Stories From Families About THE POWER OF MULTILINGUAL KIDS!

你好  HOLA  Moni
Bonjour  Hello  מồלך
नमस्ते  Hallå  ከንቃ
Aloha
Moms and dads know the value of multilingualism in creating unique opportunities for their children and they are speaking out!

From raising our own bilingual children, to being bilingual ourselves, or working in communities to strengthen dual language education programs – the MomsRising/MamásConPoder community is committed to celebrating and promoting the language diversity of our nation. MomsRising members like Linda who writes:

“My children have attended a dual language immersion program since preschool. It has been a wonderful journey for my family. I believe there are many reasons why we need more of these programs in the country. Cultural competence with the growing diversity in the U.S. means it is imperative that our children develop skills that enable them to interact effectively with others who come from a different background. In a period where our country is divided with hate speech, I believe that learning a second language can function as a bridge of tolerance and respect. The dual language program has made a great impact on my children's bilingual skills. The benefits of being bilingual in terms of employability, salary, and even health are very important. But it is also important how knowing a second language can expand horizons and opportunities to serve and grow.”

Why dual language programs? Because they work.

Research shows that dual language programs are one of the most effective strategies to close the opportunity gap for all students before it starts while also ensuring our kids have a competitive advantage when they enter the global workforce.

Not to mention that knowing multiple languages is great for our brains! Students who know more than one language have exhibited increased emotional intelligence, stronger problem solving skills, and improved academic outcomes. Research also shows that dual language programs are the best way to increase student achievement for English Language Learners (ELL) and are critical to fostering positive identity development for kids of all cultures.

But don’t just take our word for it. Enclosed are hundreds of stories from families across the nation on why they love their child’s dual language program, why they want dual language programs in their districts, and why they believe in maintaining and celebrating the linguistic diversity of their communities.

Let’s work together to ensure our educational system recognizes the benefits of multilingualism and that together we build welcoming communities that see the languages and cultures in our neighborhoods as an asset.

Sincerely,

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner

Executive Director, MomsRising.org
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Personal stories from MomsRising members about the power of bilingual kids!

**ALABAMA**

One of the regrets of my life is that I never successfully learned a second language. We live in a multicultural world, even within our own nation. Being fluent in a second language increases the probability of better understanding of other culture’s world-view. Plus, with the increasing numbers of Spanish speakers in America, I think it only a matter of simple courtesy to be able to communicate with others in what may for them be the language they’re most comfortable with.

– John, Tuscaloosa

**ALASKA**

When Alfredo was little they wanted him to do the Mexican hat dance, but he was Peruvian. The teacher would dance around a hat. This was in 1965. He was in 2nd grade. All day long he wondered why she was dancing around a hat and the teacher never understood he wasn’t Mexican. The teacher often asked at taco day if they were authentic. He didn’t know enough English and he’d just smile back and did not understand why she kept asking. The teacher never understood he was from a different country and had never seen a taco and had never seen a big hat. Anchorage now has some of the top 10 most diverse public schools in America where 95 different languages are spoken and privatization and vouchers would be devastating for Anchorage and Alaska.

– Shoshanah, Anchorage

**ARIZONA**

My husband and I were missionaries in Guatemala. We learned Spanish to communicate. All of our children and most of our grandchildren are bilingual. All of our children use both languages in their work. Our son and his wife also have learned some French. As we travel, being bilingual or multilingual has proven to be a real asset. Our language helps us navigate between cultures and understand people much better than only knowing English. Our lives have been enriched greatly by knowing more than one language.

– Marilyn, Tucson

**CALIFORNIA**

My husband was born in Chile and is a naturalized citizen. We wanted to preserve the cultural and linguistic ties with his family, so we advocated for a dual immersion choice program in our local school system (Palo Alto, CA). My oldest son, Alejandro, was in the first class; he
went on to participate in the State Department’s flagship Arabic program at UT Austin and now runs a translation team for the US embassy in Tel Aviv. My other two children are also fluent in Spanish, and this has helped them advocate for workers’ rights as well as tutoring in Spanish.

One of the first students in the Spanish Immersion program now teaches at the same elementary school where she learned the language. These programs are so beneficial for both native and non-native speakers. My children gained a sense of global issues from a young age, traveled abroad to Spanish-speaking countries, and developed an appreciation for multi-culturalism. I can’t say enough in favor of dual immersion programs!

– Elizabeth, Palo Alto

Marysol, Lawndale, CA

My husband and I consider ourselves to be bilingual and bivliterate. As former dual language teacher, I always knew that I wanted to ensure that we gave our daughter the gift of language. I think for me, given my background in education, I always over-analyzed our home environment, wanting to make sure that she was completely immersed in the language. We had a Spanish only rule in the house, but we quickly found ourselves in this natural code-switching mode. It’s a world that my husband and I comfortably lived in. The fluidity of both languages just couldn’t give into my “Spanish only” rule.

Then we tried a simultaneous dual language model at home, where mami would be the Spanish only speaker, and papi would be the English only model. However, once I went back to work 18 months later, language became an issue again. While most of our family is also bilingual, my sisters and step dad are not as fluent. Given that, naturally, “awita’s” (my daughter’s way of saying abuelita) home was predominantly English only. My mom helped me watch my daughter while I was at work. So, quickly I noticed my daughter picking up English and her vocabulary was expanding. She was selective with language. Some words and phrases she said in Spanish, while others she preferred to say them in English. I found myself constantly saying “y en español se dice ______.”

I didn’t want to give up, but I worried. I worried that I had failed. My little 2 year old wouldn’t become bilingual and would reject the language that I love so much, not reap the countless cognitive and social benefits of being bilingual! What’s a bilingual mama to do?!

Put her in Spanish Immersion preschool, of course! I’ve had the privilege of working a small language school when I was working on my undergraduate degree, teaching Spanish for after school programs. Years later, this little language school opened a Spanish Immersion preschool that prepares their students for dual language programs through play-based thematic units in the target language. I decided to put my daughter in their Transitional 2s program 2 times per week.

The first few months were hard and full of tears. However, as time passed, I saw my daughter grow in various areas, language is one of those areas. Let us fast-forward 2.5 years later, and now my little one is going on her 3rd year there. I opted for keeping her an extra year at her school instead of doing TK, because there are no dual language TK programs in our area.

She is going on 5 in a few months, and is now enrolled full time in school. She knows her colors, numbers up to 30, shapes, initial sounds (oso, oso, o-o-o), and can have short conversations in Spanish. Her listening domain in Spanish is through the roof. Most importantly, she has fun and enjoys going to school every day. Now my daughter got accepted into a Dual Immersion 90/10 Kinder program where she tested in as a native Spanish speaker and we are so excited!

There were days that I wanted to call it quits. However, I kept pushing and will continue to do so until she can read Don Quixote and write an analytical paper on major themes of the novel. Ok, ok, maybe not that much, but you catch my drift.

As a freshly retired educator, I can speak to the benefits of bilingualism/multilingualism firsthand. It has been noted that kids brought up with home languages that differ from school language have superior social skills, which I can attest to anecdotally as well. In our ever-more-populated world, perhaps getting along is the most important non-academic skill taught in school. But more importantly, improved executive function benefits a person and society in multiple ways.

– Carol, Trinidad

My wife is a Cuban-born naturalized citizen, raised in a Spanish-speaking family. I was raised with English as my primary language, and I learned Spanish as an adult. Our daughter was in a well-established, dual-language (Spanish-English, 90/10) immersion program from Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Sadly, our daughter’s 5th grade teacher was intolerant, and we were forced to withdraw our child shortly after she started her 5th grade year. We don’t just need dual language programs, but culturally competent educators.

