their children are treated fairly and consistently at school.
- 100% of the parents interviewed indicated satisfaction that the school made the students aware of the school's expectations.
- 100% of interviewed parents indicated that the administration of the school did take action to resolve the concerns of parents.
- 83.3% of the staff surveyed indicated satisfaction with student behavioral expectations.
- 79.3% of staff were very satisfied or satisfied that rules are enforced fairly and consistently.
- 100% of the teachers interviewed indicated that students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them.
- 92.8% of staff surveyed were very satisfied/satisfied that the school has a positive climate.
- 86% of staff, students and parents believe that students are safe at the school as measured by the Accountability Pillar survey.

18. Regular reporting is provided to parents.

Yes **No** **Unsure**

Based on a review of student records and report cards and verified by parent and teacher interviews and surveys:

- Regular reporting to parents was confirmed by reviewing a sample of student records, individual student profiles for PATs and student report cards.
- 100% of parents interviewed and 90.6% of parents surveyed indicated satisfaction with the reporting provided by the school.
- 82.2% of students surveyed indicated satisfaction with information about their progress.
- 88.8% of parents surveyed were satisfied with receiving enough information about what their child is expected to learn.
- 100% of the teachers interviewed were satisfied with the amount and quality of information provided to parents about the child's progress.
- 95.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides enough information to parents about their child's progress.

- 100% of staff during classroom observation debriefing indicated that they communicate to all parents with updates via email either weekly or biweekly and that parents regularly contact staff via email.
- Westmount Charter School schedules three conferences each year to give students the opportunity to share their learning with their parents.

19. Student achievement results are consistent with the Charter goals and targets for student learning.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the Charter, the AERR 2006/2007 and the 3YEP 2006-2009 and verified in teacher, principal, superintendent, board member and parent interviews:

- The school is proud of the results the students have achieved, particularly on PATs. There is a systematic school-wide analysis of PAT results to inform planning;
- The staff does extensive planning and assessing of results achieved on the learning experiences provided at the school.
- 93.8% of students surveyed indicated that they are satisfied that they receive enough information about what they are expected to learn.

20. Parents support the school.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the AERR 2006/2007 and verified in student surveys and parent, teachers and board member interviews:

- Results from all stakeholders describe satisfaction with the educational opportunities and the quality of education for students.
- Data from the school show a high retention rate for students moving into the next grade. The only exception is the transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10.
- Teachers interviewed communicated that parents are very satisfied with the school.
- 91.3% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the overall quality of education their child is receiving as indicated on the Accountability Pillar survey.
- 79.3% of parents surveyed for the Accountability Pillar were satisfied that students had the opportunity to experience a broad program of studies.
- 82.1% of parents surveyed were satisfied that administration appropriately acts on parent concerns.
- Those parents interviewed indicated that parents are satisfied with the high quality of education, are willing to comply with an expectation that each volunteers ten hours per year and that administration and teachers are open to parent suggestions. They indicated a desire for more second language courses.
- During interviews teaching staff indicated that parents are very supportive of the school and that parents are always available to support special events and field trips.

21. The stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs.

Yes No Unsure

Based on board member, parent, staff, student and administration interviews and surveys:

- 49.4% of parents interviewed were dissatisfied that the school facility meets student needs.
- 88.9% of teachers interviewed disagreed that stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs.
- 75% of staff surveyed are dissatisfied that the school facility meets student needs.

- Board members interviewed confirmed that the parents do not perceive the facility as meeting student needs. There was no unanimity from board members themselves in response to this question. They saw advantages and issues with the current facility, and most of the issues revolve around sharing the facility with an adult/young adult educational institution.
- The superintendent confirmed that the facility could meet the long-term student needs if it were able to negotiate the tenancy of a complete wing for the high school program. CBE, however, is unwilling at this time to allow this occupancy. He indicated that the school's relationship with CBE was good and that the CBE maintenance department did a reasonable job of responding to maintenance requests from the school. He was also very sensitive to the perceptions of many parents that the school could not be made 100% safe from intruders.
- All stakeholder interviews and direct observation confirmed that more space is needed for physical education programs and that science facilities will need to be expanded in the future.

D: Is the School Financially Viable?

- According to the Audited Financial Statements (AFS), the school society ended the 2007/2008 school year with an accumulated operating surplus of \$981,000, which is about 10% of total expenses. Total revenue for the same period was \$10.1 million; 89% of which was obtained from the Government of Alberta. The remainder was derived from various sources such as net school generated funds (\$376,000), instruction resource fees (\$287,000), and transportation fees (\$277,000).
- Total expenses for the 2007/2008 school year were \$9.8 million. Of this amount, 69% was spent on the instruction. The remainder was used for such items as operation and maintenance (18%), transportation (8%) and for board and system administration (5%).
- The school society budgeted a \$30,000 surplus for the 2008/2009 school year. The budget was approved by the board on June 16, 2008. The projected total revenue is \$10.47 million and total expenses were budgeted at \$10.44 million. The budgeted allocation of total expenses by program is: instructional expense takes 70% of the budget; plant operation and maintenance is 17%; transportation is 8%; and board and system administration is 5% of the total expenses.

22. The financial position of the school is positive as demonstrated in the audited financial statement.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the BRF 2008/2009 and the AFS 2007/2008 and verified in interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- The school ended the school year 2007/2008 with an accumulated operating surplus of \$981,000; and
- The enrolment is projected to be 978 FTE students (ECS counted as half FTE) for the 2008/2009 school year.

23. Expenditures for the current year are consistent with budgeted amounts.

Yes No Unsure

A review of the AFS 2006/2007, BRF 2008/2009, and interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- The variances between the budgeted and the actual revenue and expenses are within reasonable range at the time of the on-site evaluation;
- The board and administrative costs are about 5% of the total expenses;
- According to the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer, the fees are comparable to other charter schools. Accounting for school fees and School Generated Funds is consistent with department requirements; and

- Based on the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer, a partial fee schedule follows:
 - \$250 for the elementary school;
 - \$255 for the junior high school;
 - \$285 for the high school;
 - \$25 for drama course, and \$135 for Project Earth; and
 - \$750 for transportation fees.

24. Long-term commitments are reasonable and minimal.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- The school has no long-term commitments beyond the Charter mandate; and
- Other than photocopier leases, and service and employment, no other long-term commitments were indicated.

25. Financial processes and documents comply with provincial requirements.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the BRF 2008/2009 and the AFS 2007/2008 and verified in interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- The AFS and BRF were submitted in a timely manner;
- Both the AFS and BRF were complete and fully compliant.

26. Recommendations, if any, made in the auditor's management letter are successfully addressed.

Yes No Unsure

- Review of AFS 2007/2008 indicated that there were no issues with the school's internal control system, and no recommendations for the school financial processes and procedures.
- The superintendent and secretary-treasurer interview indicated that auditor's management letters have been addressed appropriately, actions were documented addressing any requirements, and requirements were reflected in practice.

27. Charter school budget information is shared with school stakeholder groups and is available for public review.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- Budget information in 3YEP and AERR meets provincial planning requirements.
- Information is provided as to how and where budget information can be accessed.

28. Enrolment in the Charter School is adequate and in accordance with the *Charter School Regulations*.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the school enrolment trend data and verified by the principal and superintendent:

- Total FTE enrolment (ECS counted as half FTE) was 846, 923, and 956 for the 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school years respectively.
- The enrolment change has showed an upward trend.

29. Appropriate insurance is maintained for loss due to fire, theft or flood and to cover liability.

Yes No Unsure

Based on the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer:

- The school has a comprehensive schedule of insurance coverage in place, including property, liability, bond and crime, student accident and umbrella liability.

30. Board budget planning reflects board priorities.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the BRF 2008/2009 and the AFS 2007/2008, and verified in interviews with the secretary-treasurer:

- Board budget planning reflects board priorities;
- Resources are available to support board financial priorities;
- For the annual budget process, the board uses its own surveys of staff, students, alumni and parents to help determine the program focus. Funds are then directed in the budget to support the priorities.

E: Are Innovative Practices and Approaches to Student Learning and Other Charter Innovations, Being Used, Effective and Shared?

31. Educational innovations outlined in the Charter are evident in practice.

Yes No Unsure

Based on classroom observations, teacher interviews and the AERR:

- Educational innovations outlined in the Charter are evident.
- Classroom observations confirmed that the principles and beliefs of the Westmount Charter School were evident in all classrooms observed.
- The AERR reports on outcomes that are derived from the Charter: growth in multiple intelligences, thinking critically and creatively to solve problems and conduct research, understanding the interrelatedness of knowledge, independent learning, knowledge and acceptance of self and understanding, acceptance of and appreciation of others.

32. Staff members have opportunities for in-service related to the Charter and individual growth plans.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the Charter, the AERR and the 3YEP and verified in classroom observations and interviews with the superintendent, principal and teachers:

- 100% of the teachers interviewed expressed satisfaction with opportunities provided for in-service related to individual growth plans and professional development related to the Charter mandate.
- The school has established Communities of Practice that allow staff to focus their professional activities.
- A staff mentorship program for new teachers allows for coaching by experienced colleagues and visits to classrooms enabled through substitute teacher time.
- 100% of teachers interviewed confirmed that each teacher can recover the costs for professional development related to his/her professional growth plan.
- 100% of the teachers completed and filed a professional growth plan with the principal.
- A review of PGPs indicated that plans addressed individual professional goals and most were related to professional development priorities for the school.
- 71.6% satisfaction with “In-service Jurisdiction Needs” as reported in Accountability Pillar results.

33. The school shares effective practices related to its Charter mandate.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the communication plan and verified by the superintendent and principal interviews:

- Since January of 2007, a Communications Coordinator has the responsibility to communicate the school's successes and innovations with the broader community.
- A review of the AERR reveals an extensive history of sharing effective practices with educational partners and the community.
- The partnership between the school and the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary has been productive and mutually beneficial in disseminating information about the school's innovations. A number of the non-parent board members are connected to the Centre.

F: Is the School Being Governed Effectively?

Governance by the Board of Directors is critical to the success of the school. Adherence to charter bylaws and provincial legislation/regulations, effective policy development, strong communication among stakeholders, an active school council and a commitment to a dynamic vision provide the leadership to ensure that the school is effective.

34. The Charter board adheres to the by-laws of the society or company operating the school.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the policies approved by the board and board minutes and verified by board member interviews and observation of a board meeting:

- Review of society by-laws, policies and board meeting minutes indicated board adherence to by-laws.
- Review of board agenda packages and minutes indicated that appropriate business was conducted in compliance with the *School Act*.
- Observation of a board meeting on November 17, 2008 indicated appropriate use of procedure for the meeting.
- Compliance with legislative and procedural requirements was confirmed by board member interviews.

35. Communication among the Charter board, superintendent and staff is effective and in the best interests of the school.

Yes No Unsure

Based on satisfaction surveys, superintendent, principal, board member and teacher interviews and observation of a board meeting, stakeholders express high satisfaction with communication at Westmount Charter School:

- 66.5% of the parents surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the board.
- 100% of the board members interviewed indicated an excellent working relationship with the superintendent, school administration and the staff.
- 92.9% of staff surveyed were satisfied that teaching staff and administration at the school work together well.
- 66.7% of teachers interviewed and the principal interview acknowledged that communication among the Charter board, superintendent and staff is effective, efficient and in the best interests of the school.
- Board members interviewed indicated that staff present reports at board meetings, that board members are welcome to attend staff meetings, and that there are at least two events each year attended by the board and the staff. When interviewed, a board member expressed a desire for more face-to-face opportunities with teachers.

- The principal provides a principal's report to the board at every board meeting.
- The principal provides regular reports to the school council at each meeting.

36. The school council is active, involved and aware of its responsibilities.

Yes No Unsure

Based on parent and teacher surveys and verified in interviews with the parents, principal and board members:

- Stakeholders interviewed reported that the school council is an active and dedicated group of parents.
- School council activity and involvement were confirmed by review of school council minutes.
- Parent, school council chair and principal/vice-principal interviews confirmed that the school council is active, involved and aware of its responsibilities.

37. The corporate body is in good standing in accordance with the *Societies Act* or the *Companies Act*.

Yes No Unsure

- Review of Corporate Registry documents indicated confirmation of current filing by the Society.

38. Members of the Charter board take advantage of their opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in charter school governance.

Yes No Unsure

Based on board member and superintendent interviews:

- Superintendent and board member interviews confirmed participation in The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools.
- Superintendent and board member interviews indicated that the board is a capable and committed group of individuals.

39. The charter board has developed appropriate by-laws and policies regarding board governance, the role/responsibilities of the superintendent, the Charter board, the principal, the teachers and the school council.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the bylaws and policies regarding governance and verified by superintendent and board member interviews:

- The board has developed a comprehensive policy handbook.
- Review of board policies, confirmed by interviews, indicates that appropriate policies regarding roles/responsibilities of key individuals are in place.
- The superintendent is working with the board on an ongoing basis to ensure that the board policies and activities are directed toward strategic planning rather than day-to-day responsibilities.
- 64.3% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the board.
- 31% of parents surveyed were unsure of the performance of the board.

40. The charter board contracts for adequate superintendent services as per the requirements of the *School Act*.

Yes No Unsure

Based on interviews with board members, superintendent and principal, the board contracts adequate superintendent services:

- The superintendent's contract provides for services on the basis of .6 of a FTE. While the superintendent expressed satisfaction with this arrangement, comments from some teachers and administrators suggested that he works more than the contracted time.

41. Recommendations of past reviews and evaluations have been successfully addressed.

Yes No Unsure

- It was confirmed in the superintendent and board member interviews and from direct observations that all nine of the recommendations from the April 2004 evaluation have been acted upon.

42. The Charter board is committed to achieving the charter school's vision.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the Charter, the AERR and the 3YEP and verified by superintendent, principal, board member and parent interviews:

- Parents interviewed recognized the board's commitment.
- Board commitment to achieving the school's vision was confirmed by board member, superintendent and principal interviews.
- The vision and mission statements incorporated into the Charter are evident in the operations of the school.
- 98% of teachers surveyed by the school were satisfied that the Board of Directors had adequately governed the school.

43. Charter board decisions are communicated to the public regularly in an open manner.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the Charter, communications plan, and verified by superintendent, principal, board member and parent interviews:

- The board regularly communicates its decisions.
- Board decisions are communicated by e-mail through circulation of minutes, messages from the superintendent and updates from the communications coordinator.
- The board minutes, policies, planning and reporting documents are posted on the school website.
- 33% of parents surveyed were unsure of the performance of the Board of Directors.
- 64.5% of staff surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the Board of Directors.

