

The following letter regarding the results of the GATE Program Review was distributed by school principals at all GATE Schools.

April 13, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians of Students in the GATE Program:

As you are aware Learning Support, with the assistance of the Community Engagement and Operations Planning (CEOP) Team, undertook an engagement process that invited parents, students, teachers and principals to provide input about GATE programming within the CBE. This process involved two meetings with both parents and CBE staff; a survey, and an open house. Students at the elementary, junior and senior levels were also invited to participate. The following statements outline the key findings from the engagement process. These include the need for:

- ✓ a congregated setting for gifted learners
- ✓ a critical mass of students in a congregated setting
- ✓ teacher expertise and training in giftedness
- ✓ a review of assessment practices for the identification of and programming for gifted learners

These findings have been shared and discussed with the CBE Area Directors, Area System, Principals and Superintendent's Team. The following recommendations were approved by Superintendent's Team on Monday, April 11th. Please note this decision is not tied to budget constraints, but rather reflects the feedback provided by stakeholders through the engagement process.

Most significant of the recommendations is the consolidation of the number of GATE sites to ensure a critical mass of "like-minded" students in each school site. The advantages of this consolidation reflects stakeholder feedback which indicated the need for GATE programs to have a larger cohort of peers; flexibility for the school to organize students for instruction; and the opportunity for teachers to work and plan together. The majority of participants indicated that given the choice of proximity to home and size of program, their preference would be for a robust program. Given this feedback the following decision regarding the location of GATE classes beginning in the fall of 2011 is as follows:

Area I

- Students currently designated to Ranchlands School will be designated to Hillhurst School.

Area III

- Students currently designated to Annie Foote School will be designated to Hillhurst School.
- Students currently designated to Dr. Gordon Higgins School will be designated to Queen Elizabeth School.

Area IV

- Students currently designated to Elboya School will be designated to Nellie McClung and John Ware schools.

High School

- Students in all Areas will have the choice of either Queen Elizabeth High School or Henry Wise Wood High School

To further address the key findings gathered through the engagement process, the CBE is committed during the 2011-2012 school to investigate alternative assessment processes for gifted learners and explore effective professional learning experiences specifically for teachers working in the GATE program.

We are in the process of coordinating open houses for students who will be transitioning to their new school sites for the 2011-2012 school year. We were anxious to get this information to you, therefore, a meeting invitation will be sent to you within the next week with the specific dates and times of the school open houses.

Thank you for your input, patience, and support throughout this process. We are confident that these changes will continue to enhance viable and effective programming for gifted learners within the CBE.