– Hal, Venice

Research results from the multilingual Mandarin-English programs of the state of Utah and the multilingual Mandarin-English public school in Oakland, CA, indicate strongly that students entered into these programs have consistently superior grades and executive skills to those students who are not in such programs.

– Denise, Oakland

Educational research shows that children experience cognitive benefits from additive language instruction. Our children benefit from a dual language immersion

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program. Their education allows them to communicate with their grandparents. This inter-generational connection is so valuable, and I know that many families do not have this privilege. Our family would prefer that this connection is available to as many families as possible. Please expand dual language immersion in many languages.

– Margaret, Santa Ana

I am a white woman from the US and my husband is from Mexico. Our daughters are 2 and 5 years old and are being raised bilingually and bi-culturally. We currently live in Mexico City but spend a lot of time in the US. I am keenly aware of how our Mexican friends here see the privilege of learning English yet how some of our Mexican friends in the US feel ashamed, afraid, or uncomfortable speaking Spanish with their kids in public because of the discrimination they experience.

Speaking two languages allows our daughters to speak with both sets of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and learn about both cultures, in a meaningful way. It allows my partner and I to relate to our daughters in our maternal tongue with authenticity. It creates for many special moments of mixing up the two languages and a deeper understanding of each other as people and individuals.

Our world would be so different if everyone spoke multiple languages and could gain a deeper appreciation for other cultures aside from their own. Having dual immersion programs, supporting bilingualism, eliminating discrimination and xenophobia are all key steps to building a brighter and better future for our children.

– Megan, San Francisco

I will always regret my inability to think fluently in a second language, as my school provided NO instruction till high school.

– Margaret, Albany

I am a state preschool teacher in California. Most (90%) of my students are American-born children of Mexican and Central American immigrants to the USA. I am teaching them social skills, emotional self-awareness and personal and relational responsibility of attitude and performance, and would have my pedagogy greatly enhanced were I to have a realistic & energetically engaging bilingual English-as-a-second-language curriculum – not rigidly clock-bound but flexible, fluid and fun that aides could easily apply with their own innovative personal touches.

One of anglo-Americans’ greatest liabilities as human beings is that we are not obligated in school to take a second language or even care about learning about or from another culture. This must change in today’s global village.

– Steve, Richmond

I’m not a parent. I am a language teacher and translator. Being multilingual is one of life’s greatest pleasures, besides coming in handy! I have been able to get to know people, help people, etc. Just today I met with an old friend who has many documents pertaining to her family history. I’m going to work on translations of these documents. There is nothing more important than curing the scourge of monolingualism!

– Roslyn, Menlo Park

Our sons are in a Spanish language immersion program in Oakland and we love it! It helps make our community diverse and welcoming to a whole range of people. Research shows that kids with multiple language mastery are better equipped to succeed in business - they are more aware of social cues than monolingual children. Please make dual and non-English language immersion programs a priority to keep California an international leader and prepare us for the future.

– Cati, Oakland

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/opinion/sunday/the-superior-social-skills-of-bilinguals.html?_r=0

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT BILINGUAL YOUTH OFTEN HAVE INCREASED EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, STRONGER PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS, & IMPROVED ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IN THE LONG RUN
My son has been bilingual his entire life and as someone who grew up in the same community over two decades ago I understand how easy it is to forget your mother tongue. I didn’t practice my Spanish very much for almost 10 years and almost lost it. This is one of the reasons it was so important to me for my son to speak Spanish and to never forget it like I did. Our school district has an amazing Spanish Immersion program and I made some difficult personal choices in order to ensure that my son got the opportunity to attend that school. His transfer was accepted and his Kindergarten was amazing. I have zero regrets and am getting involved in his school so that the Spanish speaking families have more of a voice.

Yes, even at a Spanish immersion school the Spanish speaking families don’t have enough voice in the decisions made by the PTA or the administration. Language access has not impacted my family very much but it does impact other families in our community and this has inspired me to consider running for school board in our district. The families of color in our school district do not representation on the school board and this needs to change. We can do a better job of reaching all families.

– Noelia, San Mateo

SOMOS BILINGÜES en mi casa -- Hasta Melania Trump habla (y espero que lea y escribe) muchos idiomas. ¡Es lo mayor para el MUNDO entero de hoy y del futuro!!

In our house, WE ARE BILINGUAL – Even Melania Trump speaks (and I hope reads and writes) many languages. It is the best thing for the whole WORLD today and in the future!!

– Carmen, Los Angeles

We support dual language programs in our family - my grandchildren have benefitted from language development directly!

– Gabrielle, Lakewood

My experience with bilingual education is from the perspective of a teacher with limited bilingual ability. Prior to the passage of Proposition 227 in California, the children who came to school dominant in a language other than English were taught to read in their primary language. The condition that triggered the requirement for primary language instruction was a small percentage of the school population. Children learned the sound symbol relationships and to decode words. Immediate links were made between the decoded word and its meaning. In other words, primary language instruction supported literacy. The very day after Proposition 227 passed I watched a boy try to match the symbol h with a picture of an object beginning with the sound /h/ but he had no chance. The word associated with the picture of the “hammer” in his mind was “martillo.” Not an /h/!

– Marianne, Goleta

I grew up under English Only policies at school, though my parents spoke both Spanish and English. I witnessed the silencing of children who struggled to learn English but were afraid to say a word in either language for fear of punishment.

I witnessed children who I knew were perfectly intelligent being labelled as “retarded” because of their limited English. I saw the faces of the children reflecting their shame and embarrassment as the English speakers taunted them. Though I was warned not to do so, as a child I often interpreted the teacher’s commands to my non-English speaking classmates.

Several of my friends have tutored children with limited English. Recent studies have shown that studying another language-bilingualism-stimulates brain development and strengthens abilities at all ages. Children quickly acquire social skills and develop confidence in settings where they are accepted as equals. Bilingualism is good for everyone-at any age.

– Suzanne, Bayside

My daughter-in-law struggles because she was schooled under the cloud of Prop 227. I think if we don’t value native languages then we are missing an opportunity to make people truly multi-lingual and worse we are missing the opportunity to truly educate.

– Karen, Tracy

I was not raised bilingual, except that my mother who had lived in Paris for a year & a half of her college time taught me basic French, which allowed me to do well in French classes. One thing I realized early on in my studies is that each language has some ways to express thoughts that cannot adequately be expressed in any other language (without many more words).

And knowing more than one (ideally spoken grammatically well and with good vocabulary, but to a great extent in ANY form) makes it 1) easier to learn others later on, and 2) easier to understand that there is more than one perspective on any factor of life and living. And on this shrinking planet we need that understanding more than ever!

– Virginia, Palo Alto

I grew up in a dual language household and I eventually became a bilingual teacher. I believe it helped me become a better person and a good citizen.

– Luis, Long Beach

I am a 57 years old disabled man with cerebral palsy. Dual language has helped me to overcome my disability by been able to communicate with 2 worlds. The English speaking world and the Spanish speaking world. Sometimes I have been treated poorly by people who only speak one language, just because my cerebral palsy condition. But I am actively involved in my community as a motivational speaker, helping others to develop their talents and empower them become advocates for justice and human rights.

– Rogerio, Riverside

I was so glad my child began learning Spanish in kindergarten and then added French in high school and finally German and Danish in college and continues to work to stay at a conversational level in fluency. I’ve observed all the benefits reported for bilingual education in my child.

– J, Rescue
I grew up in a bilingual family and felt that having access to two languages (and thus at least two cultures) was an enormous benefit. The only thing that would have made it better is if I had also been able to study both languages in elementary school, instead of only English.

