WESTMOUNT CHARTER SCHOOL

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS
OPEN HOUSES
SEPTEMBER 16, 2019
WHO ARE WE?

• Publicly Funded
• Elected School Board
• Specific Educational Mandate
• Not connected to CBE except through a rental agreement
ALBERTA’S PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
WESTMOUNT HISTORY

- Opened in 1996
- ABC Charter School (1996 to 2005)
- Renamed in 2005 as Westmount Charter School.
- Initially offered classes for grades 1-3
- Bridgeland (1996-1998)
- Viscount Bennett Centre (2002-2011)
- Separate Campuses as of 2011
  - Mid High – Grades 5-12
  - Elementary – Grades K - 4
Westmount Charter School

**Elementary Campus**
728 32 Street NW
Kindergarten to Grade 4

**Mid-High Campus**
2215 Uxbridge Drive NW
Grade 5 – Grade 12

2019-09-23
Westmount Charter School

At the Elementary Campus, there are 4 Homerooms per Grade.

Kindergarten to Grade 4
~420

Grades 5 – 8: ~460
Grades 9-12: ~420
Approximate Class Sizes

Kindergarten – 19
Grade 1 – 20
Grade 2 – 21
Grade 3 – 22
Grade 4 – 23

Class sizes will vary depending on need.
WHAT ARE SIGNS OF GIFTEDNESS?

In 1988, researchers in the area of giftedness, George Betts and Maureen Neihart, after years of work with and observation of gifted students, developed 6 profiles of gifted students. Their profiles were updated twenty years later in 2008.
Type 1 – The Successful

Achieves at a high level
Accepts & conforms
Extrinsic motivation
Seeks teacher approval
Dependent
Positive self-esteem

Boredom
Anxious
Guilty about failure
Self-critical
Avoids risks
Chooses safe activities
Type 2: The Challenging

Challenges teacher
Questions rules, policies
Stands up for convictions
Is honest and direct
Highly creative
Heightened sensitivity
Perseveres in areas of interest (passions)
Bored & frustrated

Lacks appropriate behavior & social skills
Fluctuating self-esteem
Impatient & defensive
May have mood swings
May have poor self-control
May be in conflict with peers
Uncertain about social roles
More psychologically vulnerable
Type 3: The Underground

Desire to belong socially
Denies talent
Ambivalent about achievement
Feel unsure and pressured
Resists challenges
Not connected to the teacher or the class
Drops out of GT and advanced classes

Moves from one peer group to the next
Diminished sense of self
Unsure of right to their emotions
Internalize and personalize societal ambiguities and conflicts
Seems unsure of direction
Conflicted, guilty & insecure
Type 4: The At-Risk

Resentful & Angry
Poor self-concept
Unaccepted
Depressed
Isolated
Resistive to authority
Explosive
May be self-isolating
May be self-abusive

Does not work for grades
Will work for the relationship
Has intermittent attendance
Pursues outside interest
Criticizes self & others
Produces inconsistent work
Is creative
Type 5: The Twice or Multi-Exceptional

- Slow in performance
- Disorganized
- Unaware
- Appears average or below
- Inconsistent work
- Learned helplessness
- Frustration & anger
- Feelings of inferiority
- Work to hang on

- Makes connections easily
- Good problem solver
- May be disruptive or off-task
- Thinks conceptually
- Enjoys complexity
- Poor academic self-concept
- Don’t see themselves as successful
- Lack of self-confidence
- Unsure of where they belong
Type 6: The Autonomous Learner

Self-confident
Self-accepting
Enthusiastic
Intrinsic motivation
Seeks personal satisfaction
Desire to know & learn
Works independently
Develops own goals

Has appropriate social skills
Accepted by/accepts others
Does not seek external approval
Follows strong areas of passion
Thinks creatively and critically
Stands up for convictions
Willing to fail
Resilient
Most Prevalent Characteristics of Giftedness

