



# Review of the Transition Program for Gifted Students

October 4, 2024

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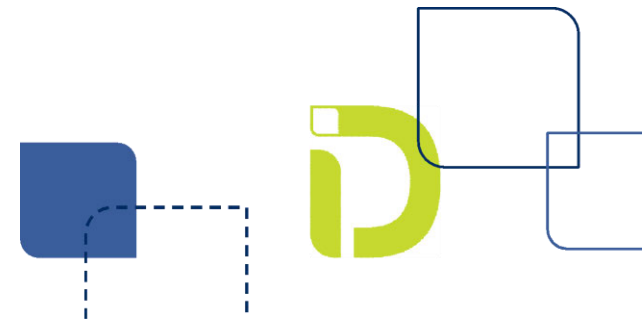
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# Background and Purpose

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## **Background**

The Transition Program for Gifted Students (TPGS), previously known as the University Transition Program (UTP), was established in 1993 by the Vancouver School Board (VSB) in collaboration with the University of British Columbia (UBC). TPGS was designed to accelerate the education of exceptionally gifted adolescents, enabling them to apply for entry to university at an earlier age. TPGS was designated as a Provincial Resource Program (PRP) within the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) in 1995 and presently operates with support from VSB and UBC. In November 2023, the three institutional partners, MECC, VSB, and UBC, agreed to the need for a formal, third-party review of TPGS with the following focus areas:

- Student Learning Experience
- Student Wellbeing
- Student University Preparation
- Program Accessibility
- Program Governance
- Program Cost

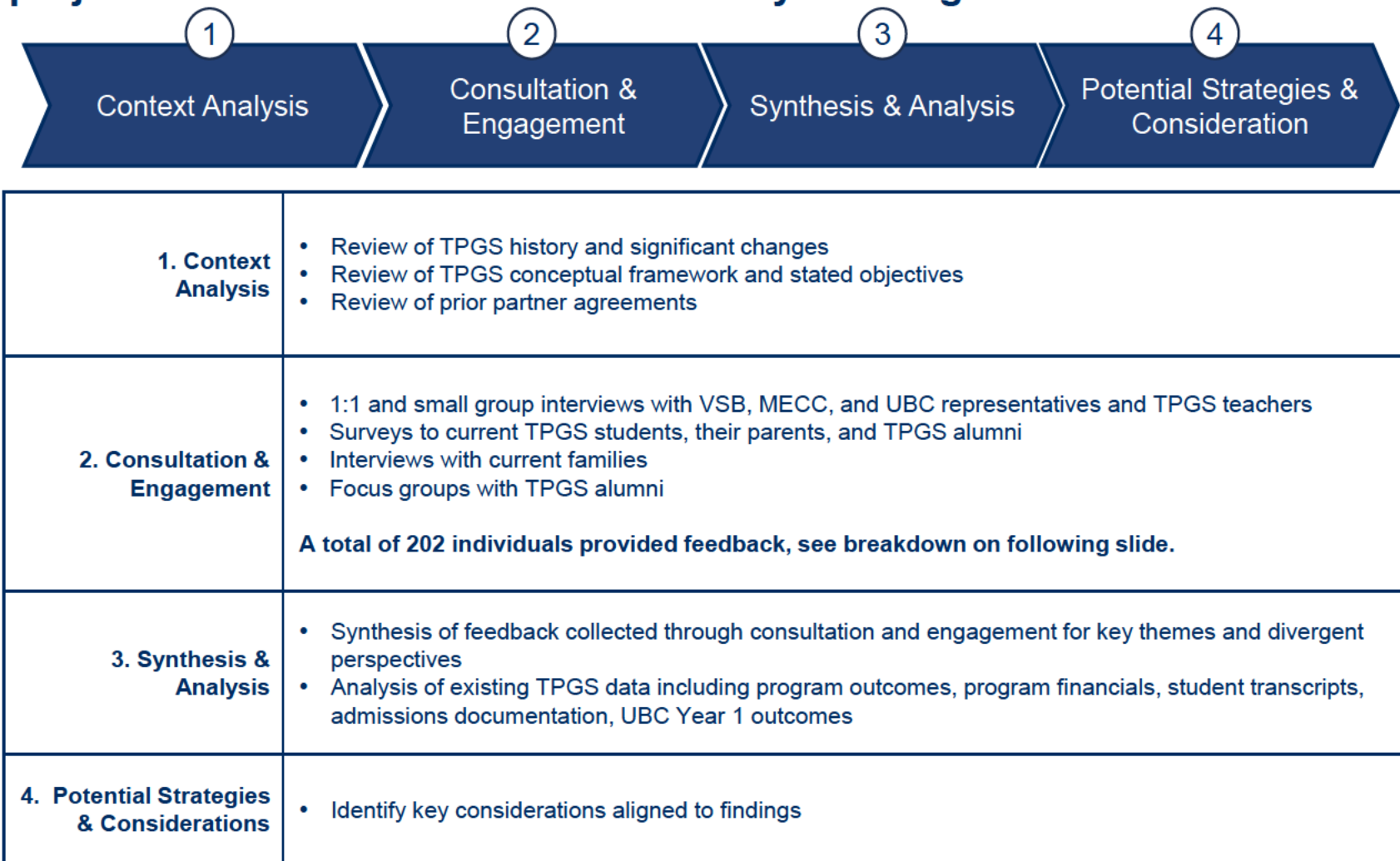
Note: The January 2024 decision to pause program admissions was not itself within the scope of this review.

## **Purpose**

This report presents a summary of findings from a comprehensive review of the Transition Program for Gifted Students. It also identifies potential opportunities for improvement.

# Project Approach

The review involved four main workstreams and included extensive consultation and engagement, and data synthesis and analysis. The project was conducted between February and August 2024.





# Evaluation Framework

The scope of the evaluation included six key dimensions.

Evaluation	Description
Student Learning Experience	Experiences around student learning are explored, such as the breadth and depth of instruction, teaching styles, experiential learning, and the TPGS location and facilities.
Overall Student Wellbeing	Areas of overall student wellbeing are explored, such as the impact of academic and workload pressures, access to wellness supports, relations and supports with peers, teachers, and the TPGS community environment.
Student University Preparation	Students' preparedness for educational experiences after TPGS are explored, such as their academic outcomes in university, their wellbeing in university, and their access to post-secondary supports.
Program Accessibility	Areas of program accessibility are explored, such as the awareness of TPGS for potential students across BC, the process of admissions, and the geographical accessibility of TPGS for students from across the province.
Program Governance	Practices relating to governance of TPGS are explored, such as compliance with MECC and VSB practices and roles and responsibilities of the three TPGS institutional partners.
Program Cost	Direct and indirect costs of TPGS are explored.



# Evaluation Methodology

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Information and data collected during the project included:

- Surveys & interviews with current students<sup>1</sup> and their parents
- Surveys & focus groups with alumni
- Interviews with administration and teachers representing MECC, VSB, and UBC
- Administrative data provided by MECC, VSB, and UBC

Much of the analysis and evaluation is based on information and experiences collected from current students, parents and alumni. The analysis assumes that the participants and information is representative sample of the entire group.

**Sampling Bias:** While the participation (i.e., response rates) from current students and parents was high (e.g., 65-80%), there was a small portion of students & parents (<15%) who could not be reached. While only ~20% of alumni could be reached, the participation rate among these alumni was also relatively high (78%).

- All current students who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Student Survey but contact information was not available for all current students. **35/41 (85%) current students were invited to participate in the survey.**
- All parents of current students who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Parent Survey but contact information was not available for all parents of current students. 72 parents of current students were invited to participate in the survey. **All current students had 1 or more parent who were invited to participate in the survey.**
- All TPGS alumni who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Alumni Survey but contact information was not available for all TPGS alumni or some TPGS alumni asked not to be contacted. **120 alumni were invited to participate in the survey.**
- **Survey response rates are as follows: Student Survey: 80%; Parent Survey: 64%; Alumni Survey: 78%**
- All current students and their parents who received a survey were invited to participate in interviews but not all current students and their parents participated. 59% of families participated in interviews.

<sup>1</sup> Current as at 2023/24 school year



# Evaluation Methodology

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Additional important limitations in analyzing the information and data:

**Subjectivity:** Much of our assessment relies on subjective information which can introduce biases or interpretations from the research team and potentially limit the objectivity of findings.

**Bias Towards Positivity:** Stakeholder groups who have personal interest in TPGS may lean toward positive feedback which may skew the overall assessment of the program's effectiveness. In addition, negative views may be suppressed out of concerns for the future of the program and further skew results.

**Limited Comparability:** The evaluation was constrained by a lack of comparative analysis with other programs (i.e. unable to identify an appropriate comparator where quality data was available), such as gifted students in mainstream schools, in other gifted programs, which restricts our ability to benchmark the findings.

**Handling of Sparse Data:** Comments with very low frequency (e.g. 1 response) were not highlighted as significant findings, potentially overlooking nuanced but infrequent perspectives.

**Access to Data:** The evaluation was constrained by the availability of some data sets - notably, the home locations of previous TPGS students and the academic performance of TPGS students beyond Year 1 at UBC were not available – thereby restricting a more fulsome review.

***Anecdotes provided are not meant to be statistically representative:*** The anecdotes provided with the results are examples and are not meant to represent a majority or consensus perspective.



# Student Learning Experience: Overview

**Benefits and concerns around the student learning experiences based on stakeholders' feedback are summarized. Additional details to follow.**

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Parents & Current Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~93%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the quality of teaching and instruction; e.g. pace of learning, opportunities for self-directed learning, appropriate teaching styles</li> <li>~91%<sup>2</sup> agree that impact on their child's development was positive and TPGS caters to their individual needs and interests; e.g. more engaged with learning and studying, motivated and excited by learning</li> <li>~90%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the facilities and co-location on UBC campus and the associated benefits; e.g. UBC faculty instruction, UBC resources and events</li> <li>~88%<sup>1</sup> (70%<sup>3</sup>) describe the TPGS environment as engaging and motivating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~30%<sup>3</sup> expressed concerns with TPGS learning environment; e.g. inadequate classroom management, lack of consistency and transparency in expectations and grading practices; variability in teaching quality</li> <li>~17%<sup>3</sup> expressed concerns with student engagement; e.g. students who prefer humanities are disengaged by heavy STEM-focus, personal academic gaps led to demotivation</li> </ul>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~77% agree that TPGS had a positive impact on their development e.g. teaching style; pace of learning; opportunities for self-exploration; engaging curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only ~52% agree that the program met their individual needs and interests, ~25% disagreed or strongly disagreed (remainder are neutral)</li> <li>equal numbers of alumni are pleased and disappointed with their experience in TPGS;</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers try to align teaching practices and deliver content and learning experiences which meet and go beyond curriculum requirements to cater to each TPGS student's needs and interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers' learning opportunities on gifted education are limited and it is left to the individual teacher to source and plan</li> <li>TPGS teachers are teaching outside of their teachable subjects – an accepted practice in mainstream schools</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: students via Student Survey

<sup>2</sup> Source: parents via Parent Survey

<sup>3</sup> Source: families via interviews



# Student Wellbeing: Overview

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Parents & Current Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~94%<sup>1,2</sup> felt the workload was manageable and ~88%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the opportunities for extra-curricular activities provided by TPGS for their child</li> <li>~92%<sup>1</sup> were satisfied with level of support from teachers</li> <li>~91%<sup>2</sup> agree that they have observed positive changes in their child's social and emotional wellbeing in TPGS,</li> <li>~85%<sup>1</sup> (78%+<sup>3,2</sup>) describe the TPGS environment as comfortable and supportive; e.g. small, inclusive, tight-knit community, inter-year relationships are supportive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~30%<sup>3</sup> describe concerns around workload and balance for the student in TPGS; e.g. stress due to pace of learning</li> <li>~22%<sup>3</sup> describe concerns around the student's wellbeing due to TPGS; e.g. excessive focus on performance</li> <li>~17%<sup>3</sup> (8%<sup>1</sup>) describe concerns around support from TPGS teachers; e.g. favouritism, inconsistencies</li> <li>~13%<sup>3</sup> (12%<sup>1</sup>) describe concerns around support from students/peers in TPGS; e.g. peer bullying and shaming, social isolation and exclusion</li> <li>~11%<sup>1</sup> (n=3) describe the TPGS environment as exclusionary and/or unsafe; e.g. feeling unsafe in classroom/in group work</li> </ul>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sense of belonging; tight knit community and close friendships</li> <li>personal and academic growth</li> <li>opportunity to explore interests in depth and sooner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~14% were dissatisfied with level of support from teachers</li> <li>~13% were dissatisfied with level of support from peers</li> <li>~11% did not feel the academic expectations and workload in TPGS was manageable</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers observe significant benefits to some students' mental health and engagement with learning due to TPGS peer environment, individualized learning, and academic challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some TPGS students have trouble with the pace of acceleration especially in Year 1; additional pressure from parents can be detrimental to some students, reactions can be more intense due to giftedness</li> <li>TPGS students have access to a counsellor at University Hill Secondary School, but proximity is a barrier for some</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: students via Student Survey

<sup>2</sup> Source: parents via Parent Survey

<sup>3</sup> Source: families via interviews





# University Preparation: Overview

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strong academic preparation; e.g. study habits</li> <li>enhanced readiness for University and clear understanding of what to expect; e.g. lab work, independent learning</li> <li>comparative advantage compared to peers from regular high schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~20% disagree that TPGS adequately prepared them for post-secondary education</li> <li>exposure to a range of courses was limited and felt barriers to pursuing education / careers in non-STEM fields</li> <li>unprepared for the social dynamics and power imbalances of an older peer group at University and a lacked foundation of sexual health education and an understanding of consent</li> </ul>
UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continuous integration between TPGS and university is good for student transition</li> <li>TPGS students generally do well in university classes - their analysis has shown that marks are slightly higher than regular students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maturity levels of some graduates, examples of inappropriate behaviour in the UBC classroom</li> <li>lack of depth of some graduates, particularly in the Arts and Humanities</li> <li>students are not as well positioned for awards because they do not have the time to generate the experience (e.g., volunteering, sports teams, etc) that may be required for some awards</li> <li>students may de facto have less access to scholarship opportunities/funding packages compared to those who are able to choose from and be admitted to universities including UBC and others<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
First Year UBC Performance	<p>Across the period from 2009 to 2019, TPGS alumni academically outperformed (based on Year 1 grades) the <u>general student body</u> for each of the UBC degree programs at a 95% confidence level.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Students have fewer post-secondary options because of their age at graduation from TPGS. Students generally need to be at least 17 years old by the time they start their studies in most Canadian universities. Specific age requirements vary by institution and program.



# Program Accessibility: Overview

	1998 Conceptual Framework & PRP Policy	Historical Deviations from 1998 Conceptual Framework	Recent Practices <sup>4</sup>	Remaining Issues
Admissions process <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three academic subject teacher references</li> <li>students meet threshold of 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading, mathematics and writing are accepted</li> <li>intake completed in March</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher references are not required</li> <li>students below threshold of 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading, mathematics and writing are accepted</li> <li>intake was completed in October/November instead of March</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher references optional</li> <li>students meet 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in at least 2 domains</li> <li>admissions timelines align with the 1998 framework</li> <li>changes to student assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student assessments, testing, and criteria have largely remained the same and have not considered new research or leading practices in gifted education</li> </ul>
Awareness <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media advertisement is required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS not broadly advertised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS advertised through the weekly Deputy Minister's Bulletin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uncertain effectiveness of advertising approach</li> </ul>
Geographical accessibility <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% from outside Vancouver and 50% from VSB schools (Conceptual Framework)</li> <li>more than one district throughout BC must be represented by the children and youth attending the program (PRP Policy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limitations in data prevented historical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>98% of applicants and all current students are from the Lower Mainland of BC</li> <li>in 2023/24 intake year, 30% of applicants were from VSB schools, 14% of applicants were from independent schools in Vancouver</li> <li>51% of current students live in Vancouver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS is practically only an option for those students originating from the Lower Mainland and for those outside of Vancouver travel or relocation barriers exist</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives and review of VSB documents

<sup>2</sup> Source: Interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives

<sup>3</sup> Source: Data provided by VSB

<sup>4</sup> January 2023 to present



# Program Governance: TPGS Practices

	TPGS Practice*	Deviations from Standard Practice*
Curriculum alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no curriculum guide</li> <li>limited visibility into course outlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when the curriculum is adjusted, a curriculum guide should be developed</li> <li>until recently, teachers did not share course outlines; UBC guest speakers/instructors do not consistently provide syllabuses or course outlines</li> </ul>
Instructional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lower than typical teaching to prep ratios (1:1)</li> <li>inconsistent/ inaccurate grading</li> <li>non-standard development of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) (i.e. students write their own IEPs), parent resistance to District Principal engagement on IEPs and/or to noting student disabilities on IEPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>typical teaching to prep ratios in VSB schools is 7:1</li> <li>not clear if TPGS is meeting minimum number of instructional hours (i.e. 952 hours per year)</li> <li>some parents concerned that grades are inflated, do not accurately reflect level of understanding<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Typically, a group of people is appointed as a school-based team to plan and develop the IEP. Principal is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is developed, implemented and reviewed. The presence of a disability is typically referenced in the IEP to achieve a complete picture of the student's circumstances and needs.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Role of parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) collects parent fees in bulk and plans and runs school activities</li> <li>PAC does not share expenditure or agenda information</li> <li>parents have an unusually high degree of engagement in the operations of the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re: PAC fees, standard practice is for parents to pay per activity; school, not PAC, typically runs activities</li> <li>Principal typically reviews PAC expenditures and meeting agendas and is invited to PAC meetings</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teacher use of UBC email addresses for communications with families</li> <li>non-standard practices related to field trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers should use VSB email addresses to communicate with families</li> <li>approvals for field trips do not follow standard practice, supervision ratios are too high</li> </ul>

\* Unless otherwise noted the information this slide was sourced through interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives.