Although I could speak Spanish, my family did not teach me to read or write, and I waited until after college to study written Spanish (I took French in high school). As a white woman (my Spanish comes from my step father), I have benefited a lot in the world of work from being bilingual, so I can definitely argue for the economic benefits of bilingualism. However, it’s really the access to culture, jokes, stories, traveling, movies, books, and connecting with others that are the real treasures for me.

Being bilingual in Spanish is such an important value to me that my partner (a high school French teacher) and I enrolled our two white sons in a dual immersion Spanish-English school in San Francisco. My 8 and 11 year olds speak Spanish and read and write it at grade level. They also call on their Spanish any time they need it to connect with others, whether chatting with another kid on the playground, talking to anyone who crosses their path on last year’s trip to Costa Rica, answering questions from a recent Guatemalan immigrant who doesn’t yet speak English, or even commiserating about the heatwave with Spanish tourists on a recent trip to London!

My kids are also starting to learn French and have plans to master other languages as soon as they can get access to learning them.

– Anastasia, San Francisco

A wealth of research in the last few decades shows the advantages of young children being exposed to more than one language in their environment and schooling. Though my own children did not have access to dual language programs, two grandchildren (in Davis, CA) have benefitted from instruction in English and Spanish.

– Joyce, Los Alamitos

I am a big advocate of bilingual education. My e-book, Raising Bilingual Children, was published by Simon and Schuster in 2014. The recent research about how our the brain is multilingual and the benefits of being fluent in two or more languages contributed to their interest in publishing this book.

My children were raised bilingual and bicultural, and today, they are young adults that appreciate being able to navigate two languages and two cultures. I believe every child in this country should have that advantage. It is a gift we give our children.

– Maritere, El Segundo

It has been amazing watching my son turn into a mini-polyglot. As a rather stubborn boy, who is exposed to English plus three very different Chinese dialects at home, we were worried that our efforts to help him be bilingual in Mandarin and English was significantly stunting his speech. By 18 months, he still only had a very limited vocabulary in either language.

However, in the ensuing months and years, we watched his language skills explode. He calls each language by the people in his life who speak the language - mommy’s language, daddy’s language, grandma’s language, maestra’s language. He is able to flip from one language to the next seamlessly, and translates with ease. He is constantly curious about other languages he hears in day-to-day life. We cannot be happier that we persisted and are continuing to foster his multilingualism.

This is many years back, but when I went from junior high to high school, the counselor told me that I couldn’t take Spanish because my English grades weren’t “good enough”. Duh. I learned Spanish AND German at the same time I was learning English as a child. The problem was that by 4th grade I no longer had family members with whom to speak Spanish and German so I was having to rely on English, but I didn’t want to forget my Spanish language because I knew I could get better jobs later if I was bilingual.

– Adams, Escondido

We have a 4th grader and a 1st grader in a two-way bilingual immersion program (TWBI): half the class are native English speakers and other half are native Spanish speakers. [The school is a Title 1 school meaning we have a high % of low income families.] Both our boys are native English speakers. We love the TWBI program for many reasons as our goal is to raise open minded global citizens. However, my primary interest in the program was academic - I want my kids challenged - and also selfish - I speak Finnish but you’re not going to find a Finnish immersion program here in California! I believe if you learn one other language well, it is easier to learn additional ones.

The TWBI kindergarten starts with all teaching in Spanish and add English as the years go on. Neither child ever complained of not understanding the teacher and they’ve always liked school. I wonder if they even realize other kids go to school in English? Children are adaptable and they are able to infer from context, gestures etc. which is probably a good skill in itself. (I also speak Finnish and the kids attend a bi-weekly Finnish class so they were used not understanding everything.)

The boys both learned to read in Spanish first, through school. Somehow they also magically learned to read on their own in English. (We did not push them on this.) They are both now well above grade level in English reading and at grade level in Spanish reading. Their math classes are held in Spanish and both are above grade level in math as well. So far my observation is that going to school in a new language does not seem to slow them down one bit.

When I attended my older son’s 3rd grade presentation last year, I was actu-
ally surprised to hear him give a presentation on Venus in Spanish! I of course know he is learning in Spanish and I’d seen him do research on Spanish websites. I just don’t often hear him speak Spanish. Seeing how he is truly becoming comfortable discussing a fairly advanced topic in another language was incredibly impressive. I believe they are/will be truly bi-literate. have no real scientific evidence for this but I believe a young brain is pliable – the more you challenge it, the more it can take on. And the benefits of putting your brain to more use extend to beyond language. We are very lucky to have TWBI at our local public school.

– Pia, San Jose

An excellent education includes teaching international languages and should start in our pre schools. It prepares us to communicate and compete in a global world. I was hired due to my second language.

– Manuela, Berkeley

Both of my daughters (now adults) attended a dual immersion program in elementary school. Being bilingual has offered them many opportunities: the ability to easily score well on a language AP test, has made them sought after candidates by employers, and helped them be highly valued employees compared to other employees who only speak English.

– Melanie, Davis

I had the advantage of growing up in an ethnically mixed community. A neighbor who baby sat for me before I was in school spoke Spanish. She taught me some age-appropriate words. What was more important, I learned to pronounce Spanish words. This was an advantage when I learned more words later. When I studied French in high school, it was too late to master the pronunciation, even though I could read and write French quite well.

All Americans should be at least bilingual. It’s a life skill we need in the modern world. Those who don’t speak English should learn. Those who only know English should add at least one more language. It improves understanding of our neighbors. From the Christian perspective, the whole world is our neighborhood.

– Mary, Wilmington

My eldest son was fortunate to be in a city that offered bilingual elementary school when he was in kindergarten. Unfortunately we moved to a city that only offered monolingual programs so he is now monolingual, never having enough motivation to learn another language fluently. My younger son studied French in high school and went on an exchange program, studied and became fluent. If we had been able to have bilingual education in elementary school it would have been better for both of them.

– Meyers, Uplands

Both of my daughters went to a Spanish immersion program. They are fluent in Spanish and they did very well academically.

Research shows that children who are in a dual language immersion program do the same or better as children with only one language. Brain research also shows that learning a second language improves brain function.

– Prisca, Los Angeles

Having two languages is strongly correlated with increased income, higher education and professional achievements, and increased levels of intelligence generally. I need that in the next generation. Our entire society needs that. And it is easily achievable.

– Imam, Oakland

I was blessed to be taught Spanish beginning at age 8 by a school that believed that every child needed two languages. I was taught to read, write and speak Spanish as well as English, and that gift has served me well over my 65 years.

I entered the ministry at age 50 and was able to do about a third of my coursework in Spanish, a real blessing since I worked with immigrant families.

Knowing Spanish meant when I traveled to Greece I also understood a great deal of Greek - the Romans borrowed a great deal from Greece, including keywords of their language. I found that some words in Greek were identical to their counterparts in Spanish.

Learning Spanish grammar helped me understand English grammar, despite its irregularities. Having two languages has made me more open to new ideas, different cultures, and new people.

My grandsons live in Louisiana, where they both attend French immersion classes. I’m grateful they are reaping the benefits of dual languages and many cultures.

– Diane, Eureka

Both of my daughters attended a dual-immersion program (Spanish/English) through junior high and it has been incredibly helpful to them academically.
and in obtaining jobs. Although native English speakers, they both received a score of 5 on the AP Spanish Exam and have obtained employment based on the fact that they are fluent in Spanish.

– Melanie, Davis

I didn’t grow up in a bilingual family because of the biased attitude toward Italians when I was a kid. I so much regret that. But I was fascinated by Spanish from the time I was very young and worked hard to become bilingual. Being bilingual has shaped my worldview, lead me into fulfilling careers in social justice work and higher education and connected me to other cultures and world views that have enriched my life immeasurably.

