

Report to School Council

November 25, 2020.



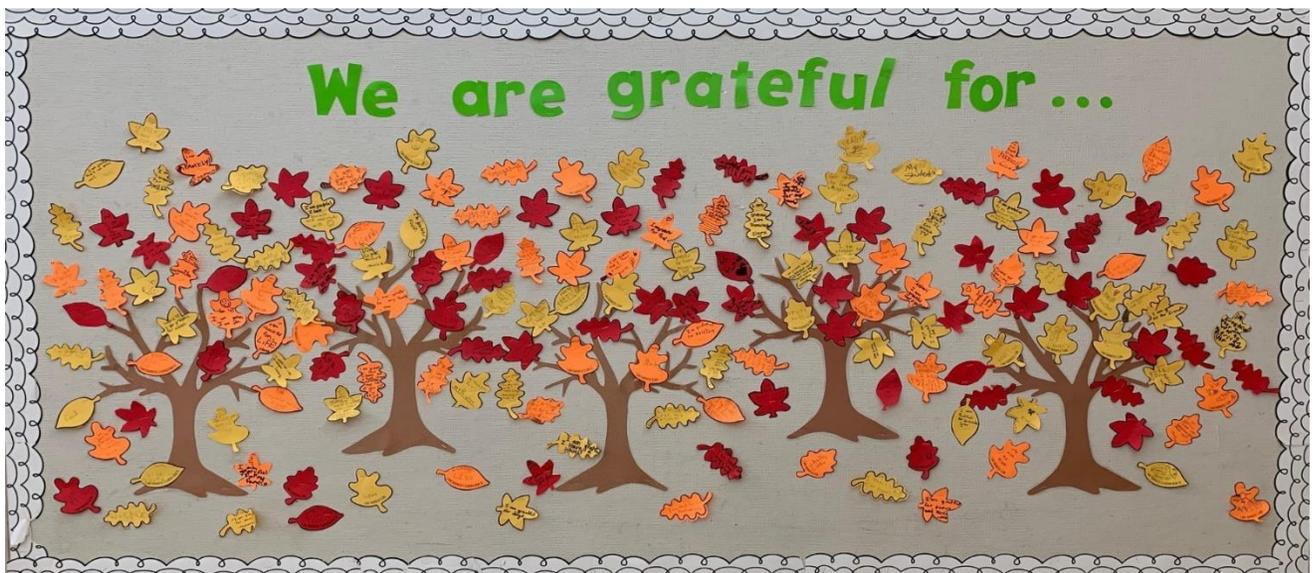
"With gratitude, what we have becomes enough."

November 2020

October-November reminded us of the restrictions and new realities that COVID-19 is imposing on us. Our typical Halloween Scream Assembly for example, would see students assembled in the gymnasium enjoying a parade of costumes. This Halloween, students enjoyed the occasion in their homerooms. On the advice of AHS, candies were not consumed in classrooms, but taken home in small, sealed baggies to be enjoyed under parental supervision.

Our annual Remembrance Day Assembly, always a moving tribute by students to our fallen heroes, featured homeroom tributes, artwork and a school-wide observance of a moment of silence.

The resilience of our students, parents and staff is inspiring as they manage each of these new impositions in stride and with a joyous sense of purpose. With the possibility of our grand gestures removed, we are gratefully reminded of the true importance and meaning of each occasion and are learning to find gratitude for the unanticipated opportunities that have emerged.



