2027-2028

Mount Douglas Secondary Challenge Program



Take a tour of Mount Doug at https://mountdoug.sd61.bc.ca/

Challenge Coordinator - Ted Meldrum

EMAIL: tmeldrum@sd61.bc.ca

2027-2028



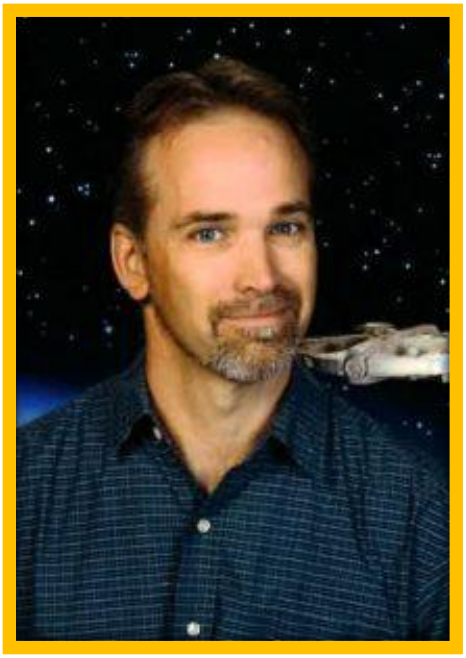
Mount Douglas Secondary School Challenge Program Faculty

Ted Meldrum – Challenge Coordinator & Social Studies – Mount Douglas



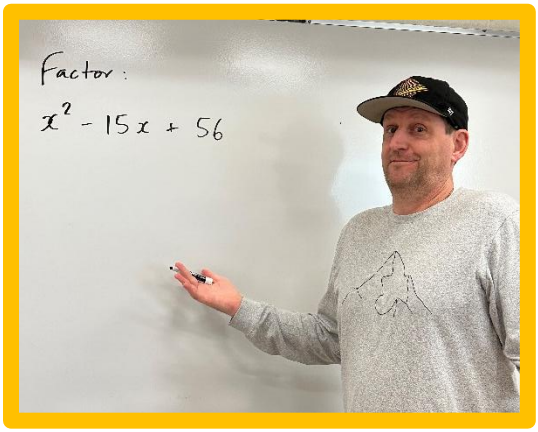
Mr. Meldrum attained his Bachelor of Arts in Geography and History in 1994, finishing his degree during the evenings while working full time as a land surveyor assistant. Five years after graduating from the University of Victoria, Mr. Meldrum returned to the University of Victoria and completed his post degree program, earning his teacher certification while starting his family, and finishing in the top 5% of his classes. Mr. Meldrum began teaching gifted students in the Esquimalt High School Challenge program before moving on to the Alternative Education and the Adult Education Programs. Arriving at Mt. Douglas in 2009, Mr. Meldrum once again started teaching gifted students in 2010, starting with Social Studies 10 and moving on to all Social Studies from grade 9 – 11. In 2015, he took over the position of Challenge Coordinator with a focus in improving the relationships and connections for students in the Program. Wherever Mr. Meldrum has taught, he has created innovative programs and revitalized existing programs. Mr. Meldrum has continued to hone all aspects of his teaching practices, focusing on working with gifted students, connecting with youth at risk, improving student connections to learning, and enhancing interactions of gifted students. He is a co-winner of the **Government of Canada History Award** for 2016.

Neal Johnson – Science & Math – Mount Douglas



Neal Johnson has focused on Gifted Education his entire teaching career. His unusual degree is a Bachelor of Education in General Sciences Expanded (With Distinction) granted by the University of Victoria in 1996. This specialized degree allowed him to integrate Physics with other sciences such as Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, and Geophysics. By 1998, Mr. Johnson had been recruited to teach full-time within the Cedar Hill Junior Secondary Challenge Program, and a year later was asked to serve as Challenge Coordinator for this district program. He accepted and guided the program until 2009, including transitioning the program into its present setting at Mount Douglas Secondary. Many people may be familiar with Mr. Johnson based on his work supporting students in competitions at Mount Douglas as well as at various Middle Schools. As a teacher sponsor for the Provincial Math Challengers, National University of Waterloo Math competitions, Canadian Open Mathematics Challenge, and the provincial Kwantlen STEM competition, Mr. Johnson has been very fortunate to help students win many championships. Since 2005, Mount Douglas Secondary has been recognized as the top performing school on Vancouver Island for these Mathematics and STEM competitions, and even won ***Top STEM School in British Columbia*** at the 2019 Kwantlen Provincial STEM Competition. In recognition of all of the work and successes Mr. Johnson has experienced with his students over his career, he was nominated for and subsequently honored to receive the ***Outstanding Teacher Award*** from the University of Chicago. Given that Mr. Johnson himself was designated as "Gifted" and one of his children also received this designation, it is not surprising that he has such a passion for Gifted Education. He has experienced the substantial benefits from the perspective of student, parent, and teacher.