<sup>1</sup> Source: family interviews <sup>2</sup> Source: Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning. See List of References for details.





# Program Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

**While there is agreement among institutional partners on roles and responsibilities, the TPGS community has misconceptions.**

	<b>Roles of institutional partners<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>TPGS community<sup>2</sup> perspectives on institutional partner roles</b>
Role of UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC provides facilities and access to resources, and some financial support, including for support for guest speakers/instructors</li> <li>• participation in TPGS does not guarantee entrance into UBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPGS students are guaranteed early entrance into UBC</li> </ul>
Role of VSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSB is the host district and has responsibility for administrative oversight and for providing staff for TPGS</li> <li>• the primary objective of TPGS is to graduate students; preparing them for university is a secondary objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPGS is first and foremost a university (UBC) preparation program. Related to this, VSB should not have a robust role to play in TPGS; it is TPGS's special relationship with UBC that defines it.</li> <li>• as a Provincial Resource Program, TPGS does not need to operate within some of the key boundaries of a VSB school</li> </ul>
Role of MECC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MECC is responsible for providing provincial oversight, funding and direction to host districts for PRPs, including TPGS</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Information about the roles of MECC and VSB is sourced from the Province of BC Ministry of Education and Child Care: Provincial Resource Programs Handbook of Procedures (2022 to 2023); information about the role of UBC is sourced from a January 2024 letter to families from all three institutional partners, the TPGS website and interviews with UBC, VSB and MECC representatives. (See Context section for a detailed overview of each institutional partners' roles and responsibilities.)

<sup>2</sup> The TPGS community refers to current parents and students, alumni and TPGS teachers. Information on these perspectives was sourced through surveys and interviews/focus groups with these groups.



# Program Costs: Overview

**Cost comparisons could not be conducted due to data limitations and the complexity of finding an equivalent comparator program to TPGS.**

	Annual TPGS Costs 2023-24	Description	Equivalent Costs for Gifted Student in Mainstream School
Direct Costs	\$749K <sup>2</sup>  \$50K <sup>1</sup>  <u>\$356K</u> \$1,155K	MECC funding to cover program expenses: including salaries (teachers, Principal, other support, TOC), employee benefits chargeback, supplies  In-kind contributions for UBC staff participation in TPGS activities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC Professors: ~170 hours</li> <li>• UBC Teaching Assistants: ~130 hours</li> </ul> 2023/24 per student MECC basic allocation funding: \$8915  Subtotal	<i>Data limitations prevent appropriate comparison analysis</i>
Capital Costs	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings – maintenance, furniture, equipment</li> </ul>	
Additional In-Kind Contributions	Not quantified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC classroom facilities access</li> <li>• UBC laboratory access: ~140 hours</li> <li>• UBC sports facilities: ~30 hours</li> <li>• VSB supports and services (e.g. counselling supports, support from other district teams)</li> <li>• Guest lecturers</li> </ul>	<i>Data limitations prevent appropriate comparison analysis</i>
Additional Staff Efforts	Not quantified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSB: ~1000 additional hours (June 2023-May 2024)</li> <li>• MECC: “exceptionally high over the past two years compared to any other PRP”</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Source: Data provided by UBC

<sup>2</sup> Source: Data provided by MECC. 2021-2022: \$505,810 (actuals) 2022-2023: \$673,098 (actuals) 2023-24 (budget). Collective agreement salary lifts, mostly for teachers, were a key element of these funding increases during this 3-year period.



# Summary of Findings

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TPGS students are highly academically gifted; however, these students also have diverse learning needs and abilities and benefit from an individualized learning approach. Each student's ability to manage and succeed in an accelerated program is influenced by many factors, including their:

- unique learning needs (whether formally acknowledged in their IEP or not)
- personal interests
- strengths and weaknesses across different subjects
- prior experience in accelerated education (e.g. entering from a challenge program vs. a mainstream program).

Many factors have contributed to barriers to recognizing and supporting these differences and have negatively impacted some students' learning experience, academic performance, wellbeing and university preparation.

TPGS graduates are academically well prepared for their first year of university. They are attending university with peers that are three or more years older and who are often more physically, emotionally and socially mature. TPGS graduates need the self-management, social and life skills to navigate the significantly more complex situations they will face in university. There are important examples of TPGS students who were not prepared in these ways, and the consequences were serious and impactful.

An on-campus program introduces barriers for prospective students (i.e., geographical barriers as families may have to relocate to relatively expensive neighbourhoods) and current students (i.e., convenient access to student supports that otherwise would be available in mainstream schools such as counsellors and extra curricular activities including athletics).

Under the current TPGS program delivery model and PRP framework, there are limits to addressing geographical barriers and expanding access outside the Lower Mainland. Within the current TPGS program delivery model it is particularly important (i.e., reflecting the unique needs explained in prior slide) that students are provided convenient access to student supports such as counsellors, additional educational supports and help to prepare for university life.



## Summary of Findings

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As an on-campus specialized program with a small cohort of students, teachers, parents and alumni, the TPGS program can be a socially enriching experience for gifted students; however, these same factors have also had the opposite result. In such a small community, the relationships between TPGS students, teachers, and parents can be more intense and influential. This close interaction can lead to meaningful connections, but it also means that conflicts, when they arise, can become more serious. Unlike in mainstream schools, TPGS students do not have the flexibility to change teachers, classes, or friend groups if they encounter problems. If conflicts are not managed effectively, they can quickly escalate, leaving students, parents, or teachers feeling isolated or excluded, especially if their views differ from the majority. To prevent these issues, it is essential for students to have a safe channel to give constructive feedback on their learning environment or conflicts without fear of repercussions. Additionally, everyone involved—students, parents, teachers, and administrators—should continue to be proactive in recognizing and addressing conflicts and, where conflicts persist, the school's administration and teachers should continue to step in to resolve them. It is important that TPGS parents and students understand these dynamics, their individual responsibilities, and the role of school administration and teachers. The expectations and relative effort for school administrators and teachers are greater here than in a mainstream school.

VSB has been moving towards alignment between the TPGS practices and the Conceptual Framework/VSB practices. Lack of clarity and/or agreement of the role of VSB by some in parent community has created heightened tensions and affected relations. While there may not be a way to appease certain groups, formally clarifying the roles for the institutional partners and parents, the decision-making process for key decisions, and clarifying the avenues for parents' feedback could provide a basis for rebuilding relationships.

The following slides describe considerations to a) improve the current delivery model and b) modify the delivery model.

# Future Considerations

The review surfaced several considerations to inform the TPGS program. These considerations are organized in two potential strategies: 1) improve the current program (no change to delivery model) and 2) modify aspects of the program delivery model.

## Improve the current delivery model

Program delivery model remains the same; however, supports and practices are improved/harmonized to improve the student experience and program governance.

1A

Student & teacher supports

Increase awareness of and access to student and teacher supports, including counselling services for students and professional learning opportunities for teachers.

1B

Program administration & management

Formally clarify the roles and responsibilities of institutional partners as well as parents and TPGS teachers, particularly regarding admissions, feedback loops, and key program decisions.

## Modify the delivery model

Subject to program enhancements, consider changes to the program's delivery model to improve long-term student experience, accessibility and outcomes.

2A

Acceleration

Consider program length options by evaluating the opportunities and challenges they present for students, including opportunities for expanded depth and breadth of learning and student supports.

2B

Program location

Consider program location options by evaluating their geographic accessibility and the opportunities and challenges they present relative to current state.

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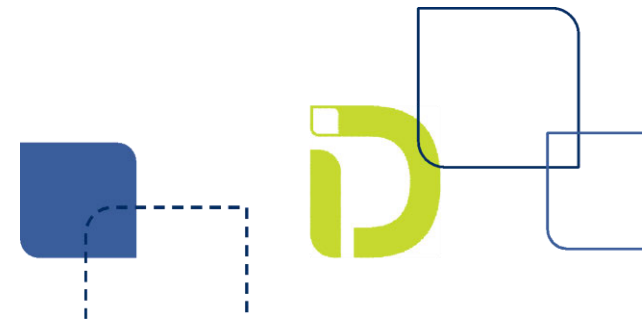
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# History of TPGS

**The TPGS was established in 1993. Key events in the history of TPGS are noted.**

## Evolution of TPGS

### 1991 to 1999

- 1991: UBC affirms partnership with VSB
- 1991: Steering Committee is established, reactivated in 1994
- 1993: VSB and UBC launch TPGS
- 1995: TPGS is designated as a Ministry-funded PRP & graduates its first class
- 1996: Program Coordinator position is created
- 1998: TPGS moves to UBC campus
- 1998: 1998 Conceptual Framework<sup>1</sup> is created

### 2000 - 2009

- 2002-2003: UBC senate decision (2002); TPGS moves to Faculty of Education (2003)
- 2002: VSB and UBC internal program review is conducted in response to parent concerns (ref: 2002 Review<sup>1</sup>)

### 2010 - 2019

- 2015: Work is started on a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (not finalized)
- 2020: Steering Committee is no longer active

### 2020 to present

- 2021: UBC Student Newspaper Article<sup>1</sup> written by alumni calls for improvements to TPGS curriculum and culture
- Dec 2022: Supervision changes from Program Coordinator to a District Principal position overseeing all VSB PRPs and begins to align TPGS practices
- Jan 2024: Announcement is made regarding MECC-initiated external review

<sup>1</sup> See List of References for details



# Original TPGS Approach

The TPGS Conceptual Framework largely describes the program's approach.

Key components	Approach	Document Source <sup>1</sup>
Target population	Highly academically gifted students seeking early entrance to university. Minimum age 12 with completion of Grade 7; maximum age 15 or completion of Grade 10	1998 Conceptual Framework
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• support opportunities for early entrance to university</li><li>• provide supportive intellectual peer group</li><li>• support career exploration and preparation</li><li>• provide university experience (seminars, visiting professors, etc)</li><li>• provide teachers that understand and can adapt to student needs,</li><li>• promote self-esteem and key interpersonal and other skills (e.g., decision-making)</li></ul>	1998 Conceptual Framework
Curriculum strategies	Compacting, acceleration, seminar and small group instruction, interdisciplinary assignments, group projects, tutorials, gap-based instruction	1998 Conceptual Framework
Timetable	Reflects university timetable, supports flexible pacing, grouping, opportunities to complete independent studies	1998 Conceptual Framework
Role of parents	Envisions a robust role for parents with list of parent responsibilities  TPGS promotes strong communication with parents through PAC meetings, individual consultations and IEP meetings	1998 Conceptual Framework  2016 Program Evolution Update
Location of students	Students are required to reside in the Lower Mainland for the duration of their participation in TPGS	1998 Conceptual Framework

<sup>1</sup> See List of References for details



# Roles and Responsibilities - MECC

The PRP Handbook largely outlines the responsibilities for MECC and VSB

## Institutional Partner Roles & Responsibilities for TPGS

### Ministry of Education and Child Care<sup>1</sup>

#### Program Management

- Ensure the PRP mandates aligns with government priorities and direction
- Establish and maintain PRP policies, procedures and inter-ministerial protocols
- Review applications for new programs or changes to existing programs and submit for ministerial approval where appropriate

#### Budget Management

- Manage a provincial budget adhering to established government financial processes
- Disseminate funds through an annual budget submission process
- Communicate approved annual budget allocation to the PRP and school district
- Electronically disburse funding monthly throughout the school year
- Provide an established fee to the host school district for administrative oversight of the program
- Review surplus funds reported in the Ministry's Financial Audit Reports and recover unspent/unutilized funds as deemed appropriate

#### Accountability Reporting

- Establish and manage an accountability process that provides the Ministry with program information and data to ensure continuous growth and improvement
- Establish and maintain a Quality Review process to ensure each program:
  - aligns with current government priorities;
  - operates within their approved mandate; and
  - provides valued supports and services within the K-12 education sector

<sup>1</sup> Source: PRP Handbook. See List of References for details.

# Roles and Responsibilities - VSB



## Institutional Partner Roles & Responsibilities for TPGS

### Host School District (Vancouver School Board)<sup>1</sup>

#### Program Management

- Provide and maintain appropriate infrastructure, furniture and fixtures<sup>2</sup> not included by partnering ministries as per the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools
- Unless there is a specific program agreement in place, the host district will provide the following services:
  - Human Resources (see below on hiring)
  - Information Technology Support
  - Accounting
  - Custodial<sup>2</sup>
- Assign or appoint a program lead (administrator or head teacher as determined by the district) to provide daily oversight of the program. The role and responsibilities of the program lead include but are not limited to the following:
  - Monitoring the overall effectiveness of the program and ensuring educational services are in keeping with the program's established mandate through regular communication (e.g., observations, conferencing with staff, monitoring of key indicators and performance measures).
- Assign or appoint a district administrator to oversee all PRPs hosted by the school district. The roles and responsibilities of the district administrator include but are not limited to the following:
  - Serve as liaison between the programs and the Ministry of Education and Child Care.
  - Consult with the program lead during hiring process and succession planning to ensure qualified staff are in place and that performance reviews are conducted in accordance with district policy
  - Ensure staffing and expenditures align with approved budget and are in keeping with district policy.
  - Ensure educational commitments as outlined in the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools are being addressed appropriately.
  - Collaborate with the program lead to prepare and submit annual budget submissions to the Ministry.
  - Collaborate with the program lead to prepare and submit annual outcome reports to the Ministry.
  - Represent the district (or appoint a designate) on student admission/selection committees as required.

<sup>1</sup> Source: PRP Handbook. See List of References for details.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of TPGS, these are provided for the most part by UBC.

# Roles and Responsibilities - VSB



## Institutional Partner Roles & Responsibilities for TPGS

### Host School District (Vancouver School Board)<sup>1</sup> (continued)

#### Hiring

- Ensure the PRPs are staffed with qualified individual(s) who have the knowledge, experience, and competencies needed to effectively contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program in alignment with school district staffing practices, program requirements, and approved budgets.
- Consult with Ministry of Education and Child Care, Inclusive Education Branch staff if there are staffing/human resources issues that may affect the administration or overall effectiveness of the PRP.

#### Student Records

- Follow district policy for the management of student records.
- Where possible, pertinent educational information created for a student should follow the student back to their home school.
- In BC, a permanent student record shall be stored or archived for a period of 55 years from the date that student withdraws or graduates from the BC public school system, as outlined in Permanent Student Record Ministerial Order 082/09.
- Specific legislation is in place for the maintenance of different types of confidential files (e.g. medical or custody order etc.). School district legal counsel will be able to provide advice on the specific legislation requirements related confidential records.

<sup>1</sup> Source: PRP Handbook. See List of References for details.



# Roles and Responsibilities - UBC

The PRP Handbook largely outlines the responsibilities for MECC and VSB; however, there is no current formal agreement in outlining expectations of UBC. Expectations are implied from past agreements.

## Institutional Partner Roles & Responsibilities for TPGS

### University of British Columbia<sup>1</sup>

#### Facilities and access to resources

- UBC provides the space for the Program and access to UBC resources (e.g., library, laboratory access, sports facilities)
- Faculty of Education is administrative home of TPGS, e.g., gives admin support, appoints Adjunct Faculty, looks after funds from Provost Office

#### Guest speakers/instructors

- UBC guest speakers/instructors and teaching assistants deliver instruction
- UBC provides an in-kind contribution of \$50,000 per year for administration of TPGS, e.g., faculty and teaching assistant costs

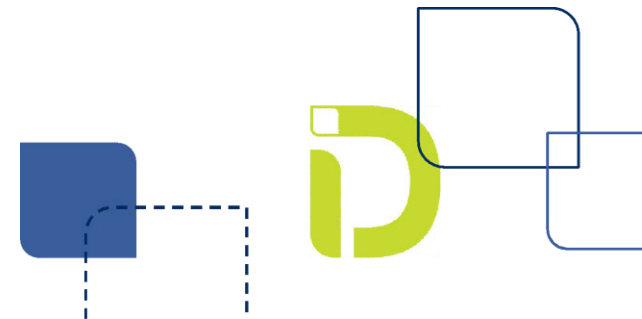
#### Admissions

- UBC permits graduates from TPGS to enter UBC earlier than their minimum age of admission (similar permissions are not given to students outside TPGS)

<sup>1</sup> Source: Interviews with UBC, VSB and MECC representatives.

# Contents

1. Summary
2. Context
  - A. History of TPGS
  - B. Roles and Responsibilities of Partners
3. Program Evaluation
  - A. Evaluation Framework
  - B. Evaluation Methodology and Limitations
  - C. Detailed Analysis
4. Areas for Consideration
5. List of References





# Evaluation Framework

**The scope of the evaluation included six key dimensions.**

Evaluation	Description
Student Learning Experience	Experiences around student learning are explored, such as the breadth and depth of instruction, teaching styles, experiential learning, and the TPGS location and facilities.
Overall Student Wellbeing	Areas of overall student wellbeing are explored, such as the impact of academic and workload pressures, access to wellness supports, relations and supports with peers, teachers, and the TPGS community environment.
Student University Preparation	Students' preparedness for educational experiences after TPGS are explored, such as their academic outcomes in university, their wellbeing in university, and their access to post-secondary supports.
Program Accessibility	Areas of program accessibility are explored, such as the awareness of TPGS for potential students across BC, the process of admissions, and the geographical accessibility of TPGS for students from across the province.
Program Governance	Practices relating to governance of TPGS are explored, such as compliance with MECC and VSB practices and roles and responsibilities of the three TPGS institutional partners.
Program Cost	Direct and indirect costs of TPGS are explored.

