



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



Ms. Kaya Henderson
Chancellor
D.C. Public Schools
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chancellor Henderson,

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on July 9, 2015, our Commission voted 6-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to write you to express our support for a language immersion program at Miner Elementary School.

Our support is based on the community dialogue in recent months, including:

- ANC Members have been in conversation with in-boundary parents in the community;
- Presentations to the Miner Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization, wider community at Rosedale Recreation Center hosted by ANC6A representatives, ANC6A Community Outreach Committee, Ward 6 Speaks hosted by Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO), and meetings of in-boundary families;
- Information has been shared online via numerous neighborhood listservs;
- Support from CHPSPO including the formation of an immersion subcommittee to support the community in this conversation and the school in implementation; and
- Outreach including seeking insight and support from the office of Councilmember Charles Allen, DCPS Ward 6 Community Action Team member, DCPS Language Acquisition Office, Joe Weedon, Ward 6 Representative, State Board of Education, in-boundary ANC7D Commissioners, and Eliot-Hine Middle School Parent Teacher Organization representatives.

We believe that thriving neighborhood schools are an important component of thriving communities because higher levels of education increase access to steady employment opportunities, decrease the likelihood of risk-taking behavior, reinforce positive social skills and build stronger community ties. Based on the research presented to us and the current context at Miner and in our neighborhood, we believe the addition of an immersion program will strengthen this neighborhood school and our community because:

- The building facility at Miner is currently underutilized with dropping enrollment and immersion programs can serve as a “magnet” program drawing greater enrollment from the in-boundary community and others;
- There is a high demand for language immersion programs as evidenced by the lottery process when so many families include language immersion programs among their top choices and the long waitlists for these programs;

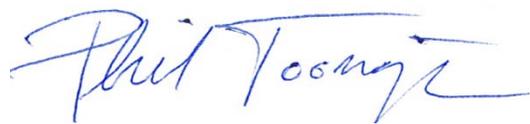
¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the listservs anc6a-announce@yahoogroups.com, anc6a@yahoogroups.com and newhilleast@yahoogroups.com, at www.anc6a.org, and in the Hill Rag.

- Faced with low test scores at Miner, we are encouraged that more than fifty (50) years of research on language immersion education has heralded benefits such as academic achievement (including raising test scores), language and literacy development and cognitive skills;
- There is a well-established positive relationship between basic thinking skills and being a fully proficient bilingual individuals who maintains regular use of both languages. Fully proficient bilingual individuals outperform monolingual individuals in the areas of divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving;
- Increasingly, proficiency in a second language and intercultural competency skills open up employment possibilities. High-level, high-paying employment will demand competence in more than one language. We believe the Miner community would be a great fit for this type of educational opportunity; and
- Immersion programs have shown to be successful for reinvestment in neighborhood schools, creating learning environments that reflect and enhance the diversity of the community, where students develop strong self-esteem and cultural identity, and their families have greater commitment to the program increasing retention in enrollment and stability in the wider community.

As members of the community, we want to be involved in the long term planning vision for Miner Elementary and are eager to work with the school administration to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of its students, families, and our community, which is the in boundary population that should help fill Miner. We have recently become aware that there is an upcoming strategic vision/planning process for Miner Elementary School. The ANC would like a language immersion program to be part of that work. We would provide our support to additional surveys of community support and feasibility. Additionally, we believe it is important for the team working on the vision for the school includes representation from the wider community – including Ward 6 education leaders, inbound families who will have students in the school during the years the program will be implemented, and the ANC.

A thriving neighborhood school with a unique, in-demand program is sorely needed in our community and would benefit the District and DCPS.

On Behalf of the Commission,



Phil Toomajian
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Jennifer Niles, Deputy Mayor for Education
DC Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Joe Weedon, State Board of Education, Ward 6
Maurice Wilkins, DCPS Ward 5 and 6 Community Action Team
Tammy Alexander, Miner PTO Chair
Suzanne Wells, CHPSP0