
From: Paul Sumby
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 2:15 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dual Language Programs

Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

Happy Spring! I'm writing today to support Dual Language (DL) or Immersion programs throughout the WCSD. Study after study highlight the benefit of DL programs in the learning of all students within a school, i.e., not just those students in the DL program. Exposing students to other cultures, whether in the classroom or the playground, promotes diversity and inclusion which benefits the students and the community at large.

Currently, there are two great DL programs operating in the WCSD – Jessie Beck and Mount Rose. At Jessie Beck, DL classrooms offer the opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds to learn in an equitable environment as 50% of the students are native English speakers and 50% are native Spanish speakers. By expanding the DL language option to families throughout the district we would likely increase graduation rates by offering a fair playing field for more students. When my family learned that we had the opportunity to enroll our child in a DL program we gladly took the option, not only would our son learn a second language starting in kindergarten, but he would also pick up critical thinking skills at an early age, skills that he may not have learned until much later in life. Talking to other families outside of our zoned school, we know that others would gladly pick the DL option if it were available.

While I champion the two DL programs that there are, one major issue with the current setup is that there is not an option to continue the DL learning model once in middle school. Please work on addressing this learning gap within the WCSD. This is a major disappointment to the students, and a major waste of talent that could ultimately be of added value to the Nevada economy.

Thank you for your time,

Paul Sumby

From: Pablo Nava Duran
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 1:17 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Building a new administration building

Dear Board Members,

In agenda 4.02, I saw the packet that could build a new central administration building before the many schools are older than 1962. I know the administration building is getting outdated but we should prioritize many older schools first, this is not equality for the students and the community who have schools older than the current administration building. We know Vaughn Middle School is getting a brand new building in 2026 but Traner and Dilworth Middle School was built a year (1961) before the administration building was built. Reno (1951), Sparks (1909), and Wooster (1962) High schools were built before the current administration building with the exception of Wooster High School was built the same year as the current administration building. Many elementary schools (mostly inside the McCarran loop) are older than the current administration building.

I urge you to oppose the planning of the new administration building until many schools are renovated, expanded, or rebuilt.

Sincerely,

Pablo Nava Duran

From: Rachel Stepina
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2023 10:44 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Un plan para la educación bilingüe: Dual Language Education in WCSD

Public Comment April 25, WCSD Board of Trustees

*This public comment was originally written (and submitted) in Spanish and has been human-translated to English by the author. For the record, please include both versions of this comment. **I encourage the Board to try to read as much of the message as they can in Spanish prior to reading the English.** Then, imagine how opportunities for bilingual education could have changed your experience reading this or try putting the Spanish text through machine-translation and see what is different. Does it still make sense? Dual Language Education may not be every parent or student's choice, but currently only two classrooms per grade K-5 (10 total) of our entire district have the opportunity during elementary school to learn in such an environment. We must do better for our children.*

Estimados miembros de la junta directiva:

Soy Rachel Stepina y soy mamá de tres hijos; dos están en nuestro distrito escolar (grado 1º y 3º) y tengo un hijo de cuatro años. Tengo la maestría de educación (M.Ed) en la educación bilingüe de niños 0-8 años (nacimiento hasta 3er grado) y otra maestría (M.A) en español. Aunque tengo muchas cosas que quiero compartir con ustedes, voy a centrarme en el tema principal de la educación bilingüe desde joven y la falta actual de acceso para nuestros hijos bilingües. Hay mucha evidencia e investigación que nos dirige al éxito que un programa bilingüe bien organizado e implementado puede proveer para *todos estudiantes*. Con aproximadamente 9,000 estudiantes multilingües (según la información presentado por la superintendente Enfield y la presidente Smith al comité Ways and Means el 31 de marzo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbLGcgjcLQ>) ya no podemos perder más tiempo en implementar estrategias bilingües de inmersión. Sólo aproximadamente 250 estudiantes de la primaria (K-5) están matriculados en un programa de educación bilingüe en Jessie Beck y Mt. Rose. Sin embargo, como dice la superintendente, hay mucho deseo para estos programas en el distrito.

