

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Dr. Manno, Board Members, Senior Administrators,

This letter may be freely distributed to the public or any interested parties.

For the past few years I have observed the progress of the MKES Dual Language Program with great concern. It appears to have taken on a life of its own. At a minimum, I am perplexed and distressed at the amount of Board and Administrator time, resources and attention it has consumed. It appears that focus on this Program has crowded-out needed attention to curriculum enhancements that could benefit a larger portion of the student body. In addition, admission to this Program has no basis in merit and or achievement.

In a world where English is the universal language of commerce, ask anyone who have traveled on business, where information, science, data and technology are the key growth drivers of the US and global economy, why is the Bedford Central School District singularly focused on a Spanish Dual Language Program as a key building block or a distinguishing feature of its curriculum?

I have asked myself several questions and wonder if District residents, teachers, parents, the Board and Administrators have asked and answered these questions? I do not have the answer to all of these questions, but I urge the Board and Administrators to seriously consider them before committing additional limited resources to continuing and or expanding the Spanish Dual Language Program.

### **Value Proposition of Spanish Dual Language**

What is the value proposition or mission of Spanish Dual Language for each demographic enrolled? They are different for each demographic constituent group, native English speakers versus native Spanish speakers.

What are the Program's stated goals and what metrics/measurements are used at each grade to evaluate success against stated goals? Are unfulfilled promises the basis for future litigation? Please report to the District on these measures and experience to date.

Since the Program was structured and based on observations of other ESL/Dual Language programs, has there been any follow-up on the progress of those programs on which MKES was based? These programs have a longer history. Was follow-up ever intended?

What is the expected demographics of the proposed MKES Dual Language Magnet School?

Has the District considered the range of potential outcomes and impacts over time of the existing MKES Spanish Dual Language Program or a Spanish Dual Language Magnet School? The architects of this Program never anticipated or considered the divisions the Program has caused for MKES families who opted out. Families have been ostracized for wanting the curriculum that is present at four of our five

elementary schools! These families deserve a tailored solution to what should be an intrinsic right in this country, an English-based curriculum alongside the general student body.

Please articulate the expected impact on college acceptance or potential careers that follow from Spanish Dual Language?

Name a Westchester school district or any other which has adopted a Spanish Dual Language program but does not have a large Hispanic immigrant population.

BCSD already has significant data to analyze the impacts or benefits of dual language. Please use it. BCSD has graduated hundreds if not thousands of Hispanic Spanish Dual Language students. Please provide the District with the last five years of graduating GPA and SATs of these students on a no-names basis; provide mean and median scores. Please review the college attendance rate and the selectivity of colleges attended as measured by their acceptance rate.

### **Magnet Schools**

The term magnet school is commonly understood to denote selectivity, often through testing. Why is the term magnet school being applied to the expanded MKES Dual Language Program?

The current Program as well as the one envisioned has a 100% acceptance rate and no threshold screening measures except for students with disabilities.

Please identify two Spanish Language magnet schools. NYC area schools which fit the generally accepted concept of magnet schools include Bronx Science, Stuyvesant and the High School for Performing Arts; these schools all screen their applicants based on academic or other performance measures and have low acceptance rates.

**Why has the Administration not surveyed the District about on what choices they would prefer for magnet schools? Why have teachers, our professional educators, not been surveyed?**

**Please conduct a District-wide survey, including BCSD teachers, to evaluate what the District believes the priorities should be for “enhanced” curriculum offerings or if such offering should be in the form of a magnet school.** District residents should rank each option. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive or be the correct aggregation of subjects.

Potential options for Enhanced Curriculum or Magnet School

- No Magnet School
- Spanish Dual Language
- Science , Math, Technology/Computer Science
- English Language Arts - Literature and Writing
- Humanities: Government, Politics, History and Economics
- Performing Arts
- Language: Mandarin, Arabic plus one other Romance Language

## **Conclusion**

I have been a finance professional for more than twenty-five years. One core concept in finance is that of "Sunk Costs". Finance professionals are taught to exclude past investments in determining the value of future investments. When quantifying future benefits, only future investment/costs and benefits are evaluated. A second concept is to maximize future value. These concepts are relevant to investments in education. My current employer Columbia University no longer has a school of mining, though one existed for more than fifty years. Investments in the curriculum are evaluated based on relevance and size of impact.

Governance structure and the process of decision making are equally important. They validate final decisions. The goal of the governance structure and the process is to ensure that all affected and invested parties have a say in decisions that impact them. The affected and invested parties of the Spanish Dual Language Program are not limited to the current parents and students of MKES. The vast majority of BCSD's constituents have not been heard nor their preferences measured or considered. No thoughtful person would claim the Public Forum constitutes a statistically representative sample of BCSD. Surveying incoming elementary school parents or meetings with small groups are equally inadequate.

**We have technology as well as annual elections. Please make use of them. First conduct the District-wide survey. Make any final decision subject to a District-wide vote in May.**

Best Regards,  
Colin Redhead  
Mount Kisco Resident