Jeremy Quast – Math – Mount Douglas



Jeremy Quast attended UVic for his Biology and Mathematics undergraduate degree and followed that with his Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. He began his teaching career in 1998 at Lax Kw'alaams Elementary-Secondary School in Port Simpson, B.C., and, after several short stints at various Victoria high schools, including Lambrick Park, Oak Bay, and Spectrum, arrived at Mt. Douglas in September 2002. He has remained a Ram ever since. Mr. Quast teaches a variety of subjects, including Math 9 Challenge, Workplace Math 11, Pre-Calculus Math 12, Chemistry 12, and Anatomy and Physiology 12. A self-proclaimed math nerd, a basketball athlete until two ACL tears ended his career, an 11 year basketball coach, and lifelong Canucks and Dolphins fan, he is married to his wife, Vanessa (a counsellor at Spectrum), and they live with their two sons and five cats. Mr. Quast has a tremendous talent to bring all Challenge students to the same level of proficiency no matter what their previous math experience has been. Mr. Quast welcomes you to the Program and promises that all Challenge students will come to appreciate the elegance of algebra after five months in Mr. Quast's room 214.

Jordan Bell – English – Mount Douglas



As a Mt. Doug alumnus and former Challenge student, Jordan Bell is thrilled to pass on his positive experience to a new generation. Mr. Bell was raised by a professorial patriarch possessing a pronounced proclivity for poetry; this upbringing, along with his student years in the classroom of Mt. Douglas legend Mr. Greene, likely sealed Mr. Bell's fate of becoming an English teacher himself. After completing his BA English Honours with Distinction and Post-Degree Professional Program at the University of Victoria, Mr. Bell spent time teaching on the British Columbia mainland and in Japan before returning to Victoria and joining School District 61 in 2016. He also enjoys theatre and has discreetly performed in productions at Langham Court and St. Luke's. Mr. Bell is sincerely grateful to work here at Mt. Douglas, where he is inspired each day by the excellence of his colleagues and students.

Amelita Kucher – Science – Mount Douglas



After a decade spent exploring the world and its cultures, Amelita Kucher immersed herself at the University of Victoria earning a Co-op degree in Biology with a minor in Environmental Studies. Her work as a university TA and as a Parks naturalist and interpreter led her into a teaching career. Now head of the Science Department, Ms. Kucher brings experiential learning into her Science, Biology and Earth Science classes with explorations, yoga stretches and hands-on laboratory work. Fluent in French, she takes Mount Doug students to France every two years as the coordinator of our France Exchange. Ms. Kucher documents many of the school's activities as an experienced photographer. She spends her leisure hours hiking, biking, and enjoying Victoria's culture.

Allan Williams – English – Mount Douglas



A graduate of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, Alan Williams moved to Victoria for love, and began teaching at Mount Douglas in 2003. His first experience working with gifted students was when he helped create the **Mini School at Killarney Secondary** in Vancouver. He has taught French, ESL, PE, and Social Studies, but for the last five years has focused on teaching English in the Challenge Program, as well as Drama. An accomplished field hockey player, he played on the **Canadian Men's National Squad** for three years and coached the UVic Vikes for six years. Denying a mid-life crisis, Alan Williams has morphed into the loud singer of a teacher rock band, hoping to tour portables everywhere.

Sean Lansdell – English – Mount Douglas



Sean Lansdell graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature. During his undergraduate studies, he spent many of his nights working as a cook in various restaurants throughout Victoria. Despite a passion for cooking that led him to consider a culinary career; he ultimately began a post-teaching degree teacher internship and earned his certification in 2007. Mr. Lansdell has been at Mount Douglas since 2012. He became a teacher because of his love of storytelling and his appreciation of the constructs of language; he aims to pass on his enthusiasm to his students. Outside the classroom, Mr. Lansdell is a dedicated sports fan, an avid reader of fiction, and a devoted father of two young children.

GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #61
SECONDARY CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Re: Greater Victoria School District #61 Secondary Challenge Program

The Greater Victoria School District provides district programs catering to the needs of gifted and talented students in two schools:

Mount Douglas Secondary School (Grades 9-12)
Challenge Coordinator: **Ted Meldrum** tmeldrum@sd61.bc.ca
and
Esquimalt Community School (Grades 9-12)
Challenge Coordinator: **Omdrea Walker** owalker@sd61.bc.ca

THE GIFTED LEARNER

A talented and gifted learner possesses a variety of characteristics that may include high task commitment, social and emotional intensity, creative and/or productive thinking and above average intelligence. This individual has a thirst for knowledge, has a passion for learning and requires differentiated educational opportunities and services.

In keeping with the Ministry's definition of giftedness, the selection process used to identify such students gives heavy weighting to high intellectual ability as reflected in test scores and academic performance; and high task commitment, as indicated in written presentations, documentation and interviews, and highly creative assignments and hobbies.

DISTRICT CHALLENGE TESTING PROGRAM

In order for students to be considered for the Challenge Program they must be tested. The testing is used in conjunction with the student's application to create a student profile. The information below is intended to help you understand District Program's testing process.

A test schedule will be sent to each applicant (via e-mail or phone) and the information will be sent to their current school during the latter part of January. This notice will specify the scheduled testing date and time. The student is to come to the designated spot for testing on the day and time specified. If your child cannot attend on the date scheduled, please call or e-mail the school to re-schedule your child's testing session. If your child is ill on the day of his/her test, please call the school in the morning to arrange for an alternative date.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. The School Based Teacher or Principal may select students who they consider eligible for consideration. Selections may be based upon identification materials contained in the District #61 Resource Book for teachers of Challenge students. Parents may also refer their children for consideration by applying through Mount Douglas Secondary School.

2. **Part 1 of the application form can be filled out on the night of the information meeting January 6th, 2027 at Mount Douglas Secondary or returned to Mount Douglas Secondary School at 3970 Gordon Head Road in person to the main office or by mail, fax or email (FAX: 250-477-0277 Email mtdouginfo@sd61.bc.ca) by Friday, January 15, 2027.**

3. **Part 2 of the application package should be delivered to Mt. Douglas at your assigned testing session time on Friday, January 22, 2027.**

4. An evaluation form will have been forwarded to all schools; however, upon receipt of the Challenge Application and upon request, an evaluation form will be sent to the student's current teacher(s).

5. **Testing:** Parents and students will be provided with more information about the testing session via e-mail.

SCREENING

1. **Once all information is received and collated, the Screening Committee will meet and decisions will be made to**
   i) accept the applicant into the District Program; or
   ii) place the applicant on a wait list pending available seats in the District Program; or
   iii) notify the applicant that he/she has not been accepted into the District Program.

2. **Mount Douglas will**
   i) establish and maintain a roster of recommended students;
   ii) communicate in writing the status of the student to the recommending school and parents; and
   iii) hold all student work and materials for pick up at Mount Douglas Secondary after the selection process is complete.

3. **Appeal Procedure**
   a. The Committee will discuss the decision with the parents and with the student, if appropriate.
   b. Upon request of the parents and student, the District Committee will reconsider previously and newly submitted information on a student who has not been placed in a gifted program.
   c. The appeal must be received in writing within two weeks of placement notification.

The information on the attached forms is collected under the authority of the School Act and will be used solely for the purpose of establishing eligibility for the District Challenge Program. It will be kept secure and confidential in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Any questions concerning the collection or use of this information may be directed to your School Principal.

VIDEO AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE:

https://mountdoug.sd61.bc.ca

VISION STATEMENT

The Mount Douglas Secondary Challenge Program serves the unique needs of gifted, creative, and talented learners by creating a community which seeks to maximize student opportunities for enrichment, self-direction, independence, synergetic interaction and emotional well-being in a secure, mentoring atmosphere. The program will foster the development of individual excellence through differentiated educational experiences.