Relationships



Talking to Parents

Coffee Talks

The Elementary Admin joined parents at 9:15 on Friday, October 23, for an hour of casual sharing, questions and answers. These are now monthly events moderated by our School Council Parent Liaison person, Ashley Wilford-Matthews. Our conversations would typically be held in our Staff Room and attended by 12-20 parents. With COVID-19 restrictions, we are now conducting them via Zoom and the attendance is now in the 30-40 range. The next Coffee Talk is scheduled for early December.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers and parents met via Zoom during the days of November 5 and 6. Interviews were booked ahead of time and had a duration of 15 minutes. A quick check in with teachers following interviews revealed that parents were delighted with the Zoom format. Some said that a 15 minute interview did not require a 30 minute drive to and from the campus. Others were grateful to be able to speak with teachers during their coffee and lunch breaks. We will shortly conduct a small formal survey with parents to gather more data, but I suspect Zoom interviews will become a more regular feature of our communication with parents in the future. Of tremendous significance is our teachers unanimously expressed their gratitude to parents for all of the positive comments they received. The impact was big; it allowed our teachers to go into their Fall breaks feeling appreciated and motivated for the hard work ahead following the holiday.

School Council Meeting

Our October School Council meeting was held on the evening of the 28th. Again, parent attendance has increased dramatically now that we have had to move to an online platform.

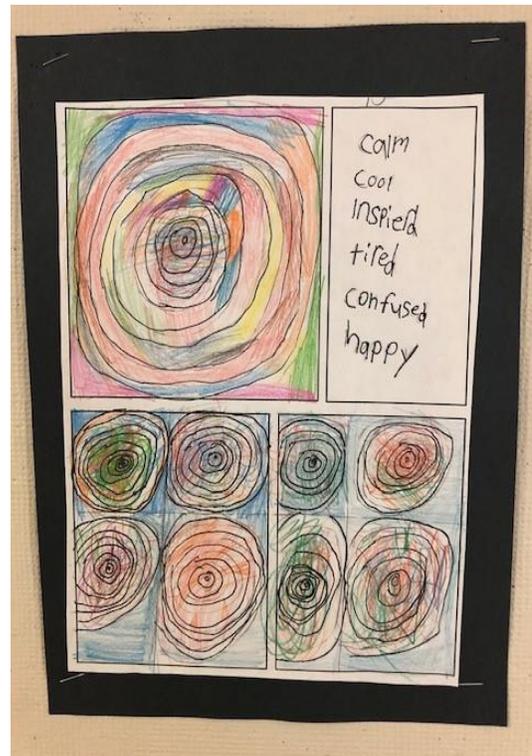
Talking to Staff Members

Each year, teachers and teaching and learning assistants (TLAs) are required to create professional growth plans (TPGPs and TLAPGPs). At the Elementary Campus, growth plans are typically constructed around the framework of our 3 annual priorities. For the 2020-2021 school year, those 3 priorities are trauma based learning, COVID-19 safety and staff mental health. Staff members are asked 2-3 questions related to each priority, and individual meetings are arranged with the admin team to review the plans.

Critical Responses

Drills

Each year, we are required to conduct a prescribed number of fire, tornado, lockdown and administrative lockdown drills. With COVID-19, this becomes challenging as 3 of these 4 drills require close congregation of students and staff members. We have improvised ways of conducting the expected drills without having students congregate outside of their homeroom bubbles. This has been mostly accomplished by having drills rehearsed in isolated sections of the school, IE. A grade 4 class on the second floor practices their tornado drill at the same time as a grade 2 class in the west, main floor hallway and a kindergarten class on the east end of the main floor.



Positive Cases

Learning from Experience

We are grateful not to have had any positive cases of COVID-19 at the Elementary Campus to date, however, we expect it is only a matter of time. We've had the good fortune of being able to watch and learn from the difficult experiences of our counterparts at the Mid-High as they developed their processes and created their communication strategies. They have demonstrated incredible diligence and admirable grace under pressure. We appreciate their example and are reassured by the support we see in the Superintendent's team and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Intake Update

Applications

The number of applications for 2021-2022 is, not surprisingly, down from this time in previous years. The application deadline is the end of November, and there has been a gradual increase in the last couple of weeks prior to the November break. I will share final numbers at the December Charter Board meeting.

Confirming any Changes to In-class Learning and SEAL

Please watch www.westmountcharter.com and your email early next week for complete information regarding the process for confirming any changes to your child's program in January 2021. The EC will need to know if parents intend to have their children move from SEAL to in-class learning or vice versa.

Respectfully submitted,

Hal