– Breeze-Martin, Sonora

I was born and raised in China though my parents were both Americans. I lived there 12 of my first 14 years so learned both my parents and my birth country’s language from native speakers. Of course having one foot in each of two cultures can complicate life, but I’ve read that those with bilingual capacity have advantages in a variety of ways and have never felt disadvantaged myself.

I believe those with bilingual skills have especially important gifts to share with us in today’s world and should be supported in whatever ways their adjustment might require.

– Margaret, Hermosa Beach

My aunt became proficient in our ancestral Cherokee language and shared with me how the English language is deficient in certain concepts.

I understand this is true of all languages...concepts and understandings differ among peoples. How better it will be if dual language learners benefit and also the general public is exposed to a broader conceptual understanding about the world and humankind, as well.

– Sharon, Nevada City

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I know the research supports dual language education. There is a considerable body of research that confirms children who are exposed to two languages do as well or better in language acquisition and later educational performance.

– Nancy, Santa Rosa Valley

Everyone in this country should have the pleasure and, the advantage of knowing two or more languages. An educated citizen is a real enrichment to the U.S.A.

I am proud to say that both my children can speak, read and, write in both English and Spanish. This was due to our family’s heritage and efforts to have them receive the necessary instruction. Second and third language acquisition should be part of our public schools curriculum. Let’s educate for the future. We live in global community.

– Amelia, San Mateo

My four children have greatly benefited from Portuguese- English bilingual programs in California, since 1992. They are now on their way to becoming teachers – greatly needed in California – and professionals serving the needs of ethnic minorities across the state and the nation.

– Mariana, Berkeley

Both of my daughters went through the El Marino Spanish Immersion program
and they did very well academically and speak Spanish fluently now. At that age, learning a language is much easier and it connects the brain cells more, so the children do better academically in all the subjects. There is research on this. It was a very good school choice and I am so grateful we had the opportunity to learn Spanish!

- Prisca, Los Angeles

Speaking more than one language has opened many doors for me!

- Robert, Santa Rosa

Students in American schools, regardless of their ethnic background, can benefit immensely from dual language programs. Besides the obvious advantages of mastering another language, they learn to respect and cooperate with children from different cultures, languages, and income levels. Every American could profit from this experience.

- Joyce, Los Alamitos

Having more than one language is beneficial in a global society. It benefits everyone!

- Susan, Oakland

I strongly support people being conversant in multiple languages. Each adds new ways of thinking and each adds a legion of people one can communicate with; each adds a cultural perspective. Unfortunately, the only language my parents had in common was English, so I grew up in a monolingual home, though I was exposed to the combined 15 languages my parents spoke.

- Howard, Palo Alto

I learned other languages early and it makes it easier to learn them later in life. I highly encourage dual language immersion!

- Ronit, Santa Barbara

If America wants to compete in a global economy, it must have a bilingual education. America is getting behind in the math and science fields, why would Washington want to divest in states like Wyoming, Arkansas, Indiana, and Idaho? All states need a push for bilingual education, like Utah, Texas, California, Florida and Arizona.

Statistically speaking, student even perform higher on standardized testing and college prep rigorous subjects when they know a second language. It’s time to push the politics out and make our education more efficient-introduce bilingual education and make America Great Again!

- Jorge, El Cajon

Dual language education is important for all. In Germany, almost all speak English in addition to German. This is a good thing!

- Joan, San Marcos

COLORADO

Diana, Denver, CO

Being raised as a bilingual child I loved the special feeling of being part of such a passionate and colorful culture, however I also felt separate from monolingual children.

As an adult I have reaped such great advantages in the workforce due to being bilingual that I have no regrets about how I was raised.

When I had my son, I had no doubt that I would raise him bilingual as well. It was more difficult than expected as he understood both English and Spanish perfectly, but he spoke more English than Spanish. To help with this I enrolled him in an Immersion Language Charter school for Elementary school.

It has been amazing to watch him and other children absorb Spanish and use it with each other! Now not only does my son speak Spanish, he reads and writes in it just as well as he does in English. It has even come to a point where he teaches me Spanish!

De 1956 a 1959 vivia en Mexico. Al principio, no podia hablar el espanol. Hoy, puedo hablar con personas que no saben el ingles. Quisiera que mis paisanos trataran a los de otros paises con el mismo respeto que me mostraron en Mexico hace tanto tiempo.

English Translation: I lived in Mexico from 1956 to 1959. At first, I could not speak Spanish. Today, I can talk to people who do not speak English. I would like my countrymen to treat people of other countries with the same respect they showed me in Mexico many years ago.

- Deborah, Loveland

When we moved from Colorado to British Columbia we quickly registered our three year old daughter, Kerryn, in a French Immersion pre-school. She continued in the French Immersion program up until 11th Grade.

Even though she did not complete a full French Immersion program, Kerryn’s engagement with it assisted her in other language programs (Spanish) and, now at age forty five (45) it gives her a leg up with her job searches and current employment. Second language learning is something tragically missing from the USAmerican educational system/curriculum.

- Robert, Denver

Dual Language is one of the best programs my children have experienced in school. All tested into high Spanish courses in high school.

- Lulu, Edwards

I learned other languages in school and before school my mom, who was fluent in Spanish and French, would sing us songs in those languages which helped
to impart foreign language learning on us as toddlers. Those we may not have understood still took root in us. As an adult I found that I could understand French though I never took it in school. I was also able to pick up colloquial Spanish as an adult because of her. I later learned Italian by moving there as an adult in a multilingual religious community. So yes, more than one language learning is a must for any child!

– James, Colorado Springs

**CONNECTICUT**

Both of my children were lucky enough to be enrolled in a public school which recognized the importance of language learning from kindergarten through high school. As a result, my 24 year old daughter speaks Spanish well and has an appreciation for a culture outside of her small Northeastern town, and my son is working on adding French and Japanese to his working knowledge before he embarks on a year of traveling around the world with a friend, staying at selected Workaway sites throughout Asia and Europe. He will come home with an increased understanding that language does not need to separate us, but can instead bring us together.

– Jennifer, Preston

Fluency in French reduces grammatical errors and expands vocabulary in English.

– Chloe, Stamford

My parent did not teach us their two different native languages and I wish that they had. It is wonderful to be able to speak multiple languages and it is in much of the world but not the U.S. Why?

– Caso, Rocky Hill

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Bilingual education has expanded my family’s horizons, allowing us to connect with people from all over the world and giving us perspective on why people immigrate to the United States and what it means to be an American.

– Jessica, DC

My mother never spoke her native language with me or my sisters when we were growing up, out of her fear that it would mark us somehow as “less than” and out of a general sense that it wasn’t very American to speak in another language besides English.

As a result, I am completely cut off from communication with her side of the family. Whenever we have traveled to her country, I have felt a painful chasm between myself and my relatives.

Whenever I hear the language being spoken on the street as I pass by, it sounds deeply familiar, yet totally incomprehensible. It is the strangest feeling to know how to pronounce the words perfectly (because I am so used to hearing the language) but not know what they mean.

It is like cutting off a limb and feeling phantom pain. It has led me to feel strongly that we should do all we can to promote families feeling culturally whole: American AND ____, rather than fractured and bereaved of a part of themselves.

– Katharine, DC

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**SPEAKING YOUR HOME LANGUAGE WITH YOUR CHILD**

**BUILDS STRONG CULTURAL CONNECTIONS & IS GREAT FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT**

https://www.weareoneamerica.org/speak-your-language
in their schools and I am positive it can be done in the USA.

– Mayra, Hollywood

We are a family of four that uses the one person one language approach in supporting our daughters’ bilingual development. Although sometimes challenging, especially for Papi who learned Spanish in his adolescence, the girls communicate extremely well across both languages at home, in their bilingual school, and in our bilingual community of Miami.