44. The Charter board maintains effective and appropriate relationships with partners, associations and societies.

Yes No Unsure

A review of the 3YEP and verified in board member and superintendent interviews confirmed that:

- The board maintains effective and appropriate relationships with partners, associations and societies.
- A partial list of such includes the Association for Bright Children (Calgary Society), the Rotary Club of Calgary West, the University of Calgary, The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS), Southland Transportation, the Galileo Education Network and the Gifted and Talented Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

G: Is the School Being Administered Effectively?

With an enrolment of 1,057 children and students, Westmount has many programs, activities and initiatives that are being administered by a capable and experienced administrative team. The expectations and duties of the administrative team (superintendent, secretary-treasurer, principal, vice-principals) are extensive, and the services provided by the administrative team are with the best interests of all stakeholders in mind.

45. The charter school is focused on continuous improvement.

Yes No Unsure

Based on reviewing source documents and interviews with the superintendent, principal and secretary-treasurer and verified by Alberta Education reviews:

- The 3YEP and AERR meet all provincial requirements as identified in the *Guide to Charter School Planning and Results Reporting*. Education plan and results reports reviews indicated that all plans and reports are completed in a timely manner.
- 81.7% of respondents on the Accountability Pillar survey expressed satisfaction that the school had improved or stayed the same in the last three years.

46. Staff members are involved in decision-making and program development, implementation and review.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the staff satisfaction surveys, staff meeting agenda and verified in teacher and principal interviews:

- 88.1% of staff surveyed were satisfied that they have opportunities for input into school decision-making.
- Administration and 77.8% of the teachers interviewed indicated that they are involved in decision-making about program development, implementation and review and about policy development.

47. Classroom and grade organization are appropriate.

Yes No Unsure

Based on classroom observations, the assignment of grades to particular rooms, class lists and parent and teacher interviews:

- Class size overall averages meet or are very close to provincial guidelines.
- Groupings in elementary are fluidly arranged so that they will meet the instructional and independent levels of operation shown by students in core subjects.
- 77.8% of teachers interviewed and 100% of the parents interviewed agreed that classroom and grade organization are appropriate. Comments from teachers who had reservations indicated that these were centred upon the complexity of re-grouping and the imperatives of timetabling restrictions.

48. Safety procedures are in place.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the school's manual and a visual inspection of the facility and verified by staff, principal and parent interviews and by satisfaction surveys:

- Safety procedures were confirmed by review of school policies.
- Extraordinary measures to ensure student safety had been implemented shortly before the evaluation.
- Appropriate attention to student safety was confirmed by parent, principal and teacher interviews.

- 75.4% of students surveyed and 56.5% of parents surveyed were satisfied that students were safe at school and 91.7% of staff surveyed were satisfied that the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff.
- 78.3% of the staff surveyed believed that the children are safe on their way to and from school.
- 89.8% satisfaction that the school is “Safe and Caring” as reported in the Accountability Pillar Results.
- 89.7% of students and 80.5% of parents are satisfied that students are safe on the way to and from school.

49. Student records meet the requirements of the *Student Record Regulation*.

Yes No Unsure

Based on an inspection of a sample of students’ records and verified by principal and teacher interviews:

- Samples of student records from each grade level were reviewed to confirm that they are maintained in accordance with the Alberta Education *Student Record Regulation*.

50. The school facility meets provincial health, safety and building standards and is suitable for operation as a charter school.

Yes No Unsure

Based on parent interviews, secretary-treasurer interview and verified by the superintendent, principal and board member interviews:

- The building is owned and maintained by the Calgary Board of Education whose responsibility includes health, safety and building standards.
- All but one classroom observation confirmed that the instructional space was adequate.
- Most parents interviewed indicated that they felt the facility was unsuitable, not because of the instructional deficiencies but because it was difficult to ensure adequate levels of security.

51. School teaching and administrative staff members adhere to the requirements of the *Student Evaluation Regulation and Student Evaluation Policy*.

Yes No Unsure

Based on a review of the PAT and Diploma exam participation rates and the school student evaluation policy and verified by the principal interview:

- The school had a 98% to 99% participation rate in PATs in 2008.
- The school’s participation rate in “academic stream” diploma exams is roughly twice the provincial average.
- 100% of parents interviewed and 88.8% surveyed were satisfied with the information they receive about their child’s progress at school.

III. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

Westmount Charter School has been growing and developing in a variety of locations and under two names since 1996. Over that time the school has been characterized by its commitment to meeting the needs of students whose learning needs and characteristics may be more difficult to accommodate in fully heterogeneous classes, and for whom the development of their full potential may have remained elusive. The school community spoke clearly about a shared vision and of its faith in the leadership of the current administration.

However, things are not perfect. Reservations about the facility and its co-occupancy with a learning centre for adults and older teens were expressed strongly, and throughout the history of the school the adequacy of its facilities has been in question. Student safety, specifically the protection of younger students from outsiders and from what some perceive as poor role modeling from adult students are a concern for many. A small number of parents expressed dissatisfaction on a number of questions in the survey and in comments and e-mails to the evaluation team. Some parents expressed disagreement with Alberta Education policy toward charter schools.

Despite these limitations, however, there is no doubt that Westmount is perceived by a large majority of its stakeholders as effective, caring, committed and innovative, and it is highly regarded by students and parents.

Based on the findings and evidence obtained throughout the evaluation process, Westmount Charter School meets the evaluation criteria on the seven essential questions of a Charter School Evaluation. The specific conclusions are as follows:

1. Are the provincial requirements being met?

Yes

Based on the findings and evidence, Westmount Charter School meets the provincial requirements of the *Charter Schools Regulation* and the *School Act*. The school follows the Alberta *Programs of Study* and provides more than the minimum required amount of instructional time and students participate in provincial assessments. The school complies with Alberta Education planning, reporting and funding requirements in providing complete and timely information, and is almost completely compliant with the Class Size Initiative guidelines.

2. Does the school meet the terms and conditions of its Charter?

Yes

The Charter goals and requirements are appropriate and are being addressed in the operation of the school. Prospective students are assessed holistically using a standardized group test of cognitive ability, a variety of inputs from parents and other adults, and observational data from a variety of learning tasks. The school is committed to a definition of giftedness that is wider than purely academic ability and it strives to meet the needs of the students in programs that reflect this broad definition. Teachers are encouraged to model creativity in their approach to teaching and learning, but also to ensure that the Alberta Program of Studies is covered comprehensively.

3. Do the students, parents, teachers and community members see the school as being effective and successful?

Yes

Students, parents and staff see the school as being effective and successful. There is strong stakeholder support for all areas of the school operation including the delivery of the instructional program. The school's approach to flexible arrangements that allow students to be taught at their own level of instruction and the metacognitive approach to learning enshrined in the Personal Education Plans are seen as appropriate and valued strategies. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Parents appreciate the hard work and commitment of the staff and administration, including the comprehensive reporting to parents on the progress their child is making at school and the accessibility of staff through e-mails and personal contact. The staff, administration team and the board have strong working relationships underpinned by a common mission and vision. Student survey results show high satisfaction with the overall quality of the education they receive at school.

4. Is the school financially viable?

Yes

Based on a review of financial information and interviews with appropriate stakeholders, Westmount Charter School is in a healthy and viable financial position and is able to support its core programming as well as the enrichment that is provided through its emphasis upon social responsibility and discourse. Long-term commitments are few and are more than compensated for by reserves. Student transportation is operated on a cost-recovery basis. The school has an accumulated and an operating surplus. It is fully compliant with all reporting and auditing requirements.

5. Are innovative approaches to student learning and other charter innovations being used, effective and shared?

Yes

The primary purpose of the school is to provide differentiated educational programming that meets the needs of students who meet the criteria of giftedness based upon the theory of multiple intelligences. Learning experiences observed attested to **individualization** through choice in content, process and product; **enrichment** through opportunities to explore more complex content, to engage in critical and creative thinking, and to apply learning across disciplines and across the various grade levels; **acceleration** strategies included Advanced Placement opportunities, and the adjustment of learning time to accommodate those who demonstrated excellent performance in a shorter period of time: for example, math in middle to junior high grades. Staff are keen to share their experiences and insights and do so through partnerships and research projects with the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary and the Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education. The school hosts a large number of visitors and encourages professional collaboration with teachers from a variety of jurisdictions.

6. Is the school being governed effectively?

Yes

The school is being effectively governed by a qualified and committed Board of Directors with the support and cooperation of the administration team, staff and parents. The board enjoys support from all stakeholders and demonstrates a future focus of continuous improvement while remaining true to the critical elements of the Charter. The school's gradual expansion into Division Three and Four, the adaptation of its instruction to the needs of the older students, its commitment to professional growth of staff and its revision of policy are all testaments to a strategic approach to planning. The only area of significant dissatisfaction on the part of stakeholders, the facility, has been the subject of exhaustive planning, collaboration and advocacy over the years, and any dissatisfaction that exists is for reasons beyond the control of the board.

7. Is the school being administered effectively?

Yes

The school is being effectively administered by a focused, visionary and committed administrative team including the superintendent, principal, vice-principals and secretary-treasurer. The principal has provided strong leadership in the area of professional development for staff to pursue their own specialization within the context of gifted education. Administration has put in place an exemplary orientation for new staff complemented by the mentorship of a more experienced colleague. This program is supported financially to allow new teachers to visit other classes and to be observed in their own practice. School routines, lines of communication, shared responsibilities for non-instructional duties, collaborative decision-making and a sense of common purpose are all well established in the school. Administration expenses fall within the enveloped requirements.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIRED CHANGES

Commendations

The school is to be commended for:

- Enthusiasm and commitment of teachers as they create a learning environment that is sensitive to the academic, social and emotional needs of their students.
- The inclusion of students who have special needs beyond those associated with giftedness, such as those who have learning disabilities or who are emotionally fragile. The staff demonstrate care for these students and work extensively to accommodate their needs and to encourage them to develop their full potential.
- Commitment on the part of teachers to ongoing enhancement of their expertise in the field of education for gifted learners. This commitment is supported by the school through the addition of a salary enhancement for teachers who earn a credential in gifted education.
- Numerous opportunities for professional development are made available to staff. They have participated in in-servicing at the international level as well as the local level. In addition, staff are involved in Communities of Practice within the school. Effort is dedicated to topics specifically related to practices at the school, for example the recent emphasis on math instruction at the junior high and high school level and meeting the social and emotional needs of the gifted population.
- The supports to new teachers and their inculcation into the charter, the vision and the mission of the school. These include the two day orientation in August and the on-going guidance of a mentor teacher.
- Recognition by teachers that parents play a vital role as partners in their child's education.
- The school atmosphere that is positive, informal and relaxed, and characterized by a high level of cooperation among the students.
- A large majority of students, parents and teachers are very satisfied with the programming offered at the school.
- The model of Multiple Intelligences is put into practice effectively.
- Curriculum letters to parents keep them informed of the learning that is anticipated for the term and, in several cases, provide a course outline with expectations for assignments and readings to be covered for each topic of instruction.
- Rubrics are developed and employed effectively for marking. Students are aware of the rubrics and there is evidence of their use by staff and students.
- Innovative instructional techniques were in evidence in every class.
- Discussions regarding instructional techniques included information about compacting curriculum, accelerating instruction, enriching curriculum and use of evaluation to guide instructional planning.
- The results of the PATs, the Diploma Exams, and other measures conducted at the school level, are employed to plan improvements in instruction.
- The school takes pride in offering service to students with severe special education needs.
- Confidence was expressed in the board and administration for the manner in which decisions were made regarding the operation of the school, and for a highly collaborative model that encourages staff input.

Recommendations for Consideration

- The definition of giftedness included in the charter could be revised to reflect more accurately the "multiple intelligences" approach that the school has adopted in applying the definition. The definition used by Alberta Education in its current documents may be worthy of consideration.

- Include reference in the “Student Assessment” section of the charter to peer assessment and/or self-assessment. These practices were observed and can be valuable learning strategies.
- Balance discovery learning with direct instruction targeted at specific learner outcomes that are not covered during the discovery learning activities. This would ensure that the whole Program of Studies is taught. While the discovery learning model provides excellent stimulation and challenges the gifted population to think critically, it does not necessarily ensure that all of the basic outcomes of the curriculum are met. The practices of acceleration and compacting of curriculum are effective as long as the basic components of the curriculum are covered and students are exposed to all essential outcomes of each course.
- Extend tutorials and strategy development for test taking including teaching relaxation techniques, building resilience for managing stress and instructing students in methods for writing different types of exams. Test anxiety was often cited as a reason for reduced performance on provincial exams.
- Ensure a consistent process for documenting student achievement and informing students of their marks. While some teachers demonstrated a structured process for marking assignments and recording and reporting achievement, this did not appear to be consistent across all classes. Lack of access to their current marks in a course was cited as a concern by students.
- Examine the tenets underlying student assessment practices so that final marks reflect students’ abilities to demonstrate mastery of the specific learner outcomes of the Program of Studies. Marks that reflect reliability, effort, work habits and other self-management skills should be reported separately if the final summative assessment is a blend of these factors.
- Delete item 6(c) on page four of the charter as it repeats item 6(b).