# Information & Data Collection

Several groups were engaged through interviews, surveys, and focus groups to inform the current state analysis.

Engagement Groups	Included Roles	# of Participants
Ministry of Education and Child Care	Executive Director, Education Programs and Policy; Director Inclusive Education	2
Vancouver School Board administration	Superintendent; Secretary-Treasurer; Associate Superintendent, Educational Services; Associate Superintendent (retired), Manager, Labour Relations; Director of Instruction, Learning Services; District Principal; District Counsellor	8
TPGS teachers	Current TPGS teachers	4
University of British Columbia administration	Executive Director, Academic Initiatives; Dean, Faculty of Science; Associate Dean Students, Faculty of Applied Science; Associate Dean Students, Faculty of Science; Associate Dean Students, Faculty of Arts; Manager, Students; Associate Dean Equity and Strategic Programs, Faculty of Education; Associate Vice-President Enrollment Services, Registrar; Associate Registrar, Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Student Recruitment and Advising; Associate Registrar, Clerk to Senate	10
University of British Columbia faculty	Associate Professor Department of Physics and Astronomy, Professor Mathematics, Professor/Head, Department of Philosophy	3
Current Students <sup>1</sup> – via surveys	29 unique students combined	28
Students – via family interviews		11
Parents – via surveys	52 unique parents combined	46
Parents – via family interviews		32
Alumni – via surveys	94 unique alumni combined	94
Alumni – via focus groups		22
TOTAL		202

<sup>1</sup> Current as at 2023/24 school year



# Evaluation Methodology

Information and data collected during the project included:

- Surveys & interviews with current students<sup>1</sup> and their parents
- Surveys & focus groups with alumni
- Interviews with administration and teachers representing MECC, VSB, and UBC
- Administrative data provided by MECC, VSB, and UBC

Much of the analysis and evaluation is based on information and experiences collected from current students, parents and alumni. The analysis assumes that the participants and information is representative sample of the entire group.

**Sampling Bias:** While the participation (i.e., response rates) from current students and parents was high (e.g., 65-80%), there was a small portion of students & parents (<15%) who could not be reached. While only ~20% of alumni could be reached, the participation rate among these alumni was also relatively high (78%).

- All current students who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Student Survey but contact information was not available for all current students. **35/41 (85%) current students were invited to participate in the survey.**
- All parents of current students who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Parent Survey but contact information was not available for all parents of current students. 72 parents of current students were invited to participate in the survey. **All current students had 1 or more parent who were invited to participate in the survey.**
- All TPGS alumni who had provided their email address were invited to participate in the Alumni Survey but contact information was not available for all TPGS alumni or some TPGS alumni asked not to be contacted. **120 alumni were invited to participate in the survey.**
- **Survey response rates are as follows: Student Survey: 80%; Parent Survey: 64%; Alumni Survey: 78%**
- All current students and their parents who received a survey were invited to participate in interviews but not all current students and their parents participated. 59% of families participated in interviews.

<sup>1</sup> Current as at 2023/24 school year





# Evaluation Methodology

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Additional important limitations in analyzing the information and data:

**Subjectivity:** Much of our assessment relies on subjective information which can introduce biases or interpretations from the research team and potentially limit the objectivity of findings.

**Bias Towards Positivity:** Stakeholder groups who have personal interest in TPGS may lean toward positive feedback which may skew the overall assessment of the program's effectiveness. In addition, negative views may be suppressed out of concerns for the future of the program and further skew results.

**Limited Comparability:** The evaluation was constrained by a lack of comparative analysis with other programs (i.e. unable to identify an appropriate comparator where quality data was available), such as gifted students in mainstream schools, in other gifted programs, which restricts our ability to benchmark the findings.

**Handling of Sparse Data:** Comments with very low frequency (e.g. 1 response) were not highlighted as significant findings, potentially overlooking nuanced but infrequent perspectives.

**Access to Data:** The evaluation was constrained by the availability of some data sets - notably, the home locations of previous TPGS students and the academic performance of TPGS students beyond Year 1 at UBC were not available – thereby restricting a more fulsome review.

***Anecdotes provided are not meant to be statistically representative:*** The anecdotes provided with the results are examples and are not meant to represent a majority or consensus perspective.



# Student Learning Experience: Overview

**Benefits and concerns around the student learning experiences based on stakeholders' feedback are summarized. Additional details to follow.**

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Parents & Current Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~93%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the quality of teaching and instruction; e.g. pace of learning, opportunities for self-directed learning, appropriate teaching styles</li> <li>~91%<sup>2</sup> agree that impact on their child's development was positive and TPGS caters to their individual needs and interests; e.g. more engaged with learning and studying, motivated and excited by learning</li> <li>~90%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the facilities and co-location on UBC campus and the associated benefits; e.g. UBC faculty instruction, UBC resources and events</li> <li>~88%<sup>1</sup> (70%<sup>3</sup>) describe the TPGS environment as engaging and motivating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~30%<sup>3</sup> expressed concerns with TPGS learning environment; e.g. inadequate classroom management, lack of consistency and transparency in expectations and grading practices; variability in teaching quality</li> <li>~17%<sup>3</sup> expressed concerns with student engagement; e.g. students who prefer humanities are disengaged by heavy STEM-focus, personal academic gaps led to demotivation</li> </ul>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~77% agree that TPGS had a positive impact on their development e.g. teaching style; pace of learning; opportunities for self-exploration; engaging curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only ~52% agree that the program met their individual needs and interests, ~25% disagreed or strongly disagreed (remainder are neutral)</li> <li>equal numbers of alumni are pleased and disappointed with their experience in TPGS</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers try to align teaching practices and deliver content and learning experiences which meet and go beyond curriculum requirements to cater to each TPGS student's needs and interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers' learning opportunities around gifted education are limited and it is left to the individual teacher to source and plan</li> <li>TPGS teachers are teaching outside of their teachable subjects – an accepted practice in mainstream schools</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: students via Student Survey

<sup>2</sup> Source: parents via Parent Survey

<sup>3</sup> Source: families via interviews

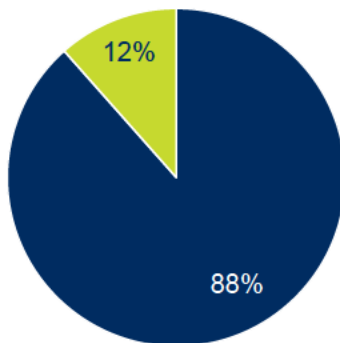


# Student Experience: Survey and interview feedback

Across surveys and interviews, ~80% of students and their parents describe their experience in TPGS as engaging and motivating. ~30% of family interviews expressed some negative sentiment around engagement, teaching styles and facilities.

How would you describe your experiences in the TPGS environment? (Select all that apply.)

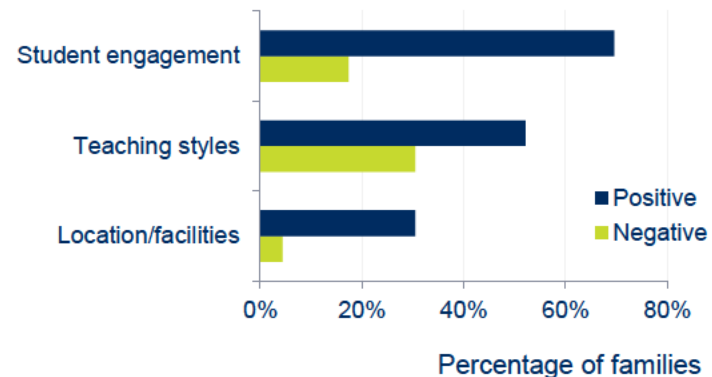
**Student survey responses (n=26)**



■ Engaging and motivating  
■ Others<sup>1</sup>

Describe strengths and opportunities for improvement of the TPGS.

**Family interview responses (n=23)**



■ Positive  
■ Negative

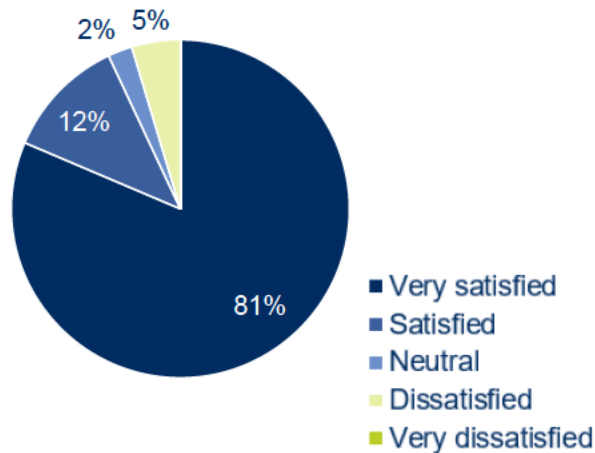
<sup>1</sup> Note: respondents were invited to respond with multiple selections so various groupings are possible. 'Others' here relates to various combinations of responses, not including 'Engaging and motivating'.

# Student Experience: Learning, teaching, location

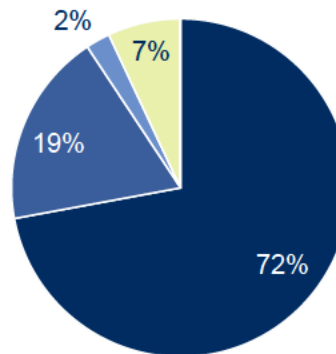
**~90% of parents responded that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the learning, teaching, and/or location aspects of TPGS. ~7% (n=3) were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and instruction.**

## Parent survey responses (n=43)

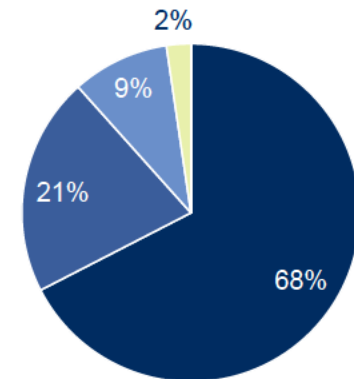
How satisfied are you with the quality of learning opportunities provided by the TPGS for your child?



How satisfied are you with the quality of teaching and instruction provided by the TPGS for your child?



How satisfied are you with the location and facilities where your child attends the TPGS?

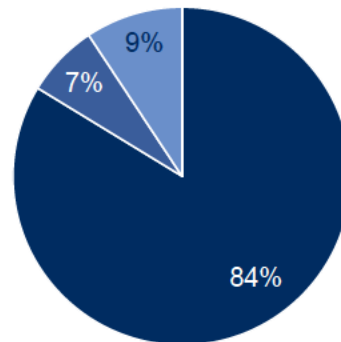




# Student Experience: Impact, Individualization

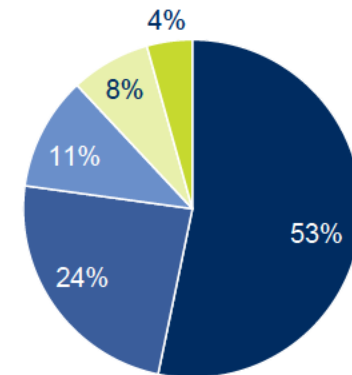
**Alumni report lower satisfaction with the academic impact and individualized experience (~25% disagreed that TPGS met their individual needs) compared to current parents.**

**Parent survey responses (n=43)**

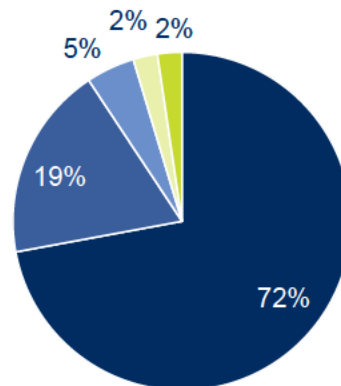


The TPGS had a positive impact on my/my child's academic development.

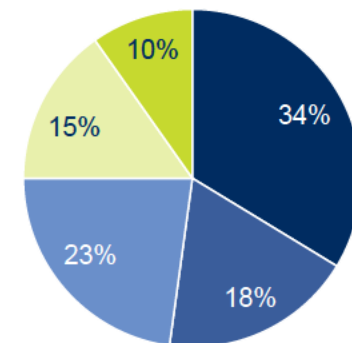
**Alumni survey responses (n=92)**



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree



The TPGS adequately caters to my/my child's individual needs and interests.



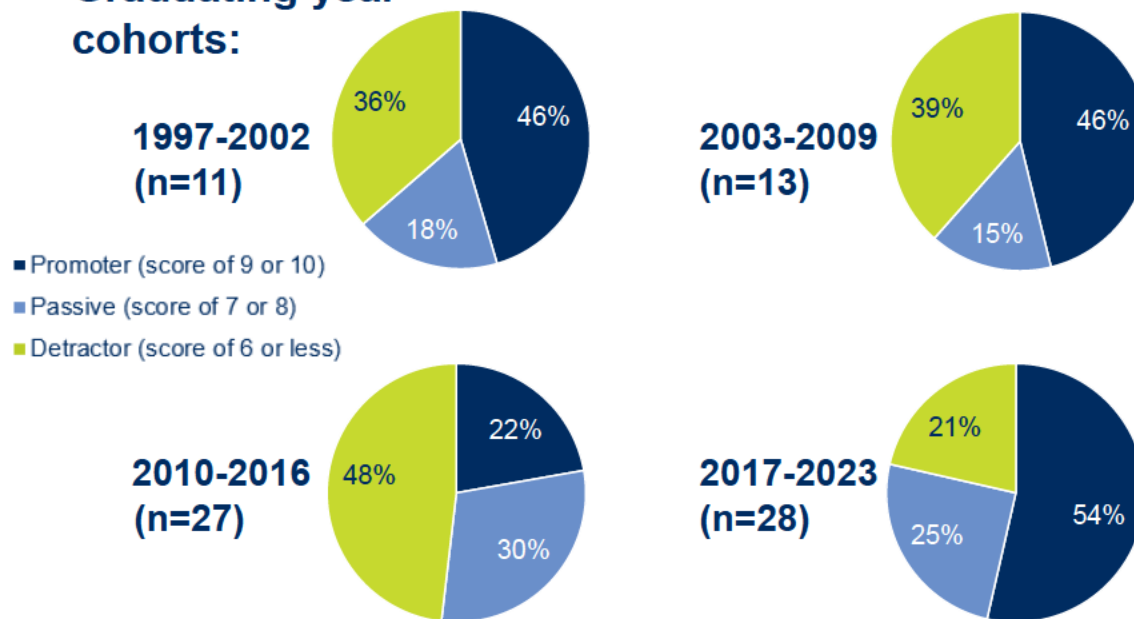


# Student Experience: Alumni likelihood to recommend

The Net Promoter Score survey results show the diversity of alumni experiences. At a 95% level of confidence, alumni are indifferent about their experience at TPGS i.e. equal numbers who are pleased and disappointed.

On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend TPGS to other gifted students?

## Graduating year cohorts:



## Key Observations

- Among all alumni who responded to this question, 41% are promoters<sup>1</sup>, 35% are detractors, and 24% are neither promoters nor detractors. Overall NPS score<sup>2</sup> = 6%.
- Most favourable cohort is alumni who graduated in 2017-2023 (NPS = 32%). Least favourable cohort is alumni who graduated in 2010-2016 (NPS = -26%).

<sup>1</sup> Usual practice for Net Promoter Score (NPS) segments: Promoters (pleased with their experience) score 9 or 10, Passives (neither pleased nor disappointed) score 7 or 8, Detractors (disappointed with their experience) score 6 or less.

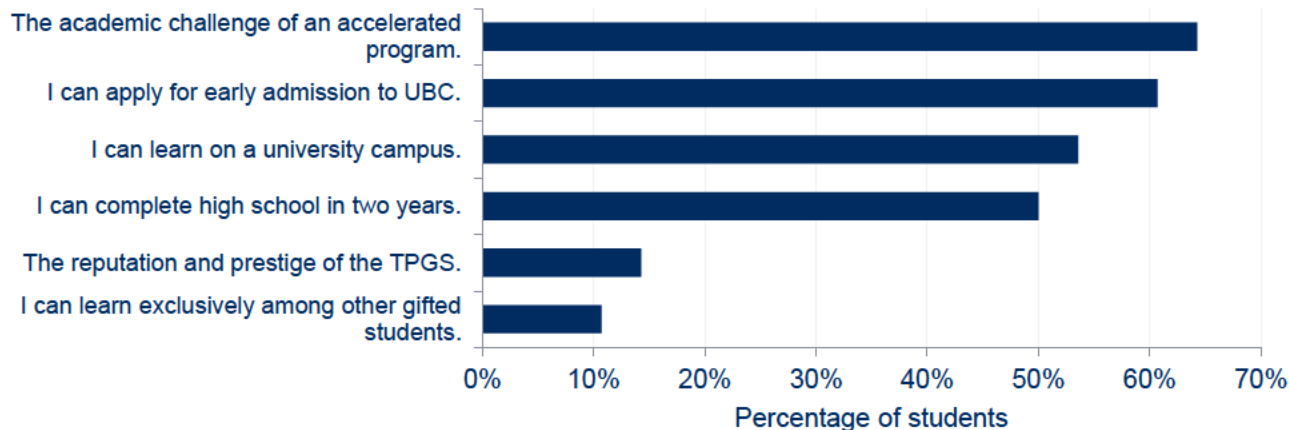
<sup>2</sup> NPS score = Promoters % - Detractors %; ranges from -100% (all detractors) to 100% (all promoters)

# Student Experience: Student drivers to enroll

**Academic challenge, early admission to UBC, and learning on a university campus were cited to be the most significant drivers for students to enroll in TPGS.**

## Student Survey Responses (n=28)

What factors influenced your decision to apply and stay enrolled in the TPGS?