Steven M. Nordby © 1997-2002

99.4% learn rapidly
99.4% extensive vocabulary
99.3% excellent memory
99.3% reason well
97.9% curious
96.1% mature for their age at times
95.9% excellent sense of humor
93.8% keen sense of observation
93.5% compassion for others

93.4% vivid imagination
93.4% long attention span
92.9% ability with numbers
90.3% concerned with justice and fairness
89.4% ability with puzzles and Legos
88.4% high energy level
88.3% perfectionistic
85.9% perseverant in their areas of interest
84.1% question authority
80.3% avid readers

These are characteristics. If your child does not display one or more, it doesn’t mean he/she is not gifted.
Early Signs of Giftedness Include:

- Unusual alertness in infancy
- Less need for sleep in infancy
  - Long attention span
  - High activity level
- Smiling or recognizing caretakers early
- Intense reactions to noise, pain, frustration
- Advanced progression through the developmental milestones
- Extraordinary memory
Early Signs of Giftedness Include

- Enjoyment and speed of learning
- Early and extensive language development
  - Fascination with books
  - Curiosity
- Excellent sense of humor
- Abstract reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Vivid imagination (e.g., imaginary companions)
- Sensitivity and compassion
Early Signs of Giftedness Include

Keen powers of observation
Recognition of letters before age 2
Ability to put together a 20-piece puzzle before age 3
Asks complex, probing questions
Early interest in time—clocks, calendars
Vision

Fostering Gifted Education from the Inside Out
Outside In – identified by what they produce and achieve

Inside Out – identified by their innate characteristics
Students are gifted when...

...They demonstrate:

• Outstanding levels of aptitude or competence
  • when compared to those of similar age, experience and environment;

• Asynchronous development
  • Development is different in the physical, emotional and cognitive domains

• Heightened intensity
  • Inner experiences and awareness are not typical and require modified teaching, parenting and counselling.
Mission

To provide gifted students an experience that...

• Supports their needs, abilities and potential
• Provides opportunities for inner development
• Develops genuine relationships
• Is supported by teachers and assistants who are:
  • Empathetic
  • Passionate
  • Creative
  • Ethical
  • Committed to developing lifelong learners
It is **MOST IMPORTANT** to ensure an appropriate alignment between the needs of gifted students and the school’s program.

Westmount Charter School’s primary objective IS NOT high achievement. We value good marks, but our #1 priority is best programming for gifted learners, not high marks.

If high marks is the most important objective for you and your child, please seriously consider this before applying.
Inside Out

Most gifted students think and feel differently from others...
- Heightened awareness
- Sensitivity to surroundings
- Very aware of self and others
- Sometimes out of step with the world

At Westmount, giftedness is not measured by academic achievement.
It is who a child is, not what a child produces.
AWARENESS • CRITICAL THINKING & CREATIVE SOLUTIONS • PRO-SOCIAL INTERACTIONS • ETHICAL CITIZENSHIP

RESILIENCE • CONNECTEDNESS TO, AND IMPACT ON, OTHERS

PERSPECTIVE • SELF-UNDERSTANDING • SELF-REGULATION • SELF-ADVOCACY

AFFECTIVE CURRICULUM • A DEEPER & BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF CURRICULUM • RESEARCH BASED BEST PRACTICES • CONSISTENCY IN THE USE OF LEARNING MODELS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT • MINDFULNESS • HEALTHY LIFESTYLES • BALANCE IN PHYSICAL, NUTRITIONAL & EMOTIONAL WELLNESS • MINDFULNESS

HEALTH & WELLNESS • CONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN HEALTHY BODY & HEALTHY MIND

ENHANCING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PERSONAL & GLOBAL WELL BEING • ENHANCING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE AFFECTIVE & THE COGNITIVE

WESTMOUNT TEACHERS MODEL AND TEACH WHILE RESPECTING THE UNIQUE NEEDS & CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED LEARNERS
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

