

THE COGITO ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME

Cogito is a knowledge-based programme that challenges students to always do their best – the programme is designed for the student who is willing to work hard to achieve a high level of academic excellence. By setting and fulfilling high academic goals, our students are able to build their self esteem and build a strong sense of pride.

Cogito provides a structured environment with clear expectations. Development of a strong, broad base of knowledge is valued and an atmosphere of structure and sequenced learning is consistently fostered.



The programme's focus on a broad liberal arts education produces a balanced approach across school subjects. High standards and high expectations prepare students for a wide range of future academic, professional and skilled employment opportunities.

COGITO IS DEDICATED TO
HELPING AVERAGE STUDENTS
MAXIMIZE THEIR
ACADEMIC POTENTIAL.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. ALBERT COGITO PROGRAMME

St. Albert Protestant Schools first offered the Cogito Alternative Programme in the 2003/2004 school year. During the first year of implementation, the Cogito teachers provided instruction for three classes with students from Grades 1 to 6. Where numbers warrant, the programme will continue to grow from Kindergarten to Grade 9, with the potential for extension to the high school level.

Cogito is open to all St. Albert students and yellow bus transportation may be available.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Elmer S. Gish School
75 Akins Drive
St. Albert, Alberta
Phone: (780) 459-7766
Website: www.esgjh.spschools.org

Cover photo by: Jason Franson, Gazette Press

COGITO ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME



Designed to help average students achieve a high level of academic success, Cogito is based on the following principles:

- a knowledge-rich curriculum;
- direct instruction;
- a structured environment;
- regular homework; and
- parent involvement.



ELMER S. GISH SCHOOL



ST. ALBERT
PROTESTANT
SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The Cogito Programme is based on the Alberta curriculum but includes the following key features:

- the acquisition of knowledge is emphasized;
- early literacy is fostered through explicit phonics instruction – sound-symbol relationships of the language are systematically taught, practiced and applied;
- systematic attention is given to grammar, vocabulary and fluency;
- second language instruction begins in Grade 1, providing an important opportunity to extend language mastery;
- early mastery of basic numeracy skills is emphasized – sequential development of skills facilitates accuracy and proficiency and a strong emphasis on mental math reduces dependency on technology;
- specific skills in and appreciation for geography and history are incorporated in the Social Studies programme; and
- science studies stress the development of a strong knowledge base and instruction in basic principles precedes investigation.



REGULAR HOMEWORK

Our students can expect regular homework assignments, which:

- provide extended time on task and opportunities to practice material that has been taught;
- develop personal responsibility and time management skills; and
- involve parents in the learning process.

TEACHING APPROACH

In a Cogito classroom, you will find:

- teacher-led instruction to the whole group;
- learning outcomes analyzed and organized into carefully sequenced, measurable steps;
- objectives designed to be measured systematically;
- results reported in a quantified fashion when possible;
- a high proportion of teacher explanation and demonstration;
- corrective feedback; and
- recitation, memorization and practice exercises.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Students enrolled in Cogito strive to meet high standards, both academically and in building the Cogito environment, in which:

- students are always challenged to produce their best possible work;
- work habits and organizational skills are valued;
- an orderly, structured environment is maintained;
- student uniforms contribute to perceptions of success;
- accuracy and precision in oral and written work are expected; and
- time on task is maintained at a very high level.



PROGRAMME COMMITMENT

Cogito requires a high level of commitment from everyone involved – students, parents, teachers and the school's administration.

- All parents and junior high students sign a commitment form indicating their understanding and support of the Cogito philosophy and practice.
- The principal and teachers are committed to developing and maintaining a school environment in which the Cogito philosophy can be fully implemented.
- Teachers and principal maintain close communication with parents.
- Students demonstrate diligence and effort to achieve expected results. Students work hard, complete assignments to expected standards and follow the rules of the school.
- Parents encourage student progress, provide a distraction-free time and place for homework, examine student work and sign the homework book.