### Other factors

- Academic rigour and higher standards
- Community and social support
- Personal fit and growth
- Recommendations from teachers, alumni, and thorough research
- Inter-year interactions and the chance to learn from classmates



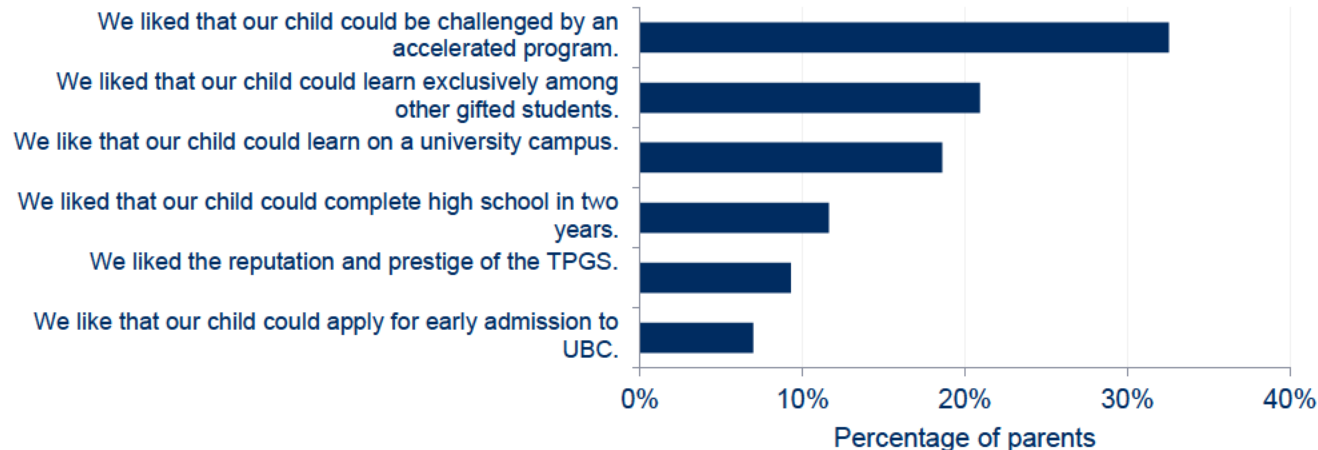


# Student Experience: Parent drivers to enroll child

**Academic challenge was the most significant driver for families' decisions to enroll in TPGS. Many other factors were also cited.**

## Parent Survey Responses (n=43)

What factors influenced your family's decision to enroll your child in the TPGS?



### Other factors

- Student support for one another and engaging teachers
- Classroom atmosphere
- Learn among like-minded peers and sense of belonging
- Teachers who are understanding and embrace neuro-diversities
- Child has friends at TPGS
- Wide range of academic studies and learning opportunities
- Decision was made by my child



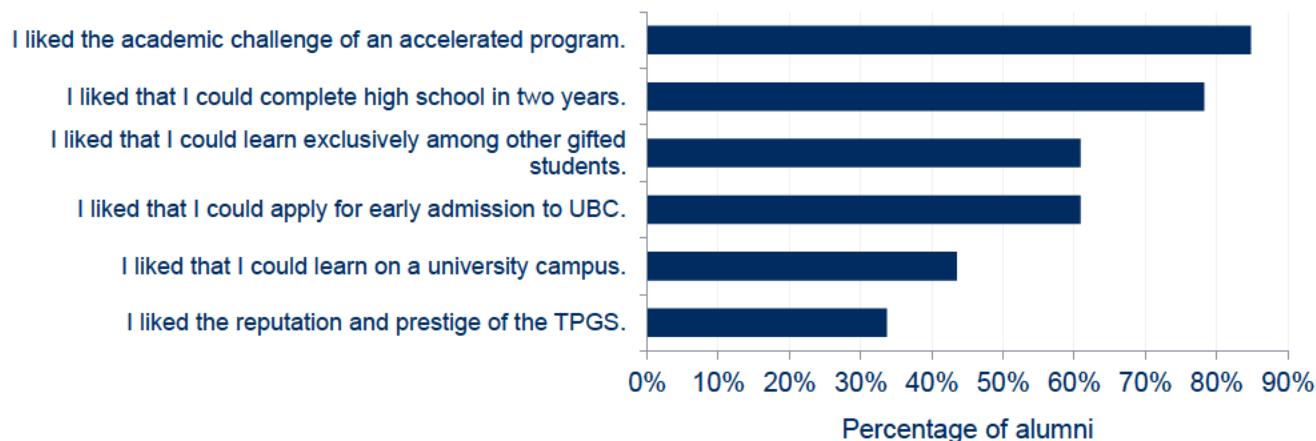


# Student Experience: Alumni drivers to enroll

**Academic challenge and completing high school in two years were cited to be the most significant drivers for alumni to enroll in TPGS.**

## Alumni Survey Responses (n=92)

What factors influenced your decision to enroll in the TPGS?



### Other factors

- My parents wanted me to enroll
- Chance to demonstrate my readiness for university and fair grading
- Closer than other options
- Faster pace of learning
- Warm, accepting, tight-knit community amongst students and teachers



# Student Experience: Diverse learning needs

## Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in addition to being gifted, some TPGS students may also have a disability.

All TPGS students are expected to have IEPs. The review team did not have access to the IEP information necessary to summarize the diverse learning needs of TPGS students. However, interview feedback suggests that some current students and alumni have disabilities like Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or diverse abilities. Information was shared which represents students and alumni as having an ASD or ADHD diagnosis.

*“ADHD is common in gifted students. The symptoms for ADHD show up in their teens for young [people], and I was in university when I started developing symptoms.” ~ alumni via survey*

*“As someone who has autism, the social environment was also good for me, as I wasn't bullied or excluded for being “weird” - instead I fit in with others who were “weird”. ~ alumni via survey*

*“I'd like to highlight disorders that often co occur with “giftedness”. I was diagnosed with ADHD a year after university graduation. I had at first chalked difficulties up to “never properly learning time management” but realized as I started [redacted] positions (and had failures) that it was something more.” ~ alumni via survey*

Based on information received by TPGS teachers as follows, visibility into the diverse learning needs of TPGS students may not be fully represented by IEP information:

- *“a lot of parents don't want their child tested around autism, around ADHD” ~ TPGS teacher*
- during interviews, TPGS teachers communicated their perspectives that some student IEPs are missing diagnoses for disabilities (e.g. ASD, ADHD) which makes the teaching experience more challenging for teachers and students because teachers are not able to directly address some of the difficulties or barriers students face; also, that some parents are not open to discussing disabilities as they perceive a diagnosis may impact their child's prospects of being admitted to university



# Student Experience: Diverse learning needs

## **TPGS teachers use a range of teaching methods; student experiences with these methods are mixed.**

Teachers reported using a variety of teaching methods (e.g., self-directed learning, group work, university-style teaching (e.g., labs), mentorship/inter-cohort learning, guest lectures, experiential learning (e.g., field trips), etc.<sup>1</sup>

Interviews and surveys with parents, students and alumni suggest that student experiences of the teaching methods used in TPGS differ based on personal preference, diverse learning needs, and delivery style (i.e., how individual teachers employ these methods). Anecdotal evidence suggests:

- Some students with less developed executive functioning do not thrive in self-directed or group work-oriented learning environments. Other students with more advanced skills appreciate these methods.
- Students who excel in one subject area may not excel in others and may require more structured and regular paced instruction in weaker subjects. The pace of instruction and the emphasis on self-directed learning makes this challenging.
- The pace of learning makes it difficult to tailor teaching methods to individual students.<sup>2</sup>
- Most students valued the mentorship, guest lectures and experiential learning opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Interviews with teachers, interviews and survey results from parents, students and alumni. Note: This list is not necessarily comprehensive.

<sup>2</sup> This finding is corroborated by alumni survey results which found that only half of the alumni agree that TPGS catered to their individual needs and interests. (See slide earlier in this section.)



# Student Experience: Student & parent comments

**Student and parent survey comments provide details around their own or their child's positive experiences in TPGS.**

Positive

**Learning environment & academic benefits**

- More engaged with learning and studying relative to previous school
- Motivated and excited by what they are learning and the pace of learning
- Opportunities for self-directed learning and exploring own interests
- Teaching styles nurture independent interests and learning styles

*"[W]hen I was in a mainstream, Grade 8 school, the work was not satisfying and I often felt apathetic about school. I was in a mini school program with accelerated coursework, and it simply wasn't for me."* ~ student

*"For example, passion projects, where I'm able to apply the things I've learned in class to something I would like to learn more about, and then share that with my class in a formalized way. It's essentially a guided in-depth exploration of anything I'd like to, and that gives me a stake in what I'm learning."* ~ student

*"I particularly love the teachers of my program. Every one of them takes time to learn about each student's individual needs and help in the best way they can. They make sure that the workload is challenging yet manageable and I have never felt stress surrounding my schoolwork at UTP. ... I do indeed feel incredibly happy in the program."* ~ student

*"In addition to the warm and welcoming atmosphere within my cohort, it is the inter-year relationships that create the vibrant community I am so happy to be a part of. We are always supporting one another, whether that be academically or emotionally, and everyone can comfortably spark a conversation with everybody else at TPGS."* ~ student

*"Before UTP, [student] used to have a problem in completing [their] assignments on time.. Teachers and principals talked to us multiple times ...[N]ow [student] is completely newborn. [Student] manages [their] time more efficiently than ever. At the right learning pace, [their] self-motivation has been ignited."* ~ parent

*"TPGS focuses more on developing individual abilities, teamwork, and connecting with future university and social life. For example, TPGS nurtures children to learn independently first, and after understanding on their own, encourage[s] them [to] help classmates with questions and confusion. These practices motivated by child."* ~ parent

# Student Experience: Student & parent comments

**Student and parent survey comments provide details around their own or their child's negative experiences in TPGS.**

Negative

**Learning environment & academic challenges**

- Lack of structure and control in classroom environment, disorganized and unstructured class schedules changing without warning
- Lack of consistency and transparency in expectations and grading practices, heavy emphasis on group work
- Heavy focus on STEM subjects, less emphasis on humanities
- Variability in teaching quality

*"Loud, disrespectful. It feels like the kids have no filter and no ability to be quiet. Teachers can rarely control energy levels."* ~ student

Difficulties or frustrations: *"Lack of rubrics, structure, and grading transparency"* ~ student

Suggestions for improving TPGS: *"More organization – it is very common for class schedules to be changed last minute, which causes students to be thrown off balance."* ~ student

*"Things are SO very disorganized that it creates a whole extra level of stress and anxiety. The chaos is excused as 'readying them for uni' but university is simply not the gong-show that this program seems to be."* ~ parent

*"Our [redacted]'s passion were left to self-learning and disorganised. Best learning came from opportunities to be on the university campus locations. So many school learning opportunities were barely touched since everything was in a rush."* ~ parent

*"It is my concern that the teachers do not have adequate training or understanding of gifted and neurodiverse learners. ... UTP operates on a 'less' version of structure which really should be something that is worked towards rather than immediately subjected to all students."* ~ parent

feedback on inflated grades via interview: *multiple group projects per week, group work allows teachers to mask grades* ~ parent

via interview: *there is a heavy emphasis on physics and maths, [my child] likes humanities, not all gifted learners are necessarily good at physics/math* ~ parent





# Student Experience: Alumni comments

## Alumni survey comments provide details around their positive experiences in TPGS.

Positive

Learning environment &  
academic benefits

- Teaching styles, tailored approach to student needs and abilities
- Learned important skills: time management, better able to handle university-level work, learn how to learn
- Self-exploration, engaged, challenged

*"The teachers, aware that students may have different academic backgrounds, all started out with relatively simple material and gradually built up the expectations during the two-year period to allow students who may initially be behind to catch up."*

*"The teachers were experts in dealing with gifted education and knew how to challenge our minds."*

*"This program was a lot of work, but this high intensity was really joyful for me. It energized me and taught me self-discipline and study skills. All of the lessons that I learned as regards time management are really helping me with my university studies now..."*

*"The rigour of our laboratory training vastly exceeded anything available outside the TPGS and was even a solid step up from first-year UBC lab courses."*

*"The TPGS curriculum emphasizes self-exploration and learning in subjects that interested and engaged us, which helped me explore my own future options and ultimately led me to the subject that I am currently studying at UBC."*

*"I liked the dedicated amount of teachers we had for a fairly small class size."*

*"I came into the program knowing that it would be difficult and that my success depended entirely on me and how well I could adapt. TPGS was the first time I had EVER felt challenged by my school work and I actually had to figure out how to learn and how to spend lots of time on learning. It was certainly an adjustment, but it was an adjustment without which I would've never gotten anywhere in post-secondary (or just in life, generally)."*

*"I was able to have a slightly modified curriculum during Y2 of the program because I was planning on applying to the Faculty of Arts; I was able to take courses online ... instead of physics and calculus, so I appreciate the flexibility that the program has, even though it's not what you'd usually think when you think UTP."*

# Student Experience: Alumni comments

## Alumni survey comments provide details around their negative experiences in TPGS.

Negative

Learning environment &  
academic benefits

- Insufficient support for students with additional disabilities or diverse abilities, no time for individualized/ personalized education
- Insufficient support for students who fall behind or for whom baseline knowledge is lower, concerns about quality of teaching
- Not prepared for university, narrow range of subjects/ limited exposure

*"Being behind on homework, etc were seen as personal failings and not properly learning time management. Disorders like ADHD were never discussed as potentialities. Maybe this has gotten better as TPGS faculty has changed."*

*"While TPGS is indeed prestigious, I believe it falls short of its reputation for quality education. ... TPGS did not do very much to close disparities in students' knowledge. As someone who did not have exposure to chemistry/computer science growing up, I felt like I was always behind my peers."*

*"It often felt like we were expected to learn more from a worse quality of teaching (i.e. we did not have standardized physics classes/lectures, and our learning was dependent on how well our peers taught/we taught our peers). The standards of grading often changed between students, despite a drastic difference in the quality of work, seemingly dependent on each students' relationship/standing with the teacher. "*

*"The TPGS also does not provide adequate breadth of curriculum or guidance for students to make an informed decision about their path through post-secondary education. Similar issues arise from the lack of freedom in choosing courses. The lack of certain courses (such as French or other second languages) places other institutions off-limits unless a student can afford and has the time to take such courses outside of their normal schooling."*

*"Strongly advocate that accelerated learning should not be in place. For most students I know it has been a negative experience."*

*"UTP fosters an environment of cramming (especially due to its intense workload and academic environment) that does not adequately prepare you for university."*





# Student Experience: Location

**Parents, students, and alumni provide positive and negative feedback on the location and facilities of TPGS.**

Positive

Location and facilities

- Provides access to UBC resources and events; e.g. library, Campus Day
- Allows students to familiarize themselves with UBC campus so they are less intimidated when they enter UBC
- Provides students with access to a grad/alumni community for supports and TPGS premises as a place for respite
- Convenient for UBC faculty teaching at TPGS

*"With my UBC card and student status, I can read advanced papers at my leisure and connect with professors for hands-on research opportunities across campus."* ~ student

*"I enjoy having access to university labs and libraries, as well as having the opportunity to familiarize myself with the campus."* ~ student

*"Campus Days give opportunities to explore different subjects and attend lectures on campus"* ~ parent

Negative

Location and facilities

- Some resources available in a mainstream high school are not easily accessed; e.g. resources for learning a second language, broad selection of electives, larger pool of IEP case managers
- Lacks a staff room and kitchen facilities. Not accessible to people who have challenges climbing stairs.
- Too small, cluttered, and windowless

*"Building is run-down, but functional"* ~ parent

*"The school itself should be cleaned, decluttered and organized"* ~ parent

*"It would be nice for them to interact with other kids (for PE or Art or clubs) ... having access to high school facilities would be a positive benefit"* ~ parent



# Student Wellbeing: Overview

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Parents & Current Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~94%<sup>1,2</sup> felt the workload was manageable and ~88%<sup>2</sup> are satisfied with the opportunities for extra-curricular activities provided by TPGS for their child</li> <li>~92%<sup>1</sup> were satisfied with level of support from teachers</li> <li>~91%<sup>2</sup> agree that they have observed positive changes in their child's social and emotional wellbeing in TPGS,</li> <li>~85%<sup>1</sup> (78%+<sup>3,2</sup>) describe the TPGS environment as comfortable and supportive; e.g. small, inclusive, tight-knit community, inter-year relationships are supportive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~30%<sup>3</sup> describe concerns around workload and balance for the student in TPGS; e.g. stress due to pace of learning</li> <li>~22%<sup>3</sup> describe concerns around the student's wellbeing due to TPGS; e.g. excessive focus on performance</li> <li>~17%<sup>3</sup> (8%<sup>1</sup>) describe concerns around support from TPGS teachers; e.g. favouritism, inconsistencies</li> <li>~13%<sup>3</sup> (12%<sup>1</sup>) describe concerns around support from students/peers in TPGS; e.g. peer bullying and shaming, social isolation and exclusion</li> <li>~11%<sup>1</sup> (n=3) describe the TPGS environment as exclusionary and/or unsafe; e.g. feeling unsafe in classroom/in group work</li> </ul>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sense of belonging; tight knit community and close friendships</li> <li>personal and academic growth</li> <li>opportunity to explore interests in depth and sooner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~14% were dissatisfied with level of support from teachers</li> <li>~13% were dissatisfied with level of support from peers</li> <li>~11% did not feel the academic expectations and workload in TPGS was manageable</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers observe significant benefits to some students' mental health and engagement with learning due to TPGS peer environment, individualized learning, and academic challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some TPGS students have trouble with the pace of acceleration especially in Year 1; additional pressure from parents can be detrimental to some students, reactions can be more intense due to giftedness</li> <li>TPGS students have access to a counsellor at University Hill Secondary School, but proximity is a barrier for some</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: students via Student Survey

<sup>2</sup> Source: parents via Parent Survey

<sup>3</sup> Source: families via interviews

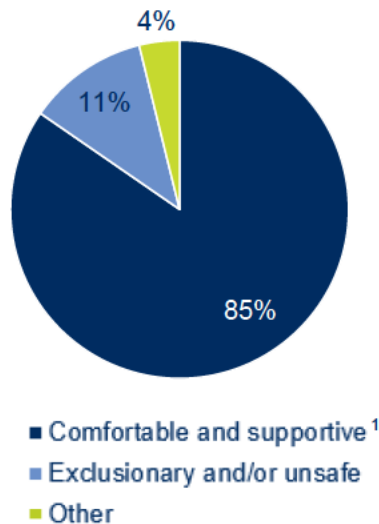


# Student Wellbeing: Survey and interview feedback

Across surveys and interviews, roughly 68% of students describe their wellbeing in TPGS as positive; however, it is important to note that 7% of students describe their TPGS experiences as exclusionary and unsafe. Positive and negative sentiment around wellbeing was expressed in family interviews.

