

WESTMOUNT

CHARTER SCHOOL

Assurance Framework Three-Year Education Plan 2024-2027



Grade 6 Student Artwork recognizing Diversity and Inclusion
Submitted to Alberta Education
May 2024

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live and work in the traditional territories, which make up the Treaty 7 Region III of Southern Alberta.

Message from the Board Chair

"Fostering gifted education from the inside out."

Westmount is a unique community of students, educators and parents, unified by the singular purpose to advance the education and well being of the gifted students we serve.

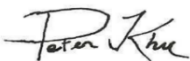
As we engage in the new three-year planning process under the Assurance Framework, we continue to focus on the social and emotional well-being of our students first in order to create an environment of learning that is welcoming and caring. As a result, students continue to perform at the highest levels of achievement supported by empathic and informed staff.

Our aim is not only to educate but to foster an environment allowing students to challenge themselves, become lifetime learners, and ultimately to become valuable and contributing members of both the school community and the larger community.

All Westmount students are formally identified as gifted, and over 22 percent are additionally coded for specialized learning needs (twice exceptional), making this school one of the most inclusive learning environments in Alberta for gifted learners. With the increase in demands for complex, specialized gifted education we continue to search for ways to increase our reach and delivery of services for increasing demands for our services. We look for opportunities to grow the school to a third campus and also for ways to expand into underutilized spaces shared with our community and educational partners. In the mean-time we continue to work on strengthening our practices through, revisiting our core principles of inside out education and through targeted professional development. Recently we have conducted a needs analysis to improve our intake process for new students and also for supporting the specialized learning for both long serving and new teachers.

The charter board works closely with all school stakeholders, including parents, staff, teachers and students to find ways to improve the experience and opportunities for students within the school. We are also focused on research and innovation and the dissemination of knowledge and best practices to support complex gifted learners.

Sincerely,




Peter Khu
Board Chair

Accountability Statement for the Education Plan

The Education Plan for Westmount Charter School commencing September 2024 was prepared under the direction of the Board/Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the *Education Act* and the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board reviewed and approved the 2024/2027 Education Plan on May 15, 2024.



Peter Khu
Board Chair



Joe Frank
Superintendent

Introduction

Westmount's Charter (2016-2031) defines our mission as providing students who are gifted with an authentic educational experience that: supports need, ability and potential; provides opportunities for inner growth; develops genuine relationships; and is facilitated by empathic, passionate, creative educators whose ethical practice develops lifelong learners.

As stated further in our Charter, "From this perspective, giftedness is not equated only to high academic achievement. Giftedness is *how you are wired*, not what you produce. At Westmount, we encourage students to choose to demonstrate their abilities in their individual ways. When students are not achieving what we believe is their potential, we work to understand the gap and help them bridge it, modeling perseverance, resilience and respect. From our perspective, **achievement is the outcome, not the starting point.**"

We believe students who are gifted are capable of exceptional performance. Additionally, we believe these students require comprehensive, specialized educational programming if they are to understand and maximize their varied abilities. We also believe parents and guardians are vital partners in their children's education, and members of the community at large have an important role to play in the education of students who are gifted.

The growth and development of our students is a collaborative effort which requires a broad and balanced approach to planning and implementation strategies.

Fundamental to the annual planning and reporting is the Alberta Education Business Plan:
<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/1715-0809>

Engagement

Westmount Charter School facilitates stakeholder engagement throughout the school year. This commitment is realized through multiple avenues and informs a variety of our priorities and concerns. Stakeholder input and feedback are valued on a range of topics.

Engagements include:

- September Board Retreat
- School Council (SC):
 - Monthly general meetings;
 - "Coffee Talks" between the SC Parent Engagement Director, administrative teams, and parents at each campus, covering: campus operational matters; information about gifted students and gifted education; student timetabling and scheduling; student events; and new curriculum implementation.
- Parent information sessions;
 - Meet the Staff at both campuses; Elementary Intake Open House; Mid-High Intake Information Night; Elementary New Students Welcome, Incoming Grade 5 Transition Information Night.
 - Parent Education series: parenting gifted children; giftedness; how the elementary campus works for new kindergarten families; what Inside Out is all about; How to use MyBluePrint; Post Secondary Information Night; Post Secondary Showcase; Career exploration sessions with those in different careers; and post-secondary supports available for twice exceptional students.
- Student developments and achievements.
- Annual appointment of one or more board member liaisons to the SC to serve as conduits from the SC executive to the board and vice versa.

