



Chair (Vancouver DPAC) <chair@vancouverdpac.org>

DPAC on MACC

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Dear Trustees:

Our executive wishes to provide our thoughts about the MACC program, the recent public engagement and the decision-making process.

1. The DPAC Executive supports the continuation of the special needs district program of MACC in its current full-year format and encourages the district to find ways to improve access to the program for equity-seeking groups. *We believe that the extensive proposed changes amount to a cessation of the program.*
2. Engaging parents by asking for and incorporating their feedback is important. DPAC has in the past provided feedback about VSB consultation and was a driver in creating the current administrative procedure regarding public consultation, which references the IAP2 spectrum of public participation. (https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Administrative%20Procedures%20Manual%20Library/Section%20100/AP_106_District_Public_Engagement.pdf)

The limits of the engagement process were quite clearly outlined at the beginning of and throughout the consultation sessions about the proposed new Enrichment Centres:

- All the information provided by the VSB and Spur (videos, printed/online materials, communications in engagements, etc.) indicated that the MACC Program, VSB's only dedicated program for P-designated students in Grades 4-7, will no longer be offered.
- Regarding the cessation of MACC, participants were not permitted to speak or discuss, and there were no breakout sessions for them to offer verbal feedback. Any written comments or questions about the MACC Program – both in the Miro app and in the Zoom chat – went unaddressed. Session leaders removed participants from the meetings on at least three occasions, though these participants had written questions/points respectfully.
- Participants were directed to answer questions solely about specific aspects of the proposed new program.

Using the language from the IAP2 spectrum:

- a. The actions in the engagement sessions relating to the significant "revisioning" (i.e.: cancellation) of MACC indicates that "*Inform*" was the public participation goal, the most minimal stage of the Participation Spectrum.
- b. Parents were being *consulted* about a new program.

Clarity and transparency are essential with regard to engagement processes. MACC parents are frustrated that they are being only *informed* about the apparent decision to cancel the MACC Program. For a decision ending a full-time, district special education program for students with a Ministry learning designation, it is the expectation of students, parents, alumni and other stakeholders to be engaged – at minimum – in any of the advanced IAP2 stages: to “Consult” (to offer feedback on analysis and provide alternatives to the decision), or, more reasonably, to “Involve” (to be invited and welcomed to share concerns and aspirations, with the assurance that their voices are consistently understood and considered). Parents want, and deserve, to have a bigger impact on significant decisions made by the district.

3. The MACC program is a District Program under Learning Services. There is clear communication of the intent to no longer offer the program. Cessation of District Programs is a responsibility of the Board. (Policy 2, additional responsibilities: #9 “Approve the implementation and cessation of District programs....” https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Board-of-Education/Policy_Manual/Documents/sbfile/180928/02-Policy2-Role-of-the-Board.pdf)

Given that decisions on the cessation of the MACC program should be made by the trustees, and that consultation on the existing program has not yet occurred, we urge Trustees to fully participate in the consultative process on the future of MACC before making a decision about the program. Doing less would not fulfill the responsibility of the Board.

To support Trustees in their work, we invite you to attend an informational session that we are hosting on February 24. The engagement process has focused solely on the benefits of the enrichment centres intended to supplant MACC. It has failed to hear about the crucial supports MACC provides, and the gaps that enrichment centre format would not be able to fill. Our February 24 session will be an opportunity for Trustees to learn from experts about the learning profiles of Gifted/neurodiverse students, and the resources and supports that these children need.

Register for our February 24th meeting here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlqc--ppjkiGNGGs1PsgjjwRhe0j8cW8PHx>

Thank you,

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Gord Lau
Chair, Vancouver DPAC

Honouring the traditional, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples

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