Required Changes:

- Develop Individual Program Plans (IPPs) that contain all of the essential elements as outlined in the *Standards for Special Education Amended June 2004* for students identified to Alberta Education with the Special Education Code of 80 (Gifted and Talented). The Personal Education Plans developed for each student can be useful goal setting tools, but they do not meet the standards of Alberta Education for IPPs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Westmount Charter School Evaluation Indicators and Evidence

Evaluators: Stuart Adams, Marliss Meyer, Jim McClellan, John Blevins, Lillian Tickles, Steve Makowski

Dates: November 17 – 21, 2008

Are provincial requirements being met?			
YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
1. The Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i> are being followed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers have current programs of study. ○ Teacher long-range plans are based upon the Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i>. ○ Daily planning. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom visitations. ○ Long-range plans. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom observations, teacher interviews and interviews with the principal and superintendent confirmed the Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i> are being followed. ● 100 % of classroom teachers observed during classroom visitations and post-visitiation debriefing and 100% of the teachers interviewed had completed long-range plans that are based on the Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i>. ● 100% of classroom teachers observed and interviewed had access to a current copy of the Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i>. ● 100% of classroom teachers observed had unit plans and day plans that relate to the relevant Alberta <i>Programs of Study</i>.
2. Students participate in provincial achievement and diploma exams.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participation rates are appropriate and show improvement, if warranted. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Student Evaluation Policy</i>. ○ Alberta Education multi-year Provincial Achievement Test (students writing and cohort) and Diploma Examination reports. ○ AERR. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An average of 98.2% 97.8% 98.8% of students participated in the Grades 3, 6 and 9 PATs respectively, over the last five years. ● Participation confirmed by review of multiyear PAT reports.
3. Required provincial documents are completed and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dates of submission correspond to deadlines. ○ Documents require minimal revision based upon manager feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A review of the submission dates for the 3YEPs, AERRs, BRFs and AFS's for the last 2 operating years indicates timely completion of the required

submitted on time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documents including BRF, AERR, 3YEP and APAR. ○ Superintendent interview. 	documents; also confirmed by interviews with the superintendent & secretary-treasurer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The <i>Charter School 3YEP Summary and Review Template</i> completed by Alberta Education indicates compliance. ● At the time of the evaluation, the preparation of the AERR (2007/2008) was ongoing to be completed prior to the November 30, 2008 deadline.
4. Fees and School Generated Funds (SGFs) are appropriate and explained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fee schedules contain appropriate fees. ○ Accounting for school fees and SGFs is consistent with department requirements. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board budget documents and motion approving fees. ○ Principal interview. ○ Parent interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Secretary-treasurer interview. ○ Website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal interview confirmed the following current fees: Students are charged an instructional fee of \$250 for elementary students (Grades 1 – 5) and \$255 for students in Grades 6 to 8 and \$285 for students in Grades 9 – 12. Other fees include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transportation user fee: up to \$750 /year. ○ Art, choir, communications technology, drama, outdoor education, foods, sports medicine, physical education, Project Earth, Renaissance Project fees from \$25 to \$135. ○ \$75 fee for band camp. ● Parent interviews indicated awareness and acceptability of the fees. ● The fees are outlined on the school web site. ● The <i>AFS (2007/2008)</i> reflects that the net SGF are \$376,000, and revenue from instructional resource fees was \$287,000, which are appropriate.
5. Officials hired by the board (superintendent, secretary-treasurer, principal, teachers) are qualified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent is approved by Alberta Education and has educational expertise. ○ Secretary-treasurer is appointed in accordance with the <i>School Act</i> and has required expertise. ○ Principal and teachers have Alberta teacher certification and required expertise. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministerial approval letter for superintendent appointment. ○ Secretary-treasurer qualifications as identified in resume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of current superintendent appointment approval letter confirmed his qualifications. ● Interviews with superintendent and secretary-treasurer indicated qualifications appropriate for their roles. The superintendent is a retired experienced senior administrator. The secretary-treasurer has some formal training and has extensive experience with managing school finances. The secretary-treasurer is recognized within the charter school community for expertise.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principal and teachers' teaching certificate numbers and resumes. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviews with the principal/vice-principal confirmed that 100% of the teaching staff and the principal have Alberta teaching certification. ● Interviews with superintendent and board members confirmed staff qualifications. 																				
6. Requirements of the <i>Funding Manual for School Authorities</i> for the current school year are met.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transportation, if provided, is consistent with section 1.26. ○ Financial records are audited; AFS and BRF are submitted as required. ○ Insurance and bonds are in place. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transportation policy in policy manual. ○ Management letters provided by Auditor. ○ Insurance policy in effect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation is provided by the school on a user fee basis. The parent survey indicates 80.5% of the parents are satisfied that the students are safe coming to and from school. ● The AFS's & BRFs for the last two operating years were reviewed and are in order. ● The schedule of insurance coverage currently in place was reviewed and indicated appropriate insurance in place. 																				
7. Average class sizes meet Alberta Education guidelines.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Class Size Initiative (CSI) Plan addresses the Alberta Commission on Learning (ACOL) guidelines. ○ Grade K-3 – 17 students ○ Grade 4-6 – 23 students ○ Grade 7-9 – 25 students ○ Grade 10-12 – 27 students ○ Actual class sizes are consistent with targets established in the CSI. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CSI plan submitted to and approved by Alberta Education. ○ AERR class size reporting. ○ Class lists. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Westmount Charter School Class Size Initiative report for 2008/2009 revealed the following: <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>2006/2007</th> <th>2007/2008</th> <th>2008/2009</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>K-3</td> <td>18.0</td> <td>17.3</td> <td>17.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4-6</td> <td>21.1</td> <td>21.1</td> <td>22.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7-9</td> <td>20.2</td> <td>21.2</td> <td>22.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-12</td> <td>21.7</td> <td>19.2</td> <td>21.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school is within the guidelines except for the K-3 classes. ● While the average class size in K-3 is 0.2 above the guideline, the trend is declining. 	Grade	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	K-3	18.0	17.3	17.2	4-6	21.1	21.1	22.5	7-9	20.2	21.2	22.3	10-12	21.7	19.2	21.4
Grade	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009																				
K-3	18.0	17.3	17.2																				
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7-9	20.2	21.2	22.3																				
10-12	21.7	19.2	21.4																				
8. The charter school meets the requirements and recommendations for instructional time.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade 1-9: 950 hours ○ Grade 10-12: 1000 hours ○ High School Subjects: 25 hours per credit. ○ Teacher and student timetables. ○ Recommended subject time allocations in the <i>Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12</i>. <p>Data Sources:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher and student timetables indicate that the school exceeds the recommended number of hours and the recommended subject time allocations. ● Review of current calendar and timetables indicated provision of the following times for grades: ● 1-5: 984.5 instructional hours per year. 																				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School master timetable. ○ Principal interview. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Teacher and student timetables. ○ Subject time allocations per grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6-12: 1,038 instructional hours per year. ● Time allocations exceed provincial requirements.
<p>9. The school's facility is appropriate to the provision of the student programming.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adequate classroom space is available for the number of students housed in the school. ○ Ancillary spaces are adequate (e.g., laboratories and Career and Technology Study facilities). ○ The facility is safe. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School map. ○ Demographic information. ○ Correspondence with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on an examination of the building, and confirmed in interviews with the principal/vice-principals, staff and parents, the present facility is appropriate for the provision of the student programming, but is not optimal. A greater concern is difficulty in securing the building. ● 74.1% of students surveyed were satisfied that the facility meets student needs. Comments from student focus groups suggested that the dissatisfaction was with the ancillary space rather than the instructional. ● Survey results indicate that 75% of staff are dissatisfied that the facility meets student needs and 88.9% of teachers interviewed disagreed that stakeholders perceive that the facility meets student needs. ● Comments from teacher interviews indicated that while they were dissatisfied with specific parts of the facility such as the gym and the library, they believed that a bigger drawback was ensuring student safety and security. ● 49.4% of parents surveyed are dissatisfied and 48% are satisfied that the facility meets student needs. Parents concerns in focus groups centred on the safety of students and sharing the space with adult learners. ● Interviews with administration, parents and board members confirmed that the school does not have adequate space for physical education and will need greater access to science labs in the future. ● Most instructional spaces are adequate. Some are

			<p>not. The library, for example, still retains the smell of an automotive shop and houses noisy ventilation system equipment. The area under the gym has low ceilings, poor lighting and dismal aesthetics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major instructional limitation of the facility is the lack of dedicated science labs for senior high courses. This situation will be exacerbated by the expansion of Advanced Placement science.
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Does the School Meet the Terms and Conditions of its Charter?

YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
10. The specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the Charter are followed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom instruction reflects individual charter school mandate. ○ Reporting to parents reflects individual charter school mandate. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter that outlines pedagogical or instructional techniques for the school. ○ Website. ○ Classroom observations. ○ School information documents. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Parent interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observations, interviews with staff and a review of a sample of student work indicate appropriate activities reflecting charter philosophy and methods. These philosophies and methodologies include: a focus on the interrelatedness of knowledge, inquiry into real problems and issues that have wider societal implications, varying instructional techniques to match the theory of multiple intelligences, a special focus on global issues, the development of a sense of community that focuses on ethical behaviour, scholarship, curiosity, discovery, creativity and active learning by both students and teachers. • Examples of activities that were seen during classroom observations or discussed after the observation that support the philosophy and methodology of the Charter include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letters to parents focus on curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, music, and drama. Instruction starts with the outcomes in mind. ○ A wide variety of student materials including stimulus pictures, story sheets, templates, work wall, word building materials. ○ Rubrics for critical thinking and a course outline to summarize each unit for the students ○ Goals for students to work towards posted in the

			<p>room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quizzes, assignments and exams are created around the outcomes of the curriculum. ○ Used Smart board, video clips, interactive questioning, hands on work, power point, demonstrations. ○ Tutorials offered before school, student presentations, interactive instruction, and demonstrations. ○ Use of Bloom’s taxonomy in designing classroom simulations, research projects. ○ Use of varied approaches to reading and writing, working in pairs, movement incorporated into class activities, drawing and art activities to reinforce learning, singing songs to reinforce concepts, interactive learning. ○ Flexibility in classroom management, students working at the board, others using drawings or charts to solve problems, using models to solve problems. ○ Encouragement of student exploration of problem solving methods, creating games to practice concepts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All interviews, classroom observations and debriefing confirmed a methodology/philosophy consistent with the Charter. ● The school website clearly outlines how the characteristics of the Charter are implemented in the school setting. ● 97.6% of staff surveyed interviewed were satisfied that the mandate of the school’s charter is reflected in the teaching and administration of the school. ● 100% of the parents interviewed were very satisfied or satisfied that the specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the Charter are followed. ● 91.8% of parents surveyed and 100% of parents
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			<p>interviewed were satisfied that the staff helped them understand the mandate of the school's educational program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of parents interviewed and 90.6% of parents surveyed indicated satisfaction with receiving regular information on student progress. • 100% of teachers interviewed indicated that they have regular contact with parents. • 98.8% of staff surveyed indicated satisfaction with the overall quality of education provided to students.
11. The Charter is current.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The charter school reviews new research related to its charter goal. ○ Requirements contained in provincial documents (e.g., Charter Schools Handbook) are reflected in the Charter. ○ The school has a plan to review its charter periodically. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter documents. ○ Board member interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Requests for charter school amendments. ○ Board agendas and minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Westmount Charter was renewed in 2006 by the Minister for a five-year period, effective September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2011. • The school maintains descriptive materials for parents on its web site pertaining to the Charter and its interpretation. • Interviews with the superintendent and principal/vice principals and board members confirm that extensive discussions took place to re-define the definition of giftedness in the Charter after the previous evaluation. • A review of board agendas and minutes indicated that the board is currently revising key board policy to ensure the school is effectively governed and the Charter mandate remains current.
12. The measurable outcomes and indicators of success are being evaluated and reported upon.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goals and outcomes contained in AERRs are consistent with the Charter approved by the Minister. ○ Measures appropriate to the Charter are identified in the 3YEP and reported on in the AERR. ○ Superintendent and board evaluation of results are included in the AERR and priority areas of improvement identified. ○ Provincial requirements are met in the AERR and the 3YEP. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AERR and 3YEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed by review of the last two operating years 3YEPs and AERRs, and the Charter School 3YEP Summary and Review Template that 100% of measurable outcomes are being evaluated and reported upon. • These findings were confirmed in the principal/vice-principal and superintendent/secretary-treasurer interviews. • A review of the 3YEP confirmed that Westmount Charter School has a Charter goal with seven

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alberta Education Review Templates for AERR and 3YEP. ○ Website. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<p>outcomes and measures and targets directly related to giving every student opportunities to optimize his or her own potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 14 of the 15 Accountability Pillar Achievement results are very high and responses to the survey measures were very supportive of the school's program. 																												
<p>13. Other charter requirements are evident in school operation.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade configurations are consistent with the Charter and appropriate to the facility. ○ Facility enhancements are consistent with the Charter. ○ Timetabling is consistent with the Charter. ○ Staff activities reflect the Charter. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter identifies grade levels to be served; grades are consistent with Charter. ○ Capital Plan. ○ School's annual professional development plan and PGPs identify professional development activities to enhance staff capacity in areas identified in the Charter. ○ Principal interview. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Westmount charter allows for a maximum of 1040 students. This enrolment has been approached gradually. In 2001-2002 the school moved into its current larger facility. This allowed an increase to four classes per grade, while the school continued its annual grade extension. A full grade 12 class was instituted in 2005/2006. <p>Enrolment as of September 30, 2008:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1335 737 1864 932"> <thead> <tr> <th>ECS</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>66</td> <td>74</td> <td>67</td> <td>79</td> <td>90</td> <td>86</td> <td>93</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Gr.</th> <th>7</th> <th>8</th> <th>9</th> <th>10</th> <th>11</th> <th>12</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>101</td> <td>91</td> <td>91</td> <td>81</td> <td>87</td> <td>51</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appropriate school organization was confirmed by interview with the principal. ○ TPGPs appropriate to the Charter were confirmed by the teachers observed and those interviewed. ○ A key focus of the school's latest professional development direction is to address the social-emotional needs of its students. ○ The school had an operating surplus of roughly \$300,000 in 2007/2008, and has an accumulated surplus of around \$1 million. Some of the surplus funds have been dedicated in the past to such facility enhancements as new classroom flooring and painting. 	ECS	1	2	3	4	5	6	66	74	67	79	90	86	93	Gr.	7	8	9	10	11	12		101	91	91	81	87	51
ECS	1	2	3	4	5	6																									
66	74	67	79	90	86	93																									
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	101	91	91	81	87	51																									

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The school is equipped with a generous ratio of computers including some “mobile labs” of laptops, and some Smart Boards. ○ 100% of the parents interviewed indicated approval of the appropriateness of classroom and grade organization. ○ Parent comments indicated support for the flexible grade organization based on student ability. ○ 90.5% of staff surveyed indicated satisfaction that each child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending Westmount.
<p>14. Entrance and enrolment requirements are consistent with the Charter, clear, communicated and open.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy is established, consistent with the Charter requirement, to describes students the school intends to serve. ○ Parent registration information, consistent with the Charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. ○ Registration procedures, consistent with the Charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School information documents about the nature of the charter school and the students the school serves. ○ Charter. ○ Policy on registration of students. ○ Website. ○ Board member interview. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of policy provisions and of admission documentation indicated conformity with charter requirements. ● An information meeting is held for prospective parents and students in February. Prospective students are screened through completion of the CCAT, through a parent questionnaire, a teacher/community leader checklist and through an interactive assessment process where teachers observe their responses in pre-determined learning tasks. ● The school sets minimum requirements or benchmarks as criteria for entrance. The school has chosen not to require an individual psycho-educational assessment as this would be cost-prohibitive for some students. ● The school has developed information that is contained in brochures and posted on the website that outlines the entrance requirements. Parents sign an agreement of understanding as a condition of their child’s enrolment in the school. ● Parent, principal and teacher interviews confirmed that the entrance and enrolment requirements are met. However, some teachers indicated that the area of giftedness is not apparent in their own subject,

			<p>while others suggested that some students who do not meet criteria are accepted if their parents are insistent. They see this as harmful for the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness, clarity and communication of entrance requirements were confirmed by principal, teacher, board member and parent interviews. • 94.5% of parents surveyed were satisfied that the administration helped them understand the mandate of the school's education program, and 91.8% of parents were satisfied that staff did so.
<p>15. The Charter includes improved student learning outcomes to be attained that are, in turn, reflected in education planning and results reporting.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identified list as required by the <i>School Act</i> is included in the Charter and visible in the planning and reporting documents. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter as approved and/or amended with the approval of the Minister. ○ 3YEP. ○ AERR. ○ Board member interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3YEP Review Template indicates that outcomes for student learning are complete. • Methodologies appropriate for providing an enriched educational experience based on empirical research. These include curriculum compacting, cross-curricula projects, flexible skills grouping, extended independent work and tiered assignments. • Setting goals for and measuring progress towards improved learning outcomes were also confirmed by superintendent, board member and parent interviews. • The school's mission clearly articulates the purpose of the school is to meet the learning needs of the students. • 98.8% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of education provided to students at the school. • 90.5% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that each child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending Westmount Charter School. • 97.5% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the overall quality of education provided to the students. • 96.9% of the students are satisfied with the education they are receiving at the school.