- Regular leadership meetings between the superintendent, school leadership teams, and central office staff regarding procedures, budgeting, campus-specifics, provincial matters and events.
- Regular meetings between school leadership teams from both campuses to coordinate campus philosophies and events, professional development, and operational matters.
- Monthly teacher grade groups or department team meetings to discuss student learning, teacher practice, resources, new curriculum implementation, technology integration, and continued ways to foster gifted education from the inside out.
- Monthly campus-specific all-staff meetings.
- Weekly meetings with student services teams to understand students' needs and ensure support.
- Various in-school committees, including:
 - the Executive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Decolonization (DEID) Council and the Indigenous Learnings Committee;
 - student leadership committee at the Grade 3-4 level;
 - student Council grades 5-12;
 - Principals' Student Advisory Councils; and
 - Information and Technology Committee.
- Local and external surveys;
- Liaison with the new Research Chair of Gifted Education (Dr. M. Makel), U of C.

Results of Engagement (non-exhaustive list)

- Implemented a new position, Director of Gifted Education at Westmount, resulting from a concern expressed by school staff in the AERR, which was confirmed as an area of needed attention from feedback at the board retreat in September 2023.
- Included in this position is re-imagining the intake process at the elementary campus, including the new creation of an intake committee that started in December 2023.
- The director has been providing gifted education and leadership mentorship to the new leadership team at the elementary campus.
- Presentation to School Council on Giftedness from the Inside Out in October 2023 with a request for a follow-up session and a similar presentation in January 2024 at the elementary campus to staff.
- Reinforcement of the "one school, two campuses" concept to ensure collaboration and development of common procedures among campus school leaders.
- More intentional communication between the board liaison members and school council executive, regarding roles and responsibilities and joint initiatives as needed.
- A team of staff, students, school council, and board members was struck to work with an elder and guided by the EC DEID Learning Leader to create a new district-wide land acknowledgement. to be read at Westmount Charter School gatherings as appropriate, meetings, and embedded within the elementary school campuses' classroom activities (for further student engagement).
- Indigenous flags were bought for both campuses, representing First Nations, Metis and Inuit, and the indigenous O'Canada is played every Wednesday at the elementary campus, while the land acknowledgement is read at staff meetings, and school-wide events.
- Retreat with superintendent, school and central office leadership staff to focus on leadership from the inside out.
- Follow-up Leadership development activities focused on Kevin Cashman's book "Leadership from the Inside Out"
- At the elementary campus, staff participated in a book study around Dr. Bruce Perry's book, "What Happened To You?" and engaged with Dr. Emily Wang, psychologist. She delved into the profound intersection of trauma-informed practices and gifted education with staff.
- Updates were made to the charter outcome survey questions to include qualitative measures, e.g., written responses from students to key questions arising from the charter goal.
- Continuation of a school leadership network among Calgary Charter Schools and other provincial charter school leaders as invited.
- Supported a draft proposal for an MEd in Gifted Education for 2025 following discussion and input with Dr. Makel, Research Chair, U of C, and a commitment to engage in research regarding identification protocols for gifted students.

- Continuing math/science/technology-related research projects with Dr. Krista Francis, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary (as a response to the legislated mandate for charter schools).
- All staff PD was personalized through attendance at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention.
- Joint Campus Teacher Learning Assistant PD to support our twice exceptional students.
- Mid-High whole staff PD with Alberta Assessment Consortium.
- Mid-High accessed Calgary Regional Consortium to support staff who choose to pilot new outcomes based assessment and reporting.
- Middle School continued use of the Friendology program supporting social and emotional development.
- All Grade 7s supported the larger community by participating in the shoreline clean up.
- Mid-High provided courses for students at different levels for leadership (Heroes) and volunteerism (Westmount Assisting Others)
- Student DEID Counsel continued to build understanding of diversity through information sharing and celebrations.