The Mount Douglas Secondary Challenge Program offers gifted, creative, and talented students an educational program consistent with their abilities which aims to prepare them for post-secondary education and the world at large. The program makes every attempt to ensure that students become knowledgeable and skilled in "core areas" of instruction. Acquisition of knowledge is seen as a cornerstone of the program; however, students do not learn in a rote manner but are expected, instead, to develop an understanding of relationships within knowledge, one of the hallmarks of an educated individual. Methods of instruction are also aimed at the development of higher order thinking skills. Activities and assignments routinely require students to analyze, synthesize or evaluate material covered. Similarly, students are asked to make logical extensions or to establish and justify conclusions.

Skill development is seen as a second cornerstone of the Challenge Program at Mount Douglas Secondary. A concerted attempt is made to ensure that students develop necessary research, organization and presentation skills. These skills flow naturally into independent study projects, which further hone individual skills while offering opportunities to develop creativity and skills in long term planning, time management and group dynamics.

Within the program, Grade 9 and 10 Challenge students stay together for the core subjects of Social Studies, English, Science and Mathematics. In Grade 11 and 12, Challenge students maintain the grouping in Social Studies, English and Mathematics and choose the appropriate Science courses. At the end of Grade 12, students will, upon completion of Social Studies 9-11, while have the option of writing the AP Human Geography 12 exam. The core subject grouping offers an environment and a peer group where interest in learning and facing intellectual challenges is seen as the norm and not as something unusual or undesirable. This constructive peer atmosphere is a tremendous advantage to the academically gifted student. On the other hand, the elective program provides the advantages of mixing challenge students with the rest of the student body and ensuring that they are well integrated into the school's broader culture.

The Mount Douglas Secondary Challenge Program offers students opportunities for enrichment in education, skill development, performance and accomplishment. It asks for keen intellectual interest and a commitment to shared goals.

We, in the program, look forward to working with new students towards these shared goals.

Heather Brown

Principal

Ted Meldrum

Challenge Co-coordinator

PLEASE NEATLY FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS FORM BEFORE Friday, JANUARY 15, 2027

APPLICATION - PART 1

FAX, MAIL, EMAIL or DELIVER TO MOUNT DOUGLAS SECONDARY SCHOOL

FAX: 250-477-0277 **E-MAIL: mtdouginfo@sd61.bc.ca**

Mount Douglas Secondary School
3970 Gordon Head Road, Victoria, B.C. V8N 3X3

GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #61
CHALLENGE PROGRAM REGISTRATION
STUDENT INFORMATION (Please print)

SURNAME: _____

FIRST NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ **Optional:** Male ❑ Female ❑
(YEAR) (MONTH) (DAY)

PRESENT SCHOOL: _____ **PUPIL #:** _____

CURRENT GRADE: _____ **CONTACT/TAG TEACHER:** _____

FRENCH IMMERSION ❑ OR ENGLISH STREAM ❑ **WITHIN SD61 ❑ OR OUT OF SD61 ❑**

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT NAME: (Mr. Mrs. Ms.) _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ **WORK PHONE (if applicable):** _____

CELL PHONE (if applicable): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT:

I / we give consent for _____ to apply to the District Gifted and Talented Program at Mount Douglas.

- I / we accept responsibility for ensuring that this application is complete and all items listed in the check list are included and submitted by the deadline. (Program personnel will not assume responsibility for calling for missing items.)
- I / we give consent for group and/or individual intellectual and/or academic tests to be administered.
- I / We understand that we must assume responsibility for the transportation to / and from Mt. Douglas for the purposes of admission testing.

_____ _____

(Parent / Guardian Signature) (Student Signature)

PLEASE DELIVER PART 2 ON YOUR ASSIGNED TESTING DATE (Friday, January 22, 2027)

APPLICATION - PART 2 – Page 1 of 4

GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #61

MOUNT DOUGLAS CHALLENGE PROGRAM APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST TO ENSURE THAT ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION IN THE ORDER THAT IS PRINTED OUT BELOW, AND SUBMIT ON THE JANUARY 22, 2027 TEST DATE.

(PROGRAM PERSONNEL WILL NOT ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CALLING FOR MISSING ITEMS.)