<p>16. Student achievement as measured by Provincial Achievement Testing and Diploma Examinations demonstrates an upward trend over time.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student achievement on PATs (cohort and writing) and Diploma Examination results trends upward during the past five years. ○ Student achievement results meet or exceed school and provincial targets. ○ Value-added trend lines are positive for students in Grade 3 to Grade 6 and from Grade 6 to Grade 9. ○ Participation rates are similar to or exceed provincial participation rates. ○ Staff planning includes reference to PAT and Diploma Examination results. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multi-year reports provided by the Learner Assessment Branch. ○ Five-year achievement data provided by Alberta Education. ○ AERR and 3YEP 2005-2008. ○ Staff meeting minutes. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Five-year trends on PATs show high performance with the degree of variability expected from a relatively small sample. ● With the exception of the Grade 9 Math in 2003-2004, Prior Levels of Achievement show that the students have exceeded the projected levels of achievement, and that the trend is increasing. ● The school participation rates exceed the provincial participation rates. <p>● Result for enrolled students:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1333 738 1995 1421"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Grade and Course</th> <th colspan="2">2008</th> <th colspan="2">Prev 3 Yr Avg</th> </tr> <tr> <th>N</th> <th>%</th> <th>N</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Grade 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5">English</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>84</td> <td>95.2</td> <td>87</td> <td>96.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excellence</td> <td>84</td> <td>42.9</td> <td>87</td> <td>37.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5">Mathematics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>84</td> <td>94</td> <td>87</td> <td>97.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excellence</td> <td>84</td> <td>45.2</td> <td>87</td> <td>49.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Grade 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5">English</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>87</td> <td>96.6</td> <td>86</td> <td>96.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excellence</td> <td>87</td> <td>43.7</td> <td>86</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5">Mathematics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>87</td> <td>98.9</td> <td>86</td> <td>97.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excellence</td> <td>87</td> <td>52.9</td> <td>86</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5">Science</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>87</td> <td>96.6</td> <td>86</td> <td>98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excellence</td> <td>87</td> <td>70.1</td> <td>86</td> <td>56.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Grade and Course	2008		Prev 3 Yr Avg		N	%	N	%	Grade 3					English					Acceptable	84	95.2	87	96.6	Excellence	84	42.9	87	37.9	Mathematics					Acceptable	84	94	87	97.7	Excellence	84	45.2	87	49.4	Grade 6					English					Acceptable	87	96.6	86	96.1	Excellence	87	43.7	86	42	Mathematics					Acceptable	87	98.9	86	97.7	Excellence	87	52.9	86	41	Science					Acceptable	87	96.6	86	98	Excellence	87	70.1	86	56.6
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Excellence	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a																																																																																				
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher interviews confirmed that there is a systematic approach to reviewing the PAT results to identify areas of strength and improvement. • 16 of 18 PAT measures (Acceptable Standard/Excellence for nine tests) show an upward logarithmic trend over the last five years of results. • Seven of 12 Diploma measures (Acceptable Standard/Excellence for six exams) show an upward logarithmic trend over the last three years of results. 																																																																																					

Do the students, parents, teachers, and community members see the school as being effective and successful?

YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
17. Students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher, parent, student and board agreement that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. ○ The school has written behavioural standards and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student department was observed to be good during the on-site evaluation. • Students approached the team members to offer help or to initiate conversation. • Classroom observations confirm that teacher/student

		<p>implements these standards on a consistent basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The school communicates standards for student behaviour and the school rules to parents and students. ○ Course outlines provide students with the information about course content, expectations and evaluation methodology. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School and provincial satisfaction survey data and AERR. ○ Parent and student handbooks. ○ Student Evaluation Policy. ○ Course outlines. ○ Teacher interviews. ○ Principal interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<p>interactions are respectful and caring and that students are a community of learners in the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers work with students to develop rubrics to be used to assess projects and students are familiar with using rubrics to assess their work. ● During classroom observations students were seen to be engaged in peer evaluation of their work and in reflective self-evaluation. ● 75.4% of the students and 56.5% of parents indicated satisfaction with safety at school. ● 91.7% of staff are satisfied that the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff. ● Parents and students expressed very high satisfaction with behavioral expectations and implementation of these standards on a consistent basis. ● 85.5% of the students and 89.4% of parents surveyed indicated they are satisfied that the school has rules for the way students are expected to behave. ● 86.9% of the students and 93.2% of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied that they/their children are treated fairly and consistently at school. ● 100% of the parents interviewed indicated satisfaction that the school made the students aware of the school's expectations. ● 100% of interviewed parents indicated that the administration of the school did take action to resolve the concerns of parents. ● 83.3% of the staff surveyed indicated satisfaction with student behavioral expectations. ● 95.1% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides enough information to parents about what their children are expected to learn.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79.3% of staff were very satisfied or satisfied that rules are enforced fairly and consistently. • 100% of the teachers interviewed indicated that students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them. • 92.8% of staff surveyed were very satisfied/satisfied that the school has a positive climate. • 94.1% of the staff surveyed indicated that the administration of the school takes action to resolve the concerns of the parents. • 86% of staff, students and parents believe that students are safe at the school as measured by the Accountability Pillar survey. • Accountability Pillar Results indicate 93.8% satisfaction with the quality of basic education, and 85.3% satisfaction with parental involvement.
18. Regular reporting is provided to parents.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequency of reporting and adequacy of information reported for individual students. ○ Teacher, parent, student and board satisfaction with parental involvement in decisions about their children's education. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student evaluation policy and course outlines. ○ Provincial satisfaction survey results; AERR. ○ IPP information about reporting to parents. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Report cards and Individual Student Profiles for PATs. ○ Students' cumulative records. ○ Parent interview. ○ Staff survey. ○ Student survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting to parents was confirmed by reviewing a sample of student records, individual student profiles for PATs and student report cards. • 100% of parents interviewed and 90.6% of parents surveyed indicated satisfaction with the reporting provided by the school. • 82.2% of students surveyed indicated satisfaction with information about their progress. • 88.8% of parents surveyed were satisfied with receiving enough information about what their child is expected to learn. • 100% of the teachers interviewed were satisfied with the amount and quality of information provided to parents about the child's progress. • 95.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides enough information to parents about their child's progress. • 100% of staff during classroom observation debriefing indicated that they communicate to all

			<p>parents with updates via email either weekly or biweekly and that parents regularly contact staff via email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westmount Charter School schedules three conferences each year to give students the opportunity to share their learning with their parents.
<p>19. Student achievement results are consistent with the Charter goal(s) and targets for student learning.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The charter school uses results to inform subsequent education planning by determining priority areas for improvement and building on areas of strength. 3YEPs and AERRs for the current charter term identify realistic and appropriate targets for student achievement and provide explanations when results do not meet or exceed performance targets. Percentages of teachers, parents and board members surveyed who indicate that their school has improved, stayed the same or declined in the last three years. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3YEP for the term of the Charter. AERRs for the term of the Charter. Superintendent interview. Board member interview. Student survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and principal/vice-principal interviews confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is proud of the results the students have achieved, particularly on PATs. There is a systematic school-wide analysis of PAT results to inform planning; The staff does extensive planning and assessing of results achieved on the learning experiences provided at the school. 93.8% of students surveyed indicated that they are satisfied that they receive enough information about what they are expected to learn. Reporting and analysis of performance measures for the mandate goal(s) are included in the AERR. Reporting of goals, outcomes, priorities, measures and strategies related to the mandate goal(s) are included in the 3YEP. The Accountability Pillar Results show that 81.7% of staff, students and parents indicate the school has shown improvement or stayed the same in the last three years.
<p>20. Parents support the school.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers, parent and student satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, health and physical education. Teacher, parent, student and board satisfaction with the overall quality of education in the charter school. Percentage of students who remain in the charter school after their first year of enrolling in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results from all stakeholders describe satisfaction with the educational opportunities and the quality of education for students. Data from the school show a high retention rate for students moving into the next grade. The only consistent exception is the transition from grade 9 to grade 10.

		<p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provincial and local satisfaction survey data; AERR. ○ Enrolment data. ○ Parent interview. ○ Principal interview. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 94.1% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school administration takes action to resolve the concerns of parents. ● Teachers interviewed communicated that parents are very satisfied with the school. ● 91.3% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the overall quality of education their child is receiving as indicated on the Accountability Pillar survey. ● 79.3% of parents surveyed for the Accountability Pillar were satisfied that students had the opportunity to experience a broad program of studies. ● 82.1% of parents surveyed were satisfied that administration appropriately acts on parent concerns. ● Those parents interviewed indicated that parents are satisfied with the high quality of education, are willing to comply with an expectation that each volunteers ten hours per year, and that administration and teachers are open to parent suggestions. They indicated a desire for more second language courses. ● During interviews teaching staff indicated that parents are very supportive of the school and that parents are always available to support special events and field trips.
<p>21. Stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholders are satisfied that the facility is adequate. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board member, parent, staff, student and administration interviews and surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 49.4% of parents interviewed were dissatisfied that the school facility meets student needs. ● 88.9% of teachers interviewed disagreed that stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs. ● 75% of staff surveyed are dissatisfied that the school facility meets student needs. ● Board members interviewed confirmed that the parents do not perceive the facility as meeting

			<p>student needs. There was no unanimity from board members themselves in response to this question. They saw advantages and issues with the current facility, and the most of the issues revolve around sharing the facility with an adult/young adult educational institution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The superintendent confirmed that the facility could meet the long-term student needs if it were able to negotiate the tenancy of a complete wing for the high school program. CBE, however, is unwilling at this time to allow this occupancy. He indicated that the school's relationship with CBE was good and that the CBE maintenance department did a reasonable job of responding to maintenance requests from the school. He was also very sensitive to the perceptions of many parents that the school could not be made 100% safe from intruders. • All stakeholder interviews and direct observation confirmed that more space is needed for physical education programs and that science facilities will need to be expanded in the future.
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Is the school financially viable?

YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
22. The financial position of the school is positive as demonstrated in the AFS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget is balanced. ○ Improvement in accumulated operating surplus over three years. ○ Enrolment trends support the charter school's financial position. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BRF. ○ AFS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school ended the school year 2007/2008 with an accumulated operating surplus of \$981,000; and • The enrolment as of September 30, 2008 was 1,057 children and students, with an FTE count of 1,024.

<p>23. Expenditures for the current year are consistent with budgeted amounts.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Variances between budget and expenditures are reasonable (over the last three years). <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BRF. ○ AFS. ○ Chart of accounts. ○ Secretary-treasurer interview. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The variances between the budgeted and the actual revenue and expenses are within reasonable range at the time of the on-site evaluation; ● The board and administrative costs are about 5% of the total expenses; ● According to the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer, the fees are comparable to other charter schools. Accounting for school fees and School Generated Funds is consistent with department requirements; and ● Based on the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer, detailed fee schedules are listed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$250 for the elementary school; - \$255 for the junior high school; - \$285 for the high school; - \$25 for drama course, and \$135 for Project Earth; and - \$750 for transportation fees.
<p>24. Long-term commitments are reasonable and minimal.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial commitments do not extend beyond the Charter term (facility, service and employment). <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contracts, leases, Minister's letter of approval for the Charter and term of the Charter. ○ Superintendent and secretary-treasurer interview. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school has no long-term commitments beyond the Charter mandate; and ● Other than photocopier leases, and service and employment, no other long-term commitments were indicated.
<p>25. Financial processes and documents comply with provincial requirements.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback on AFS and BRF over the past three years is available and has been appropriately addressed. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letters from School Finance, if any, documenting where changes are required to ensure compliance. ○ Documented changes as required. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Secretary-treasurer interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The AFS and BRF were submitted in a timely manner; ● Both the AFS and BRF were complete and fully compliant.
<p>26. Recommendations, if any, made in the</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management letters are addressed appropriately. ○ Actions are documented addressing any requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of AFS 2007/2008 indicated that there were no issues with the school's internal control system,

auditor's management letter are successfully addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirements are reflected in practice. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management letters provided by the Board auditor for the past three years. ○ Documented changes that address issues identified in the management letters. ○ Secretary-treasurer interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and no recommendations for the school financial processes and procedures. ● The superintendent and secretary-treasurer interview indicated that auditor's management letters have been addressed appropriately, actions were documented addressing any requirements, and requirements were reflected in practice.
27. Charter school budget information is shared with school stakeholder groups and is available for public review.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget information in the 3YEP and AERR meets provincial planning requirements. ○ Information is provided as to how and where budget information can be accessed. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Website. ○ 3YEP and AERR. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Principal interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Board member interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of budget information was confirmed by superintendent, board member, teacher and parent interviews. ● The board holds an annual general meeting to share budget information. Board minutes are available posted on the school's website and upon request. ● 77.8% of teachers interviewed indicated that the financial information was readily available. 16.7% don't know. ● 100% of parents interviewed agreed that budget information is readily available. ● Budget information in Three-Year Education Plan and AERR meets provincial planning requirements.
28. Enrolment in the charter school is adequate and in accordance with the <i>Charter Schools Regulation</i> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum 100 students or number approved by the Minister. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ September 30 enrolment figures supplied to Alberta Education. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total FTE enrolment (ECS counted as half FTE) was 846, 923, and 956 for the 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school year respectively. ● The enrolment change has showed an upward trend for the charter school.
29. Appropriate insurance is maintained for loss due to fire, theft, or flood and to cover liability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy in place protects the Charter board for potential losses. ○ Charter board is named as a co-insured when a building is leased. ○ Records are safely maintained, including back up. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insurance policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on the interview with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer: ● The school has a comprehensive schedule of insurance coverage in place, including property, liability, bond and crime, student accident and umbrella liability).
30. Board budget planning reflects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent can identify board priorities in budget. ○ Resources are available to support board financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board budget planning reflects board priorities; ● Resources are available to support board financial

board priorities	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<p>priorities.</p> <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget document, BRF. ○ Board minutes. ○ Board member interview. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<p>priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For the annual budget process, the board uses its own surveys of staff, students, alumni and parents to help determine the program focus. Funds are then directed in the Budget to support the priorities.
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Are innovative practices and approaches to student learning and other charter innovations being used, effective and shared?

