



# Westmount High School

Established in 1873

A College Board Advanced Placement School



May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Good Day Parents/Guardians,

I am privileged as a principal to be in a school where students and staff are comfortable in coming to me to discuss what they believe are important issues. I must share with you all that I have had numerous students come to me expressing the need for a facility that is becoming more and more common in schools and that is a Gender-Neutral Washroom. They explained that there are students that are not comfortable in using either a boys' or girls' washroom. It struck me that a solution to such a fundamental basic human need must be sought. I was also confident that given Westmount's past recent history, which has been so accepting of its diversity on many levels, whether it be cultural, ethnic, spiritual, or sexual orientation, that the creation of a Gender-Neutral Washroom would simply be another important step in the inclusivity we already enjoy as a community.

Westmount High has always strived to meet the needs and concerns of our stakeholders whether they be academic, social, emotional and/or physical. The students of the school all participate in a survey every year called "Tell Them From Me" where students are asked numerous questions about the school and what it provides and what they feel it should provide, to meet the needs of our students. Last year, it was brought to our attention that a number of students were uncomfortable using the washrooms because of gender identity issues. Given these comments, we decided to survey the student body about their level of comfort regarding a Gender Neutral washroom and approximately 80% said they supported the notion or were indifferent to the concept. With this in mind, we began to move forward with consultation and discussions at different levels including the teachers, Governing Board and School Board. Given what has been positively happening in other school jurisdictions, the decision was made to move forward with a pilot project where one of the Girls' washrooms would be transformed into a Gender-Neutral Washroom beginning tomorrow May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Should you have any concerns or comments, I would welcome them at [mcristofaro@emsb.qc.ca](mailto:mcristofaro@emsb.qc.ca).

**On the following page you will be able to read what was read and discussed in homeroom this morning. The feedback from teachers was that the very great majority of students were extremely positive about this washroom.**

Sincerely,

Principal M. Cristofaro



Commission scolaire English-Montréal  
English Montreal School Board

4350 Ste. Catherine Street West  
Westmount, QC H3Z 1R1  
Tel.: 514-933-2701 Fax: 514-933-2663  
[www.emsb.qc.ca/westmount](http://www.emsb.qc.ca/westmount)

*“Beginning Wednesday, May 4th an all-gender washroom will be available to Westmount High School students. An all-gender washroom also known as a gender neutral washroom, is a space that can be used by students of any gender identity. The new all-gender washroom will be located on the third floor across from room 306.*

*The idea for this washroom was proposed by a group of concerned WHS students. After surveying the entire school in the “Tell Them From Me” survey last year, it became clear that most WHS students were in support of creating this space. You may not have realized, but here at WHS we have some students that are gender nonconforming. Gender nonconforming means a person whose behavior or gender expression does not match typical masculine and feminine gender norms. For example, gender fluid would be someone whose gender may change from time to time or transgender would be someone that transitions from one gender to another. This new washroom will provide a safe space for gender nonconforming students who are not comfortable using boys-only or girls-only washrooms.*

*Even if you are not gender nonconforming, you are very welcome to respectfully use this washroom. Just be sure that you feel comfortable to be in this space alongside people of other genders. If you are not comfortable with this, there will still be four boys-only and four girls-only washrooms for you to use.*

*This space, like all other washrooms, will be supervised and students are expected to act according to our school rules. Schools across Canada are recognizing the need for all-gender washrooms and we are proud to join this important movement.*

*Congratulations Westmount High School for moving forward on this project and continuously showing your respect for the incredible diversity that we share in our school.”*