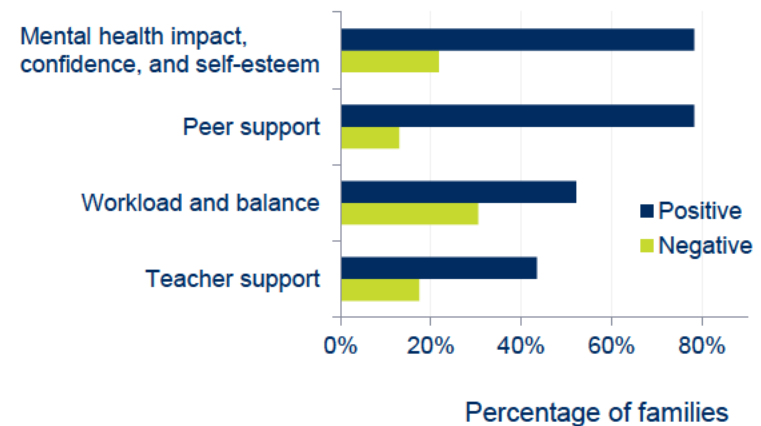
How would you describe your experiences in the TPGS environment? (Select all that apply.)

**Student survey responses (n=26)**



Describe strengths and opportunities for improvement of TPGS.

**Family interview responses (n=23)**



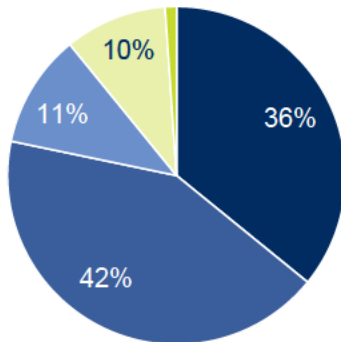
<sup>1</sup> Note: respondents were invited to respond with multiple selections so various groupings are possible. Groups shown here are mutually exclusive and complete.

# Student Wellbeing: Academic workload

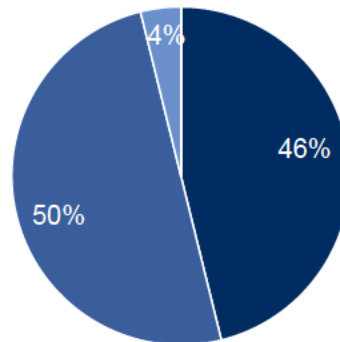
**Parent responses around TPGS academic expectations and workload as being adequate and manageable are significantly more favourable than alumni responses.**

The academic expectations and workload were/are adequate and manageable [for my child].

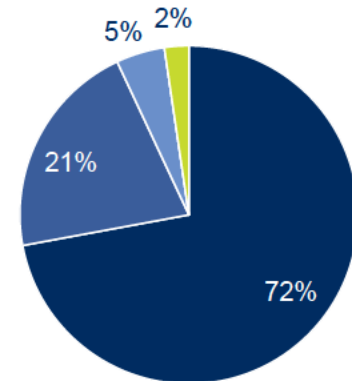
**Alumni survey responses (n=92)**



**Student survey responses (n=26)**



**Parent survey responses (n=43)**

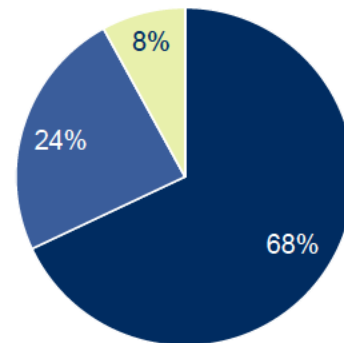


- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

# Student Wellbeing: Support from teachers & students

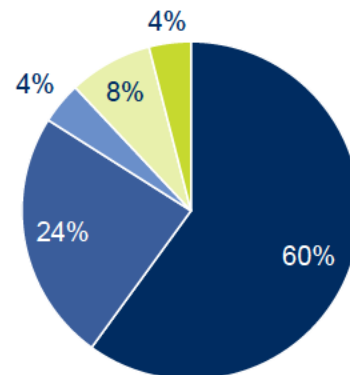
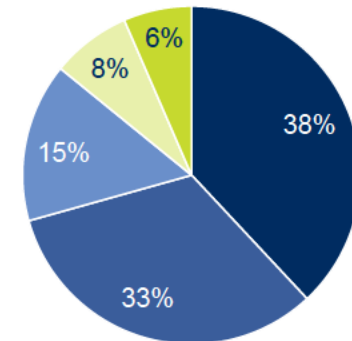
**Student responses around the support from teachers in TPGS are significantly more favourable than alumni responses. Responses around support from other students is similar between the groups.**

**Student survey responses (n=25)**

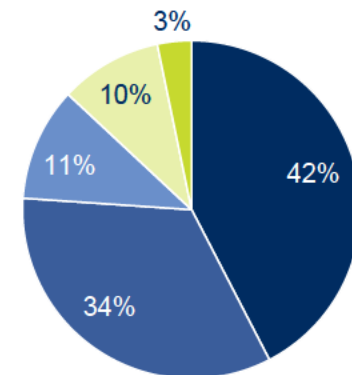


How satisfied are you with the level of support from teachers in the TPGS?

**Alumni survey responses (n=92)**



How satisfied are you with the level of support from other students in the TPGS?

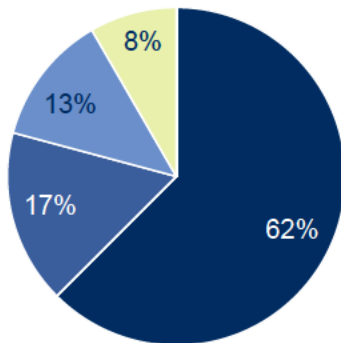


# Student Wellbeing: Additional aspects

Parent survey responses on aspects of wellbeing are ~90% favourable. It is important to note that 8% of students are somewhat uncomfortable expressing their opinions and ideas in the TPGS environment.

## Student survey responses (n=24)

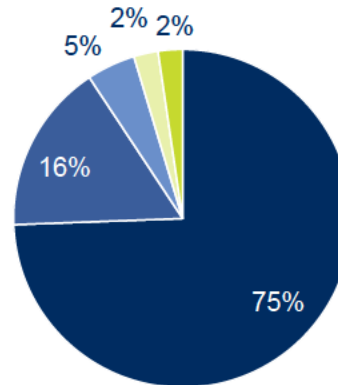
How comfortable do you feel expressing your opinions and ideas in the TPGS environment?



- Fully comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neutral
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable

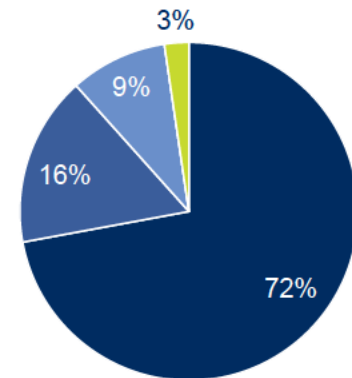
## Parent survey responses (n=43)

Since my child began participating in the TPGS, I have observed positive changes in their social and emotional wellbeing.



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How satisfied are you with the opportunities for extra-curricular activities provided by the TPGS for your child?



- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied





# Student Wellbeing: Student & parent comments

**Student and parent survey comments provide details around their own or their child's positive wellbeing in TPGS.**

Positive

**Social & emotional benefits**

- Tight knit, supportive community, positive inter-year dynamics
- Sense of belonging and safety
- Increased self-confidence and relatability amongst peers
- Challenging but manageable workload, time for extracurriculars
- Caring teachers who foster a safe and nurturing learning environment

*"Since coming to UTP, I have built strong relationships with all of my classmates. Being around people I can trust has greatly boosted my confidence that had diminished within a mainstream school where I was degraded to truly believe that being who I was wasn't ok. In UTP, I learned that it was alright to express my interests and passions that I wasn't allowed to express in another school because that would make me a nerd and not fun to talk to." ~ student*

*"I feel more understood when able to be around like-minded individuals, for example, it was incredible to be able to have academic discussions with people who share my love for [redacted]." ~ student*

*"The teachers are very supporting and helping, they readily offer guidance and teaching when I need it. I can easily approach them." ~ student*

*"... the teachers here at UTP are amazing. Each teacher takes care to check in on the well-being of the students and support everyone. ... make sure we understand all the course material and they are always welcome to help" ~ student*

*"I enjoy being able to express my thoughts in a group project without fear of being called a "nerd" and being forced to do all the work for the team. [TPGS] lets every student fit in with the group, but also stand out in their own unique ways." ~ student*

*"After [their] group evaluation with TPGS students, [they] told me, "Daddy, they talk and think in the same way as me. They like me and I like them. Finally, I have feeling of belong[ing], I belong to this school". We choose TPGS program because it is a home for neurodivergent students like my [child]." ~ parent*

*"[They] suffered socially and emotionally. [They] were unable to connect to the other students. [Their] mental health suffered. At 10 years old, [they] asked us to see a psychologist to help [them] ... [Their] social and emotional growth was exponential at TPGS. Long lasting friendships and healthy fulfilled teens." ~ parent*



# Student Wellbeing: Student & parent comments

**Student and parent survey comments provide details around their own or their child's negative wellbeing in TPGS.**

Negative

**Social & emotional challenges**

- Negative experiences, including peer bullying, racism and shaming
- Challenges with teachers; e.g. not addressing bullying effectively, being dismissive to student's concerns, favouritism, crossing personal boundaries
- Difficulty balancing extracurriculars or being encouraged to quit
- Workload intensity,

*"There have been many attempts to isolate me socially ... and when I asked the teachers for support, there was very minimal if any help, advice, or intervention until [redacted] was involved."* ~ student

*"I have experienced targeted attacks from another student ... When I brought this up to the teachers/counsellor, they said that they would speak to [the student] but [the student] has not had any sort of repercussions for [their] actions."* ~ student

*"TPGS has done more harm to my social, emotional, and mental health than anything I have experienced in my life... The environment that is fostered in the classroom is toxic and the teachers [redacted] if anything, they make it worse."* ~ student

*"sexual harassment; blatant teacher favouritism; bullying, encouraged or even caused by parents"* ~ student

*"I can no longer [redacted] for fun. It's rare for me to go out on weekends...and I usually have a lot to do. If I do end up going out or doing something for myself, it puts my academics in jeopardy. TPGS weighs me down in a lot of ways."* ~ student

*"I've found [redacted] in particular to be very dismissive and overall it's difficult to receive support from teachers."* ~ student

*"[Teachers] threaten us with bad grades and do not help us with conflict resolution in group projects. If we cannot figure it out, they punish us with bad grades and make us do it over again. This does not fix the root problem."* ~ student

*"TPGS has selected students who do not respect personal boundaries and the teachers do not teach, they do not create safe spaces for the students and they retaliate (by threatening to give out bad grades) based on their moods."* ~ student

*"...it's overwhelming, [my child] barely has kept up. In the first year, it was a lot of tears, feelings of shame and inadequacy... [my child] cares less because [they] lost respect for the teachers that kept saying [they] were the problem."* ~ parent



# Student Wellbeing: Alumni comments

## Alumni survey comments provide details around their positive wellbeing in TPGS.

Positive

Social & emotional benefits

- Sense of belonging in TPGS compared to isolation and bullying experienced in previous school
- Camaraderie and collaboration making student feel connected and supported
- Personal and academic growth
- Teacher support

*"I was extremely interested in getting out of the normal school environment. I came into the program at the end of grade 8 from [redacted], where I had never really connected with my peers and where I was dreading having to go through another 4 years of the same sludge I've been dredging through, into an environment where people connected with me and encouraged me to thrive. The academic challenge was extremely welcome."*

*"Throughout my time at the program, the teachers and other staff were very clear that our health, both physical and mental, was their number one priority. To this end, the teachers were always available if we had any concerns that we wanted to chat about, and were regular in giving extensions for assignments/assessments if we feel we needed it."*

*"While standards were set high in terms of learning goals and professionalism, ample support was also provided to help students grow from different starting points."*

*"It was difficult fitting in socially in a normal high school. TPGS was the first time I felt like I fit somewhere."*

*"Despite what many outsiders would expect, the student environment in the program is highly collaborative. There's really this feeling that we're all in it together, and people share their individual strengths to help everyone else out."*

*"There was incredible camaraderie among students. I felt this was the first time I fit in somewhere."*

*"A very close-knit group of students that I still keep in contact with. There's something incredibly wonderful about friendships that survive throughout an intense time of learning and self-growth."*

*"As someone who has [redacted], the social environment was also good for me, as I wasn't bullied or excluded for being "weird" - instead I fit in with others who were "weird"."*



# Student Wellbeing: Alumni comments

## Alumni survey comments provide details around their negative wellbeing in TPGS.

Negative

Social & emotional challenges

- Discouraged from taking extracurriculars, feelings of isolation
- Impact on self-esteem, bullying/shaming/toxic environment
- Excessive focus on performance
- Insufficient support from teachers, favouritism by teachers, teacher misconduct

*"We were discouraged from doing anything except what the teachers thought was important."*

*"The workload itself was fine, but the shaming and emotional abuse made me too depressed to have a routine."*

*"[The teachers] were dismissive and ignorant of the repeated bullying and sexual harassment..."*

*"I would say that the teachers are currently the weakest link at the program-- there was a massive problem with favouritism when I was around..."*

*"Due to how small the program is there was a great power imbalance between the teachers and students. They definitely played favourites, and this is coming from someone who likely benefited from that bias."*

*"[...] overall the consensus amongst students was that we had to perform and toe the line or we were threatened with expulsion from the program."*

*"The teachers in UTP were cruel and fostered an environment of competition and ill-will between the students, due to their unnatural amount of unchecked power..."*

*"Feeling unwelcome at school thanks to both the teachers and my peers and becoming depressed to the point of having recurring suicidal thoughts, only to be reprimanded by my teachers for being so "withdrawn" from the TPGS community. Not once did they ask me if I was okay."*

*"I definitely did struggle with my mental health at least partly due to the academic stress of the program. I feel like the program focused too heavily on academics at the expense of everything else."*

*"Certain teachers harboured stereotypes about students (on the basis of gender and race)."*



# Student Wellbeing: Community environment

**Feedback from parents, students, and alumni around the TPGS community vary significantly. Examples are provided.**

Positive

## Community experiences

- Tight-knit community and strong connections contribute to student's success
- Inter-year teaching and learning opportunities are positive and supportive

*"I liked the small community of TPGS and the tight-knit structure among students and teachers." ~ alumni*

*"The other students and the connections I made with them are probably the greatest asset I got from the program. I don't think I could have made it through the program or university without their friendship and support." ~ alumni*

*"When you care so deeply about your friends, it's very important to see them succeed with you." ~ student*

*"The inter-year community, which supports each other and has created so many meaningful bonds. My year 2s are my close friends, and we often share many collaborations." ~ student*

Negative

## Community experiences

- Some students experienced significant social isolation and exclusion from current students and the wider school community
- Competitive learning environment and feelings of academic inferiority

*"There have been many attempts to isolate me socially." ~ student*

[Redacted text block]

*"Besides being competitive, the student body atmosphere was downright toxic." ~ alumni*



# University Preparation: Overview

	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Concerns
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strong academic preparation; e.g. study habits</li> <li>enhanced readiness for University and clear understanding of what to expect; e.g. lab work, independent learning</li> <li>comparative advantage compared to peers from regular high schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~20% disagree that TPGS adequately prepared them for post-secondary education</li> <li>exposure to a range of courses was limited and felt barriers to pursuing education / careers in non-STEM fields</li> <li>unprepared for the social dynamics and power imbalances of an older peer group at University and a lacked foundation of sexual health education and an understanding of consent</li> </ul>
UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continuous integration between TPGS and university is good for student transition</li> <li>TPGS students generally do well in university classes - their analysis has shown that marks are slightly higher than regular students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maturity levels of some graduates, examples of inappropriate behaviour in the UBC classroom</li> <li>lack of depth of some graduates, particularly in the Arts and Humanities</li> <li>students are not as well positioned for awards because they do not have the time to generate the experience (e.g., volunteering, sports teams, etc) that may be required for some awards</li> <li>students may de facto have less access to scholarship opportunities/funding packages compared to those who are able to choose from and be admitted to universities including UBC and others<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
First Year UBC Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across the period from 2009 to 2019, TPGS alumni academically outperformed (based on Year 1 grades) the <u>general student body</u> for each of the UBC degree programs at a 95% confidence level.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Students have fewer post-secondary options because of their age at graduation from TPGS. Students generally need to be at least 17 years old by the time they start their studies in most Canadian universities. Specific age requirements vary by institution and program.