YES	Please check	Indicators and Data Sources	Evidence
31. Educational innovations outlined in the Charter are evident in practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom instruction demonstrates strategies related to charter school innovations. ○ Reporting to parents reflects student success in areas relating to charter school innovations. ○ AERR contains results obtained from measures pertaining to charter school innovations. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter to determine educational innovations offered in the charter school. ○ Measures identified in 3YEP to determine results for expected outcomes of the innovations. ○ AERR. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Board member interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom observations confirmed that the principles and beliefs of the Westmount Charter School were evident in all classrooms observed. Specific examples of innovations included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mobile to display student work, choice of assignments, discussion groups created by applying multiple intelligences preference, advanced reading materials ○ Expectations are high, students are expected to achieve higher than usual, humor is used to relax and stimulate students ○ Student presentations and drama activities reflect project choice, student problem solving and critical thinking ○ Assignments are varied: use of three dimensional models ○ Used Smart board, video clips, interactive questioning, hands-on work, power point, and demonstrations. ○ Using Bloom’s taxonomy, developed classroom simulations, research projects, rubrics and applied them to reflect multiple intelligences. ○ Uses varied approaches to reading and writing, working in pairs, movement incorporated the class activities, drawing and art activities to reinforce learning, singing songs to reinforce concepts, interactive learning ○ Flexibility in management, students working at

			<p>the chalkboard, others using drawings or charts to solve problems, using models to solve problems, encourages student exploration of problem solving methods, creating games to practice concepts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AERR reports on outcomes that are derived from the Charter: growth in multiple intelligences, thinking critically and creatively to solve problems and conduct research, understanding the interrelatedness of knowledge, independent learning, knowledge and acceptance of self and understanding, acceptance of and appreciation of others.
<p>32. Staff have opportunities for in-service related to the Charter and individual growth plans.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-service is offered in areas related to charter goals. ○ Alignment exists among the Charter, the 3YEP, the charter school professional development plan and staff PGPs. ○ Percentage of teachers who agree that in-services received from the charter school have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effectively addressed professional development needs; and – Contributed significantly to on-going professional development. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional development plan for the school. ○ 3YEP that highlights in-service and professional development priorities for the year. ○ Individual teacher PGPs. ○ Principal interview. ○ Provincial satisfaction survey data. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of the teachers interviewed expressed satisfaction with opportunities provided for in-service related to individual growth plans and professional development related to the Charter mandate. • Teachers and the principal referred to the model of sending staff to in-service opportunities and having them share the knowledge or expertise with the rest of the staff. • The school has established Communities of Practice that allow staff to focus their professional activities. • A staff mentorship program for new teachers allows for coaching by experienced colleagues and visits to classrooms enabled through sub time. • 100% of teachers interviewed confirmed that each teacher can recover the costs for professional development related to his/her professional growth plan. • 100% of the teachers completed and filed a professional growth plan with the principal. • Principal confirmed that administrative discussions and written feedback related to the professional growth was provided for 100% of the teachers.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of PGPs indicated that plans addressed individual professional goals and most were related to professional development priorities for the school. • 71.6% satisfaction with “In-service Jurisdiction Needs” as reported in Accountability Pillar results. This result is a little lower than might be expected from the teacher interviews. • 63% of teachers are satisfied that in-house PD activities have had a positive influence on their teaching practice, according to the school’s internal survey.
<p>33. The school shares effective practices related to its charter mandate.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication plan for sharing innovations, results achieved and lessons learned. ○ Tracking of activities by which innovations/effective practices are shared with the education community. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications plan and school website. ○ Journals and publications. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Principal interview. ○ Teacher secondments. ○ Board member interview. ○ Presentations at conferences. ○ School visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the AERR reveals an extensive history of sharing effective practices with educational partners and the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact with local and national media outlets seeking information about educational options for students. ○ Westmount is involved in gifted education organizations and this networking helps to share Westmount’s innovations. ○ Two of Westmount’s administrators serve as President and Secretary of the Gifted and Talented Education Council of the Alberta Teachers’ Association. ○ Westmount has a presence within the executive of the Action for Bright Children (Calgary) Society, and has a partnership with the GATE Parents’ Association. ○ The Charter Board sends representatives to the annual conference of the National Conference of Gifted Children, held each November in the United States. ○ Since January of 2007 a Communications Coordinator has the responsibility to communicate the school’s successes and

			<p>innovations with the broader community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership between the school and the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary has been productive and mutually beneficial in disseminating information about the school's innovations. A number of the non-parent board members are connected to the Centre.
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Is the school being governed effectively?

YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
34. The Charter board adheres to the by-laws of the society or company operating the school.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy manual reflects the by-laws. Board minutes reflect adherence to by-laws. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy manual. Society by-laws as approved. Board minutes. Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of society by-laws, policies and board meeting minutes indicated board adherence to by-laws. Adherence to by-laws was also confirmed by board member interviews. Review of board agenda packages and minutes indicated that appropriate business was conducted in compliance with the <i>School Act</i>. Observation of a board meeting on November 17, 2008 indicated appropriate use of procedure for the meeting. Compliance with legislative and procedural requirements was confirmed by board member interviews. The board continues to have strong parental and community-based membership.

<p>35. Communication among the Charter board, superintendent and staff is effective, efficient and in the best of interests of the school.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Satisfaction of staff, superintendent and board members that communication is efficient and in the best interests of the school. ○ Board minutes reflect positive communication. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local survey conducted during evaluation. ○ AERR. ○ Board minutes. ○ Communications plan. ○ Board member interview. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 66.5% of the parents surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the board. ● 31% of the parents surveyed were unsure of the board's performance. ● 100% of the board members interviewed indicated an excellent working relationship with the superintendent, school administration and the staff. ● 92.9% of staff surveyed were satisfied that teaching staff and administration at the school work together well. ● 88.1% of the staff surveyed were satisfied with the opportunity for input into the decision making process. ● 66.7% of teachers interviewed and the principal interview acknowledged that communication among the Charter board, superintendent and staff is effective, efficient and in the best interests of the school. ● Board members interviewed indicated that staff present reports at board meetings, that board members are welcome to attend staff meetings, and that there are at least two events each year attended by the board and the staff. A board member when interviewed expressed a desire for more face-to-face opportunities with teachers. ● The principal provides a principal's report to the board at every board meeting. ● The principal provides regular reports to the school council at each meeting. ● The board has developed a communication plan and has approved the position of communication coordinator.
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<p>36. The school council is active, involved and aware of its responsibilities.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documents relating to the establishment and operation of the school council are consistent with the <i>School Council Regulation</i>. ○ The school council supports the Charter board. ○ The school council successfully addresses activities it has chosen to undertake. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School council documents. ○ School council minutes. ○ School council plan of activities. ○ Communication by the school council with the community. ○ Interviews with/surveys of parents. ○ Interview with school council chair. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stakeholders interviewed reported that the school council is an active and dedicated group of parents. ● School council activity and involvement were confirmed by review of school council minutes. ● Parent, school council chair and principal/vice-principal interviews confirmed that the school council is active, involved and aware of its responsibilities.
<p>37. The corporate body is in good standing in accordance with the <i>Societies Act</i> or the <i>Companies Act</i>.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Registry indicates the Society or Company is in good standing. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alberta Education corporate search. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of Corporate Registry documents indicated confirmation of current filing by the Society.
<p>38. Members of the Charter board take advantage of opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in charter school governance.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter board members attend board meetings regularly. ○ Charter board members attend and report back to the Charter board on activities related to improving their knowledge and skills. ○ Percentage of charter board members who attend at least one professional development activity per year to enhance capacity as a board member. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board minutes to determine attendance. ○ Board minutes containing reports of board members on learnings obtained in professional development activities. ○ Board motions approving attendance of board members at professional development activities. ○ Board member interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Superintendent and board member interviews confirmed participation in The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools. ● Superintendent and board member interviews indicated that the board is a capable and committed group of individuals.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent interview. 	
39. The Charter board has developed appropriate by-laws and policies regarding board governance, the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, the Charter board, the principal, the teachers and the school council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel and governance policies are consistent with by-laws and provincial legislation, regulations and policy. ○ Personnel and governance policies are followed. ○ Governance of the charter school is reported to be effective. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bylaws. ○ Policy manual. ○ Superintendent duties (either in policy or in contract) and role of the board chair in contracts. ○ Principal interview. ○ Board member interview. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board has developed a comprehensive policy handbook. ● Review of board policies, confirmed by interviews, indicates that appropriate policies regarding roles/responsibilities of key individuals are in place. ● The superintendent is working with the board on an ongoing basis to ensure that the board policies and activities are directed toward strategic planning rather than day-to-day responsibilities. ● 64.3% of parents surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the board. ● 31% of parents surveyed were unsure of the performance of the board. ● 78.6% of the staff were satisfied with the performance of the board. ● Through direct observation and confirmed in interviews, there was a clear delineation of roles between administrators and board. ● Teachers reported that they were involved in school and board committees. ● Teachers indicate a sense of involvement embedded in the culture of the school.
40. The Charter board contracts for adequate superintendent service as per the requirements of the <i>School Act</i> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent and charter board report satisfaction with the time that the superintendent has to carry out the functions of the Chief Education Officer and Chief Executive Officer as required by the <i>School Act</i>. ○ Charter board and superintendent express satisfaction with the contracted time for a superintendent. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interview with superintendent and board chair ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The superintendent's contract provides for services on the basis of .6 of a full-time equivalent. While the superintendent expressed satisfaction with this arrangement, comments from some teachers and administrators suggested that he works more than the contracted time. ● Comments from staff and board members were complimentary about the work of the superintendent.
41. Recommendations of past reviews and evaluations have been	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommendations and required changes identified in action plans from past evaluations have been addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was confirmed in the superintendent and board member interviews and from direct observations that all nine of the recommendations from the April,

successfully addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior evaluation reports. ○ Action plans. ○ 3YEP and AERRs. 	2004 evaluation have been acted upon.
42. The Charter board is committed to achieving the charter school's vision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The vision identified in the Charter is accurately reflected in education planning and results reporting. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vision statement in the Charter. ○ 3YEP. ○ AERR documenting results achieved in realizing the vision. ○ Website. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Principal interview. ○ Board member interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents interviewed recognized the board's commitment. ● Board commitment to achieving the school's vision was confirmed by board member, superintendent and principal interviews. ● The vision and mission statements incorporated into the Charter are evident in the operations of the school. ● 98% of teachers surveyed by the school were satisfied that the Board of Directors had adequately governed the school. ● The school has instituted a survey of alumni to monitor their perception of its effectiveness in achieving the school's vision.
43. Charter board decisions are communicated to the public regularly and in an open manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board motions are identified in the minutes. ○ Those affected by board decisions are aware of those decisions. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board minutes. ○ Communications plan. ○ Interviews with parents and principal. ○ Website. ○ Newsletters. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Superintendent interview. ○ Board member interview. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board member, superintendent and parent interviews confirmed that the board regularly communicates its decisions. Strategies mentioned were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board decisions are communicated by e-mail through circulation of minutes, messages from the superintendent and updates from the communications coordinator. ○ The board minutes, policies, planning and reporting documents are posted on the school website. ● 33% of parents surveyed were unsure of the performance of the Board of Directors. ● 64.5% of staff surveyed were satisfied with the performance of the Board of Directors.
44. The Charter board maintains effective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agreements, donations, joint projects and minutes of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A review of the 3YEP and verified in board member and superintendent interviews, confirmed that the

