

WESTMOUNT



CHARTER SCHOOL

**Assurance Framework
Three-Year Education Plan
2023-2026**

Submitted to Alberta Education
May 2023

Message from the Board Chair

"Fostering gifted education from the inside out."

Westmount Charter School is a public charter school committed to providing an excellent education for our students who are gifted. 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. This is especially important as we see the effect the pandemic has had on mental health globally. By working through the domains of assurance in harmony with our inside-out Charter, we strive to close learning gaps for our students and to help them grow, become lifetime learners and valuable and contributing members of both the school community and the larger community.

As with all schools and all branches of our society, we have struggled with the challenges of the pandemic over the last couple of years and have adapted our methods of operation (instruction and administration) and our interaction with the school community. We continue to learn to adapt engagement with stakeholder groups. Our intention is to move forward beyond the pandemic while still supporting our teachers and leaders, both in enhancing their skills for the ever-changing environment and in monitoring and improving their own health and well-being.

The Charter Board will continue to receive reports and feedback regarding our Charter outcomes and will now also receive information about the domains of assurance. In addition, the Board receives regular reports on events, activities, professional development, and student anecdotes from both the elementary campus and the mid-high campus.

We continue to be proactive and adaptive as we move forward with a new set of plans and strategies.

Sincerely,



Diane Shirra
Board Chair

Accountability Statement for the Education Plan

The Education Plan for Westmount Charter School commencing September 2023 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 2023/2026 Education Plan on May 17, 2023.



Diane Shirra
Board Chair



Joe Frank
Superintendent

Introduction

Westmount's Charter (2016) 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:

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- School Council (SC):
 - Monthly general meetings:
 - "Coffee Talks" between SC parent liaison, administrative teams, and parents at each campus, covering topics such as campus operational matters; information about gifted students and gifted education; student timetabling and scheduling; student events; and new curriculum implementation. In addition, feedback is gathered on the effectiveness of admin and staff measures, and getting suggestions to generate discussion on future measures;
 - Parent information sessions:
 - Meet the Staff; Mid-High Information Night; Elementary Information Nights, Elementary Welcome to Westmount, Grade 4-5 Transition Information Night; education series for parents on topics like parenting gifted children, giftedness and how the elementary campus works for new kindergarten families, what Inside Out is all about, and How to use MyBlueprint; Post Secondary Information Night; Post Secondary Showcase; Career exploration sessions with those in the career; Post Secondary supports available for twice exceptional students
 - Student developments and achievements.
- Westmount Charter Board of Directors annually appoints one or more board member liaisons to the SC.
- Monthly leadership meetings between the superintendent, school administrative teams, and central office staff regarding procedures, budgeting, campus-specifics, and events.

