

# FAQs: Westmount Elementary Campus Intake Procedures 2017 – 2018

## General Questions

### 1. How do we define giftedness at Westmount Charter School?

- “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.” (Alberta Education)
- Giftedness is *asynchronous development* in which advanced *cognitive abilities and heightened intensity* combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally (Columbus Group, 1991).

### 2. Why does Westmount Charter School’s Elementary Campus use an intelligence test (IQ Test) as part of its multiple criteria in the intake procedure?

*To apply to Westmount Charter School, ONLY an intelligence test (WPPSI, WISC or STANFORD – BINET) is required. (See number 6 for definition of these acronyms)*

- Individual IQ tests provide the best information when making important programming decisions for gifted students – much better than group tests (Silverman, 2013).
- An appropriate IQ test for the gifted students should be an excellent measure of abstract reasoning (Silverman, 2013). Individually administered intelligence tests such as the WISC-IV, WISC-V, WAIS-IV and SB-5 provide a student’s profile of verbal and performance problem-solving abilities. They also provide the opportunity for skilled observation, by a qualified psychologist, in a controlled situation with exposure to stimulating materials.
- IQ (intelligence quotient) tests are important tools for recognizing the special education needs of intellectually gifted students. Using a standardized intelligence test as a valid instrument, and one of several broad range criteria, ensures Westmount Charter School’s identification procedure is compatible with its definition of giftedness and programming services offered.

- The intelligence test provides a more objective picture of a child's intellectual abilities than teacher judgment, parent recommendations, grades, achievement tests, and other measures (Silverman, 2013).

### **3. What is the cost of a psychological assessment?**

- The Psychologists' Association of Alberta's (PAA) published fee schedule currently recommends \$180.00 per hour for assessment services.
- The intelligence test will provide the FSIQ and/or the GAI required by Westmount as one of its criteria in the application process. The approximate cost is \$900.00.
- The cost of a cognitive and academic assessment (not required by Westmount Charter School, but may be recommended by your psychologist if there is a concern about a learning disability) or a full assessment will vary according to hours billed.
- It is most important to discuss cost with the psychologist who may be testing your son or daughter. Psychologists may have different payment plans, and this should also be discussed.
- **To apply to Westmount Charter School, ONLY an intelligence test (WPPSI, WISC or STANFORD – BINET) is required.**

### **4. Could the cost of the psychological assessment be covered by a family's health insurance provider?**

- Yes, often this cost is covered by health insurance providers. Please check your family's personal health insurance plan or ask your carrier's advisor. Some plans cover part or all of a psychological assessment.

### **5. Does Westmount recommend specific psychologists for its intake procedure?**

- Westmount Charter School holds a list of psychologists who have provided psychological assessments for possible entry to Westmount. It is also recommended that you consult your physician or go to the following website for a list of Calgary psychologists:  
<http://www.yellowpages.ca/search/si/1/Psychologists/Calgary+AB>.
- For further information please contact [admissions@westmountcharter.com](mailto:admissions@westmountcharter.com)

### **6. What do acronyms such as the WPPSI-IV, WISC-IV, WAIS-IV, SB-5, and CCAT mean?**

- Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Test of Intelligence (WPPSI): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to an individual child from the age of 2 years, 6 months to the age of 7 years, 7 months. It is currently in its fourth edition (WPPSI-IV).

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to an individual student from the age of 6 years to the age of 16 years. It is currently in its fourth edition (WISC-IV).
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to older adolescents and adults, from the ages of 16 years to 90 years. It is currently in its fourth edition (WAIS-IV).
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (SB-5): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to individuals from the age of 2 years to 85 years. It measures cognitive abilities as well as the overall level of an individual's cognitive development. It is currently in its fifth edition (SB-5).
- Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT): an ability test administered by, or under the supervision of, a qualified person, not necessarily a psychologist, to a group. It assesses the development of cognitive abilities in the verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning areas.

### **7. What are the subtests included in an intelligence test?**

- WPPSI-IV is comprised of subtests in the following areas:
  - Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI)
  - Visual Spatial Index (VSI)
  - Working Memory Index (WMI)
  - Fluid Reasoning Index (FRI)
  - Processing Speed Index (PSI)
- WISC-IV & WAIS-IV are comprised of subtests in the following areas:
  - Verbal Comprehension (VCI)
  - Perceptual Reasoning (PRI)
  - Working Memory (WMI)
  - Processing Speed (PSI)
- The subtests are scored on how accurately and, for timed subtests, how quickly questions are answered. Sometimes students who are thoughtful and perfectionistic or who have learning disabilities, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or mood disorders may take longer to complete the answers to test questions.