El lenguaje es el centro de nuestra identidad y nos afecta nuestro pensamiento, como aprendemos, leemos, escribimos, soñamos, comunicamos, y creamos relaciones sociales con el uno al otro. Nuestros estudiantes multilingües merecen la oportunidad de desarrollar sus habilidades académicas en ambos idiomas suyas y tener la oportunidad de graduarse con el Sello de la biliteracia. Hay también beneficios culturales y sociales, que resultan en estudiantes con perspectiva global. Es verdad que los estudiantes pueden conseguir el sello durante la prepa pero la investigación nos dice que es mejor aprender dos idiomas en la juventud. Además, la investigación también nos dice que la inmersión apoya el aprendizaje en dos idiomas a la vez y no causa confusión ni problemas del desarrollo académico en niños. Para lograr todos estos beneficios (y más) es de suma importancia que el distrito cree un plan para ampliar los programas bilingües para que sean accesibles a cualquier escuela primaria (empezando en PK) hasta la transición a la escuela intermedia y también durante la secundaria. También es importante que el distrito fortalezca los programas existentes con desarrollo profesional de maestros (incluso el estudio explicito del alfabetismo en dos idiomas), intervenciones y exámenes diseñados con perspectivas bilingües (cuales no son lo mismo que una traducción simple entre ingles y español) y disponibles en ambos idiomas, apoyo para familias y niños, oportunidades autenticas para experimentar el idioma en la comunidad, fondos específicos, y más. Los lideres bien informados en la educación bilingüe y un plan específico desde el nivel del distrito son necesarios para guiar a todos durante la implementación de tal plan. Ya me siento muy afortunada por participar en el proceso del plan estratégico y en el Comité de acción de educación bilingüe de Beck. También participo el nivel de trabajo actual en el estado. No es una cuestión de sí yo participo; yo solo soy una voz—es una cuestión de que haremos juntos como comunidad para unir todas las voces a beneficio de nuestros hijos y sus idiomas y culturas. Escribo hoy porque no puedo participar en vivo; con mi familia joven también es importante que paso el tiempo con ellos después de la escuela—espero vernos en persona muy pronto. Hasta entonces, Rachel Stepina.

This public comment was originally written (and provided) in Spanish and has been translated by the autor.

Dear School Board Trustees:

My name is Rachel Stepina and I am a mother of three young children; two who attend our school district in grades 1 and 3, and a four-year-old son in child care. I have an M.Ed in Bilingual Early Childhood Education ages 0-8, or birth to 3rd grade, and an M.A. in Spanish Literature. Although I have many things I'd like to share with you today, I would like to spotlight the theme of bilingual education opportunities from the early grades and the current lack of access for young multilingual learners and children. There is extensive research and evidence that guides us to the clear success that well-implemented bilingual programs (dual language education) can provide for *all learners*. With approximately 9,000 multilingual children in our district (according to the information presented by Superintendent Enfield and President Beth Smith at the Assembly Ways and Means presentation on March 31, 2023), we cannot lose more time in enacting and implementing bilingual immersion strategies. There are less than 250 students in elementary school (K-5) who are enrolled in a dual language education program, either at Jessie Beck or Mt. Rose. Nevertheless, as Superintendent Enfield stated, there is a large appetite for these programs in our district.

Language is the core of our identities, impacting how we think, learn, read, write, dream, communicate, and build relationships with one another. Our multilingual students deserve the opportunity to develop their academic abilities in both of their languages and graduate with the Seal of Biliteracy. There are also many cultural and social benefits that result in students with global perspectives. Students can only obtain the Seal of Biliteracy during high school, but research shows that language acquisition is best at a young age over the long-term. Further, research demonstrates that immersion experiences support learning two languages at once without causing confusion nor academic delay in either language. To achieve these benefits (and more), it is of utmost importance that the district creates a plan to expand bilingual programs that are accessible to all elementary schools, beginning in PK, and include plans for the transition to and continued learning during middle school and high school. It is important to strengthen the two existing programs with professional development for teachers (including the explicit study of biliteracy development), interventions and assessments designed with a bilingual perspective and available in both languages (which is not the same as a simple translation from English to Spanish), support for families and children, authentic opportunities to experience language in the community, specific funding, and more. Knowledgeable leaders in dual language education and a district-level plan is needed to guide the implementation of such a plan. I already have the fortunate opportunity to participate in the Core Planning Team for the Strategic Plan and the Dual Language Action Committee at Beck. I also participate at a state level.

This is not an issue of if I participate; I am only one voice. It is the question of what we will do together as a community to unite our voices on behalf of our children. I write today because I cannot participate in-person; with my young children at home, it is also important that I spend time with them after school. I hope to see each other soon (with the little ones, too).