• Enrichment
• Individualized and personalized programming
• Flexible programming in terms of the pace and level of instruction
• Cross-Grade or Multi-Age Grouping
• Early Entrance
• Course or Grade Advancement
• Independent Study
CLUBS AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- Cup Stacking
- Art Smart
- Chess Club
- Brown Bag Book Club
- Run Club
- Choir
- Drumming
- H!P Kids
- Trivia
- Zentangle
- Drama Club
- Etiquette
- Eco Warriors
- Tinker’s Club
- Mindful Meditators Club
- Theatre Monkeys
TWICE EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Westmount Charter School’s inclusive student population is highly diverse with up to ~10% requiring special education supports. This can include:

- Student Services Specialist Team
- Teaching and Learning Assistants
- Individualized Program Plans
- Assistive Technology
15-20% of Westmount Charter School’s population are English as an Additional Language Learners

Receptive Language Assessment prior to placement

Pull-out and in-class support
Other Programming Considerations

• Music
• PE
• No official second language programming until Mid High
• Zones of Regulation
• Character Counts
L.E.A.D.

LEAD - LEARN, EXPLORE, ACQUIRE & DISCOVER

- Topics above and beyond the curriculum.
- Friday afternoons for 70 minutes
- Multi-aged groupings for K, 1& 2 and 3&4
- Smaller Class Sizes
- Opportunity to Learn in Passion Areas
ASSESSMENT

Student Work Samples
Interview and/or Observational data
Teacher-developed Tests
Competency Rubrics
Standardized Provincial Assessments

Student Progress Reports
Student Portfolios
Student individual Program Plans (IPPs)
Contracts or Independent Study Records
A TYPICAL KINDERGARTEN DAY

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<td>DR PE</td>
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## A TYPICAL GRADE 1-4 DAY

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<td>11:00-11:35</td>
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According to Alberta’s School Act, charter schools do not have to provide transportation. Westmount, however, does provide transportation. Alberta Education pays part of the costs, and parents pay the remainder.

http://www.westmountcharter.com/transportation

Here are the particulars:

• 11 bus routes covering Calgary
  • You may need to get your student to the nearest stop
• Full time riders - $850 per year
• Part time riders - $550 per year
• Must live 2.4 km or more from the school
• Expect bus rides averaging 60 – 75 minutes
• Visit Westmount Charter School Website for specifics
• $100 Non-refundable Registration Deposit
• If offered a space at Westmount, and you accept, this $100 is applied as a credit to 2020-2021 fees.
• Instructional Resource fees for 2020-2021 are as follows:
  • Total additional fee for Kindergarten = $155
  • Total additional fee for Grade 1-2 = $250
  • Total additional fee for Grade 3 = $260
  • Total additional fee for Grade 4 = $256
• This amount is in addition to busing fees.
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

• Program Director: Jillian
• Phone Number: 403-399-6653
• Email: studentcare@westmountcharter.com

Please contact Jillian with any inquires about our before and after school care program.
Westmount School Council is a partner in supporting students achieving full personal potential from the inside-out. We achieve this by:

- Organizing educational sessions for parents.
- Creating opportunities for parents to meet informally with Administration.
- Organizing fun activities that build school community.
- Supporting teachers’ field trip opportunities.
- Providing additional material resources to homerooms.
- Fundraising to enhance our children’s education.

Parents and Guardians of children attending Westmount Charter School are automatically members of School Council. It is vital to support the work of School Council in whatever ways you can.
APPLYING TO WESTMOUNT

2020-2021
STEP 1 – Attend the Open House (Optional)
AGE OF ELIGIBILITY

Children can start kindergarten in the fall of 2020 if they turn 5 years old on or before Dec. 31, 2020.

Applicants who were born after this date must contact the elementary office before their application can move forward.