and appropriate relationships with partners, associations and societies.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	meetings are documented and maintained appropriately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Societies and companies file annual reports with Corporate Registries. ○ Students benefit from the relationship. Data Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documentation. ○ Website ○ Board member interview. ○ Superintendent interview. 	board maintains effective and appropriate relationships with partners, associations and societies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A partial list of such includes the ABC (Calgary Society), the Rotary Club of Calgary West, the University of Calgary, TAAPCS, the Galileo Education Network and GTEC.
Is the school being administered effectively?			
YES	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
45. The charter school focuses on continuous improvement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education plans contain measures to address the unique aspects of the Charter to determine results achieved. ○ The 3YEP and AERR meet all provincial requirements as identified in the <i>Guide to Charter School Planning and Results Reporting</i>. ○ CSI plan was submitted to and approved by Alberta Education. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3YEP and AERRs for the past three years. ○ Website. ○ Education plan and results report review templates provided by Alberta Education liaison manager. ○ CSI plan. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 3YEP and AERR meet all provincial requirements as identified in the <i>Guide to Charter School Planning and Results Reporting</i>. Education plan and results reports reviews indicated that all plans and reports are completed in a timely manner. ● The school has put considerable resources into administrative positions, with four designated vice-principals and a communications coordinator. Each member of this team has specific responsibilities that focus upon continuous improvement of practice. ● 81.7% of respondents on the Accountability Pillar survey expressed satisfaction that the school had improved or stayed the same in the last three years.
46. Staff members are involved in decision-making and program development, implementation and review.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minutes and schedule of staff meetings/groups. ○ Staff satisfaction with staff group working outcomes. ○ Staff involvement in decision-making. Data Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff meeting minutes and yearly schedule. ○ Teacher interview. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 88.1% of staff surveyed were satisfied that they have opportunities for input into school decision-making. ● Comments from teachers interviewed suggested that if anything the school errs on the side of too much staff involvement. ● Staff meetings are held after school on Mondays.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration and 77.8% of the teachers interviewed indicated that they are involved in decision-making about program development, implementation and review and about policy development.
47. Classroom and grade organization are appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility is appropriate to the instructional needs of the grades and programs offered in the school. Class sizes are consistent with provincial guidelines. Instructional groupings reflect student age, programming needs and achievement. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment of grades to particular rooms. Class lists. Class sizes for Divisions I, II, III and IV. Interviews with teachers and principal to determine the rationale for the instructional groupings. Teacher interview. Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class sizes vary greatly over the 12 grade levels and subjects, but overall averages meet or are very close to the guidelines. Groupings in elementary are fluidly arranged so that they will meet the instructional and independent levels of operation shown by students in core subjects. 77.8% of teachers interviewed and 100% of the parents interviewed agreed that classroom and grade organization are appropriate. Comments from teachers who had reservations indicated that these were centred upon the complexity of re-grouping and the imperatives of timetabling restrictions. Parents interviewed are very satisfied with the grade configuration and the class sizes.
48. Safety procedures are in place.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy ensures student and staff safety. Supervision is appropriate to the number of students, the school facility and grounds. Teachers, parents, students and board members agree students are safe at school. Number of fire drills/lock down drills held per year. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy manual. Student and staff handbooks. Supervision schedule. Record of fire drills held. Provincial satisfaction survey and AERR. Crisis manual. Teacher interview. Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety procedures were confirmed by review of school policies. Incidents that occurred two weeks before the evaluation demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of the school's emergency response procedures. There was a heightened awareness of safety issues and procedures on the part of staff, students and parents. Extraordinary measures to ensure student safety had been implemented shortly before the evaluation. Appropriate attention to student safety was confirmed by parent, principal and teacher interviews.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75.4% of students surveyed and 56.5% of parents surveyed were satisfied that students were safe at school and 91.7% of staff surveyed were satisfied that the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff. • 78.3% of the staff surveyed believed that the children are safe on their way to and from school. • 89.8% satisfaction that the school is “Safe and Caring” as reported in the Accountability Pillar Results. • 89.7% of students and 80.5% of parents are satisfied that students are safe on the way to and from school.
49. Student records meet the requirements of the <i>Student Record Regulation</i> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student records are maintained securely. ○ Student records are current. ○ Student records contain required information. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Student Record Regulation</i>. ○ Sample of student records. ○ Principal interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples of student records from each grade level were reviewed to confirm that they are maintained in accordance with the Alberta Education <i>Student Record Regulation</i>. • Some omissions were noted and explained.
50. The school facility meets provincial health, safety and building standards and is suitable for operation as a charter school.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inspection reports from the fire department and health units are recent. ○ School capital plan is complete. ○ Facility leases. <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inspection reports. ○ Facility and capital plans submitted to Alberta Infrastructure. ○ Copies of leases. ○ Parent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building is owned and maintained by the Calgary Board of Education whose responsibility includes health, safety and building standards. • All but one classroom observation confirmed that the instructional space was adequate. • Most parents interviewed indicated that they felt the facility was unsuitable, not because of the instructional deficiencies but because it was difficult to ensure adequate levels of security.
51. School teaching and administrative staff members adhere to the requirements of the <i>Student Evaluation</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charter school supports provincial examinations. ○ Provincial examinations are conducted in a manner consistent with provincial requirements. ○ Participation rates on provincial examinations. ○ Program evaluations are conducted. ○ Parents are satisfied with reporting of student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school had a 98% to 99% participation rate in PATs in 2008. • The school’s participation rate in “academic stream” diploma exams is roughly twice the provincial average. For example English 30-1 at 94.6% vs. 58.9%, and Physics 30 at 50% vs.

<p><i>Regulation and Student Evaluation Policy.</i></p>		<p>achievement.</p> <p>Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alberta Education Multi-year PAT and Diploma Examination reports. ○ School policy on excusing students. ○ Principal interview. ○ Provincial satisfaction survey data. ○ Superintendent interview. 	<p>22.8%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% of parents interviewed and 88.8% surveyed were satisfied with the information they receive about their child's progress at school.
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APPENDIX B: Student Survey Results

Block one classes were given a list of random access codes and teachers were asked to ensure that students had access to a computer to complete the survey during the week of November 17 to 21, 2008. A total of 526 students in Grades 4 to 12 responded.

Findings

- 97.0% of students were very satisfied or satisfied with the education they are receiving at the school.
- 95.6% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that their teacher helps them understand the education program at the school.
- 93.9% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they receive enough information about what they are expected to learn.
- 82.2% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they receive regular information about their progress. 15.1% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 90.8% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they receive the help they need to succeed at school. 7.3% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 88.6% of the students were very satisfied or satisfied that the teaching and administrative staff at the school work well together. 5.1% didn't know.
- 85.4% of the students were very satisfied or satisfied that the school has rules for the way that children should behave. 11.6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 86.9% of the students were very satisfied or satisfied that they are treated fairly and consistently. 12.5% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 75.4% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they feel safe at school. 20.4% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 89.7% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they are safe on the way to and from school. 7.8% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 87.8% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that they have improved their academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school. 6.3% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 5.9% didn't know.
- 74.1% of students were very satisfied or satisfied that the school facility meets student needs. 23.6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Charter School Grade 4-12 Student Survey

How satisfied are you:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1. With the education you are receiving at the school?	54.9	42	1.5	0.6	1
2. That the teachers help you understand the education program at the school?	43	52.6	3	0.8	0.6
3. That you receive enough information about what you are expected to learn?	38.5	55.3	3.6	0.6	1.9
4. That you receive regular information about your progress?	28.4	53.8	13	2.1	2.7
5. That you receive the help you need to succeed at school?	44.6	46.2	6.3	1	1.9
6. That the teaching and administration staff at the school works well together?	43.4	45.1	4.4	1.9	5.1
7. That the school has rules for the way that children should behave?	37.2	48.3	8	3.6	2.9
8. That you are treated fairly and consistently?	36.6	50.3	9.1	3.4	0.6
9. That you are safe at school?	35.2	40.2	14.3	6.1	4.2
10. That you are safe on the way to and from school?	51	38.7	5.3	2.5	2.5
11. That you have improved your academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school?	50.9	37	4.6	1.7	5.9
12. That the school facility meets student needs?	29.7	44.4	14.3	9.3	2.3

Note: totals may not add up to 100% as some students chose not to respond to all items.

Charter School Student Survey – Student Focus Group Comments

34 students from Grades 4 to 12 in six focus groups provided feedback for this evaluation of Westmount Charter School.

How satisfied are you:

1. With the education you are receiving at the school?

- Teachers are positive and take into consideration your learning style and provide educational learning opportunities that meet your needs.
- Teachers provide students with the necessary information, adequate instruction and opportunities for enrichment.
- Teachers make the information interesting.
- Students indicated that they learned something new every day and that they were challenged by their teachers to learn new concepts.
- Students did mention that class sizes seem to be increasing which takes away from the small school setting.
- Teachers focus on lots of subjects and try to make them fun.
- Teachers do not tolerate any fooling around.
- Some middle school students indicated that they felt that the high school did not offer a program that would meet their needs since a number of students have left the school after Grade 9.
- Some students felt that their physical education program needed improvement and that they were doing the same things year after year after year.

2. That the teachers help you understand the education program at the school?

- Students are very satisfied and the teachers at this school have kept me here as well as the small school setting and a feeling of belonging.
- Students indicated that teachers are available to assist them but sometimes they had to wait for that assistance.
- Each teacher provides a course outline which includes teacher expectations.
- Teachers provide guidance to learn and help you to find the answers to questions.
- Some middle school students felt that they only take notes and work on packages of information and this does not meet their learning needs.
- Some middle school students felt that school was boring and not as much fun or they did not have as much variety in learning since they left elementary school.
- Some middle school students indicated that teachers needed to give more explanation of the content of the course and on assignments/projects as well as providing rubrics.

3. That you receive enough information about what you are expected to learn?

- Students were very satisfied and also indicated that teachers went out of their way to provide additional information.
- There are not enough option courses at the senior high level offered by this school.
- Course outlines are detailed and indicate teacher expectations as well as what is to be learned in the course.
- Teachers are very organized and provide review packages to assist in learning.
- Some middle school students felt they were not getting enough information and that they were just being given projects to do without any direction.
- Some middle school students were having trouble moving from a teacher guided elementary approach to a middle school learning on your own approach.

- Some students felt there is too much homework and the direction given for assignments was not clear.
- Some elementary students indicated that they always got rubrics for each assignment.
- Some elementary students indicated that when you are doing science projects teachers always tell us where to get the information.
- Some elementary students indicated they get schedulers to plan their projects.

4. That you receive regular information about your progress?

- Students indicated that sometimes they have to go to the teacher to get the information on their progress that it is not provided on a regular basis.
- Students noted that teachers are very approachable and take the time to show you methods to use to improve your marks.
- Report cards are handed out four times per year.
- Students indicated that they get assignments back sometimes but not on a regular basis.
- Some students indicated that they get regular progress reports.
- Some students indicated that they have asked for updates on marks between reporting periods and have not received any.
- Report cards are very informative; they provide you with your marks in each subject and teachers make comments to help you learn and improve.
- Some middle school students indicated that some of their assignments were marked late and did not make it into the calculations for their report card marks—this they felt was a problem as these omissions lowered their marks.
- Elementary teachers provide feedback to students on a regular basis such as writing comments in journals, providing feedback to students on expectations for the course, etc.

5. That you receive the help you need to succeed at school?

- Students were very satisfied and indicated that there is access to teachers on a regular basis.
- There is a school psychologist if you need assistance.
- Students indicate that they have asked for help and scheduled meetings with teachers but something comes up for the teacher and the meetings are cancelled.
- Some students indicated that they get help from their peers and this leads to success.
- Elementary teachers provide direction for assignments and projects as well as explaining what questions mean.
- A teaching and learning assistant is available to elementary students if they are having difficulties.

6. That the teaching and administration staff at the school works well together?

- They seem to work well together.
- Some students say they have seen arguments between teachers.
- Some middle school students indicated that they felt administration and teachers work well together.
- They also felt that during the lock down administration overreacted to the situation and that there was a lack of communication.

7. That the school has rules for the way that children should behave?

- The rules are good and there are consequences to any actions.
- There are rules but they are not necessarily followed or they are interpreted in different ways or the enforcement of the rules is inconsistent.

- Some students indicated that sometimes the discipline is a little harsh and does not meet the incident.
- Students indicated that the rules are there for your safety.
- The teachers are not patronizing.

8. That you are treated fairly and consistently?

- Students felt that they were treated equally and fairly.
- Teachers are in tune with the students.
- Some students felt that interactions with their peers were not fair or consistent.
- Some students felt that sometimes they felt they were being picked on or being bullied.
- Some students felt that their complaints were not dealt with fairly and any investigations done and punishments were handed out too quickly.
- Some students indicated that there is a lot of bullying (verbal and physical abuse) going on in school that has not been detected by administrators or teachers.
- Verbal abuse is done by girls and physical abuse is done by boys.

9. That you are safe at school?

- Students felt very safe at school.
- Some students indicated that they did not feel as safe with Chinook Learning Services students so close.
- Some students felt safe and they also felt that the Kindergarten to Grade 5 students were more at risk than middle school or high school students.
- Some students feel very safe since certain measures have been put into place such as cameras and more strategically placed guards.
- Some students felt that the new identification cards they were wearing helped them feel safer because they now knew who attended their school since they were wearing the identification.
- Some students were concerned about open doors that can be accessed from outside the school.

10. That you are safe on the way to and from school?

- Students felt that this was not an issue.
- Some students indicated that they get picked up and dropped off by their parents so they feel very safe.
- Some students participate in extra-curricular activities that last for some time after school and that walking to the city bus stop is scary.
- Other students who walk to and from school felt very safe.
- Some students take public transit and felt it was both inconvenient and not safe.
- Some students felt the school needed more buses and that bus stops should be closer to their homes.

11. That you have improved your academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school?

- Students felt that attending this school has made a difference in their achievement.
- Students felt that they were more driven to learn and that there are more opportunities to learn at this school.
- Students felt that the teachers knew them and that they had a personal attachment to the teachers.
- Students also felt that they were less stressed in this environment than they were in a regular public school.
- Teachers make allowances for individual differences and this has helped in improving academic achievement.

- Students indicated that they monitor their PEPs each month.
- Some students felt they had improved but not very much.

12. That the school facility meets student needs?

- Students felt that the facility does meet their needs.
- They encouraged us to look past the physical facility and look at the learning that is happening in the school.
- However students did mention that they would like to see better washrooms, water fountains, cafeteria, changing rooms, parking lot, weight room, student lounge, heating, cooling, lockers, etc.
- Some students felt that the facility could be maintained much better than it is.
- Some students felt that the building was great.

APPENDIX C: Parent Survey Results and Interview Summary

Survey

In November 2008, Alberta Education sent an e-mail invitation to participate in an on-line survey to every family in the school. 342 responses were received, representing a little under half of the households.

Interviews

On November 17-21, 2008, parents were interviewed at the school. A total of 36 parents were interviewed in groups of 4-6 with one individual interview of the School Council Chair.

Findings

- 98.5% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of education that their child is receiving at the school.
- 94.4% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the administration helped them understand the mandate of or reason for the education program at the school.
- 91.8% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the staff helped them understand the mandate of or reason for the education program at the school.
- 88.9% of the parents surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the quantity of information about what their child is expected to learn.
- 90.6% of the parents surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied that they receive regular information about their child's progress.
- 89.4% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that their child receives the help needed to succeed at school.
- 86.5% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the teaching and administration staff work together well.
- 82.1% of the parents surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied that the school administration takes action to resolve concerns of parents.
- 64.6% of parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied and 31% were unsure about the performance of the Board of Directors.
- 89.4% of parents surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied that the school has rules for the way that children should behave.
- 93.2% were very satisfied or satisfied that their child is treated fairly and consistently.
- 56.4% of the parents surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that their child is safe at school and 38.6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 80.5% were very satisfied or satisfied that their child is safe on the way to and from school and 14.8% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 86.8% was very satisfied or satisfied that their child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending the school.
- 48% of parents were very satisfied or satisfied and 49.4% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied that the school facility meets student needs.