Until then,
Rachel Stepina

From: Abigail B
Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 5:21 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Safety Concerns

Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

On April 14, 2023, 18 kindergarten students were absent from school. The parents of these students made the difficult decision to keep their children home due to safety concerns in the kindergarten classroom. There are several safety issues, all of which are specifically addressed in the WCSD Student Behavior Administrative Procedures Manual that contributed to the action taken. The behaviors, some of which have been occurring for 8 months are listed below:

1. BATTERY TO DISTRICT EMPLOYEE CAUSING INJURY – bite breaking skin
2. THREATS TO STAFF/STUDENTS – threat to safety resulting in at least two evacuations to a neighboring classroom
3. BATTERY TO STUDENT – Students have been physically assaulted, unsure of injury
4. FIGHTING/PHYSICAL AGGRESSION – multiple incidents
5. VIOLENCE OR HARM TO STUDENT – children being physically attacked
6. VIOLENCE OR HARM TO STAFF – bite breaking skin
7. DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY-DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY – multiple incidents
8. DISREGARD FOR SCHOOL RULES – multiple incidents
9. DISTURBANCE OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES /DISTURBING THE PEACE
10. INTERFERENCE WITH INSTRUCTION - multiple incidents

As a parent-volunteer I have witnessed several of these incidents. I know these behavioral disruptions have been occurring since the beginning of the year and have continued to escalate. My child has reported being hit and feeling fearful for the teacher's safety. I learned from another parent that the kindergarten class has been evacuated to neighboring classrooms where close to 40 students were being held while the child needing individualized support damaged the classroom and assaulted the teacher. I learned through communication with other parents that their children have also been hit and that their attempts to meet with school administration has been mostly ignored.

After reviewing the WCSD Student Behavior Administrative Procedures Manual I am confused as to how we arrived at this point where kindergarten classrooms are being evacuated, teachers are being assaulted on multiple occasions, children are being assaulted and parents aren't being contacted, and a child with specialized needs doesn't appear to be receiving the interventions described in the manual. Instead, the child who needs specialized intervention and support was abruptly moved to a dual-language classroom. This intervention is not "culturally responsive or trauma sensitive." It was clear to the child's foster family that this intervention was not a place where this child could be successful and they withdrew the child from school.

The Tier approach to behavioral management relies heavily on Tier 1 interventions to "guarantee student access to rigorous and relevant instruction in an optimal learning environment." Tier 1 relies on the teacher to develop meaningful, supportive relationships with each student. This poses the first challenge in managing the disruptive behavior that has been reported and that I have observed in my child's classroom. Overcrowded classrooms with one teacher negatively impacts the teachers ability to develop meaningful relationships. As a volunteer I am often faced with prioritizing which kindergartner to help with reading, which to support with writing, or who to sit with to listen to their creative stories. It is challenging to attend to the educational, emotional, and social needs of 23-25 kindergartners, it is

impossible to attend to anyone other than the child or children who have behavioral outbursts and specialized needs in a classroom with one teacher.

The one teacher in this classroom has demonstrated compassion, empathy, and professionalism throughout this school year. She has been available for conferences to address our concerns and despite the challenges she has found a way to nurture our child's love and excitement for school. I am concerned we will lose highly qualified, passionate teachers if they don't receive the support needed to meet the expectations of the WCSD Behavioral Management approach. It is easy to place the blame on the teachers, but the right course of action is for WCSD to evaluate whether it is even possible to utilize Tier 1 approaches in overcrowded classrooms. Is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework utilizing Trauma Sensitive Environments or is it creating trauma inducing environments? Are we providing the right resources? Are we following the written procedures for managing recurring or habitual behaviors?

It seems like the people our schools are created to serve are the ones negatively impacted by this situation. The teacher is being subjected to an environment that is not conducive to teaching, the students are missing valuable learning opportunities, the students are being exposed to a chaotic, unsafe environment, the students with special needs are not receiving the individualized resources needed to support them in "the least restrictive environment", and parents are afraid to send their kindergartners to school.

I am also concerned about the lack of communication. When my child is being evacuated from a classroom due to safety concerns I would like to be contacted so I can decide whether or not my child should remain at school. I do not think my child benefits from being in a classroom with 40 students without desks or adequate teaching support. When my child has a head injury and is sent to the nursing station I would like to be contacted or at a minimum a notification of injury should be sent home. When there are safety concerns and children are being kept at home, school administration should be accessible sooner than 5 weeks. This situation presents an ideal opportunity for administrators to practice "restorative conversations" with parents who have valid safety concerns for their children. I am grateful for the time my child's teacher has devoted to connecting with us and addressing our concerns. If not for the teacher providing excellent education and demonstrating the ability to navigate challenges with grace and professionalism this situation would have been much worse.

I hope bring awareness to this situation provides opportunities to:

- 1) Improve communication
- 2) Review barriers in implementing behavioral management strategies outlined in the WCSD Student Behavior Administrative Procedures Manual
- 3) Evaluate if the proper strategies are being utilized to support students with special needs while maintaining "a safe and healthy learning environment for all district students"
- 4) Consider challenges related to overcrowded classrooms

Respectfully,

Abigail Beagen