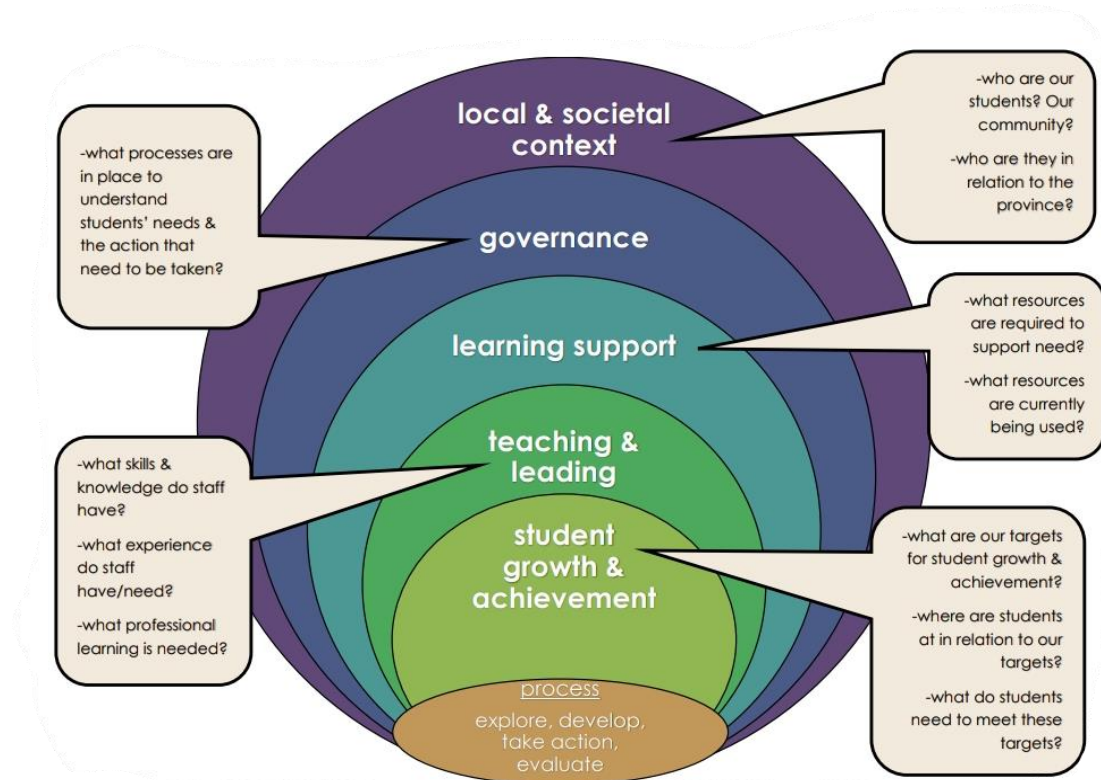
Budgetary Allocations:

- Over \$70,000 allocated to professional development including: gifted education coursework; conference/convention; EdD/PhD bursary; annual individual staff professional development allowance; and campus-specific professional development options.
- Over \$90,000 for staff recognition including: long service awards; Health and Wellness allowance; continuation of the four-fold amount psychological consultations benefit allowance.
- Membership in The Association of Alberta Charter Schools or alternate, \$13,000.
- \$600,000 capital allocation to renovate washrooms as requested by students, staff, and parent group.
- Provision for funding to research and access appropriate assessment tools to improve student intake processes (TBD).



Domains of Assurance

The domains of assurance framework identifies what we examine, how we organize ourselves and how we engage in this work as a learning community, providing evidence of the effectiveness of our work.



Funding Manual 2024-2025, Appendix B, Alberta Education, p.24.

Continuous Improvement Cycle

Successful work within and across the **domains** occurs within a continuous improvement cycle. There are a variety of approaches to improvement and many include the following components:

- Explore: Involves accessing, analyzing and interpreting accurate and relevant data and identifying and understanding an issue, concern or problem. Key question: What is going on here?
- Develop: Involves identification of a problem or challenge that can be addressed; identification of potentially successful strategies to address a learner-centred problem/challenge; and developing an action plan. Key question: What needs to be improved? How?
- Take action: Involves learning as you implement the plan and making adjustments through formative feedback. Key question: How are we 'actioning' the plan?
- Evaluate: Involves evaluating the impact of the plan. Key question: Did our planned strategies have the desired outcomes? What next?

