



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

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## MACC program - concerns

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Mon, Jun 6, 2022 at 2:56 PM

To: Helen McGregor <hmcgregor@vsb.bc.ca>, David Nelson <dnelson@vsb.bc.ca>

Cc: "Vice-Chair (Vancouver DPAC)" <vicechair@vancouverdpac.org>, Janet Fraser <janet.fraser@vsb.bc.ca>

Dear Helen:

Earlier this year, DPAC communicated our concerns about changes to MACC to trustees and staff. Our executive voted to "support the continuation of the special needs district program of MACC in its current full-year format".

We were pleased to hear about the intake for MACC at the Grade 4 level resuming, albeit later and on a more limited basis than in previous years.

At this time, families have received offers of placement and have been asked to accept by June 10th. However, we believe that simply resuming intake does not ensure the program continues to be as accessible to students as it has been previously.

I would like to bring forward some concerns that you may not be aware of, and an ask.

As background, the English MACC program has been offered in three classes at 2 locations (Tecumseh, Grade 5-7, Osler, Grade 4-5 and 6-7). We understand that this year, the Grade 4 intake will be at Tecumseh only, possibly making those classes Gr 4-7.

Parents have expressed concerns in past years that, of all VSB learning services programs for elementary-level children with special needs, access to bussing for MACC has been at the discretion of the district based on hardship and vulnerability. That lack of clarity and universality is concerning and this year, even that level of accommodation has not been offered to parents.

Instead, we've heard that parents have been told that, while bus service will continue for MACC families who currently receive it, there will be no bussing offered for incoming Fall 2022 MACC families, and that transportation should be factored into their choices for their special needs child. This is not inclusion. We have heard from parents in the past who have situations which make it impossible for them to get their children across town to MACC to access the support their child needs. It could also lead to the absurd situation where a family with two children in the MACC program of different ages would have one child bussed to their school (Osler) and have the younger one make their own way (as the Grade 4 intake is at Tecumseh).

In addition, some parents have heard from their home schools that Learning Services may still change how they are going to divide individual MACC grades between Osler/Tecumseh. This lack of certainty alongside the lack of bussing service makes it impossible for some parents to accept a spot by the June 10th deadline.

In the future, trustees may need to make a decision regarding the MACC program. It truly concerns me that such a decision might be made after program supports such as transportation and comprehensive assessment have been changed in ways that make the program less accessible and equitable.

As I'm sure you know, there can be life-altering consequences for children who don't receive what they need at the appropriate time. We are pleased that spaces at the Grade 4 level are being offered to families but without supports such as bussing and a willingness to work with families (even if it's just based on hardships), for some families, these offers may as well be a shiny gift behind the glass of a department store window, beautiful to look at but impossible to have.

I ask that you consider this concern, restore bussing service for 2022-2023 incoming families, extend the deadline for accepting offers and restore comprehensive group assessments for the 2023-2024 incoming year.

Thank you,

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Gord Lau  
Chair, Vancouver DPAC

6/9/22, 5:42 PM

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