They come up with new ways of expressing themselves and constantly teach us about how to learn language without shame. Without the opportunity to become bilingual, our family would not be as enriched as it is, and our daughters would not have work, school, and social options that they do. We are forever thankful for bilingualism!

– Lina, Miami

We spent 34+ years working in the field of English for Speakers of Other Languages and am a Specialist. Research shows many advantages to learning and speaking more than one language. It helps a person cognitively and helps academic achievement, staves off brain disease and builds memory, increases employment opportunities, grows cultural understanding and enhances travel. There are no negative outcomes for speaking or learning another language.

– Pamela, Bradenton

As a bicultural mom and early childhood mental health expert, I know first-hand the benefits of honoring the cultures and languages of our communities. Living in Miami makes me think daily about what my Latino heritage means to me, how I raise my children, and the work that I do. I’m striving to pass on my Colombian heritage to my children, but raising my children and teaching them to appreciate their Latino roots has also been one of the hardest parts of parenting in the United States.

My children had not discovered the importance of speaking Spanish until I took them to visit my family in Bogota and they struggled to communicate with loved ones. And I’m not the only parent who struggles with this. This is why dual language immersion early learning programs that value and are responsive to our kids’ cultures are so critical – that and the fact that bilingual infants show increased cognitive flexibility.

My husband and I are bicultural. We have both had experiences in the two cultures and each of these cultures are pieces of the puzzle that make us who we are. The world that my husband and I show our children is the world we know and experience from our bicultural point of view. Having the support of educators in supporting our children’s language development and culture is a critical piece of this puzzle.

– Diane, Boca Raton

Our grandchildren are extremely fortunate to attend a nursery school that teaches children both Mandarin Chinese AND Spanish! And the tuition is less than at Montessori! They have no problem! Learning is so natural and FUN!

Our son, the children’s father, went back to his Spanish roots, learned Spanish in his adolescence, and is now bilingual. Thank God we insisted on this development. Although sometimes challenging, especially for Papi who learned Spanish in his adolescence, the girls communicate extremely well across both languages at home, in their bilingual school, and in our bilingual community of Miami.

They come up with new ways of expressing themselves and constantly teach us about how to learn language without shame. Without the opportunity to become bilingual, our family would not be as enriched as it is, and our daughters would not have work, school, and social options that they do. We are forever thankful for bilingualism!

– Ryan, Miami

In my experience being bilingual is a plus in any community. My little daughter used to go to a school in Hialeah FL where both English and Spanish was taught and when I moved to Hollywood FL, that was no longer the case and I felt she lost a great opportunity to learn a different language. Many European countries support the teaching of different languages and I am positive it can be done in the USA.

– Jasmin, Tampa

I’m an immigrant. As a child, my brothers and I were not allowed to speak our native language in school. We were punished if we did. However, my parents paid a tutor so we would not lose our maternal language, Spanish. In the university, I took Spanish literature classes to improve my knowledge of the language, and also learned French and Portuguese.

As an adult, I worked as a software trainer and was paid extra for my language knowledge. I was able to communicate with overseas clients in their native languages. Being bilingual or multi-lingual is an advantage, not a hindrance. Besides, nothing is more rewarding and nurturing than to speak to your parents and grandparents about their histories in their native language, and to learn about your culture in the language in which it was developed.

– Maria, Miami

I have a 3 1/2 & 5 year old that recently started school a couple years ago. Ever since they were in my belly, it has been full immersion of Spanish only. Add soon as they started school, they learned English and are now bilingual. Thank God here in FL we don’t get treated any differently. People actually praise my husband and I for speaking to them in Spanish and exposing them to our culture on a constant basis.

We continue to enforce the “Spanish at home, English at school” rule very strictly. It has been a blessing hearing them speak both languages and being proud of their culture. It also helps that I’m the Spanish teacher at their school. Being bilingual is nothing to be ashamed of and I’m proud of the opportunities it has brought me growing up and it really does open your mind up and helps your brain!

– Pamela, Bradenton
so we know how valuable it is to have another language/another life! In fact, my husband spoke only Finnish until he started kindergarten, and had to learn English. His students (when he was a FULLBRIGHT professor in Estonia many years later) were amazed at his perfect pronunciation! Finnish and Estonian are quite similar.

My rural high school in Ohio only offered two years of Latin, but it was so very helpful to me as a medical professional. I don’t think I could have chosen a better language for overall usefulness in so many aspects. Thank you for promoting multi-lingual and multi-cultural awareness! We are a nation of many world backgrounds and this should be acclaimed!

– Karen, Pensacola

Bilingual education for all citizens in primary school allows learning another language very well at a time when our children’s brains are open to learning and retaining a second, third & even fourth language. Surely this becomes more important as our world becomes smaller and we work & live with a large variety of people from other countries & cultures. Understanding and fluency in others’ native languages allows clearer understanding and appreciation of these countries & cultures.

– Charlotte, Navarre

I’m not from a bilingual family, but Spanish was a required class in middle school, and I think I really benefited from that. The earlier kids start learning a foreign language, the more they will be able to retain!

– Erin, Tallahassee

As a school psychologist, I work with children of all backgrounds. Support (or lack of) their home language critically affects their development to know they are accepted and welcomed in their city and school.

– Alicia, Brandon

I have been discriminated against for my language by Police Officers as well as at my Job which is a Government Job. Things need to change.

– Emma, Miami

GEORGIA

Sequoia, Loganville, GA

My family is multilingual – at home we speak English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Both my husband and I grew up speaking up more than one language at home and school, so naturally we valued the ability to communicate in multiple languages and wanted to share this experience with our kids.

At school, there aren’t many bilingual kids in my kids’ class, however the school does promote language “immersion” activities, that are very rudimentary level words and phrases. Nonetheless, I am happy to observe that my son does not appear embarrassed or ashamed to speak a language other than English – a feeling I had as a young girl growing up in the South.

We have specifically chosen school districts that support dual language immersion in elementary grades because we understand the importance of continued exposure to the desired language in order to enhance one’s speaking capabilities over time.

I do often fear that school officials or teachers may discriminate against my sons simply because they have Spanish names and surnames and may disparage them for speaking Spanish as once happened to me when I was in school. I am hopeful though that increasing ethnic and racial diversity will reduce the likelihood of this prejudice continuing on against my sons.

– Colleen, Norman Park

I don’t have a child, but as a descendant of the slaves who were brought to this country, and helped to make it the success that it is today. Along with the Chinese and other people from other nations were instrumental in building the infrastructure we have today. The founding father(s) and mother(s) knew they were creating a diverse nation, including language. The term diverse may not have been used, but the concept was there.

I may also add that it is not just the ‘minorities’ who struggle daily against seen and unseen obstacles to their becoming the success their hard labor should have earned them. Through accepting diversity we can all be made better, but it will not be done by fighting, killing and opposing anyone.

– Irene, Savannah

I didn’t grow up in a bilingual family because of the biased attitude toward Italians when I was a kid. I so much regret that. But I was fascinated by Spanish from the time I was very young and worked hard to become bilingual. Being bilingual has shaped my worldview, lead me into fulfilling careers in social justice work and higher education and connected me to other cultures and worldviews that have enriched my life immeasurably.

– Breeze-Martín, Sonora

Almost every other “industrialized” nation makes certain that children learn at least one language other than their own in school. In today’s global marketplace,
it is essential for our children to have the skill to converse easily and freely with people from other countries. The United States is being left behind in the field of education and this will lead to an insecure future for this country in many areas, beginning with our economy.

- **Gloria, Macon**

My family and I have been lucky enough to live in the Netherlands. The sad part was that we only spoke English. Many Dutch people spoke 3-5 different languages.

