



Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>

Student Media Inquiry - Second half of MACC questions

6 messages

Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 8, 2022 at 2:39 PM

To: communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca>

Good Afternoon Communications,

Hope staffs' week is off to a good start.

As I'm sure you know there are a lot of passionate members of the community who have strong opinions regarding the MACC changes, and I have some questions based on what's been heard from them or found through investigation. I apologize if they sound moderately confrontational, just my job ;)

If you need more details, please let me know and we'll clarify.

(1) Regarding the six-week GEC model's claimed base in research

All studies provided in the [Best Practices for Gifted Programming](#) document, the research [findings from on this page](#), and the additional study provided by communications ([The Effect of an Enrichment Program on Developing Analytical, Creative, and Practical Abilities of Elementary Gifted Students](#) - PDF mine), that VSB said support the following statement:

"Research identifies a duration of six weeks as an ideal length for enrichment programming," - Liz Hayes-Brown in [this video](#).

were found to in no way be supportive of said statement. The VSB has yet to provide any research that identifies a duration of six weeks as ideal. That claim is simply not true.

Even in the additional study sent last week, the VSB misquoted it substantially and claimed it [supported the opposite of what it actually did](#).

(a) Did the VSB know that they were misleading the public regarding their claim that the six-week model is research based? Will the VSB acknowledge that they are currently doing so?

(b) How did factually incorrect statements make their way into a public engagement campaign that the District claims is research based?

(c) Does the VSB intend to produce evidence to back their claim that the six-week model is research based?

(e) Who (department of VSB, positions/names, or third parties) is responsible for providing the research in respect to the six-week model?

(e) Parents have said they've had trouble accessing the [cited research](#). Does the VSB intend to make that research more accessible?

2. Regarding Spur/VSB Consultations

The Nest has heard from parents who claim they were removed from January Zoom consultations after respectfully offering their opinion, verbally and written into the chat. I am aware consultations are managed by Spur Communications, and I will be asking them to reply on the specifics of those; however, I would like to hear from VSB:

(a) Did the VSB know parents were being removed from Zoom Consultations managed by Spur?

(b) Is it acceptable for community members respectfully expressing their opinions to be removed from a consultation? Is that appropriate?

(c) *Parents and students who participated in the consultations told me that they were overwhelmingly disappointed in the level of consultation and do not believe they have been meaningfully consulted in any way regarding the MACC proposal. Please give your response.*

(d) *Parents noted that they felt the forum of the consultations became increasingly restrictive after the first (where Liz Hayes Brown and Rosie Poetskche stayed well past the scheduled end of the call to answer questions), and limited engagement. Spur Communications also introduced some tone-setting rules in the last three consultations that were not present in the first. Was this at the VSB's request?*

(e) *Was Spur instructed by the VSB to remove people who continually voiced opinions that they didn't agree with? Only those who actively and repeatedly voiced disagreement were removed from what I have seen and heard.*

3. General

(a) Many say the proposed GECs wouldn't serve the same population as MACC, and that the Revisioning process in the name of equity is inequitable for gifted learners. How would the VSB respond to those statements?

(b) there's been some confusion as to whether MACC is a gifted or enrichment program, complicated by the name of the replacement, GECs. The District has called the current MACC both a gifted program and an enrichment one in different places. Which one is it?

(c) Parents have asked why MACC and GECs cannot both persist. Why not?

(d) Consultation participants ' have said their faith in the public education system has been reduced by this experience. Jessica Wang, a parent, called the process a "huge erosion of public trust". Alumni and current MACC students have expressed confusion at the revisioning. Please respond.

(d) Lastly, MACC parents, students, and alumni say the GECs would serve a different population and leave MACC-eligible students to struggle. What does the District say to their concerns?

I am very aware this is a large list of questions, so please take your time and kindly reply by 11:30 PM Friday.

Thanks very much,
Spencer

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The Griffins' Nest

INFORMATIVE • IMPARTIAL • INDEPENDENT

Spencer Izen

Student Journalist & Editor-in-Chief | The Griffins' Nest

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Informative • Impartial • Independent

I would like to acknowledge that I work, live, and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-waututh Peoples.

communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca>
To: Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 8, 2022 at 3:01 PM

Hi Spencer, these are a long list of questions and we will need some time to respond. We can try and get to these later next week. Let me know if that works.



