

**SUMMARY – Immersion Program Presentation
Burlingame School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 19, 2008**

The BSD Board of Trustees scheduled a review of the Immersion Program at its February 19, 2008, meeting. This was intended as an informational review for the Board. No action was scheduled to take place, and none did. The following constitutes a summary prepared by parents who attended the meeting.

Ms. Paula Valerio, Principal of McKinley Elementary, “chaired” the presentation, which included contributions from Maestra Elaine Cruz-Tarango, a group of parents, and Sheila Speiller, the principal of Fiesta Gardens International School who also serves as a consultant to BSD on the immersion program.

Valerio

- Thanks to Board, Superintendent, McKinley staff and parents, for helping get the program off the ground;
- Spent summer months preparing the room; had to scramble a bit to get text books, assessment materials, etc
- Wanted to track Immersion to other kindergarten programs: Maestra Tarango is part of the BSD-wide kinder team and works closely with other McKinley kinder teachers
- Immersion parents are dynamic and very involved in program
- Trying to integrate Immersion with rest of McKinley; parents helping with this; kids do recess, music, PE together with other classes
- Adult Spanish class ongoing

Cruz-Tarango

- Curriculum of the Immersion program addresses same standards as other kinder classes at BSD
- Students exceeding expectations; more than half are reading at grade level – in Spanish!
- Some are speaking in Spanish although obviously at different levels of development
- Biggest challenge to language acquisition is vocabulary
- In spite of that, the kids are reading, writing and doing math

Parents’ Presentation

- General Overview
 - Parents are very happy with the Spanish Immersion program and are grateful to the Board for its overall support of the program.
 - Many were new to McKinley and we’ve been very happy with the school and with the level of support the program is getting, especially from Ms. Valerio.
 - We are enormously impressed with our head teacher, Maestra Tarango, in both her teaching style and ability to communicate with parents.

- We are grateful to the Board for providing us with a full-time, bilingual, instructional aide-- Maestra Mendoza has been integral to the success of the program to date.
- The parents of the Immersion class are very motivated and are clearly dedicated to the success of the program, and to its integration into the McKinley community.
- We thank the Board for continuing to offer the adult Spanish class to parents and administrators. There are at least six Immersion families who take advantage of this resource, as well as several other McKinley families and other community members.
- Concerns
 - Size of incoming class: Parents are not clear on the implications of having such a small entering Kindergarten class (14 students) on the future stability and growth of the program and how the District will deal with attrition.
 - Losing instructional aide next year: Having a bilingual aide has been key to the success of the program, especially for kindergarteners who have had no previous exposure to Spanish.
 - Teacher recruiting: While we understand that there are some potential candidates for the new teacher, we want to ensure there is sufficient support for the recruiting process because getting good teachers is so critical.
- Going forward
 - We would propose that the Board review the Immersion program at least annually and that there be regularly scheduled meetings between the school administration and the Immersion parents-- perhaps quarterly.
 - There is some feeling that there hasn't been enough positive publicity about the program. The Board may want to consider ways to highlight the program and the Board support for it.

Speiller

- Program has gotten off to a great start; starting slowly has allowed BSD to have support from the parents; it is good for BSD to move slowly
- BSD should continue to take its time with recruitment and hiring
- I'm glad to hear how well the Immersion program is integrating into the rest of McKinley, especially since it's a "strand" program

Valerio

- Looking ahead....
- After much deliberation, we have decided that there will be two K/1 split classes, each with 13 first graders, and 7 kinders. Three of the kinders in each class will be "Spanish-speaking"
- This configuration will help the new teacher moving into the district to integrate into the program since the classes will track each other; it will allow the teachers to work very closely together

- We will obviously need two classrooms for next year, and are already working on a plan to consider space for the Immersion program for the next six years, as the program continues to grow
- BSD will also need to consider what happens with the graduating class of current kinders, when they eventually move to BIS
- Regarding recruitment, we already have two really good candidates, and are convening our interview team. Ms. Tarango and I will be attending upcoming CABA conference
- Working with Burlingame Parks & Rec, we will be having a Spanish summer program, taught by Maestra Mendoza and housed at McKinley; Also working on possibly starting an additional Spanish program for grades 1-5.
- Our future needs include desks, text books, other items for classroom set up

Board Comments/Discussion

Michael Barber: I have been following the Immersion program closely, but I wanted the rest of you to hear this and be engaged

Liz Gindraux: Explain how this works. Does Ms. Tarango only speak Spanish?

Valerio: We use the 90/10 model; same as Fiesta Gardens. We need to think ahead about how (logistically) we handle the increase in the English portion in the coming years.

Supt. Da Marto: We may consider exchange with the English program, ie., while one of the other teachers does English-language instruction with the Immersion kids, the Immersion teacher would do some Spanish lessons with the English classrooms.

Mark Intriari: I would like to review the student projections with Ms. Valerio at another time.

Marc Friedman: Everything has lived up to expectations. We should be pleased that our program is doing so well.

Liz Gindraux: I am worried about space. We're going to have to address the transition to BIS.

Michael Barber: Yes, we will need to do this, so as a Board, we should address the Immersion program regularly, at least every 6 months, or possibly quarterly. The most complex thing about this is that BSD has what is essentially a lot of small schools, and Immersion is sort of a sixth small school. We don't have a lot of flexibility. We need to address parent concerns, but the fact of the matter is small schools will necessarily have split classes.

Marc Friedman: Is our enrollment increasing? We've had some empty classrooms...

Supt. Da Marto: There has been an increase in ADA, and a very slight increase in enrollment.

Marc Friedman: Maybe we could shift some space around...

Greg Land: I am happy to have the enrollment projections; we need to worry about space. But my real concern was recruitment, and I'm happy to hear you have candidates. Also happy to hear you have integration. Regarding the parent comment about positive media, we do need to do a better job of educating the community about the positive impact Immersion is having in the district.

Liz Gindraeux: This is a communication issue. We need to reach out better to the Spanish-speaking community.

Valerio: Ms. Tarango went to the DLAC meeting; we are working on promotion.

Michael Barber: We need to talk about split of Spanish and English speakers. What is the right configuration? We need to balance the needs of the district with the needs of the program. We could do an allocation by school, but we need to think this through.

Greg Land: We need to be flexible; there may be other configurations.