They had such an advantage of being able to communicate to many different people. We have also lived in cities with in the States that we were the minority. We love being able to learn and hear other languages.

- **Michelle, Peachtree**

I support learning languages. I speak 5 languages fluently and sing in at least a dozen more. It has helped me to be a world citizen. My goal as a child was to learn all the languages in the world, and I may not make it in this lifetime, but I do love learning new languages to help me better understand and know my neighbors on planet earth!

- **Elise, Pine Lake**

As the founder of a world language school for young children, I am a strong proponent of studying second languages and cultures. Only by learning about other people and cultures can we begin to understand each other and ultimately build lasting relationships to foster world peace.

- **Kimberly, Honolulu**

I’m the granddaughter of an international lawyer, who spoke 5 languages fluently. I inherited his gift & became a university professor of Russian & French. Knowing those 2 languages helped me learn enough Italian, Spanish, & Ukrainian to make my wishes known in those languages, too. Speaking /reading these languages helped me greatly in my career, travels & relationships as well.

- **Virginia, Honolulu**

I’m a woman in my sixties. My father was full-blooded Italian; his mother was pregnant with him on the boat coming over to the United States. Of course, he was bilingual. When I’d want him to teach me Italian, he’d say, “You’re American. You speak American.” I regret that he didn’t teach me Italian. It is such a beautiful language. I wonder about the societal pressures that made him believe that teaching me Italian would be aversive. I have tried to learn Spanish—as an adult. It is a very difficult thing to do.

Right now, I’m tutoring a young Mexican man in English. I love to hear about his culture. I think being able to speak different languages is like a passport to different cultures/ways of thinking/being. It broadens our world. It saddens me that immigrants are being targeted.

- **Teresa, Geneva**

I took Latin, French and Spanish in high school; then, French and German in college. While I am not fluent, I can interact with my French and have a basic understanding of Spanish after many years out of the classroom. I married a Frenchman and I have always been able to converse with his family and friends.

I am thrilled that my grandson is in a dual language program (English/Spanish) since kindergarten and he is doing well. His accent is excellent. I firmly believe learning the languages and cultures of others enriches one fully.

- **Louanne, Huntley**

**ILLOINOIS**

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- **Louanne, Huntley**

**KNOWING MULTIPLE LANGUAGES SET YOUTH UP TO BE COMPETITIVE IN A GLOBAL WORKFORCE AS ADULTS**

My kids’ dad is Israeli and although he stopped speaking Hebrew to them when they were too young to remember, they did do a Spanish Immersion program for grade school and part of middle school. The best part of the program is that it helped make relating to the Hispanic kids in the school second nature as they were in class with the same kids every day for 6 years.

My daughter switched to Hebrew in high school but my son is still studying Spanish. I don’t know if it’s related, but they are both great with math and they are always at the tip top of the charts in any standardized tests.

– Kate, Evanston

My grandson is in a dual language program and I feel it is the ultimate enriching experience. I, myself, took Latin, Spanish and French in high school, and then French and German in college. While I am not totally fluent in French, I can converse and travel to French speaking countries without needing to revert to English.

My other languages are not as strong, but I have a good base if I would take the time to become more fluent. Learning other languages is one of the most rewarding endeavors anyone can experience.

– Louanne, Huntley

In college and throughout my life in the corporate world, people from Europe could speak 5 to 7 languages when leaving high school. Growing up in Texas my grandfather was bilingual as he guided his crew on the Southern Pacific RR. Other languages bring people together and should never be a tool used to divide people and make anyone feel “other.”

– Cheryl, Troy

I began learning French in 5th grade and Spanish in 6th grade over 20 years ago in a nearly all-white public school district in a small rural community. I also studied 4 years of high school French. This inspired a lifelong commitment to respecting and supporting all non-English speaking citizens who come to our country, as my own family did. This also inspired a desire to travel and connect with diverse populations.

I work to support this same level of respect for others in my daughter, and hope that such opportunities continue to be available for her generation, so that future generations develop a national culture that is more inclusive, accepting, and peaceful.

– Terri, Macomb

Having been born and raised as a first generation Chi-Town gal, experiencing childhood and adolescence during the 1960s and 1970s, I was exposed to Americans of so many different ethnic backgrounds. It was common-place to hear passers-by speaking American-English interspersed with Swedish, Greek, German, Balkan-Slavic, Yiddish, Assyrian, Spanish from various Latin-American countries, Polish, etc. etc.

Being Bilingual in Greek gave me an incredible advantage in just about every subject matter; from reading, vocabulary and spelling to science and mathematics. Because European languages (which includes English) have incorporated countless of Greek and Latin words, I had an advantage in a rapid understanding of material introduced in the classroom.

attending Ellenic (Greek) school three times a week following my American-English school day was greatly beneficial. I also took two years of German in 7th and 8th grade.

– Katherine, Chicago

Learning Spanish has been a huge benefit to my son’s social relationships and high school success!

– Paulette, Chicago

I do not have school age kids yet. However we are a bilingual household and want to do anything to help create a bilingual and bicultural community for them to be raised in.

– Mariana, Lombard

INDIANA

I grew up learning Spanish at school starting in kindergarten. Me and my classmates became fluent by the second grade. It changed how I think and provided me with an invaluable job skill. We need these programs everywhere.

– Elise, Indianapolis

I speak French fluently– learned in high school and college. It has opened many doors to me: speaking to natives in francophone countries, translating for new francophone immigrants, etc.

– Elizabeth, Fort Wayne
As the US is changing demographically we need for all schools to offer dual language programs nationwide. When I graduated from HS in 2003 I found it hard to get a job because I did not speak a 2nd language. 

So while I am an American and haven’t been treated badly due to an accent or anything I can see my kids and millions of others being left out in the employment market because they only speak one language. Let’s get in the 21st century and have more Americans speak more than English.

– Manetric, Indianapolis

I have friends that have family in Mexico. I am currently actually returning from visiting them. Unlike other people my age from other countries I only speak English. I struggled communicating with the family, but I fell absolutely in love with them. They want me to study more Spanish and come back next summer. I only wish I would of had the chance when I was in elementary school to learn Spanish. It’s harder now that I am an adult.

– David, Indianapolis

I am a descendant of immigrants from Germany. When the US fought against Germany in WWI and WWII (My dad was in the Army in Guam when I was born in 1945), my grandparents and their children stopped talking German so they would not be identified with the enemy. They erased all traces of their background.

My generation was left poorer with only English and no connections with family history, customs, ethnic dishes, etc. I am an Early Child Educator and I work with families in English and in Spanish. In our town we have children born in 30+ countries in our school district. I see the wealth that immigrant and refugee families have who choose to cultivate both their original culture and the best from the US culture. I encourage them to continue the bilingual and in some cases multilingual communication and the various cultural aspects too. I WANT OUR CHILDREN TO BE THE RICHER AND EVEN BETTER US CITIZENS IN THE FUTURE.

– Sister, Garden City

I am not a mother, but I have taught children and lived in another country for many years. I know the value of knowing more than one language.

Persons who know more than one language have a great advantage over those who know only one language. A dual language immersion program would be a benefit for the future of all persons in this country.

– Bernadine, Wichita

KENTUCKY

I support dual language education! These programs would be great for kids in our community.

– Beth, Park Hills

LOUISIANA

As a child, I benefitted enormously from attending a French immersion K-8 school. The school’s name is the International School of Louisiana (ISL), in New Orleans, Louisiana, and there are immersive tracks in both French and Spanish. In middle school, there are also opportunities to learn the other language (I took a Spanish class for 3 years in middle school) as well as Chinese.

