

Lopez, Donna

From: Jane Chiang [jane_chiang@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 2:34 PM
To: Lopez, Donna; Maher, David; Benzan, Dennis; Carlone, Dennis; Cheung, Leland; Kelley, Craig; Mazen, Nadeem; McGovern, Marc; Simmons, Denise; Toomey, Tim
Cc: Jane Chiang; maria.balinska@btopenworld.com
Subject: RE: Comment on Resolution 0-8 for Public Record

Dear Mayor Maher and Cambridge City Councillors:

Please support Cambridge students and CPS' three language immersion programs, by noting on the record, your full support of Massachusetts State Senate Bill 270, The Dual Language Educational Programs Act, which was placed on the agenda by Councillor Mazen.

My name is Jane Chiang, and I am a co-coordinator of PANGEA (Parents for a Global Education Association). Our mission is to promote the benefits of language immersion for all Cambridge students and support the strengthening of Cambridge's three immersion programs. PANGEA's activities have included:

- inviting national experts on language, culture and education to speak in Cambridge, and
- reaching out to Cambridge families (such as those in public housing) to inform them of language immersion opportunities and kindergarten registration deadlines.

Not many school districts can boast about having three language immersion programs--I feel proud that Cambridge is one of them.

In spite of this, Cambridge's immersion programs can be better promoted, supported, and implemented.

For example, many of the public housing families PANGEA members spoke to didn't even know these programs existed. If you could hear how sincere their gratitude was for getting this information, your heart would break.

Another example is that, in Cambridge, English Language Learners, the students for whom language immersion programs were initially designed, are not always informed of and offered the opportunity to enroll in our immersion programs.

And believe it or not, the three language immersion programs do not come together to share and learn best practices from each other, or pool their resources.

I don't believe that the withholding of this information is intentional. Everyone is busy, there are many other competing priorities, and resources are limited. If Bill 270 passes, Cambridge will get help from the Commonwealth. Our programs can receive grants to do more outreach to families. Our administrators and teachers can receive training about language immersion learning so they can optimize these programs' ability to close the achievement gap. And, our communities will become more inclusive, culturally-proficient, and economically competitive.

More than eighteen (18) years of research shows the power of well-implemented dual language immersion programs to close the achievement gap for under-served students, and the results are truly astounding (please click on link to read report). Please help make Cambridge's language immersion programs outstanding by supporting Bill 270.

Sincerely,
Jane Chiang

P.S. If the resolution is approved, please have the City Clerk send a copy of the resolution to the MA State Senate Education Committee before March 19th, when this bill comes up for a vote.