Key Enabling Processes for Continuous Improvement

Key enabling processes that must be part of all phases of a continuous improvement cycle (see graphic below) include:

- Evidence-informed decision-making: In a continuous improvement cycle, participants are persistently attentive to gathering ongoing, triangulated evidence to inform next steps.
- Engagement: Effective engagement processes rely on education partners working together for the purposes of bringing about positive change, with all partners recognizing that the nature of the engagement will vary according to the needs of the participants.

- Learning and Capacity Building: In assurance, reflection on learning is critical. Because the provision of assurance is a dynamic process, the opportunities for building capacity for change and improvement must be ongoing.

Funding Manual 2024-2025, Appendix B, Alberta Education, pp.27-28

Domain: Local and Societal Context

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcome(s) and Strategies	Evidence of Outcomes
<p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCS engages with our community of students, staff and families, responding to emergent needs and concerns. <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strive to live the practice of inside out, by developing relationships with students to understand their unique characteristics, needs, interests and motivations; • target individuals' well-being, personal growth and development as human beings, which, as a by-product, supports life long learning and achievement; • continue DEID work with councils at both the school and at the district level; and • regular meetings with teams, parents via the School Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement feedback summaries • Principals' Student Advisory Councils • Demographic data • Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual Program Plans (IPP) - our approach ○ Well-being initiatives ○ Executive and School Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Decolonization (DEID) Council work results ○ Sexual Orientation Gender Inclusion (SOGI) initiative work with other charter schools

Domain: Governance

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcome(s) and Strategies	Evidence of Outcomes
<p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westmount Charter School is well governed and managed. <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilize evidence-based, continuous improvement to inform ongoing planning and priority setting; • continue to engage students, staff, families, and community members in planning; • prepare budgets to address educational and operational resource needs; and • board members will attend a governance training session annually each September. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance/AERR Survey Results • Board Retreat • Monthly School Council meetings, Coffee Talks, Parent Information Sessions • Current 15 Year Charter in effect until 2031, reviewed regularly • WCS Administrative Procedures reviewed • Stakeholder Reporting

Domain: Learning Supports

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcome(s) and Strategies	Evidence of Outcomes
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• our communities are safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive, acknowledging similarities and honouring differences; and• education partners fulfil their respective roles with a shared understanding of WCS's inclusive education practices. <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• facilitate annual training for all staff regarding Occupational Health and Safety (OHS);• apply resources needed to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student application requirements and achievement;• adapt learning environments as necessary to meet learner needs, emphasizing a sense of belonging and high expectations for all students;• engage education partners (internal and external supports) to optimize learning;• utilize cross-ministry initiatives and wraparound services to enhance conditions for learning;• support student and staff use of technology to enhance learning, through Information Technology (IT) department team initiatives;• provide transportation support to include students from all quadrants within Calgary city limits; and• review facilities continuously to maintain and enhance the learning environment through Plant Operations and Maintenance budgets and Capital Plan submissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assurance Survey results• OHS training completed• Sustained DEID work and events throughout the year• Student Diversity Council• SOGI learning and events• Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club at mid-high campus• Supports utilized for Indigenous students• Provisions for students with additional learning needs beyond their giftedness• Increased FTE in MH Student Services to support students' social emotional needs• Programming adaptations utilized for students• Inclusive education supports, including technology provided• Alberta Health Services (AHS) utilized:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Speech pathologists○ Occupational Therapists• Students from across the city attend WCS• Stakeholder Reporting

Domain: Teaching and Leading

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcomes:

- Teachers and leaders continuously acquire skill and competence to respond to the unique learning, interest, cultural and social-emotional needs of our students.
- Staff are encouraged and supported in their continuous professional development (PD) and health and well-being.

