

It's official!

Westmount Park Elementary 'opens' after \$20-million makeover

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A ribbon cutting was held at Westmount Park Elementary School on November 15 to mark the return of staff and students following the completion of a \$20-million makeover over the past two academic years. The students have been back in the building since September.

Built in 1913 when the city of Westmount was regarded as a suburb of Montreal and was expanding quickly, the building on Park Place facing Westmount Park underwent additions in 1919 and 1921, as well as renovations over the following decades.

During the two years Westmount Park students were unable to access the building, they were based at the former St. John Bosco Elementary School in Ville Émaré (which became known as the Westmount Park South Campus) and Marymount Academy International on Côte St. Luc Rd. in NDG (Westmount Park North Campus).

"On the council of commissioners, we're proud to support this major renovation project," said EMSB chairman Joe Ortona. "And while we know work is not yet 100-percent complete, I think we all love

what we see so far and it's just terrific to have everyone back."

According to the EMSB, the refurbished school now has modernized classrooms,

including interactive SMART boards. There are also flexible seating options, several learning spaces, dedicated music and science rooms, and a new elevator and ex-

terior ramp to make the building more accessible to persons with mobility issues.

However, guests taking part in the ribbon cutting last week were unable to tour the refurbished building because of restrictions still in place for the COVID pandemic.

In an effort to maintain some of the building's heritage, the auditorium was restored (including its elegant woodwork). The sprinkler system and emergency exits in the auditorium were also brought up to date. The paint was refreshed, the benches repaired and new heating cabinets installed.

Westmount Park students will now also have access to "energy stations" set up throughout the building. The stations will include stationary bikes, rowing machines and sensory paths.

According to the EMSB, students will be able to leave class for a motion and/or brain break when needed.

Other refurbishments included work on the roof, interior finishes, the installation of an elevator, mechanical systems (plumbing and sprinklers), electrical (wiring, lights, telecom, fire alarm) and exterior (drainage system and foundation waterproofing).



Seen here on November 15 during the ribbon cutting in a corridor at Westmount Park Elementary School are, from left, librarian Yvette Bailey, EMSB sector director Jimmy Giannacopoulos, principal Marco Gagliardi, assistant director general Pela Nickoletopoulos, EMSB chairman Joe Ortona, director general Nick Katalifos, interim principal Giovanni Iammarrone, vice principal Holly Kusiewicz and EMSB board commissioner for Ward 3 Julien Feldman.

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