Charter School Parent Survey

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
1. With the overall quality of education that your child is receiving at the school?	64.3	34.2	0.9	0.6	0
2. That the administration helped you understand the mandate or reason for the education program at the school?	55.3	39.2	2.3	0.9	2.3
3. That the staff helped you understand the mandate or reason for the education program at the school?	49.6	42.2	4.1	0.9	3.2
4. That you receive enough information about what your child is expected to learn?	47.2	41.6	8.8	1.8	0.6
5. That you receive regular information about your child's progress?	38.6	52	6.7	2	0.6
6. That your child receives the help needed to succeed at school?	43.7	45.7	5.3	2.3	2.9
7. That the teaching and administration staff at the school works well together?	48.7	37.8	2.1	2.1	9.4
8. That the school administration takes appropriate action to resolve the concerns of parents?	41.8	40.3	7.1	4.7	6.2
9. With the performance of the Board of Directors?	19.6	44.9	3.3	1.2	31
10. That the school has rules for the way that children should behave?	42.9	46.5	5.6	1.8	3.2
11. That your child is treated fairly and consistently?	47.8	45.4	3.5	1.8	1.5
12. That your child is safe at school?	16.4	40.1	21.9	16.7	5
13. That your child is safe on the way to and from school?	34.2	46.3	8.3	6.5	4.7
14. That your child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school?	53.2	33.6	5	1.2	7
15. That the school facility meets student needs?	20.2	27.8	26	23.4	2.6

Note: totals may not add up to 100% as some parents chose not to respond to all items.

Charter School Parent Interviews – Parent Focus Group Comments

35 parents in seven focus groups and one individual interview (School Council Chair) provided feedback for this evaluation of Westmount Charter School.

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
Provincial Requirements			
1. Fees and school-generated funds are appropriate and explained.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee schedules contain appropriate fees. • Accounting for school fees and School Generated Funds (SGF) is consistent with department requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not many fees at this school and there is good value for the money spent. • The fee schedules and amounts are fully explained. • High school electives will have higher fees. • School fees are used appropriately and for what they are intended. • School fees are itemized and rational. • The base fee is the same for all parents at all levels (elementary, junior high and senior high).
Conditions of Charter			
2. The specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the Charter is followed.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction reflects individual charter school mandate. • Reporting to parents reflects individual charter school mandate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student's progress is monitored through the PEP (Personalized Education Plan) and regular feedback is given to the parents. • The school uses differentiated instruction. • Teachers provide character building exercises which are helping students move towards developing better interpersonal skills. • Language Arts and Mathematics knowledge and skills of students are evaluated and all students are placed in the appropriate levels according to ability. • The teachers have taken concepts that gifted students are not good at and assisted them to be successful.
3. Other charter requirements are evident in school operation.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade configurations are consistent with the terms of the Charter and appropriate to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school incorporates the use of laptops and smart boards in their instruction and learning. • The school staff modifies or configures their

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
	No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	facility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility enhancements are consistent with the Charter. • Timetabling is consistent with the Charter. • Staff activities reflect the Charter. 	classrooms to enhance the learning environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are concerned that funding is inadequate as compared to what the CBE gets for similar programs. • One parent indicated that this school was a let down with respect to facility compared to the last CBE school her child attended. • Students are grouped for learning according to their abilities and not the grade they are in. • Teachers are very flexible and adaptable when it comes to providing learning opportunities for students. • This school is a community of learners in which older students mentor younger students. • Parents indicated that students feel they belong, they accept each other and there is no peer pressure. • Parents felt that the administration is receptive to the needs of the students. • The compressed curriculum (60%) allows for the enhancement of learning opportunities for students.
4. Entrance and enrolment requirements are consistent with the Charter, clear, communicated and open.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is established, consistent with the Charter requirement, to describe students the school intends to serve. • Parent registration information, consistent with the Charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. • Registration procedures, consistent with the charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. 	Information sessions are conducted each year for parents. The school's web site provides very helpful information for parents. There is clear and open communication between the school and the parents/students with respect to entrance requirements and results of assessments. The results of assessments are fully explained to the parents. Parents are very aware of entrance requirements and feel that they are appropriate.

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
5. Students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher, parent, student and board agreement that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. • The school has written behavioral standards and implements these standards on a consistent basis. • The school communicates standards for student behavior and the school rules to parents and students. • Course outlines provide students with the information about course content, expectations and evaluation methodology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are provided with handbooks that have all types of information including rules, etc. • Students are expected to sign a contract for the proper learning use of computers. • All teachers provide students and parents with their expectations regarding behavior and academic performance. • Consequences are clearly outlined for non-performance. • Parents have regular access to teachers who provide weekly updates on progress if requested. • A letter is sent to the parents at the beginning of the year with information on the rules, etc. and the parents are to sign acknowledging they understand the expectations of the school (teachers and administrators). • The teachers are very sensitive to the needs of gifted children. • Parents feel that there is an open dialogue with staff. • Parents also feel that there is no bullying in the school and if anything of a bullying nature arises the administration deal with the issues quickly. • Students at the elementary level set personal goals for themselves. • The staff has developed behavioral guides for the self-assessment of behaviors by students.
6. Regular reporting is provided to parents.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of reporting and adequacy of information reported for individual students. • Teacher, parent, student and board satisfaction with parental involvement in decisions about their children's education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are provided with written report cards that show both marks and comments. • Some teachers are online and communicate with parents to that student progress is tracked. • Assignments/tests are usually sent home to be signed by parents indicating that they have seen the result. • Teachers are available and accessible on a regular

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
			<p>basis throughout the day (before, during and after school).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school holds parent–teacher interviews three times during the school year. • At the elementary level there are student led conferences with parents and teachers. • Teachers respond to parents emails in no more than one day. • There is always an opportunity for parents to raise issues through the school council—the council has a parent liaison position as a conduit. • The principal has promoted a session once a month called “Mingle with Martha” whereby parents can access the principal.
7. Parents support the school.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers, parent and student satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, health and physical education. • Teacher, parent, student and board satisfaction with the overall quality of education. • Percentage of students who remain in the charter school after their first year of enrolling in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are satisfied with the education their children are receiving. • The quality of education in the school is very high and takes into consideration different learning styles. • Parents would like to see more second language instruction beginning at lower levels. • The administration and teachers are open to parents’ suggestions. • Parents indicated that it is expected they volunteer for at least 10 hours per year—this is no problem for them to fulfill.
8. Stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders are satisfied that the school facility is adequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are concerned that their children should not be in the same facility as second year Grade 12 students and adults. • Parents are concerned that Alberta Education is not supporting newer facilities for charter schools.

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
	Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have concerns about the physical facility such as asbestos, doors, locks, lack of fire suppressant system. • Parents feel that instructional resources are going into resources for the safety of the students. • Some parents felt that the school is doing a great job with the facility they have. • The charter should be extended to 10 years or more.
School is Viable			
9. Charter school budget information is shared with school stakeholder groups and is available for public review.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget information in the Three-Year Education Plan and AERR meets provincial planning requirements. • Information is provided as to how and where budget information can be accessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget information and other financial information are on the school's web site. • Parents are invited to the Annual General Meeting where the financial information is presented.
10. Educational innovations outlined in the Charter are successfully evident.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction incorporates strategies consistent with charter school innovations. • Reporting to parents reflects student success in areas reflecting charter school innovations. • AERR contains results obtained from measures pertaining to charter school innovations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are very innovative in the development of programs that meet the needs of students including such programs as Project Earth, Renaissance Project and the Human Condition to challenge students. • The resource staff provides excellent direction when it comes to developing IPPs. • One parent indicated that she could not get a program for her gifted learning disabled child anywhere else in the city—the accommodations provided are very practical.

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
11. The school council is active, involved and aware of its responsibilities.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents relating to the establishment and operation of the school council are consistent with the <i>School Council Regulation</i>. • The school council supports the Charter board. • The school council successfully addresses activities it has chosen to undertake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school council is very active in the school. • The school council is excellent at providing information for parents. • The school council fundraises for the school.
12. The Charter board is committed to achieving the charter school's vision.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision identified in the Charter is accurately reflected in education planning and results reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents believe the charter board is very committed to the success of the school and meeting the needs of gifted children. • The board members conducted an open forum for parents after the lock down.
13. Charter board decisions are communicated to the charter school community regularly and in an open manner.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board motions are identified in the minutes. • Those affected by board decisions are aware of those decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board has made board minutes available online. • The school newsletter is also available online. • The superintendent sends emails. • The Communications Director constantly sends updates on school events.
14. Classroom and grade organization are appropriate.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility is appropriate to the instructional needs of the grades and programs offered in the school. • Class sizes are consistent with the approved Class Size Initiative Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing students in instructional groups is more effective for meeting the learning needs of students.

Item	Please check	Indicators	Evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional groupings reflect student age, programming needs and achievement. 	
15. Safety procedures are in place.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy ensures student and staff safety. Supervision is appropriate to the number of students, the school facility and grounds. Teachers, parents, students and board members agree that students are safe at school. Number of fire drills/lock down drills held per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Calgary Board of Education should be more responsible for the safety of the facility. Parents believe there are many security and safety challenges in the school. Parents feel the recent lock down drill was very effective. Parents felt that the incident was an opportunity for learning and that students were never at risk.
16. The school facility meets provincial health, safety and building standards and is suitable for operation as a charter school.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection reports from the fire department and health units are recent. School Capital Plan is complete. Facility leases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents feel that the facility is not suitable for the operation of a charter school for several reasons including it is not a safe environment for the development of children. Parents were unsure as to whether or not the building met health, safety and building standards as they are not familiar with this.

APPENDIX D: Staff Survey Results and Teacher Interview Summary

Survey

Staff were sent an e-mail invitation to complete an on-line survey during the course of the on-site portion of the evaluation. The survey was closed on November 28, 2008 with 84 responses received.

Findings

- 98.8% of the staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of education provided to students at the school while 1.2% didn't know.
- 97.6% of the staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the mandate of the school's charter is reflected in the teaching and administration of the school.
- 95.2 of the staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides enough information to parents about what their children are expected to learn while 3.6% were dissatisfied.
- 95.2% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides enough information to parents about their children's progress. 3.6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 92.9% of the staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the teaching and administrative staff work well together. 7.2% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 88.1% of the staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that they have opportunities for input into school decision-making. 9.5 % were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 92.9% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school has a positive climate. 6.0% were dissatisfied.
- 94% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school administration takes action to resolve the concerns of parents.
- 78.6% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the performance of the Board of Directors. 7.2% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 83.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school provides clear expectations for student behaviour. 15.9% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 79.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the rules are enforced fairly and consistently. 18.3% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 91.7% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff. 8.4% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 78.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that children are safe on the way to and from school. 13.3% indicated that they did not know.
- 78.3% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that each child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school. 6.0% didn't know.
- 22.6% of staff surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that the school facility meets student needs. 75% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Charter School Staff Survey

How satisfied are you:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1. With the overall quality of education provided to students at the school?	73.8	25	0	0	1.2
2. That the mandate of the school's Charter is reflected in the teaching and the administration of the school?	54.8	42.9	1.2	0	1.2
3. That the school provides enough information to parents about what their children are expected to learn?	61.4	33.7	3.6	0	1.2
4. That the school provides enough information to parents about their children's progress?	64.3	31	2.4	1.2	1.2
5. That the teaching and administration staff at the school work well together?	38.1	54.8	6	1.2	0
6. That you have opportunities for input into school decision – making?	33.3	54.8	7.1	2.4	2.4
7. That your school has a positive climate?	48.8	44	6	0	1.2
8. That the school administration takes action to resolve the concerns of parents?	54.8	39.3	4.8	0	1.2
9. With the performance of the Board of Directors?	27.4	51.2	4.8	2.4	14.3
10. That the school provides clear expectations for student behaviour?	25	58.3	11.9	3.6	1.2
11. That the rules are enforced fairly and consistently?	13.4	65.9	14.6	3.7	2.4
12. That the school is a safe and caring place for students and staff?	50	41.7	6	2.4	0
13. That children are safe on the way to and from school?	31.3	47	6	2.4	13.3

14. That each child has improved his/her academic achievement as a result of attending the charter school?	51.2	39.3	2.4	1.2	6
15. That the school facility meets student needs?	10.7	11.9	23.8	51.2	2.4

Note: totals may not add up to 100% as some staff chose not to respond to all items.

Charter School Evaluation – Teacher Interview

Westmount Charter School:

Teachers Interviewed: 18

Date: November 17-21, 2008

Item	%	%	%	Suggested Indicators	Evidence
Provincial Requirements	Yes	No	Unsure		
1. The Alberta Programs of Study are being followed.	94.4	0.0	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have current Programs of Study. • Teacher long-range plans are based upon the Alberta Programs of Study. • Daily planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use the Program of Studies as a starting point for planning. Apply philosophy on gifted students. Accelerate - particularly in Math and to a lesser extent in LA where it is done laterally. Compact the Program of Studies, pre-test and compare students' knowledge against the requirements of the program of studies and take out the concepts that are redundant for them. Give students less time when they are able to handle the concepts more quickly. • Pretesting is done for all Program of Studies concepts to plan instruction. Emphasize areas where they are all weak or haven't had a lot of exposure. • Use outcomes for all subjects and have flow charts and criteria checklists.
2. Average class sizes meet Alberta Learning guidelines.	83.3	16.7	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual class sizes consistent with targets established in the CSI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grade K-3 – 17 students – Grade 4-6 – 23 students – Grade 7-9 – 25 students – Grade 10-12 – 27 students 	

3. The charter school meets the requirements and recommendations for instructional time.	100.0	0.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 1-9: 950 hours • Grade 10-12: 1000 hours • High School Subjects: 25 hours per credit. • Teacher and student timetables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is over the minimum.
Conditions of Charter					
4. The specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the Charter is followed.	88.9	0.0	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction reflects individual charter school mandate. • Reporting to parents reflects individual charter school mandate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation is emphasized. Meeting individual needs. There is a lot of accommodation. Whether students are coded for behaviour or anxiety or they are accelerated, addressing individual needs is supported. • Hit multiple intelligences with open ended assignments and problems. Allow for freedom of expression and joyful expression. • Junior great books are an example - pedagogically appropriate in the literature. Compacting, acceleration, enrichment. what is compacted appears as integrated studies - deeper investigations, simulations, open ended studies, project based learning, • The students are gifted, but not necessarily in science. Teachers engage the students; teach by variety of strategies, to ensure that they are excited about what they are learning. Power point, direct teaching, individual and group work, hands on, using the text as a resource, using the internet and the Smart Board. • Teachers use a number of different ways to validate that students are learning, with detailed rubrics so they can see what they are being marked on. With the tests and quizzes, they are not just base knowledge, but also higher thinking questions as well.
5. Other charter requirements are evident in school operation.	88.9	0.0	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff activities reflect the Charter. • Grade levels are consistent with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Gifted partnership is important. Mentorship program is great Paired with 2 language teachers. View classes, cooperative planning. Sub -time provided. 3-4 days. For all new teachers.