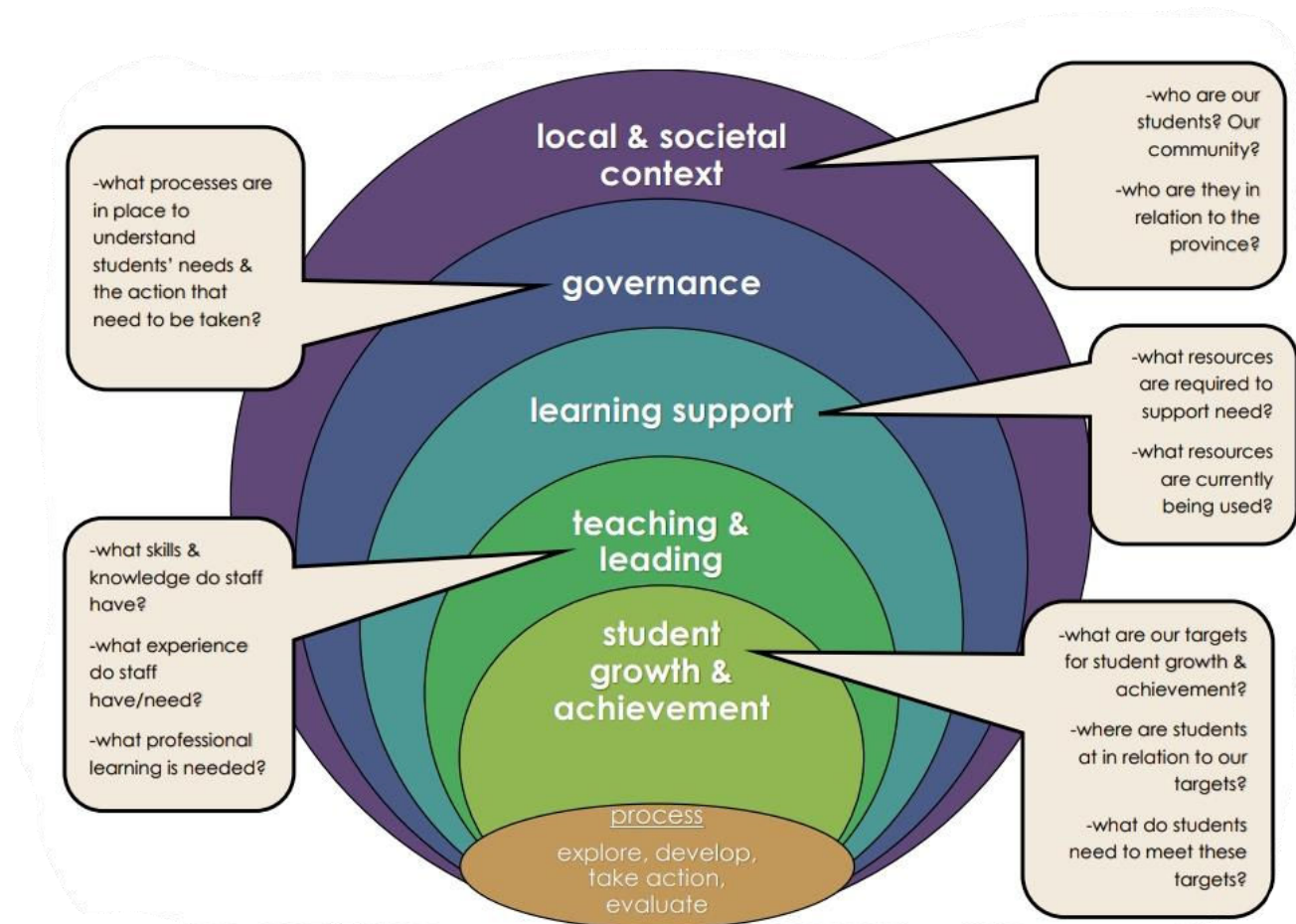
- Regular meetings between administrative teams from both campuses to coordinate campus philosophies and events, professional development, operational matters,
- Cooperation between members of The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools, and through ASCD specific to the role of leaders on campus.
- Monthly meetings of teacher grade groups, or department teams, to discuss student learning, teacher practice, resources, and new curriculum implementation.
- Monthly campus-specific all-staff meetings.
- Weekly meetings with student services teams to understand students' needs and ensure provision.
- Various in-school committees including:
 - staff committees;
 - the Executive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council and the Indigenous Committee ;
 - student leadership committee at Grade 3-4 level, and
 - Student Council grades 5-12
 - Student Advisory Councils established by the principals.
 - Information and Technology Committee
- Local and external surveys.
- Joint research projects with the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary (as a response to the legislated mandate for charter schools).
- Research Initiative with University of Calgary: Gifted students' experience of COVID-19: Impact on wellness and future programming.
- Student and Staff surveys regarding organization for learning

Results of Engagement (non-exhaustive list)

- Responses to COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, and the elementary campus returned to typical teaching and learning practices as explained to parents.
- Suggestions for closer liaison between campuses to share pertinent information for the grade 4-5 transition for students with complex learning needs, in addition to campus grade 4 & 5 Team meetings and individual family meetings with MH Student Services staff.
- Feedback on the one Mid-High class trial of the implementation of outcome-based reporting to determine the need for a formal action research study across grades and disciplines (remove for mid-high students)
- More effective communication between the board and school council executive relating roles and responsibilities and joint initiatives (e.g., focus on DEI principles).
- The elementary school worked closely this year with elders from the Tsuut'ina, Stoney, and Nakoda Nations, as well as the Kanai and Cree 8 Nations, working onsite with students and staff toward building foundational knowledge.
- Presentation to school council executive on the meaning of *inside out* and the foundations of the *Dabrowski Theory of Positive Disintegration*.
- Several parents are assisting in the Learning Commons to review the book collections to ensure a balance of diversity, equity and inclusion perspectives are available.
- Leadership development activities for school admin teams and designated central office staff with the superintendent.
- Updates to charter outcome survey questions (qualitative measures).
- Clarification of volunteer requirements including the specific need for a Vulnerable Sector Check.
- Establishment of a school leadership network among Calgary Charter Schools.

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 2023-2024, Appendix B, Alberta Education, pp.20-23.

Continuous Improvement Cycle

The success of the work, within and across the domains of assurance, is examined using the continuous improvement cycle. The key processes include:

- Evidence-informed decision-making, where data informs next steps;
- Effective engagement of education partners working together for positive change.; and
- Ongoing learning and capacity building for change and improvements.