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Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>
To: communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca>

Tue, Feb 8, 2022 at 10:36 PM

Hi 

Thanks for your prompt reply. I realize it's a long list.

I asked my Editorial Board about pushing the deadline back a few days, and the majority was only willing to go back to 8 PM Saturday. It was pointed out the Spur Communications' consultation report is scheduled to be released mid February, and if we were to wait for the District to provide a reply by then, the public wouldn't be very well served on our part. We felt it was the *public's right to access objective information regarding an important decision in a timeframe that respects that interest*. This was the maximum amount of time we could afford, having recently received some information and needing to conduct appropriate fact-checking before presenting it here.

We don't want to prioritize what the District responds to, so we'll leave that to you. We're going to have to run the story by Saturday evening to match the gravity of the public conversation. Whatever the District replies with, we will consider. Ethics are top of mind.

If you need some additional supporting details, just let us know. There's 15 questions, but we think they're important and can't wait until late next week. We appreciate the competing interests of the school district and the public.

I hope that's understandable. Looking forward to the District's replies.
Best,

On Feb 8, 2022, at 3:01 PM, communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca> wrote:

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communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca>
To: Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 11, 2022 at 5:34 PM

Hi Spencer, given the number of questions and your timeline, the following is what can be addressed within your deadline.

The current MACC model was introduced more than 30 years ago. How we teach students has evolved since then, and the MACC program should evolve with it. The changes enable the District to expand services and increase access, meeting the diverse needs of students and ensuring it is equitable for all students across Vancouver.

To revision MACC successfully, it is a priority for VSB to hear from as many diverse members of our community as possible. In addition to the online engagement that ran from January 18 to February 8, we offered four digital workshops over two weeks to hear from students, families, teachers, and other stakeholders. In these workshops, facilitators outlined clear agreements for participating, including maintaining a respectful environment, and asking those who had participated in multiple workshops to hold space for others to contribute their input.

We have heard a wealth of diverse and informative feedback from approximately 1,800 community members. We look forward to sharing the results of our engagement in a summary report, to be released in the coming months.

As part of your other questions, I would refer you to the [FAQ section](#) of our website, which has been updated.

I want to take the opportunity to address one of your story that states:

"But the six-week "recommendation", which based on The Nest's review, does not exist, appears to be the single most contentious issue shared by alumni, parents, and experts."

The Learning Services department conducted comprehensive research in Gifted education and Inclusion; and the GEC model is well-supported by that research. A six-week span for pull-out gifted programming is supported and a frequently implemented in the educational research found. Again, this information can be found in the FAQ section of the MACC website. Contrary to what was reported by Griffin's Nest, the [23-page study](#) referenced in your story does support the 6 week model.

Here are just some of the quotes take directly from the study:

There was a "considerable effect of the [six-week] program on students' analytical abilities, that is, that the program succeeded in helping students improve analytical abilities, such as retrieving information, making judgments, the ability to compare and contrast, strategies for evaluation and interpretation, and the perception of self-learning strategies." p 167

"Moreover, results showed the [six-week] program had a statistically significant effect on creative abilities...The emphasis of the enrichment program in this study was on developing skills needed for generating ideas and relatively novel products. The strategies used in this study to improve these skills seem effective. Most of the activities in this enrichment program encouraged students to have positive attitudes toward idea generation and new ideas. The indirect activities to foster mental flexibility were also seen to be effective as evidenced by results of the post-test. This result conformed to results from other studies (e.g., Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006; Sternberg et al., 2011.)" p. 168

Please note, this was one of many articles that supported the six-week Gifted service model. I hope this information helps.

Regards,

Communications

Vancouver School District

1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V6J 5K8

E: communications@vsb.bc.ca | **W:** vsb.bc.ca

Honoured to be working together on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm | Musqueam, Sḵwxwú7mesh | Squamish & səliłwəṭ | Tsleil-Waututh Nations

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Griffins' Nest Newspaper <ehnewspaper@gmail.com>
To: communications <communications@vsb.bc.ca>

Fri, Feb 11, 2022 at 5:51 PM

Have a nice weekend! :)

Spencer

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<image002.png> **Communications**
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