We MAY accept students who are below this age, but only with supporting documentation from a psychologist.
Step 2 – PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- Complete Intelligence Testing
- Westmount Charter School’s criteria for Gifted and Talented is a Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) score or a General Abilities Index (GAI) score of 130 +/- 5.
- Psychological Assessments must be administered and interpreted by a registered psychologist.
- Tests accepted are: WISC, WPPSI, Stanford Binet.
- Ideally, psychological assessments should have been done within two years of the application.
- Westmount Charter School only requires an Intelligence Test. We do not require an achievement test, such as a WIAT III. A psychologist may recommend a WIAT III, because he/she may think more information about a child is needed; that is between you and the psychologist.
STEP 3 – SUBMIT APPLICATION

Completed applications will be accepted from 9:00 AM September 3, 2019, until 3:00 PM November 29, 2019.

A complete application must include:

- Demographic Overview
- Parent Inventory for Finding Potential (PIP)
- Teacher Inventory of Learning Strengths (TILS)
  - This is optional for Grades 1 to 4.
  - Some teachers may refuse to complete a TILS.
  - It is not applicable to Kindergarten applicants.
- Preliminary Medical Form
STEP 3 – SUBMIT APPLICATION (Continued)

Photocopies of:

- Current psychological assessment (x 2)
- Birth certificate
- Immigration documents (if applicable)
- Immunization records
- * Social/Behavioral assessment (if applicable)
- * An Individual Program Plan (IPP) associated with intensive behavioral intervention funding (PUF) or Severe Disabilities funding. (if applicable)

All applications must be complete. The office staff is not able to provide photocopying.
Step 4 – WAIT TO BE CONTACTED

• You will be contacted by email regarding the status of your child's application by January 16, 2020.

• Be sure to check the email you have provided often as it is the primary way we will keep you updated on the status of your application.

Please do not call the office before this date.
STEP 5 – ATTEND PERFORMANCE TASK EVALUATION for Kindergarten and Grade 1

Performance Task Evaluation will be held at the Elementary Campus on:

January 29, 2020: 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM, or 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
STEP 5 – Kindergarten and Grade 1
ATTEND PERFORMANCE TASK EVALUATION (PTE)

Kindergarten: All qualified applicants are invited to PTE.
Grade 1: We invite 2-3 applicants for each anticipated available spot, EG. 4 anticipated available spots = 8-12 invitations

Those invited to the Performance Task Evaluation:
• Meet Westmount’s criteria for gifted (FSIQ or GAI of 130 +/- 5)
• PIP is in the gifted range
• TILS (optional) is in the gifted range
• Be “…students identified by the assessment process as demonstrating characteristics of giftedness most appropriate to the school’s program.”

Westmount Administrative Procedure 300: 2.2.1
PERFORMANCE TASK EVALUATION

• A group activity that measures applicants’ abilities in small group settings.

• Applicants will be asked to take part in assigned activities.

• Children will be observed by trained and experienced teachers.

• Teachers will provide independent comments and recommendations to the overall assessment of the applicant.
STEP 5: Grades 2, 3 and 4
ATTEND PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Students applying to Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 4 will be invited to an interview with two members of the Intake Committee.

Please note: We invite 2-3 qualified applicants for each anticipated available spot, EG. 4 anticipated available spots = 8-12 invited applicants.

Those invited will:
• meet Westmount’s criteria for gifted (FSIQ or GAI of 130 +/- 5)
• PIP is in the gifted range
• TILS (optional) is in the gifted range
• Be “…students identified by the assessment process as demonstrating characteristics of giftedness most appropriate to the school’s program.”

Westmount Administrative Procedure 300: 2.2.1
STEP 6 – WAIT FOR NOTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT DECISION

Parents/guardians of all applicants will be notified regarding the status of their applications by February 28, 2020.

Please do not call the office to check on the status of your application before this date.