- Scores can be lowered because it takes gifted students longer to answer on the timed subtests than other students. As a result, gifted children may obtain a Full Scale Intelligence Score (FSIQ) that doesn't truly reflect their actual ability. This may prevent these children from qualifying for gifted programs.

#### **8. What is a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ)?**

- Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ) describes a person's complete cognitive capacity. The WISC-IV, which generates a Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) score, is the most commonly used test to measure a student's cognitive capacity for our mid-high age group (grades 5 – 12).
- Intelligence testing is further described on websites such as the following:

<http://www.school-psychology.com.au/blog/wechsler-intelligence-scale-for-children-wisc-iv/>

#### **9. What is a General Ability Index (GAI)?**

- The General Ability Index (GAI) is an excellent indicator of abstract reasoning ability. It is derived from the 6 core subtests of the WISC-IV comprising the VCI (Verbal Comprehension Index) and the PRI (Perceptual Reasoning Index). Timed subtests, such as the working memory and processing speed are eliminated in the calculation. The GAI and the VCI serve as the most reliable measures of giftedness (Silverman, 2013, p. 178).

#### **10. What are the differences between a GAI and FSIQ?**

- The GAI does not replace the FSIQ. It should, however, be reported and interpreted along with the FSIQ and all other index scores including the Working Memory Index (WMI) and Processing Speed Index (PSI).
- FSIQ includes measures of working memory and processing speed. Neither the working memory nor the processing speed is highly indicative of general intelligence (general intelligence is often referred to as "g").
- GAI includes only reasoning ability measures, which is the best measure of "g" and more indicative of giftedness than the FSIQ.

#### **11. How can we best identify twice-exceptional students in our intake procedures?**

- Gifted children are asynchronous in their development. This means that their cognitive, physical and emotional development happens at different rates, IE. a child may be 4 years old physically, 7 years old cognitively and 5 years old emotionally.
- How much asynchrony is to be expected for the gifted population, and when is the degree of asynchrony sufficient to suggest that a psychologist should look at the possibility of a learning disability?

The most frequent and pronounced pattern of difference is between the Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) and the Processing Speed Index (PSI). In recent studies, the VCI has emerged as the best indicator of giftedness and the PSI as the weakest indicator of giftedness. (Silverman, 2013).

- The condition of twice exceptionality occurs when giftedness is combined with a learning disability. When giftedness is combined with a learning disability, the disability may mask the giftedness and the giftedness may mask the learning disability. This can make the gifted student appear both less able and less disabled. Because of this, individual assessment of twice exceptional children is strongly recommended (Silverman, 2013, p.13).

## **12. What is the Intake Process at Westmount Charter School's Elementary Campus?**

- For complete information on the intake process at the Elementary Campus, go to:
  - a) [www.westmountcharter.com](http://www.westmountcharter.com)
  - b) Click on **Admissions** from the top menu bar
  - c) Click on **How to Apply** from the left side menu
  - d) Click on the **Elementary Campus (EC) K-Grade 4** link

### **Open House Information:**

For students entering **Kindergarten to Grade 1 in September 2017**

There will be two K-4 open houses for the 2017/2018 School Year. If you are interested in applying for one of these grades at Westmount for the 2017/2018 school year, please attend one of the following:

- Thursday, June 2nd, 2016 @ 7 p.m.
- Thursday, September 15th, 2016 @ 7 p.m.

Both presentations take place in the main gym, Westmount Charter School, Elementary Campus, 728 – 32 Street NW. Calgary.

## References

- Alberta Learning. (2000). *Teaching students who are gifted and talented*. Edmonton, AB: Author. (Alberta Education).
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- Silverman, L. K. (2009c). Searching for asynchrony: A new perspective on twice-exceptional children. In B. MacFarlane & T. Stambaugh (Eds.). *Leading change in gifted education: the Festschrift of Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska* (pp.169-181). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Silverman, L. K. (2013). How to use the new IQ tests in selecting gifted students. Boulder, CO: GDC.
- Silverman, L. K. (2013). *Giftedness 101*. New York, NY: Springer.
- <http://www.pearsonclinical.com/education/products/100000310/wechsler-intelligence-scale-for-children-fourth-edition-wisc-iv.html>
- <http://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000392/wechsler-adult-intelligence-scale-fourth-edition-wais-iv.html?Pid=015-8980-808>
- <http://www.assess.nelson.com/test-ind/stan-b5.html>