Funding Manual 2022-2023, Appendix B, Alberta Education, p.23

Domain: Local and Societal Context

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcome:

- WCS engages with our community of students, staff and families, responding to emergent needs and concerns.

Strategies:

- 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 DEI work with councils at both the school and district level; and
- regular meetings with teams, parents via the School Council.

Evidence of Outcomes

- Engagement feedback summaries
- Demographic data
- Examples:
 - Individual Program Plans (IPP) - our approach
 - Well-being initiatives
 - Executive DEI Council and school-based DEI Council work
 - SOGI initiative work with other charter schools

Domain: Governance

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcome:

- Westmount Charter School is well governed and managed.

Strategies:

- utilize a capacity building cycle of evidence-based, continuous improvement to inform ongoing planning and priority setting;
- continue as governors to engage students, staff, families, and community members towards implementing a dynamic, shared vision for student success as defined in our Charter; and
- prepare budgets to address educational and operational resource needs.
- board members will attend a governance training session in September 2023.

Evidence of Outcomes

- Assurance Survey Results
- Review of the AERR 2021-22
- Local surveys
- Monthly School Council meetings, Coffee Talks, Parent Information Sessions
- [Current 15 Year Charter](#) in effect until 2031, reviewed regularly
- WCS [Administrative Procedures](#) reviewed this year
- [Stakeholder Reporting](#) (Budget, 3 Year Educational Plan, Capital Plan)

Domain: Learning Supports

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcomes:

- our communities are safe, caring, respectful and inclusive, acknowledging similarities and honouring differences; and

Evidence of Outcomes

- Assurance Survey results
- OHS training schedule
- WCS [Administrative](#)

- education partners fulfil their respective roles with a shared understanding of WCS's inclusive education practices.

Strategies:

- 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.

Procedures

- DEI work and events
- SOGI planning
- Supports in place for our Indigenous students
- Number of students with additional learning needs beyond giftedness
- Programming adaptations provided and their effectiveness
- Inclusive education supports implemented
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) utilized:
 - Speech pathologists
 - Occupational Therapists
- IT Network supports
- Inclusive (Assistive) technology supports
- Number of buses to serve WCS students across the city
- 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;

Evidence of Outcomes

- Assurance Pillar results
- Differentiated and adapted instructional strategies
- Staff PD and well-being
- WCS Knowledge Skills and Abilities pp.6-9 (Charter)
- Staff Indigenous Education Committee
- Current research projects
- Professional Partner work
- Data for certificated and non-certificated Professional Growth Plans
- Data for staff evaluations
- Professional Learning opportunities
- Standardized assessments
- Teacher and leader data for Masters and Doctorate degrees

- 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-4 curriculum for ELAL, Math K-4, Science K-4 and Physical Education and Wellness K-6;
- utilize the recently developed teaching and learning framework at the mid-high to guide professional practice and professional growth; and
- engage in professional development work with recognized gifted education experts.
- encourage attendance at relevant conferences on gifted learners, such as SENG and NAGC.

- Pre-Service Teacher Partnerships
- Debrief and create actions statements with staff following 2 pandemic years
- [WCS APs](#)
- Both campuses worked with Dr. Bruce Shore throughout the year

Domain: Student Growth and Achievement

Outcome(s) and Strategies

Outcomes:

- Students are successful and achieve prescribed provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating strengths in literacy and numeracy.
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students are successful.

Strategies:

- 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.

Evidence of Outcomes

- Provincial Achievement Tests
- Diploma exams
- Learning Loss Funding Assessments
- Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Screenings
- Assurance survey results
- Demonstrated application of acknowledgement and application of Indigenous ways of knowing
- Student Diversity Council
- Student Wellness Action Team
- Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club at mid-high campus
- Self-reflection/appraisal of work
- Interview and observational data
- Data for the various clubs and activities in the school and in the communities
- Principals' Student Advisory Councils' work
- Examples of student work
- Reflections/observations from:

Westmount Charter Outcomes

- 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.

Strategies:

- 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;
- 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
- adapt measures through alternative survey questions.

- Students, teachers and parents
- WCS survey data
- Joint University of Calgary and WCS Research study
- Goal-setting in classroom work, IPPs and life goals
- Well-being and mental health initiatives

Budget and Facilities

Westmount Charter School's Three-Year Education Plan 2023-2026, Budget 2023-2025 and the Capital Plan Summary 2024-2025 may all be accessed at: [Stakeholder Reporting](#)