The school was still very new when my parents signed me up, but their risk (and their sustaining snide comments from friends and family about sending their child to an “experimental” school) paid off when I graduated from the 8th grade fully bilingual in French and English. I had the opportunity to go France shortly after graduating middle school at age 13, where I felt almost no communication barrier at all, and felt completely liberated. I continued with French through high school, and now, in college, I have chosen to pursue Chinese more as a minor. I visited China in the summer of 2015.

Besides my personal travel opportunities, going to school at ISL allowed me to connect organically with people from France, Spain, Reunion Island, Gabon, Belgium, China, Puerto Rico, as well as my fellow public school students, many of whom were from Spanish or French speaking homes. It’s made diversity a core value of my being in a way that it seems obvious as an advantage, and needs no explanation or justification.

Hearing another language spoken at school or work is comforting to me, rather than aggravating. One of my family lines is Acadian, and when my great grandparents were enrolled in public school in Louisiana, they literally had their language beat out of them. Their parents stopped speaking to them in French at home, and our family has lost the language. Knowing this family history makes my French all the more meaningful to me. Dual language programs are a huge asset!

– Janet, New Orleans

MAINE

Compared to other countries we are lacking in dual language skills. Almost all other countries teach multiple languages. We should start teaching Spanish in grade school and another language as an elective!

– Margaret, Sanford

MARYLAND

As a parent of a Sligo Creek ES French Immersion Kindergarten student in Montgomery County Public Schools, my family and I were thrilled beyond belief when we received a call this past summer that our number on the waitlist had come up for our oldest daughter’s entrance to Sligo Creek French Immersion program, the only choice...
school we applied to.

As I’ve told my family, due to the lore throughout Montgomery County about the challenge in getting into the program of your choice, I had been praying to win this lottery since my husband (a Francophone West African immigrant) and I decided we would get married, years before we even had children. I knew that because I was not a French speaker, an immersion experience was the only way that my children would be likely to achieve native fluency in the language they would need to play with their cousins and communicate with their aunts and grandparents (all of whom still live in Togo).

Upon selection, my husband and I excitedly called family near and far and shared the huge news. Our children would be French speakers – we had won the lottery! My husband and I carefully crafted our work hours in order to arrange transportation for our older daughter in order for her to participate, and we comforted one another with the reality that our second and youngest child would be enrolled in kindergarten at Sligo Creek in the Immersion program in just a short two years, and our transportation nightmare of shuttling two children to two different programs would soon be over. I had visions of driving the two to elementary school, listening to them chatter excitedly in French about their upcoming day in school.

Imagine my increduloness when I learned that the promise of French was not guaranteed – but that our family may need to go through the Sligo Creek French immersion lottery AGAIN for our second child. I was floored - this policy goes against all that makes sense for families, our goals of providing an experience where our children would be part of a program and have the continuity every family deserves, having the same teachers, the children practicing their French with one another as they move throughout the program, the ease of transportation and communication for families in which both parents work and have limited flexibility.

For a working family, engagement in your child’s education is a challenge, building relationships, communicating with the school, helping with homework, and the like. The thought of having two separate experiences to focus on is overwhelming and incredibly disappointing. It doesn’t seem fair or equitable to allow families to make a decision to enroll their child and then have the difficulty of having a completely different reality for their other child/ren.

We have advocated at the county level to continue the sibling link preference – the benefit of this policy for families is clear, both from a relationship and community perspective as well as to strengthen the aims of the academic program and increase the likelihood that the enrolled children have opportunities to develop the second language fluency through out of the classroom interactions and language use with their siblings.

We want our county and our schools to make decisions that are good for families, not those which create undue hardship and stress, and pursue policy options consistent with that commitment and what is best for children and their siblings.

As a parent of a Kindergarten student, my family and I were thrilled beyond belief when we received a call in 2016 that our number on the waitlist had come up for our oldest daughter’s entrance to Sligo Creek French Immersion program in Montgomery County, MD. As an immigrant who learned French in school in my home country of Togo, I believe that an immersion experience is the path for my children to speak, read and write in the language of our family and my country.

In Montgomery County, immersion programs are not advertised to families. Staff is extremely limited, there is no strategic outreach to underserved families, and several communities are left out of participation because they are not aware of the choice option of immersion. Fortunately for us, I learned about the immersion program through another Togolese family whose daughter attended and is now a successful college student. I believe the important next step for our school district is to ensure that more families, particularly those who are most underserved by our school District, have access to this critical opportunity. Children who learn another language and are bilingual outperform their peers on many cognitive and socia outcome measures. The science supports this important program. Equity in dual language programs can be achieved through the development of recruitment strategies that reach more families who are currently underserved, developing additional programming that is clearly in demand, and by growing immersion and dual language programs to create language learning for more families that want it.

All families in my county should be able to benefit from a kindergarten through twelfth grade language immersion experiences.

– Alisama, Kensington

Ruth, Silver Spring, MD

I am very grateful that my daughters are able to participate in the dual language learning programs in our county public schools. My eldest is starting third grade and my youngest is about to start kindergarten at a partial Spanish immersion public elementary school in our community.

At our school, the way it works is that Kindergarten is full Spanish immersion and then in first through fifth grade, the students learn math and science in Spanish and reading and social studies in English. They’ll continue their Spanish immersion through middle school, but the program ends there, though will have an opportunity to take AP
When I was in Mexico and in Europe I was impressed by the number of people who spoke English as well as their native language. I was ashamed that we in the USA were lucky to speak with correct grammar in our native tongue; let alone speak more than one language. We should support dual language education in order to keep pace with the rest of the world.

- Sandra, Hampstead

Learning second (+plus) languages is very difficult for adolescents and adults. My daughters were lucky to participate in elementary school language immersion. I think that second and third language immersion should become standard in elementary schools.

- Rosalie, Rockville

We are working hard in Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland to make sure 2nd language instruction is available in all elementary schools. We also support teaching full literacy to ELL’s in their 1st language, especially Spanish, as our school system should have the capacity. It is slow going, but in a positive direction so far.

- Pamela, Brentwood

MASSACHUSETTS

My daughter speaks fluent Italian because it was taught in her elementary school and reinforced by her Dad and her Nonna (grandmother). I tried to learn a language in Jr. High. High school, and college and failed. Bilingual education is important for everyone and should start early.

- Cervone, Burlington

We are not bilingual, but our good friends are and we love them! Our neighbors are too. My son does learn some Spanish when he plays with them and it makes me proud! So smart!

- Jessica, Andover

It is a shame that the United States is so proud of their lack of being able to speak a 2nd language. I am so grateful that more and more immigrants are showing how important it is to know another language and culture. It helps us become better citizens of the world. I’m lucky to be trilingual. Born in Germany and raised in South America before coming to the U.S.

- Margot, Brookline

Being exposed to multiple languages and cultures is great for children. Both my children participated in a school exchange with schools in Costa Rica. They each had a student live with them, as part of their Spanish program in their public high school... and went to Costa Rica to live with a student they were paired with. It was an amazing experience for all the children involved and my grown children still keep in touch with others in the program.

- Miriam, Goshen

Our oldest granddaughter benefited greatly from a French immersion program at her elementary school. Out of 8 grandchildren, only ONE was offered this opportunity. Blessed are the children who grow up in a multi-language household and community!!

- Betsy, Andover

I write as a lifelong educator at the college level, where I’ve always had students for whom English was a second or even third language, and for a while taught ESL to newcomers. The scientific consensus is unanimous: speaking and understanding two languages well is a practical gift, a marketable accomplishment, a resource for all of us in many realms; it also increases intelligence and maintains memory longer than is the lot of those who speak a second language from a few years’ study in high school or college.