PARENT / GUARDIAN:

Please fill out the following form:

- ☐ **REGISTRATION FORM**

Please include the following correspondence:

- ☐ **PARENT LETTER OF SUPPORT**
  Write a letter of support for your child's application to the "Challenge Program Committee"
  - State why you think your child is a good candidate for the program.
  - Please limit your letter to two pages (written) or one page (typed). Please no AI use.
- ☐ **COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S MOST RECENT REPORT CARD.**
- ☐ **COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S PERMANENT RECORD OBTAINED FROM YOUR CHILD'S CURRENT SCHOOL**

STUDENT:

Please include the following:

- ☐ **LETTER OF APPLICATION**
  Write a letter of application to the Challenge Program Committee outlining what inspires you to explore new ideas, develop further understanding of what you learn in the classroom or drives your curiosity.
  - Tell them why you would want to be part of the program.
  - Tell them why you think you are suited for this program.
  - Please limit your letter to two pages (written) or one page (typed). Please no AI use.
- ☐ **STUDENT INTEREST AND ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY**
  To be completed by the student. Parents and teachers are encouraged to assist the student.
- ☐ **WORK SAMPLES**

  Please provide examples that represent your best work.
  Work samples are critical to our selection process.

  All work needs to organized in a 1"binder or 1"portfolio organizer. Provide photographs of any material that does not fit in the binder. Please show multiple angles/perspectives. USB devices can be included.

Examples of work could include the following:

- ☐ Creative Writing
- ☐ Long term research or investigative project
- ☐ Math work, tests, or provincial Math competitions
- ☐ Any competition, academic or otherwise, outside of a school setting
- ☐ Sample of other creative work (e.g. art, photograph, drama, cartooning, etc.)

Please sign and date each sample. All work samples will be available for pick up after the evaluation process from February 15th – 19th, 2027 at the school.

EVALUATION FORMS WILL BE FORWARDED TO YOUR CONTACT TEACHER UPON RECEIPT OF THIS APPLICATION

APPLICATION - PART 2 – Page 2 of 4

GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #61
CHALLENGE PROGRAM

R E G I S T R A T I O N F O R M

STUDENT INFORMATION: PLEASE PRINT

Surname: _____ **First name**:_____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Optional: Male ❑ Female ❑
Year / Month / Day

Present School: _____

Gr. 8 Contact Teacher : _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contact Parent/Guardian (Mr. Mrs. Ms.) _____

Address:_____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone : _____ Work Phone: _____

E-Mail Address : _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT:

_____
(Date)

I / we give consent for _____ to apply to the Mount Douglas Secondary School District Challenge Program for Gifted, Creative and Talented students.

- I / we accept responsibility for ensuring that this application is complete and all items listed in the check list are included and submitted by the deadline. (Program personnel will not assume responsibility for calling for missing items.)
- I / we give consent for group and/or individual intellectual and/or academic tests to be administered.
- I / we understand that we must assume responsibility for student transportation to and from Mount Douglas Secondary School or Esquimalt Secondary School.

_____ _____
(Parent / Guardian Signature) (Student Signature)

APPLICATION PART 2 – Page 3 of 4

DISTRICT CHALLENGE PROGRAM
STUDENT INTEREST AND ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY
(To be completed by student)

Name: _____ Present School: _____

1. List your past and present involvement with **clubs and organizations** and/or extra-curricular activities. Include length of involvement, positions held, and recognition received.

Length of Time	CLUB / ORGANIZATION	POSITION / AWARD

2. List **hobbies and interests** including sports, family activities, collections, games, traveling, etc. Outline the extent and duration of your involvement.

Length of time	HOBBIES / INTERESTS	INVOLVEMENT

3. Describe what you like **most** about school and subjects and why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Describe what you like **least** about school and subjects and why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Are you an **expert or specialist in some area(s)**? Please explain.

EXPERT IN:	EXPLANATION

APPLICATION PART 2 – Page 4 of 4

DISTRICT CHALLENGE PROGRAM
Information Survey

Please indicate where you heard about the District Challenge Program. You may select as many choices that are appropriate. If your parent(s) told you about the District Challenge Program, then please complete Part 2 of the survey.

Part 1.

Where did you first hear about the District Challenge Program?

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Website
- ☐ District Advertisement
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Neighbour(s)
- ☐ Friend(s)
- ☐ Parent(s)
- ☐ Other

Part 2

Where did your parent(s) first hear about the District Challenge Program?

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Website
- ☐ District Advertisement
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Neighbour(s)
- ☐ Friend(s)

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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