It is very important to note that Westmount Charter School consistently receives more applications than it has spots for. As a result, your child may qualify to attend Westmount, but may be placed on a waiting list, or have his or her application discontinued.
STEP 7 – ACCEPT OFFER OF PLACEMENT

Once parents/guardians have been offered a place, they will have a limited amount of time to accept.

If a placement spot is not accepted by March 12, 2020, the spot will be offered to another applicant.
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 300 – STUDENT SELECTION

• 1.3 Parents are obliged to share all known information respecting the suitability of their children for the school’s program, including any pre-existing and/or diagnosed medical, social-emotional and/or educational need. Failure to disclose such information may lead to disqualification.

• 2.2.1 When the number of students qualifying for admission to the school is greater than the number of available positions, placement will be offered to the students identified by the assessment process as demonstrating characteristics of giftedness most appropriate to the school’s program. Any other qualifying students will be eligible to be placed on a list of qualified candidates.

• Please note: being placed on a list of qualified candidates does not guarantee eventual placement.
What does “most appropriate to the school’s program” mean?

In consideration of all of the following information:

• Results and recommendations of the psychological assessment;
• Parent Inventory of for Finding Potential;
• Teacher Inventory of Learning Strengths (optional) if applicable;
• The Performance Task Evaluation
  o Anecdotal comments and recommendations from observers;
• Other significant factors of student need indicated in the application package at the time of application;

A candidate has demonstrated characteristics that most appropriate to Westmount’s program. It does not mean that your child doesn’t meet our criteria; it means that another child meets our criteria to a greater extent.
Intake Committee placement decisions may be appealed if:
• An error has been made interpreting or recording application information.
• An application has been processed in a way that is not consistent with what was presented at the Open House, what is posted on Westmount’s website or what is stated in Westmount’s Administrative Policy 300

Please note:
• Please note: Correcting an error in interpretation or recording will not necessarily change the Intake Committee’s decision.
• Appeals may not be considered if they are based on information that was not provided at the time of application.
• Westmount will not consider appeals for reasons other than those stated above.
APPEALS of PLACEMENT DECISIONS

• Appeals must be received by email addressed to the principal no later than 4:00 PM on March 14, 2020.

• Email responses to appeals will be sent to parents/guardians no later than 4:00 PM on March 21, 2020.

• Appeals of decisions made by the principal may be made to the Superintendent no later than 4:00 PM on March 31, 2020.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who else in Calgary has gifted programs?
   • Calgary Board of Education has a Gifted and Talented Program (GATE). It starts at Grade 4.
     • [https://cbe.ab.ca/programs/supports-for-students/exceptional-and-special-needs/Pages/Giftedness.aspx](https://cbe.ab.ca/programs/supports-for-students/exceptional-and-special-needs/Pages/Giftedness.aspx)
   • Calgary Catholic School District. Junior High programs.
     • [https://www.cssd.ab.ca/Programs/ProgramSupports/DiverseLearning/DiverseLearningSupports/Documents/Congregated_Gifted_Brochure.pdf](https://www.cssd.ab.ca/Programs/ProgramSupports/DiverseLearning/DiverseLearningSupports/Documents/Congregated_Gifted_Brochure.pdf)

2. How can I be sure my application has been received and considered?
   • You will receive an email once your application has been reviewed. This will ensure we have the right email address for you and will confirm that the application has been read.

3. What is your homework policy?
   • We do not assign homework to be completed at home and returned to school. There are two exceptions:
     • 1) if a student has not made the best use of class time, and;
     • 2) if a student is receiving academic support and would benefit from practising a specific skill.
   • We do encourage all parents to read with their children on a regular basis.
Frequently Asked Questions

4. How many spots will be offered at each grade level?
   • 76 spots in Kindergarten
   • 4-8 spots at Grades 1 – 4
   • Please note: The number of spots offered may vary depending on the complexities classes at each grade.

5. If prospective applicants have questions, please email admissions@westmount.com. The questions and responses may be added to this page.