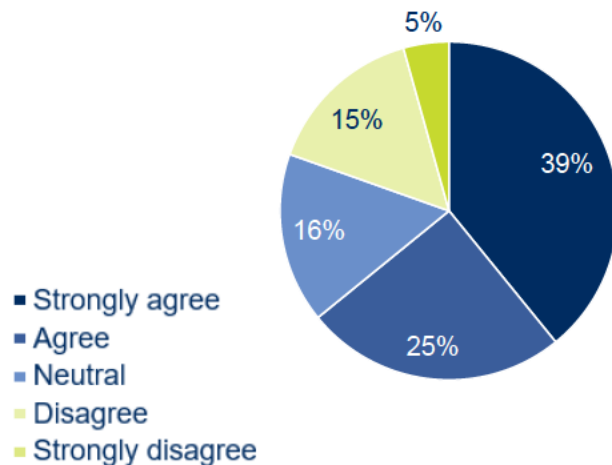


# University Preparation: Alumni Survey feedback

**Alumni survey results revealed mixed feelings surrounding TPGS positively impacting their academic development and the ability of TPGS to meet their needs and prepare them for university.**

## Alumni survey responses (n=92)

The TPGS adequately prepared me for post-secondary education.







# University Preparation: Alumni comments

## Alumni provided positive feedback on their preparation for university after graduating from TPGS.

Positive

University preparation

- Strong academic preparation; e.g. tests, study habits, high-quality writing
- Enhanced readiness for University and clear understanding of what to expect, e.g. lab work, professional-level reports, independent learning
- Comparative advantage compared to peers from regular high schools

*"TPGS adequately prepared me for post-secondary education in academic ways."*

*"prepared me to take tests and study"*

*"I ... ended up entering university on a strong footing knowing pretty much exactly what to expect and doing very well in my first year at UBC"*

*"Knowledge and ability-wise, I felt adequately prepared for university"*

*"The increased academic rigour of the program was good preparation for the challenges of university."*

*"The TPGS prepared me for post secondary education better than a regular high school, because the teachers and professors shared a lot of advice and experience about success in university, and the TPGS's higher workload was closer to the workload experienced in a university."*

*"In the TPGS, we conducted biweekly chemistry and physics experiments in UBC labs and wrote professional-level lab reports to document and communicate our findings. I became very comfortable with academic writing due to this training regimen, and I still use the writing skills I developed in the TPGS to this day in graduate school."*

*"The rigour of our laboratory training vastly exceeded anything available outside the TPGS and was even a solid step up from first-year UBC lab courses. Throughout my undergrad at UBC, I observed many classmates from regular high school struggle with the gap in academic rigour, but the TPGS prepared me well to tackle the challenges of university."*





# University Preparation: Alumni comments

## Alumni provided negative feedback on their preparation for university after graduating from TPGS.

Negative

University preparation

- Difficulty with transition and adjustment to university
- Unrealistic expectations and lack of career guidance
- Inadequate preparation for life skills such as sexual health education and career education led to difficulties; e.g. handling romantic relationships, understanding consent, making informed career decisions

*"I was unable to put together a good application to my desired undergraduate program because of attending Transition. If I had attended a regular high school, I would have had a better application to my desired program."*

*"This shift in social environment was quite significant (being exposed to people who were able to drive, drink, etc. at an age where I was not yet able) in the initial years of undergrad for me and lessened as I got older. I found that I was "set free" from TPGS and only went back to the program to visit on my own accord, rather than having the program reach out."*

*"Transition was incredibly elitist (at least then) and made me think I was smarter than a lot of people at UBC and it took me awhile to realize that based on my goals for graduate school, I needed to be towards the top of my class."*

*"The lack of sex education fails students by inadequately preparing them to understand consent or sexual health in post-secondary."*

*"Being younger in university led to romantic relationships that had large age gaps and difficult power dynamics, I didn't feel emotionally prepared for it during the program (we didn't even have sex ed)."*

*"I personally felt lost and lack of guidance as to what I could do as a career, being essentially pushed into that at the age of 15."*

*"They never really explored different career options when I was there. I had no idea what to pursue and only applied to Sciences because everyone else was..."*

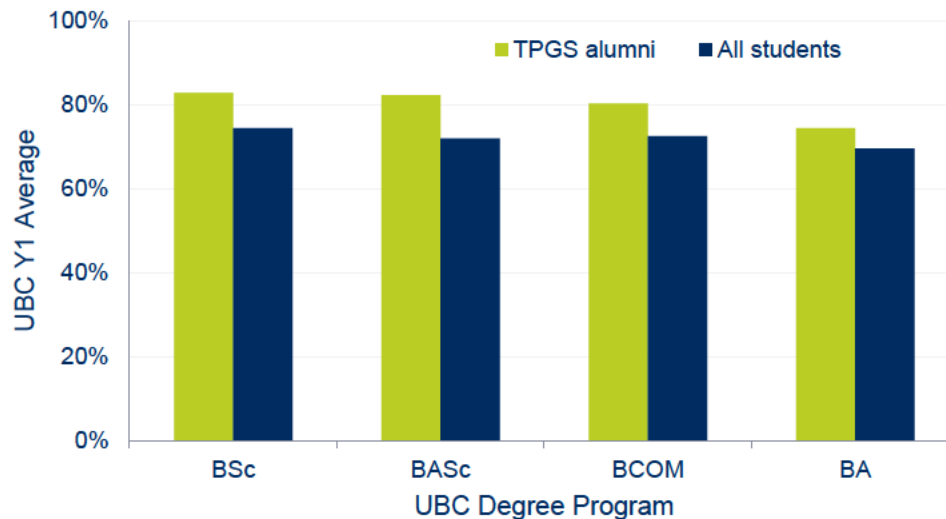
*"In many first year classes, I felt behind my peers in the existing knowledge we had."*

*via interview: thrown into the ocean to sink or swim, sank quite hard at making friends in first couple of years, was 15-year-old trying to fit in amongst 18-year-olds*

# University Preparation: UBC Year 1 Performance

Across the period from 2009 to 2019, TPGS alumni academically outperformed (based on Year 1) the general student body for each of the UBC degree programs at a 95% confidence level – limitations with data prevented comparison to gifted students from mainstream schools.

## UBC Year 1 Grade Averages by Degree Program<sup>1</sup>



TPGS alumni – population size	111	37	21	36
All students – population size	17,644	8433	7119	23,425

### Key Observations

- At 95% confidence level, based on data over the period from 2009 to 2019, UBC Year 1 grade averages are statistically higher for TPGS alumni compared to the overall UBC student body for each of the 4 UBC degree programs.
- The difference is largest for students enrolled in the BAsC program. On average, TPGS alumni grade averages in the BAsC program are 10 percentage points higher than those of the overall UBC student body.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Data provided by UBC



# Program Accessibility: Overview

	1998 Conceptual Framework & PRP Policy	Historical Deviations from 1998 Conceptual Framework	Recent Practices <sup>4</sup>	Remaining Issues
Admissions process <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three academic subject teacher references</li> <li>students meet threshold of 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading, mathematics and writing are accepted</li> <li>intake completed in March</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher references are not required</li> <li>students below threshold of 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading, mathematics and writing are accepted</li> <li>intake was completed in October/November instead of March</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher references optional</li> <li>students meet 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in at least 2 domains</li> <li>admissions timelines align with the 1998 framework</li> <li>changes to student assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student assessments, testing, and criteria have largely remained the same and have not considered new research or leading practices in gifted education</li> </ul>
Awareness <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media advertisement is required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS not broadly advertised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS advertised through the weekly Deputy Minister's Bulletin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uncertain effectiveness of advertising approach</li> </ul>
Geographical accessibility <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% from outside Vancouver and 50% from VSB schools (Conceptual Framework)</li> <li>more than one district throughout BC must be represented by the children and youth attending the program (PRP Policy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limitations in data prevented historical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>98% of applicants and all current students are from the Lower Mainland of BC</li> <li>in 2023/24 intake year, 30% of applicants were from VSB schools, 14% of applicants were from independent schools in Vancouver</li> <li>51% of current students live in Vancouver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS is practically only an option for those students originating from the Lower Mainland and for those outside of Vancouver travel or relocation barriers exist</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives and review of VSB documents

<sup>2</sup> Source: Interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives

<sup>3</sup> Source: Data provided by VSB

<sup>4</sup> January 2023 to present



# Program Accessibility: Admissions and awareness

**The eligibility criteria and admissions process for entrance into TPGS shifted over time, potentially leading to inconsistencies and overly subjective decision-making.**

The 1998 Conceptual Framework<sup>1</sup> provides a set of eligibility criteria and other requirements for admission to TPGS. The process (up until recently) had deviated from the 1998 process in four main ways:

- The process did not require **teacher references**. The 1998 model calls for three academic subject teacher references. This limits input about student suitability from parties outside of TPGS.
- TPGS Program Coordinator would accept students who were **below the 1998 threshold of 99<sup>th</sup> percentile** in reading, mathematics and writing. While this may have increased the accessibility of TPGS, having a more fluid threshold may have limited the objectivity of decision-making and may have led to admission of students who are not well-equipped to handle TPGS demands.
- **Intake was completed in October/November**, whereas the 1998 model envisions completing intake in March. Earlier intake may limit teacher referrals from origin schools as these teachers do not have as much time to get to know their students and to assess suitability for TPGS.
- TPGS was **not broadly advertised**, whereas the 1998 Conceptual Framework called for media advertisement, outreach to School Counselors and Principals as well as Challenge Centre students. This limits overall knowledge of and, by default, access to TPGS.

During interviews, TPGS teachers provided a rationale for a number of these deviations:

- The requirement for teacher references may preclude students who are gifted but who are under-performing or who require behavioural supports because teachers may not have the training or experience required to recognize giftedness.
- Relying too heavily on test scores can preclude students who have English as an Additional Language or are in French immersion, for example.

<sup>1</sup> See List of References for details



# Program Accessibility: Admissions and awareness

## **Adjustments to the 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 (since paused) admissions process helped to realign the admissions process.**

For the 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 (paused) intakes, core elements of the admissions process described in the 1998 Conceptual Framework<sup>1</sup> were reintroduced, and aligned with current VSB practice:

- renewed focus on students to fall within the 99th percentile in at least 2 domains
- elimination of the parent interview process and elimination of the Raven Progressive Matrices Test
- update to the Canadian Test of Cognitive Skills (CTCS©) 1992 edition (2023/2024 intake) and to the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test © 2012 (current edition) for the 2024/2025 admission (paused)
- updated admissions form/required documentation to remove questions about parents' occupation, siblings and cultural heritage
- teacher references were included as optional
- revised admissions timelines to align with the 1998 framework

Additionally, there has been an effort to increase outreach by advertising the Program across the Province through the Deputy Minister's Bulletin (a weekly email newsletter sent to all 60 school districts); however, the effectiveness of this promotional channel for reaching applicable teachers, students and parents is unclear.

<sup>1</sup> See List of References for details





# Geographical Accessibility

## **While TPGS meets requirements to include students from both within and outside of Vancouver, most applicants and students are from the Lower Mainland.**

There are requirements around geographical accessibility in the 1998 Conceptual Framework<sup>1</sup> and PRP Handbook<sup>1</sup>:

- 1998 Conceptual Framework: “50% of students from outside of Vancouver and 50% of students from VSB schools” [pg. 6]
- PRP Handbook: “more than one district throughout BC must be represented by the children and youth attending the program” [pg. 2]

While policy around geographical accessibility may have evolved over time, no revisions are available within the documentation received by the review team.

As shown on the slides to follow, based on applicant information for intake year 2023/24:

- 44% of applicants were from feeder schools within Vancouver, including VSB (30%) and independent schools in Vancouver (14%)
- 24% of applicants were from independent schools, including independent schools in Vancouver (14%) and independent schools outside Vancouver (10%)
- 98% of applicants were from the Lower Mainland

Based on postal code information for current students:

- 51% of current students live in Vancouver. Considering sample sizes, the difference between intake years is not significant at the 95% level of confidence.
- All current students live in the Lower Mainland

TPGS does not provide dorm options (unlike the BC School for the Deaf), thereby making it very difficult for students who do not live within commuting distance of the UBC campus site to participate.

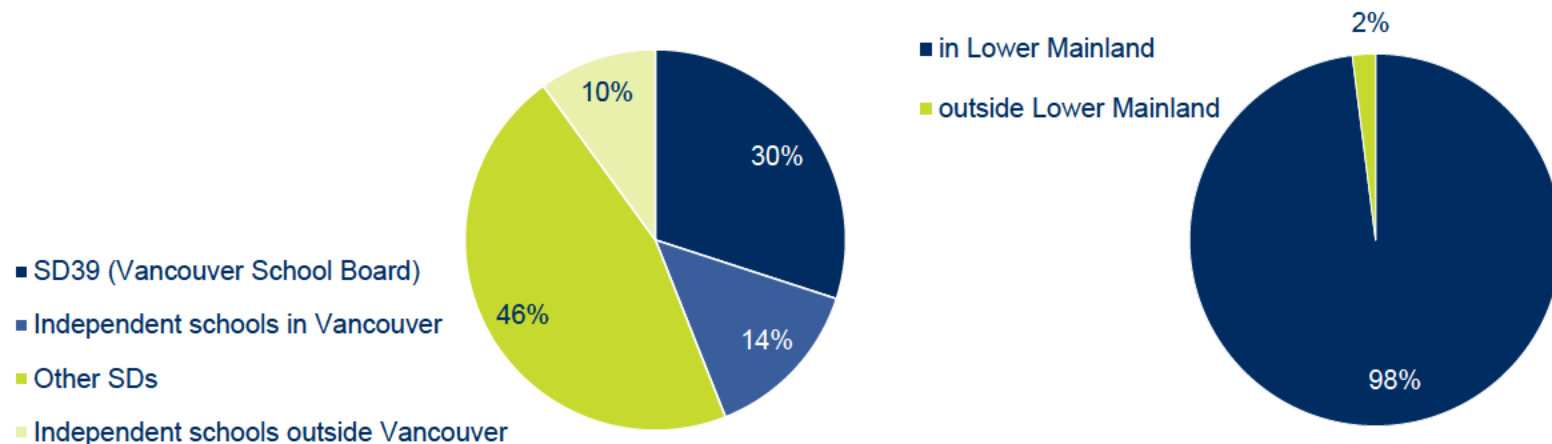
<sup>1</sup> See List of References for details



## Accessibility: Feeder school locations of applicants

For intake year 2023/24, ~44% of applicants were from schools in Vancouver, including VSB and independent schools. Almost all applicants were from schools in the Lower Mainland.

