

From: [Alena Taylor](#)
To: [Kevin Kaardal](#)
Cc: [Michelle Kaupp](#); [Board of Education](#); [Lisa Wilson](#); [Lindsay Adam](#); [Samantha Hanley](#)
Subject: Neighborhood Learning Center MJE- Student of Diverse Needs
Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2024 8:30:21 AM

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Hello,

Below, I have cc'd you in the following emails with Lisa Wilson and Lindsay Adam's at Mar Jok Elementary (MJE). I am now reaching out to you directly, as I am concerned handling this matter in the last week of August will not be sufficient timing in meeting this request. However, I respectfully understand the staff is on summer break.

I am formally requesting the "Neighbourhood Learning Centre" under the Joint Use Agreement at Mar Jok Elementary be available to students as a "Quiet Learning Space", outlined by the BC Ministry of Special Education, between 8:30am- 2:45pm, as per the Joint Use Agreement 7.3.

This space is paramount to supporting my son's education, as per his IEP and support team's recommendations both at school and in the community.

The current "Quiet Learning Space" is the MJE conference room, labeled "Calm Room". The space has become far too loud and chaotic to support his needs, due to the amount of students now using it. Offering this space during a specific time for only my child to use, does not meet his IEP learning goals. Although my child is my primary concern, I do not feel that is a solution inclusive to all students.

I understand the "Calm Room" was a new space to MJE upon my child entering Kindergarten. MJE did not have a "Quiet Learning Space", in accordance with the BC Ministry of Special Education Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines. It is wonderful that it has proven to be highly utilized, and beneficial to many student's learning needs.

I had originally requested the "Neighbourhood Learning Centre" for the Kindergarten 2023/2024 school year. It was denied on many accounts. A PAC member, [REDACTED] also suggested this space during the May, 2023 PAC meeting. At this meeting I addressed the need for this space at our school. Michelle Kaupp was also involved in establishing this space, collaborating with MJE administrators and the resource teacher. During this time we spent countless months entertaining the ball equipment room, and the boys and girls gym change rooms. After careful consideration, we agreed the boys' change room is not the most dignified space and would require an extensive renovation. The school's conference room was then assigned as this space, in which the school labeled "The Calm Room".

During the school year the PAC has consistently used "The Neighbourhood Learning Space" in place of their designated conservatory. I was baffled as to why they were allowed to utilize the space, when students of diversability were denied. They were using it as they felt their space was too small, and too loud interfering with the administrative support staff. The current "Calm Room" has proven to also be too loud, and unable to support my child's needs due to the groups, or number of students using the space at any given time.

After reading the Joint Use Agreement contracts it was disheartening to learn that I had to entertain the gym change rooms, as a "Quiet Learning Space" in my advocacy to support my autistic child. Thankfully the conference room was finally offered after months of advocacy and collaboration. This lengthy process subjected our family to a tremendous amount of stress and time.

I understand "Mini Dragons Den" is an intermittent preschool based learning program offered in this space during school hours, along with "Seniors Yoga". I hope we can collaborate with the parties outlined in the Joint Use Agreement to make this space available to students of diverse needs at MJE. Perhaps the current "Calm Room" or conference room can be offered in place of the "Neighbourhood Learning Space" when Mini Dragons Den is in session.

For my own child, this larger space would lessen the noise pollution in the room when it is occupied by several students. The larger space would also allow for a quiet section, promoting the dignity and respect of his learning needs. Please note, my child went to school part time last year due to insufficient support, until Kristen Armstrong became involved February 27, 2024. She simply solidified everything we were advocating for and established in his Pre K Transition Meeting. I do expect him to attend Grade 1 full time this fall. Please note, I will no longer be the school's alternative picking him up at 12:30 or 1:30pm. I hope he can eventually spend most of his time in class, however that is currently unrealistic. Given the winter months, this space is paramount to his support needs.

Should this not sound reasonable please let me know. I hope we can collaborate together, ensuring the success of my child's education. I kindly request a response within the 10 business days; given the time it may take to partner with corresponding parties under the Joint Use Agreement.

With respect,
Alena
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alena Cockwell [REDACTED]
Date: July 16, 2024 at 7:17:47 PM PDT
To: Lisa Wilson <Lisa.Wilson@sd23.bc.ca>
Cc: Lindsay Adam <Lindsay.Adam@sd23.bc.ca>, Samantha Hanley [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Calm Room

Hello,

Thanks for your response.

I look forward to hearing from you guys as we plan for the new school year.

I am concerned a week prior to school will not give enough time to arrange a

schedule according to the Joint Use Agreement. I will follow through with the district administrator's.

Have a great summer.

Alena
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 16, 2024, at 5:58 PM, Lisa Wilson
<Lisa.Wilson@sd23.bc.ca> wrote:

Hello Alena,

We have received your email. All the teachers and administrators and most of the district staff are on holidays now. We will respond to your email in the last week of August when we return. We look forward to connecting with you then.

Enjoy the summer.
Lisa

Lisa Wilson
Vice Principal
Mar Jok Elementary School

From: Alena Cockwell [REDACTED]
Sent: July 15, 2024 2:22 PM
To: Lindsay Adam <Lindsay.Adam@sd23.bc.ca>
Cc: Lisa Wilson <Lisa.Wilson@sd23.bc.ca>
Subject: Calm Room

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Hello Lindsay and Lisa,

As we plan for the 2024 school year. I am once again requesting the shared Multi-purpose space be used as the "Calm Space". I have read over the Joint Use Agreement with the City, it doesn't appear to be an issue.

I also have a copy of the Joint Use Agreement for the 2023/2024 school year. Can you please clarify as to why it was denied and we had to entertain spaces such as the equipment ball room and the gym change rooms prior to finding the conference room?

It was the first suggestion from myself and Sam. [REDACTED] also suggested using it, during the 2023 PAC Meeting when this space was shared with the PAC; prior to [REDACTED] starting school. She suggested working around the intermittent Mini Dragons Den program, I also suggested this.

Following our last IEP I asked [REDACTED] why he is choosing to use L. Adams office for a sensory break. He said “because it’s too loud, too many kids are in the Calm Room”. He had shared this through out the year as well.

As the Calm Room is a small space for the demand of students often using it, I hope this can be considered. It’s wonderful the space was a great success and in such demand.

If there is a formal request form to be submitted from the district please forward the applicable application. I am happy to complete it.

Thanks for your time.
Alena
Sent from my iPhone