Strategies:

- provide clearly articulated and relevant programming for learners who are gifted, incorporating the Alberta Programs of Study;
- encourage and support a culture of innovation, which manifests in research and development to support evolving best practices;
- participate in teacher and leader collaborative engagement processes of self-reflection, growth, supervision and evaluation;
- use a range of data emerging from teacher and leader practices to inform cycles of evidence-based continuous learning;
- support university teacher education, university leadership education and on-going professional learning programs to prepare teachers and leaders to meet the standards for professional practice;
- monitor and hold teachers and leaders accountable to standards of professional conduct and professional practice;
- implement the new K-6 curriculum;
- utilize the teaching and learning framework to guide professional practice and professional growth;
- engage in professional development work with recognized gifted education experts; and
- encourage attendance at relevant conferences on gifted learners, such as SENG and NAGC.

Evidence of Outcomes

- Assurance Pillar results
- Differentiation and adapted instructional approaches
- Staff engaged in individual PD
- Leadership teams participated in the Calgary Charter Leadership Network PD sessions
- [WCS Knowledge Skills and Abilities](#) pp.6-9 (Charter)
- Active research projects
- Professional Partner work
- Data from Professional Growth Plans
- Data from staff evaluations
- Teacher and leader data for Masters and Doctorate degrees
- Pre-Service Teacher Partnerships
- [WCS APs](#)
- Staff personalized PD through attendance at the Calgary City Teachers Convention and personal PD budget.
- NAGC attendance by staff
- Staff work with Dr. Janneke Frank and Dr. Laurie Alisat around gifted education and gifted learners.

Domain: Student Growth and Achievement

Outcome(s) and Strategies

<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are successful and achieve prescribed provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating strengths in literacy and numeracy. • First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students are successful. <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance reconciliation by supporting staff acquiring and applying foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit experiences and ways of knowing; • demonstrate continuous understanding and respect for the uniqueness of all learners; • provide ongoing assessment feedback to students to reflect continuously on their progress, identify strengths and areas of need and set new learning goals; • encourage students to be active and healthy; • teach and support students to apply knowledge, understanding and skills in real life contexts and situations; and • create a learning leader position specific to First Nations Metis and Inuit at the elementary campus. 	<h3>Evidence of Outcomes</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAT/Diploma exams • Standardized assessments • Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Screenings • Assurance survey results • Interview/observational data • Examples of student work • Maintain a learning leader position specific to First Nations Metis and Inuit at the elementary campus. • Staff DEID committee building capacity in staff • Demonstrated application of Indigenous ways of knowing
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Westmount Charter Goal

Outcome(s) and Strategies

<p>Goal</p> <p>To improve gifted pedagogy from the inside out.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students will understand giftedness in general and their own specific giftedness, from the inside out; • students will demonstrate increased resilience; • students will recognize the importance of goals; and • students will understand the connection between personal development, well-being and strong communities. <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustained professional development in understanding gifted education from the inside out; • infuse opportunities into classroom lessons for students to explore the nature of giftedness, gifted characteristics and their effects on individual students; • select materials and themes which reflect the diverse and complex experiences of gifted learners; 	<h3>Evidence of Outcomes</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of Charter survey questions • Qualitative feedback • Reflections/observations from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students, teachers and parents survey data ○ Joint research studies • Goal-setting in classroom work, IPPs and life goals • The number of clubs and activities in the school and community • Well-being and mental health initiatives • Student Wellness Team • Appreciate and support students' heightened awareness and empathy. • Current world issues are
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● teach and model self-awareness, self-regulation and self-advocacy; ● support development of critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making; ● teach and support goal setting; ● engage students in developing and implementing their IPPs in learning activities; ● employ instructional practices that inform healthy lifestyles, ethical citizenship and pro-social interactions; ● engage with our School Council to provide information sessions addressing the special needs of gifted students to Westmount families; ● create opportunities for supported non-success by providing safe obstacles and strategies for eventual success, and ● adopt and report qualitative feedback from staff, students, and parents. 	<p>discussed from multiple perspectives to support critical thinking, understanding and empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students have direct input to their IPPs creating priority learning areas, with strategies for growth. ● Record of parent provided education sessions
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Budget and Facilities

Westmount Charter School's Three-Year Education Plan 2024-2027, Budget 2024-2025 and the Capital Plan Summary 2024-2025 may all be accessed at: [Stakeholder Reporting](#)