### Feeder School Locations of TPGS Applicants<sup>1</sup>



#### Key Observations

- 30% of applicants were from VSB schools
- 24% of applicants are from independent schools while the remaining applicants are from public schools
- 98% of applicants are from schools in the Lower Mainland

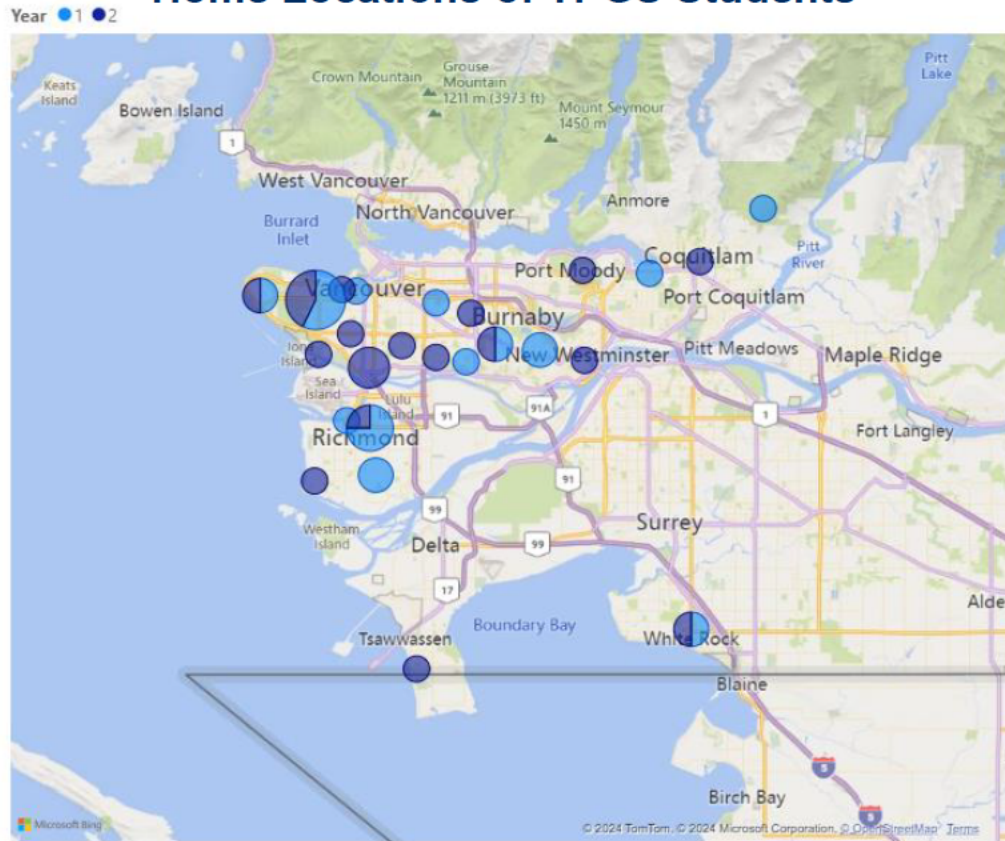
<sup>1</sup> Source: Data provided by VSB. Based on applicant information from second round of scoring, April 2023.



# Accessibility: Home locations of students

Home postal code information of current students in TPGS shows that 51% of current students live in Vancouver and all live within the Lower Mainland. Bubble sizes in the map graphic below depict the number of students in that area.

Home Locations of TPGS Students<sup>1</sup>



## Key Observations

- 40% of students admitted in the 2023/24 intake year and 62% of students admitted in the 2022/23 intake year live in Vancouver. Considering sample sizes, these percentages are not significantly different at the 95% level of confidence.
- The students who live furthest from UBC live in South Surrey/White Rock (41 km) and Westwood Plateau region of Coquitlam (38 km).

<sup>1</sup> Source: Data provided by VSB



# Program Governance: Overview

**There are two key issues/considerations related to program governance. Details to follow.**

	Issues/Considerations
Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is significant divergence between TPGS and MECC Policy/VSB Practices (see section immediately following this slide)</li></ul>
Roles & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a misunderstanding about the roles and responsibilities of the institutional partners on the part of some members of the TPGS community (see section that follows)</li></ul>



# Program Governance: TPGS Practices

	TPGS Practice*	Deviations from Standard Practice*
Curriculum alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no curriculum guide</li> <li>limited visibility into course outlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when the curriculum is adjusted, a curriculum guide should be developed</li> <li>until recently, teachers did not share course outlines; UBC guest speakers/instructors do not consistently provide syllabuses or course outlines</li> </ul>
Instructional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lower than typical teaching to prep ratios (1:1)</li> <li>inconsistent/ inaccurate grading</li> <li>students write own Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), parent resistance to District Principal engagement on IEPs, non-standard management of IEPs, parent resistance to noting student disabilities on IEPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>typical teaching to prep ratios in VSB schools is 7:1</li> <li>not clear if TPGS is meeting minimum number of instructions hours (i.e. 952 hours per year)</li> <li>some parents concerned that grades are inflated, do not accurately reflect level of understanding<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Typically, a group of people is appointed as a school-based team to plan the IEP. Principal is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is developed, implemented and reviewed.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Role of parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) collects parent fees in bulk and plans and runs school activities</li> <li>PAC does not share expenditure or agenda information</li> <li>parents have an unusually high degree of engagement in the operations of the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re: PAC fees, standard practice is for parents to pay per activity; school, not PAC, typically runs activities</li> <li>Principal typically reviews PAC expenditures and meeting agendas and is invited to PAC meetings</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teacher use of UBC email addresses for communications with families</li> <li>non-standard practices related to field trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TPGS teachers should use VSB email addresses to communicate with families</li> <li>approvals for field trips do not follow standard practice, supervision ratios are too high</li> </ul>

\* Unless otherwise noted the information this slide was sourced through interviews with VSB (administrative and TPGS) representatives.

<sup>1</sup> Source: family interviews <sup>2</sup> Source: Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning. See List of References for details.



# Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices

## Many of TPGS's current practices do not align with MECC policy and VSB standards and protocols.

According to the 1998 Conceptual Framework, the TPGS was designed to follow unique practices. Some practices intentionally did not align with VSB standards and protocols.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of these practices include:

- Compacted curriculum
- Location outside of a School District Facility
- Very active/prominent role for parents
- Students as the case managers of their own IEPs
- Students are required to reside in the Lower Mainland for the duration of their participation in the program.

Over time, the divergence between TPGS and MECC policy/VSB practices continued to widen across four key components of the TPGS:

- Curriculum alignment
- Instructional practices
- Role of parents
- Other non-standard practices

<sup>1</sup> See previous slides for a summary of key elements of the 1998 Conceptual Framework.



# Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices

**Curriculum alignment: A lack of a curriculum guide, limited visibility into course outlines, and inconsistent practices of UBC instructors and guest lecturers are key deviations from VSB practice.**

TPGS follows a unique curriculum delivery model which provides five years of high school instruction in two years. TPGS teachers report using unique approaches to delivering the curriculum in ways that are meant to strip out redundancies and to meet student interests. UBC instructors report focus on teaching subjects in a way that complements the curriculum and work with teachers to determine how courses contribute to learning outcomes.

With respect to curriculum alignment, TPGS practice deviates in the following ways from standard MECC policy and VSB practices:

- **No curriculum guide:** In accordance with standard VSB practice, when the curriculum is adjusted, the expectation is that there would be a curriculum guide that clearly explains / demonstrates how the curriculum has been adapted and that provides a structure for the development of course outlines and lessons plans. In the absence of this guide, it is difficult to determine how instruction aligns to the curriculum.
- **Limited visibility into course outlines:** Until recently<sup>1</sup>, teachers did not share their course outlines with the District Principal, students or parents.
- **Inconsistent practices of UBC guest speakers/instructors:** Some UBC guest speakers/instructors provide syllabuses while others do not have (or have not shared) course outlines. Insight into what is being taught by these instructors would help provide clarity around how instruction is aligned to the curriculum and how it has been tailored to a high school audience.

<sup>1</sup> Practice started to change after January 2023





# Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices

**Instructional practices:** A number of TPGS instructional practices deviate from VSB standard practice, including teaching to preparation ratios, instructional minutes and grading.

- **Higher than typical teaching to prep ratio:** TPGS teachers have a 1:1 ratio of teaching to preparation blocks, whereas teachers in mainstream schools have a 7:1 teaching to preparation ratio.
- **Potentially reduced instructional minutes:** BC high schools have an obligation to meet a minimum number of instructional minutes (i.e., 952 hours per year). It is not clear if the TPGS is meeting this minimum as there are several activities that are unique to TPGS and that may reduce instructional minutes (e.g., UBC instructors teach for 60 minutes of a 90-minute block, leaving 30 minutes during which students are not receiving instruction; and the regular Soup Days (parent-led potlucks)).
- **Inconsistent / inaccurate grading:** During interviews, some parents raised concerns that, in some cases, the grades earned by students did not reflect their level of understanding of a subject. For example, parents raised concerns about inflated grades, i.e., students receiving higher than deserved grades, and about manufactured grades, i.e., students receiving grades for courses in which they did not participate (e.g., physical education). Some students and parents questioned accuracy of grades for group projects when individual student contributions varied significantly. Given the emphasis and amount of group work within TPGS grading equity in group projects becomes more important.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The review team did not investigate grading beyond inputs received during interviews.





# Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices

**Role of parents:** The parent community exercises significant influence over TPGS and the dynamics among students. Additionally, the PAC continues to deviate from standard practice in ways that may impact the school community.

- **Parent engagement:** The parent community has an unusually high degree of engagement in TPGS (e.g., organize class trips and events such as Spring Showcase, communicate class schedules, lead the organization of the graduation ceremonies and celebration events). Additionally, interviews and a review of parent correspondence revealed that a small group of parents exercise an inappropriate amount of influence over TPGS and that this has an impact on student experiences with TPGS. Some families have reported experiencing exclusion and isolation.
- **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC):** A parent group operated as an unauthorized PAC for many years and, in doing so, deviated from standard PAC practices. While the PAC has recently been authorized, there continues to be significant misalignment with expected practice:
  - The PAC collects parent fees<sup>1</sup> in bulk at beginning of the year, whereas standard practice is to request that parents pay per activity, using an online system (School Cash Online). It was reported to the review team that one family refused to pay these fees and faced a significant amount of pressure from the PAC.
  - Typically, when the PAC collects funds, these are given to the school to run activities (e.g., graduation). However, the PAC continues to retain these funds and plan and run these activities.
  - The PAC has not yet provided the District Principal with detailed data on expenditures.
  - The PAC does not review meeting agendas with the District Principal in advance of a meeting and does not invite the District Principal to meetings.

Additionally, some parents reported that the PAC plays a gatekeeping role with the teachers; in other words, some parents did not feel that they had the ability to communicate directly with teachers but rather had to communicate concerns/issues to teachers through the PAC.

<sup>1</sup> In the 2023/2024 school year, these fees were \$530.00 per family.



# Compliance with MECC Policy and VSB Practices

**Other non-standard practices:** There are a range of other practices that historically have not aligned with current MECC policy or VSB standards.

- **Field trips:** TPGS teachers use field trips as a form of instruction. To this end, field trips are frequent and have historically included extended trips to Europe or parts of Canada. Until recently, TPGS teachers did not seek approval from the District Principal but rather from the University Hill Secondary School Principal or Vice-Principal. In addition, parents were running their own trips without informing the District Principal. Additionally, the number of TPGS teachers who participate in the field trips often exceeds the number of teachers that are required to participate in order to meet supervision ratios. The practices are now being standardized by the District Principal.
- **Individual Education Plans (IEPs):** Interviews suggest that there are three key divergences from standard MECC policy and VSB standards and practices with respect to the IEPs. These may impact the potential benefits of the IEP and related process:
  - Resistance on the part of parents to participation by the District Principal in IEP meetings
  - Students write their own IEPs, whereas IEPs are typically developed by school-based teams, in consultation with the parent and students
  - Anecdotally, the review team was informed that many parents are reluctant to include reference to a disability (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD] or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD]) in their child's IEP because of concerns around stigma and the impact that this may have on their child's university prospects.<sup>1</sup>
- **Grading practices:** Anecdotal information shared with the review team alleged that some TPGS students received final grades for one or more courses that they did not take.

<sup>1</sup> The review team did not have access to the IEPs and did not ask questions about disabilities during interviews with parents. This information, when offered, was unsolicited.



# Program Governance: Quality Reviews

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**TPGS had not received a PRP quality review to date.**

A PRP quality review process was started in 2017-2018 with the goal of reviewing each PRP at least once every five years. However, due to the fact that there are currently 34 PRPs and MECC resources for reviews are limited, TPGS has not been the subject of a PRP review to date.<sup>1</sup> All three institutional partners determined that a more comprehensive external review (versus a standard quality review) of TPGS was required given the range of issues about the program that were raised in recent years.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The 2002 review was conducted by VSB and UBC and was not a PRP quality review.



# Roles and Responsibilities: Overview

**While there is agreement among institutional partners on roles and responsibilities, the TPGS community has misconceptions.**

	<b>Roles of institutional partners<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>TPGS community<sup>2</sup> perspectives on institutional partner roles</b>
Role of UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC provides facilities and access to resources, and some financial support, including for support for guest speakers/instructors</li> <li>• participation in TPGS does not guarantee entrance into UBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPGS students are guaranteed early entrance into UBC</li> </ul>
Role of VSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSB is the host district and has responsibility for administrative oversight and for providing staff for TPGS</li> <li>• the primary objective of TPGS is to graduate students; preparing them for university is a secondary objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPGS is first and foremost a university (UBC) preparation program. Related to this, VSB should not have a robust role to play in TPGS; it is TPGS's special relationship with UBC that defines it.</li> <li>• as a Provincial Resource Program, TPGS does not need to operate within some of the key boundaries of a VSB school</li> </ul>
Role of MECC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MECC is responsible for providing provincial oversight, funding and direction to host districts for PRPs, including TPGS</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Information about the roles of MECC and VSB is sourced from the Province of BC Ministry of Education and Child Care: Provincial Resource Programs Handbook of Procedures (2022 to 2023); information about the role of UBC is sourced from a January 2024 letter to families from all three institutional partners, the TPGS website and interviews with UBC, VSB and MECC representatives. (See Context section for a detailed overview of each institutional partners' roles and responsibilities.)

<sup>2</sup> The TPGS community refers to current parents and students, alumni and TPGS teachers. Information on these perspectives was sourced through surveys and interviews/focus groups with these groups.



## Roles and Responsibilities: UBC

**There is a general misperception among the TPGS community that early entrance to UBC is guaranteed for TPGS graduates.**

While TPGS was designed to provide students with the opportunity and preparation for early application to post-secondary studies, it was not designed to guarantee entrance into university in general or UBC specifically. To this end, TPGS students need to meet the same application requirements as other university applicants.

Yet, as interviews with currently enrolled students and their parents revealed, there is an expectation among parents and students that upon graduation students will de facto earn early entrance into UBC. This misunderstanding is further reinforced by:

- the co-location of TPGS on the UBC campus
- TPGS teachers use UBC email addresses
- TPGS students have a UBC student card
- TPGS students can access UBC facilities such as labs and libraries
- UBC faculty teach a number of courses in TPGS
- students participate in Campus Days

Additionally, historically if TPGS students did not get into their faculty of choice, the UBC Registrars' Office would work with the Program Coordinator (role no longer exists) to suggest an alternative program where the student would be admitted.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, in some cases, TPGS teachers have chosen not to write referrals to other universities, noting that the unique supports available through the TPGS parents and alumni are critical for supporting the success of a student in their first few years of university. This may send the message to parents and students that early entrance to UBC is the only pathway to a university education.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Interview with representatives of UBC



# Roles and Responsibilities: VSB

**There is confusion within the TPGS community about the roles and responsibilities of the VSB.**

- There is a misunderstanding among some parents and students that the VSB should not have a robust role to play in TPGS as they feel that it is TPGS's special relationship with UBC that is essentially what defines it. It is their perspective that TPGS is a UBC/university preparation program, not a high school.
- Additionally, some parents and students may not accept the VSB's responsibilities for TPGS, and, in some cases, may resent it. This has led to considerable tension between some parts of the parent / student community and the VSB as demonstrated by a number of parent / student comments in the survey. Examples include:

*"The best management is "no management". Return the teaching to teachers and learning to students. The VSB stops any negative action to such a wonderful program, for example, suspension of admission." ~ parent via survey*

*"UTP used to excel in planning and organizing numerous activities for students. However, since VSB began interfering with UTP a year and a half ago, it has resulted in numerous negative impacts on UTP and quite a few events/activities were cancelled. Sigh!" ~ parent via survey*

- VSB staff cited examples where some parents have demonstrated aggressive behaviour towards the VSB in relation to the TPGS, in some instances through derogatory social media posts and in other instances through abusive messages to VSB staff.





## Roles and Responsibilities: VSB

- Some parents and students reported that they felt caught off guard by decisions related to the program (e.g. January 2024 decision to pause program admissions) and subsequently felt they had no direct conduit of communication with the VSB to express their concerns.
- VSB staff reported that, from their perspective, adequate proactive communications of program decisions were provided. Additionally, they reported that all parents and students had access to appropriate communication channels for their follow-up questions and concerns as demonstrated by the high volume of email and other communication that the VSB received following the announcement of changes.
- These dynamics may help to explain the intense reactions and resistance on the part of some parents and students to a number of MECC/VSB decisions related to TPGS, including for example:
  - increased oversight on behalf of the District Principal
  - elimination of the Program Coordinator Role
  - application of rules around the PAC
  - changes to the admissions process to align with the 1998 Conceptual Framework
  - adjustments to TPGS to align with graduation requirements
  - changes in practices to align with VSB policies and procedures (e.g., field trips, PAC authorization and practices, etc)



# Roles and Responsibilities: MECC

**There is a misperception among some parts of the TPGS community about the parameters of PRPs.**

- While the role and responsibilities of MECC were not frequently discussed during the review team's engagement with the TPGS community, some within the TPGS community have inaccurately assumed that, because it is a PRP, the TPGS should be allowed to operate outside of provincial and district policies and procedures.<sup>1</sup>
- The lack of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all three institutional partners may have contributed to some of the confusion with the TPGS community around the roles and responsibilities of the partners.

<sup>1</sup> PRPs need to operate within their mandate and in accordance with the School Act, provincial guidelines for PRPs, and school district policies and procedures.