				<p>Charter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's annual professional development plan and professional growth plans identify professional development activities to enhance staff capacity in areas identified in the Charter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students come up with questions that other students wouldn't ask. They thirst for knowledge. Teachers have to be solid on their material.
6. Entrance and enrolment requirements are consistent with the Charter, clear, communicated and open.	83.3	0.0	16.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is consistent with the Charter requirement to describe students the school intends to serve. • Parent registration information, consistent with the Charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. • Registration procedures, consistent with the Charter requirement, describes students the school intends to serve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing in grades 1 to 9. In high school there is a portfolio and an interview to go through for admission. The portfolio showcases the skill and showcases extra curricular activities, marks, strengths, weaknesses, volunteerism, the individual. • Anybody who wants to challenge our entrance. If they disagree we have to let them in. There are students who just struggle, but their parents insist. The students isolate themselves when they can't learn as quickly. It does them a disservice. We do a pretty good job at screening.
7. Student achievement as measured by Provincial Achievement Testing and Diploma Examinations demonstrates an upward trend over time.	66.7	11.1	22.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff planning includes reference to PAT and Diploma Examination results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers look for general elevated intelligence: problem solving skills, creativity, group work, work ethic, students can be nominated by a parent. Some students don't seem that gifted, but reading some of the work they have done is proof. It isn't always in math. The students have a lot of strength in writing and verbal skills. • Teachers are all part of the screening process. The students are identified by parents or teachers. Teachers are not inclined to send them away from their schools. Usually it's parents who see their children meeting benchmarks that

					<p>other children aren't meeting. The school took advice from the Centre for Gifted Ed. The school does the CCAT two levels above and have students come back for creative activities to observe in the classroom. Teachers look at how they work in groups, how creative they are. How the children approach the class. We look holistically at the child. Standardized and subjective. Our purpose is not placing them in an environment that will stress the student. Some who are highly motivated to learn will do better than those who are really bright and perfectionist or too laid back. The really bright ones aren't always appropriate. All the teachers are involved in the intake.</p>
School is Successful					
<p>8. Students are made aware of and know the school's expectations of them.</p>	100.0	0.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. • The school has written behavioral standards and implements these standards on a consistent basis. • The school communicates standards for student behavior and the school rules to parents and students. • Course outlines provide students with the information about course content, expectations and evaluation methodology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the year teachers go through the handbook and explain what they are looking for.... knowledge, skills, work habits, understanding, and attitude. They have a four point rating system in each one of those. They describe to the kids what each of those means. Excelling, commendable, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. • Clearly outlined. When kids have problems the school has an SRG meeting with all the student's teachers and the counsellors. • Cover behavioural expectations each semester. Have a study hall for lates. Don't have a school-wide policy on late assignments - most teachers knock off 10%. • Discussions about classroom expectations. What should the classroom expectations be? They come up with rules. In our curriculum letters we tell the parents what we will be doing.

9. Regular reporting is provided to parents.	100.0	0.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of reporting and adequacy of information reported for individual students. • Satisfaction with parental involvement in decisions about their children's education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a couple of methods. in lower grades, students sign back their tests - signed by parents. They knew every single test. High school students were not fine with that. If they are not successful on a test, I e-mail the result to the parent. Students know that. They get results for poor and missed assignments. A monthly update is e-mailed to parents. They know what units we cover and what their child's standing was. We send a class average to some parents. And they get a report card mid and end semester. • Traditional way with 15 minute interviews. Teachers communicate so much by e-mail; it is useful to put a face to a name in an interview. Parents know the teacher so well, they often stop in for a chat. There is a group that does it often. The TA e-mails parents of students with severe special needs every day.
10. Parents support the school.	94.4	5.6	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher, parent and student satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, health and physical education. • Teacher, parent, student and board satisfaction with the overall quality of education in the charter school. • Percentage of students who remain in the charter school after their first year of enrolling in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents have been extremely supportive. Teachers often request interviews if students struggle. Parents are keen to come in at whatever time. They support recommendations I make for students. • They are great about coming on field trips and driving. They are pretty attentive. The parents support the Christmas Band Concert. A lot come to the Remembrance Day ceremony. The parent council is crucial. They help out with the student council. They are a driving force in the school. • Yes, which is surprising because the demographics are people who are generally dissatisfied customers from somewhere else.

11. Stakeholders perceive that the school facility meets student needs.	11.1	88.9	0.0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not think that the stakeholders believe that the facility meets the needs of our students. • The lockdown shows that safety is our priority as well as teaching our students. There is only so much the school can do because it shares the school with Chinook College. • Recently the security issue has been foremost in many parents' minds. One parent kept the child at home after the incident. • The school is short of gym space. Don't have an art room or a science room. Need a building that is more secure and a playground that is not 5 minutes away. • They are not satisfied with the gym facilities and the library facilities. • The security in the whole school is paramount. Not having control of the space is very frustrating.
School is Viable					
12. Charter school budget information is shared with school stakeholder groups and is available for public review.	77.8	5.6	16.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is provided as to how and where budget information can be accessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not something that teachers attend to. The superintendent does e-mail some things out. Greg is outstanding at keeping parents informed.
Innovation is Shared					
13. Educational innovations outlined in the Charter are successful and evident.	100.0	0.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction incorporates strategies consistent with charter school innovations. • Reporting to parents reflects student success in areas reflecting charter school innovations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded in an ongoing process. • Group PEPs are not individualized. • Experimental instruction with research based practice. • Very much so - the kids are building catapults in physics. They have to calculate energy and resistance. It's so motivating to the kids because it is application not just theory. • Mentorship programs -field trips, including international travel. • The Human Conditions class developed here by a couple of teachers. Also teachers went on a field trip to William and

					<p>Mary University. They had field tested programs for elementary instruction. The university has demonstrated a huge increase in achievement after their module has been used in LA in gr. 7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar kind of thing is being done for Social 10 - pre-testing and critical thinking in social studies. • We're enriching the gr 6, 7, 8 program rather than accelerating.
14. Staff have opportunities for in-service related to the Charter and individual growth plans.	100.0	0.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service is offered in areas related to charter goals. • Alignment exists among the Charter, Three Year Education Plan, the Charter School Professional Development Plan, and staff Professional Growth Plans (PGPs). • Teachers agree that in-services received from the charter school have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effectively addressed professional development needs; and ○ Contributed significantly to on-going professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly. Different approaches to PD. It is linked to AISI funding. Very accountable for that. It is targeted at Gifted Education. • A number of teachers look at issues arising for educators of the gifted - one of those things being teacher training. What do they feel the least prepared for? The social/emotional needs are so different for these kids, with all the anxiety. GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder) is directly related to the level of potential that these kids have. Teachers do a lot of group in-service responding to that need. • Teachers went to College of William and Mary and then in-serviced whole staff. • Teachers developed communities of practice and got to decide what PD would look like. Needed to know what is happening in the larger community so are visiting other programs. • The school has PD days when we often have speakers or group meetings to discuss. Have a retreat at the end of August with a focused speaker. • Teachers are given money to take courses outside of school time or have a substitute paid so they can attend during the school day. Have opportunities to observe other schools/classes. Communities of practice focus on a single area such as the literacy committee.

15. The school shares effective practices related to its charter mandate.	83.3	5.6	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan for sharing innovations, results achieved and lessons learned. • Tracking of activities by which innovations/effective practices are shared with the education community. • The school can identify learnings transferable to other schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the school and outside at conferences. Teachers share our practice techniques. The Science dept is looking to publish different units and practices we use within our classrooms. • A number of teachers have presented at the SAGE conference, at our charter school conference and at the science conference. • We are starting to. A few teachers presented at the Sage conference. I share ideas with my children's school. Other teachers collaborate with us. We work with teachers with other schools. There are only 3 Math teachers here so I work with teachers from CBE.
Effective Governance					
16. Communication among the Charter board, superintendent and staff is effective, efficient and in the best of interests of the school.	66.7	16.7	16.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction that communication is efficient and in the best interests of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information needed to be shared with the staff is effective. Teachers have e-mail and often have our superintendent participate at our staff meetings or specific issues meetings. E.g. our Ecuador reps communicate regularly with the board regarding trip planning and changes. • The superintendent is often at staff meetings. Staff are allowed to go to the school council meetings. He sends e-mails updating us with regard to the charter. • Most teachers don't have a clue about the board. They deal with staffing issues and other sensitive issues that are dealt with in camera. • Most people are not aware of the board's workings. The policies are there. If you want the information it is available.
17. The Charter board has developed appropriate by-laws and policies regarding board governance, the roles/responsibilities of the superintendent, the Charter	61.1	5.6	33.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel and governance policies are followed. • Governance of the charter school is reported to be effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I assume so. I don't know much about the board. • It is evolving all the time. It is unique to have a board for one school. They work very hard to make the school effective. • Teachers never have to deal with it. It all just seems to go swimmingly. If we heard about stuff that is going on in the board meeting, I'd be worried. That's their job and they are

board, the principal, the teachers and the school council.					doing it well.
18. Charter board decisions are communicated to the charter school community regularly and in an open manner.	66.7	11.1	22.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those affected by Board decisions are aware of those decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During staff meetings the superintendent tells us about decisions made. Information filters down and there are written documents that people can look at.
Effective Administration					
19. Staff members are involved in decision-making about program development, implementation and review and about policy development.	77.8	5.6	16.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes and schedule of staff meetings/groups. Staff satisfaction with staff group working outcomes. Staff involvement in decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administration is open to ideas of staff who are involved in development of the program, but less so policies. Admin. did ask for feedback about policies such as dress code and lockdown. Teachers are more involved than they want to be. The school has so many committees. Numerous new programs that teachers are developing. When teachers have an idea or a passion that they want to pursue, admin is interested in making sure that it fits the program of studies. Yes - almost to a fault. Administration wants to give staff ownership. Teachers appreciate the opportunity for input, but trust them to make decisions.
20. Classroom and grade organization are appropriate.	77.8	11.1	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility is appropriate to the instructional needs of the grades and programs offered in the school. Instructional groupings reflect student age, programming needs and achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been appropriate for the most part but at times the class sizes and the organization, e.g. 3 different levels within the one class and large class sizes are hard to teach. The scheduling has sometimes driven the curriculum. Are still trying to refine that. Trying to build community and build program. Sometimes the schedule seems paramount. Where is the innovation that teachers want? The staff have a lot of debate about regrouping and how to do it and how standardized our procedures are and how appropriate the groupings are. The school doesn't accelerate by grade, but by subject if there is a need for it. Some of the multi-aging has been reduced.

<p>21. Safety procedures are in place.</p>	<p>88.9</p>	<p>11.1</p>	<p>0.0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision is appropriate to the number of students, the school facility and grounds. • Agreement that students are safe at school. • Number of fire drills/lock down drills held per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a crisis management folder in a bright red package by the door. Severe allergy and anaphylaxis folder. Every communication with parents reminds them to keep this place nut free. Teachers have clear expectations for the kids. Rules are communicated clearly. • It is fine until you have a problem. Then you have to look backwards. Have staff worked to establish a safe environment? Is it possible to completely safeguard our school? Probably not. Admin. are working on it and we have obviously improved in the last month. • The school has always had security people. They monitor the hallways. They interact with students. Now everyone wears ID. Parents are required to sign when they come in to drop off or pick up outside of usual hours. Visitors are required to wear a badge. Teachers are required to ask visitors if they can help them. There are rules about where students from Chinook College can go. Doors are locked at certain hours. Certain doors are open only when students are entering. Then the only door that is open is the front door. Students are always sent out in pairs - never alone. Students are never sent to the office to get something. When we go to another room, we always go as a group
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APPENDIX E: Classroom Observation Summary Westmount Charter School

Evaluators: Jim McClellan, Marliss Meyer, Lillian Tickles

No. of Classrooms: 14

	YES	NO	PARTIAL	Evidence
The Program of Studies is being implemented in the classroom. Question 1.	13		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term and short term teacher plans, curriculum checklist and guides reflected the outcomes of the Alberta Program of Studies. Instructional and planning resources were evident in all but one classroom.
Student work samples indicate that students are achieving the outcomes of the Program of Studies. Question 1.	13		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student work samples consist of student portfolios of writing samples, math essays, project work and other items that demonstrated fidelity with the outcomes of the Alberta Program of Studies.
The class meets the requirements and recommendations for instructional time. Question 8.	14		0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure and time allocations of the timetable are developed by the school administration. The time allocations meet or exceed minimum instruction hours for elementary/junior high and high school.
Instructional strategies are consistent with charter requirements. Question 10.	13		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations of instructional strategies applied in the classroom indicated that teachers encourage self-paced independent learning, creativity, critical thinking and self assessment. Teachers also prompt students to think beyond conventional problem solving and solutions.
Educational innovations outlined in the charter are evident in the classroom. Question 31.	12		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational innovation was evident in the majority of classrooms visited. Innovation was observed in instructional strategies, student learning and classroom displays of learner outcomes.

The specified teaching philosophy and methodology of the charter are followed and instructional strategies are consistent with these. Question 10.	13		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The charter emphasizes and supports the theory of multiple intelligences. Classroom instruction and student learning exemplifies the theory.
Other charter requirements are evident in classroom operation: grade configurations, timetabling, facility enhancements and Professional Growth Plans. * Question 13.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade configurations and timetabling are consistent with charter requirements. Facility enhancements are not evident in most areas of the school. All teachers had developed a Professional Growth Plan that reflected personal learning goals.
The school's facility is appropriate to the provision of student programming. Question 9.	11		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility meets basic requirements for the appropriate provision of student programming..
Regular reporting is provided to parents and students. Question 18.	13		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reporting periods with report cards and frequent on-going contact with parents by e-mail and telephone calls.