# Program Costs: Overview

**Cost comparisons could not be conducted due to data limitations and the complexity of finding an equivalent comparator program to TPGS.**

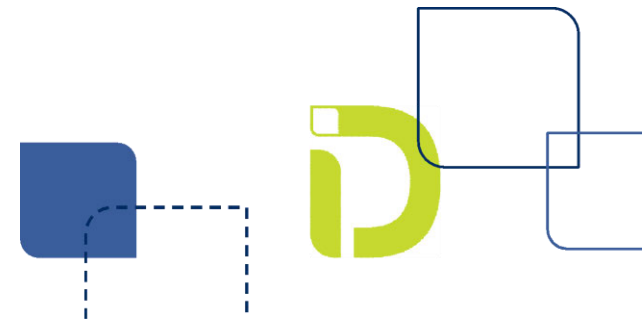
	Annual TPGS Costs 2023-24	Description	Equivalent Costs for Gifted Student in Mainstream School
Direct Costs	\$749K <sup>2</sup>  \$50K <sup>1</sup>  <u>\$356K</u> \$1,155K	MECC funding to cover program expenses: including salaries (teachers, Principal, other support, TOC), employee benefits chargeback, supplies  In-kind contributions for UBC staff participation in TPGS activities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC Professors: ~170 hours</li> <li>• UBC Teaching Assistants: ~130 hours</li> </ul> 2023/24 per student MECC basic allocation funding: \$8915  Subtotal	<i>Data limitations prevent appropriate comparison analysis</i>
Capital Costs	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings – maintenance, furniture, equipment</li> </ul>	
Additional In-Kind Contributions	Not quantified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBC classroom facilities access</li> <li>• UBC laboratory access: ~140 hours</li> <li>• UBC sports facilities: ~30 hours</li> <li>• VSB supports and services (e.g. counselling supports, support from other district teams)</li> <li>• Guest lecturers</li> </ul>	<i>Data limitations prevent appropriate comparison analysis</i>
Additional Staff Efforts	Not quantified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSB: ~1000 additional hours (June 2023-May 2024)</li> <li>• MECC: “exceptionally high over the past two years compared to any other PRP”</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Source: Data provided by UBC

<sup>2</sup> Source: Data provided by MECC. 2021-2022: \$505,810 (actuals) 2022-2023: \$673,098 (actuals) 2023-24 (budget). Collective agreement salary lifts, mostly for teachers, were a key element of these funding increases during this 3-year period.

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# Summary of Findings

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TPGS students are highly academically gifted; however, these students also have diverse learning needs and abilities and benefit from an individualized learning approach. Each student's ability to manage and succeed in an accelerated program is influenced by many factors, including their:

- unique learning needs (whether formally acknowledged in their IEP or not)
- personal interests
- strengths and weaknesses across different subjects
- prior experience in accelerated education (e.g. entering from a challenge program vs. a mainstream program).

Many factors have contributed to barriers to recognizing and supporting these differences and have negatively impacted some students' learning experience, academic performance, wellbeing and university preparation.

TPGS graduates are academically well prepared for their first year of university. They are attending university with peers that are three or more years older and who are often more physically, emotionally and socially mature. TPGS graduates need the self-management, social and life skills to navigate the significantly more complex situations they will face in university. There are important examples of TPGS students who were not prepared in these ways, and the consequences were serious and impactful.

An on-campus program introduces barriers for prospective students (i.e., geographical barriers as families may have to relocate to relatively expensive neighbourhoods) and current students (i.e., convenient access to student supports that otherwise would be available in mainstream schools such as counsellors and extra curricular activities including athletics).

Under the current TPGS program delivery model and PRP framework, there are limits to addressing geographical barriers and expanding access outside the Lower Mainland. Within the current TPGS program delivery model it is particularly important (i.e., reflecting the unique needs explained in prior slide) that students are provided convenient access to student supports such as counsellors, additional educational supports and help to prepare for university life.



## Summary of Findings

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As an on-campus specialized program with a small cohort of students, teachers, parents and alumni, the TPGS program can be a socially enriching experience for gifted students; however, these same factors have also had the opposite result. In such a small community, the relationships between TPGS students, teachers, and parents can be more intense and influential. This close interaction can lead to meaningful connections, but it also means that conflicts, when they arise, can become more serious. Unlike in mainstream schools, TPGS students do not have the flexibility to change teachers, classes, or friend groups if they encounter problems. If conflicts are not managed effectively, they can quickly escalate, leaving students, parents, or teachers feeling isolated or excluded, especially if their views differ from the majority. To prevent these issues, it is essential for students to have a safe channel to give constructive feedback on their learning environment or conflicts without fear of repercussions. Additionally, everyone involved—students, parents, teachers, and administrators—should continue to be proactive in recognizing and addressing conflicts and, where conflicts persist, the school's administration and teachers should continue to step in to resolve them. It is important that TPGS parents and students understand these dynamics, their individual responsibilities, and the role of school administration and teachers. The expectations and relative effort for school administrators and teachers are greater here than in a mainstream school.

VSB has been moving towards alignment between the TPGS practices and the Conceptual Framework/VSB practices. Lack of clarity and/or agreement of the role of VSB by some in parent community has created heightened tensions and affected relations. While there may not be a way to appease certain groups, formally clarifying the roles for the institutional partners and parents, the decision-making process for key decisions, and clarifying the avenues for parents' feedback could provide a basis for rebuilding relationships.

The following slides describe considerations to a) improve the current delivery model and b) modify the delivery model.



# Future Considerations

The review surfaced several considerations to inform the TPGS program. These considerations are organized in two potential strategies: 1) improve the current program (no change to delivery model) and 2) modify aspects of the program delivery model.

## Improve the current delivery model

Program delivery model remains the same; however, supports and practices are improved/harmonized to improve the student experience and program governance.

1A

Student & teacher supports

Consider access to and awareness of student and teacher supports, including counselling services for students and professional learning opportunities for teachers.

1B

Program administration & management

Formally clarify the roles and responsibilities of institutional partners as well as parents and students, particularly regarding admissions, feedback loops, and key program decisions.

## Modify the delivery model

Subject to program enhancements, consider changes to the program's delivery model to improve long-term student experience, accessibility and outcomes.

2A

Acceleration

Consider curriculum acceleration options by evaluating the opportunities and challenges they present for students, including early university entrance and opportunities for expanded depth and breadth of learning.

2B

Program location

Consider program location options by evaluating their geographic accessibility and the opportunities and challenges they present relative to current state.

# 1A. Optimize the current program: Student & teacher supports



1A

Student & teacher  
supports

Consideration	Explanation
1. Increase awareness of and access to student supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many parents and students did not seem to be aware that there are a range of supports available to TPGS students; there are opportunities to better communicate the education and socio-emotional supports available to TPGS students, including access to school counsellors.</li><li>• Some parents/students may be reluctant to have disabilities (e.g., ADHD, ASD) noted in their child's IEP as they think this may impact admission to university. There are opportunities to communicate to parents/students that accurate and complete IEPs can serve as useful tools for ensuring that students are able to access the supports which they need to be successful. The information included in a student's IEP is confidential and will not have any negative impact on their prospects for university admission.</li><li>• At the same time, as student mental health is a key concern, it may be useful to make extra efforts to foster relationships between TPGS students and the school counsellors to promote this opportunity for ongoing, safe, and impactful support.</li></ul>
2. Enhance post-secondary preparation and counselling supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some alumni reported that they were not prepared for the social dynamics of university. They also indicated that they lacked career guidance/development supports. There may be opportunities (e.g., guest speakers) to provide a greater focus on preparing students for university life. There may also be an opportunity to review how the career education elements of the curriculum are currently being delivered to TPGS students and to ensure that students are aware of the career counselling services that are available to them.</li></ul>

## 1A. Optimize the current program: Student & teacher supports (cont'd)



Consideration	Explanation
3. Explore supports for TPGS graduates during the first year of university <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Related to this, there may also be opportunities to explore options to provide supports to TPGS graduates in their first year of university, including for example peer/community support with the socio-emotional and academic transition to university, information for accessing resources, support for building life skills, etc.<sup>1</sup> To a certain extent, the TPGS alumni is already providing this support and the TPGS building continues to provide alumni with a space to work and to connect with TPGS students and teachers. There may be an opportunity to formalize and enhance this support.</li></ul>
4. Enhance access to and awareness of professional learning opportunities for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure they are meeting the diverse learning needs of their students, there are opportunities for TPGS teachers to continue to build their knowledge of leading practices of teaching gifted students. This could mean ensuring teachers have access to and are aware of professional learning opportunities related to teaching academically gifted students.<sup>2</sup></li><li>• Recent reports of bullying and racism suggest that it is important to ensure TPGS teachers have access to (and are encouraged to use) training and other supports on how to manage conflict in the classroom.<sup>3</sup></li><li>• Additionally, there are opportunities to better prepare TPGS students for university, i.e., with older peer groups. Consider providing tailored education on fostering healthy relationships (e.g. sexual health education, social norms) that can help provide a better foundation for graduating TPGS students. This could mean specialized training for teachers in these relevant subjects.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Post-secondary supports of this nature are out of scope for VSB/MECC but there may be a role to play for UBC in ensuring these supports are available.

<sup>2</sup> During interviews, teachers indicated that they were aware of professional development opportunities related to supporting the needs of diverse learners, but they were not aware of learning opportunities related to gifted learners. They felt this is a gap in terms of available learning opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> Teachers may currently have access to these supports but the reports of bullying and racism among current students suggests that these supports/learnings are not being consistently leveraged or put into practice.

# 1B. Optimize the current program: Prog admin & management



## 1B Program administration & management

Consideration	Explanation
5. Clarify key elements of the TPGS with the parents/students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a misalignment/misunderstanding among some members of the parent and student community related to some key features of TPGS. Institutional partners have an opportunity to clarify the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Program objectives:</b> The primary objective of TPGS is to graduate students and its secondary objective is to prepare them for university.</li> <li><b>Expected outcomes:</b> TPGS graduates will have the opportunity to apply for early entrance to UBC, but they are not <i>guaranteed</i> entrance to UBC.</li> <li><b>Roles &amp; responsibilities:</b> The three institutional partners have specific roles and responsibilities related to oversight, management, operations, and funding. The PAC has specific roles and responsibilities and has an obligation to comply with the School Act. Parents have a responsibility to understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of all parties.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6. Develop a MOU between the three institutional partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Related to the above, there is an opportunity to develop a clear MOU between the three institutional partners to help further clarify these roles and responsibilities with parents/students.</li> </ul>
7. Establish and explain decision-making process for key program changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents/students report being caught off-guard by recent program changes. There may be an opportunity to provide clarity on how program decisions are made and will be communicated going forward. There is an opportunity to ensure that communication with the parent/student community is clear and consistent.</li> <li>This work should follow PRP guidelines<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>
8. Continue to provide high level of administration and leadership support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In recent years, VSB has increased the time and resources it has dedicated to overseeing and managing TPGS in part in response to concerns (e.g., mental health, bullying, racism) raised by current students/parents and alumni. Support (e.g., the District Principal role) has been vital and should be continued. TPGS teachers may require this support to ensure they can appropriately address conflict in the classroom and respond to concerns about bullying and harassment.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> As per PRP Handbook. See List of References for details.

## 1B. Optimize the current program: Prog admin & management (cont'd)



Consideration	Explanation
9. Continue the alignment of TPGS and VSB/MECC practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is a divergence between TPGS and MECC/VSB practices (e.g., curriculum alignment, instructional practices, role of parents, etc). Efforts have been made in recent years to align TPGS practices to MECC/VSB practices. There may be an opportunity to continue and ultimately complete this alignment.</li></ul>
10. Develop a feedback loop for students and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some students thrive in the TPGS environment while others struggle with aspects of the learning environment/experience, including the pace of learning, the teaching methods used, the classroom environment, etc. As the PAC has positioned itself as an interlocutor between parents and teachers, some parents/students do not feel comfortable communicating concerns directly to teachers. In addition to clarifying the roles and expectations of the PAC (see previous slide), there may be an opportunity to create mechanisms for students and parents to provide feedback to the District Principal on teaching methods and styles.</li></ul>
11. Review the admissions process and align it with leading practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There may be an opportunity to undertake a thorough review of the TPGS admissions process and to align this process with leading practices, including clarifying the updating/clarifying eligibility criteria.</li></ul>
12. Continue to raise awareness of TPGS across the province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There may be an opportunity to continue to advertise TPGS more broadly, including through greater media outreach.</li></ul>



## 2A. Change key program features: Delivery model

2A

Delivery model

Delivery Model Options	Description	Opportunities and Challenges Relative to Current State
Accelerate (5 years in 2 years) <sup>1</sup> Current state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides academic challenge and accelerates the curriculum delivery</li> </ul>	
Challenge (5 years in 5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides academic challenge by offering enrichment (differentiated instruction, extended learning) that provides breadth and depth of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for depth and breadth of learning and provides motivation and stimulation for students.</li> <li>May not be sufficiently challenging for some students</li> </ul>
Accelerate (5 years in 3 years) <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides academic challenge and accelerates the curriculum delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerated pace provides challenge for students</li> <li>Provides students with opportunity for early entrance into university</li> <li>Increased potential to expand depth and breadth of learning<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Increased potential to address individual needs and adequate educational supports, including for students with disabilities or diverse abilities (e.g., ADHD, ASD) because of pace<sup>3</sup></li> <li>May place additional financial pressures as total costs to graduate a student would be higher</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Assumption: An accelerated curriculum is intended to facilitate (but not guarantee) early entrance to university.

<sup>2</sup> As noted in the analysis section, some parents and students felt that it is difficult to provide depth and breadth of learning through a 2-year accelerated curriculum. This type of acceleration does not allow for more fulsome instruction in both STEM and the Arts (one takes precedence over the other), opportunities to learn a second language, or exploration of a diverse set of electives. Some alumni reported that they did not receive sufficient career development/education support or sexual health education.

<sup>3</sup> As noted in the analysis section, some students who excel in one subject area may not excel in others and require more structured and regular paced instruction in weaker subjects. Some students may also need support to develop executive functioning skills. This type of individualized education may be more difficult in an accelerated environment.



## 2B. Change key program features: Location

2B

Program location

	Location Options for Current TPGS*	Geographic Accessibility	Opportunities and Challenges Relative to Current State
	Integrated & co-located with UBC campus Current State		
	Located in a VSB school within vicinity of UBC	LOW In the absence of a dorm option, accessibility is limited to students within commuting distance of UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less convenient access to university resources</li> <li>Increased access to mainstream school resources and presence of larger more diverse student / parent community</li> <li>Location in VSB school may support further alignment of TPGS practices to VSB practices and MECC policies.</li> </ul>
	Integrated & co-located with UBC campus with provision of supervised accommodation	LOW Living away from home is not an option for many young people/families, particularly less mature students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar to Current State plus additional complexity of securing on campus space and costs<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Outside Scope of a PRP	Integrated and co-located with other university campuses across BC	PARTIAL Access improved but dependent on proximity to a university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Current State<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
	Co-located in mainstream schools within the vicinity of university campuses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like locating in a VSB school near UBC<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
	Co-located in mainstream schools with little access to university campus <sup>2</sup>	HIGH Access with day commute is possible (isolated/remote communities notwithstanding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little access to university resources</li> <li>Other considerations like locating in a VSB school near UBC<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

\* Note that it is assumed that a fully remote/online learning program would not be a viable alternative program option.

<sup>1</sup> Implications relating to each option (e.g. provision of accommodation, access to classroom space, financial cost) need to be considered.

<sup>2</sup> There is a range of educational program options for gifted students across BC, varying by school district. With an IEP, educational accommodations are available to all students.



## Suggested next steps

**Based on the analysis provided in this report and the areas for consideration, the following short, medium and longer-term steps are suggested.**

Short-term



Medium-term

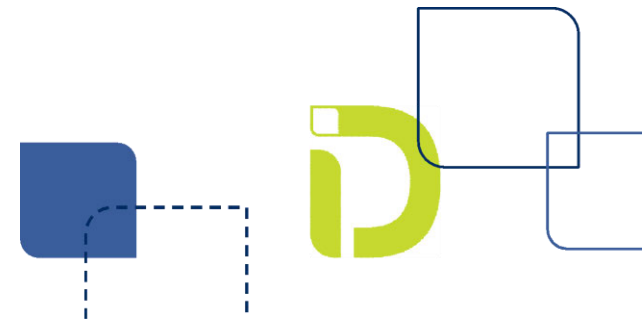


Longer-term

- Prioritize and implement the relevant considerations related to improving the current program
- Make decisions about future delivery model
- If relevant, build plan for roll-out of any changes, including dependencies
- As relevant, implement changes to delivery model and/or program location

# Contents

1. Summary
2. Context
  - A. History of TPGS
  - B. Roles and Responsibilities of Partners
3. Program Evaluation
  - A. Evaluation Framework
  - B. Evaluation Methodology and Limitations
  - C. Detailed Analysis
4. Areas for Consideration
5. List of References



# List of References

	Document reference
1998 Conceptual Framework	1998 Conceptual Framework The Transition Program Representational Steering Committee. (1998, Revised 2000). <i>The VSB/UBC Transition Program “Early Entrance to University Preparation for Academically Gifted Students” The Conceptual Framework</i> (Unpublished internal report). Vancouver School Board.
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UBC Student Newspaper Article	Alden, C. & Yong, T. (July 16, 2021). <i>University Transition Program alumni call for improvements to curriculum, culture</i> . The Ubyyssey. <a href="https://www.ubyssey.ca/news/university-transition-program-call-for-change/">https://www.ubyssey.ca/news/university-transition-program-call-for-change/</a>