Dual language schools are common in other countries I’ve lived in or visited, and the sharpness of their graduates is clear, as is their ability to share other perspectives. Why do we not encourage this?

- Mary, Cambridge

MICHIGAN

This is a different take. Many years ago, shortly after WWII, I grew up in a predominantly Polish neighborhood and the school I attended (St. Hedwig’s) had mostly Polish children, first or second generation descendants of Polish migrants.

We began learning Polish after Christmas break in first grade. It lasted approximately one marking period. We were told our parents wanted us to speak English only. I wish we had continued.

My one Busia never spoke English so I was deprived of most of what she said to me. I was able to figure out some of the discussions my family had, but not much. My cousins and I were left out of much of our heritage. Even though we sang songs in Polish at mass most of us had no clue what we were singing. There was no translation.

- Joanne, Petersburg

Es una gran oportunidad para nuestros hijos tanto mental como emocional en saber dos idiomas o más se van desarrollando mejor.

English Translation: It’s a great opportunity, both mentally and emotionally, for our children to know two languages or more because it will improve their development.

- Noemi, Detroit
In the mid-1970’s and early 80’s, I was fortunate to teach in and help design the Bilingual-Bicultural Program in the Detroit Public Schools.

Not only did I see growth in academic skills for my ELL students, but also an increase in their confidence in social and academic situations and engagement with fellow students. But just as important, the parents of my students were empowered to take an active role in school affairs.

What a powerful way to integrate into the community! By recognizing first languages as valuable for the community, while increasing proficiency in English and fostering growth in reading, math, science and social studies, we build strong, engaged residents and citizens, mutual respect for our bilingual neighbors, and build skills for the work force.

– Chrysteen, Grand Haven

I am a descendent of European colonists who arrived in this country in 1638. I also now have a multi-racial extended family which includes an African-American branch, an Asian branch, a Mexican branch.

I think it is essential that ALL American children learn about the language and multicultural richness which makes up the American landscape.

– Marsha, Monroe

MINNESOTA

My three children started learning Mandarin in fifth grade and now 2 of them graduated from college with minors in Chinese! They both spent 8 months in Shanghai and Shenzhen working and attending classes.

Meeting people, establishing relationships, enjoying other cultures, and being bilingual while working professionally are some of the benefits. Cooking their parents a meal is another! Creating understanding is one of the best benefits.

– Diane, Chaska

We need to keep the study of languages, and appreciation of varying cultures, which is central to who we are as Americans, as a priority.

– James, Moorhead

MISSOURI

We have several friends who come from other countries. They enriched our children in so many ways. We have one friend in particular who only speaks Spanish (the language our kids have been learning throughout all of elementary school) to our children so that they learn from her (and they are not only listening but responding). Dual language programs need to be prioritized in the US.

– Colleen, University City

I studied Spanish in high school and college. I studied German in college. (My first baby-sitter taught me a few words in Japanese.) I wish I could have started learning these languages at an earlier age. Understanding and speaking these languages have been a tremendous benefit to me throughout my 62 years.

– Marlette, O’Fallon

In our nearest city we have two immersion programs. My child attended one for about two years. She learned and retained a lot. We moved and the commute to school was a hardship and our current city does not have one program in elementary or after school.

I believe not only my child but all children will benefit from being bilingual not only the educational aspects increased test and reading scores, cognitive protection, diversity empathy for other cultures.

The US is one of the few countries of the world that doesn’t encourage bilingual language development. Children’s brain development is greatly enhanced by learning more languages and means of communication. 30 years of teaching high schoolers and preschoolers has convinced me that we are missing these advantages as a country. Young children learn languages much easier and more naturally than adults. Planning for our country’s future successes would definitely include enhancing early linguistic diversity.

– Kathy, Hollister

Most of the people in the world speak more than one language. The US misses out when we speak only English. US children should be taught another language throughout their educational years, and be able to converse in another language throughout life.

– Mary, Florissant

As a psychologist, I know that learning two languages, rather than just one, provides many cognitive advantages. I also value the cultural diversity that immigrants provide to our communities—my daughter has had several Latina friends, and my son has an Indian friend. I support dual language education wholeheartedly!

– Julie, Nevada

MONTANA

I am a teacher. I fully support dual-language programs to foster learning and well-being within the educational community as well as within the broader community and the nation as a whole.

– Katy, Bozeman

As an international educator, working at a number of schools overseas, I saw first hand the benefit to brain development and life learning of a second, third or multiple languages for kids. In the US we should be jumping at the chance to have this within our schools. The research backs this up - not just merely opinion. We need to be a leader in this, not be left behind.

– Lisa, St. Ignatius

NEVADA

As an educator and a parent, I have seen first-hand how exposure to cultural and language diversity helps children de-
develop empathy and strong interpersonal skills. One of the greatest assets to the public education model is that children are exposed to new ways of thinking that broaden their viewpoint and empower them to be community builders in later life.

As the Supreme Court taught us, separate is never really equal. We still have a long ways to go to eliminate barriers that cause segregation and prevent children (and their parents) from making invaluable connections to different people and ideas.

– Sara, Las Vegas

NEW JERSEY

My husband and I are 1st generation immigrants, and we have always promoted dual language capabilities in our children by speaking to them in our language (Tamil) at home. In the ’70s there was no official ‘dual-language program’ in their schools. In fact when they were 10 and 6 we went on a trip to several countries in Europe. They heard little children there talk fluently in their own mother-tongue, and our children were so impressed that they really took pride in talking in Tamil (and of course, English in school and outside of our family and relatives circle).

Now in their 40’s, both our son and daughter find the benefits of understanding and being able to speak in Tamil. They want their children to learn not just dual, but multiple languages (English, Spanish and Tamil). Apparently it stimulates critical thinking and more dynamic analytical skills. Way to go!!

– Veda, Matawan

All my three children understand, read and write several languages. This has made them tolerant of cultures other than American and communicate better with people who do not speak English.

– Elapully, Dover

Americans are behind the rest of the world when it comes to knowledge of more than one language. Bilingualism is an important skill for many reasons especially because it develops the brain. The more flexible the brain, the better.

– Marie, North Bergen

NEW MEXICO

For 27 years I was married to a Peruvian national and we raised our daughter to be totally bi-lingual and bi-cultural. She has thanked us very often. She was so proficient in Spanish that when we went down to Peru for 15 months in 1985-1986, we enrolled her in a Peruvian school and the transition was absolutely perfect.

– Thomas, Albuquerque

I am a retired schoolteacher of 36 years and have bilingual endorsements on my teaching credentials. I have personally seen the added benefits of bilingual education for my students and their families. Bilingualism has been scientifically proven to benefit students’ learning and achievement in all academic areas. In addition, being bilingual opens up greater employment opportunities for students.

Please support linguistic diversity.

– John, Buena Vista

I am second generation Spanish speaker. My daughter’s first language was Spanish and she THRIVED at a dual language school. She was also in the gifted program as well. We need dual language resources in our schools.

– Crystal, Albuquerque

Learning languages at an early age has been recognized for decades as an essential tool to learn complex mathematics, writing and grammar skills, music, science, and other knowledge later in life. Children who speak multiple languages have less difficulty learning complex subjects, and are more familiar with working through problems rather than just giving up.

Culturally, language skills are what help a person understand the details of their culture, and more importantly of the cultures of people who are different from them.

– Tori, Farmington

NEW YORK

My daughter, an English speaker, was part of a dual language program from k-5th grade. It was great! With more study and a semester in Spain in college, she became fluent. I tried to learn as an adult. MUCH harder, and I never became fluent.

– Judith, New York

The French Dual Language PS 20 The Clinton Hill School began in 2013, after interested parents sought an opportunity for French language and cultural immersion for their children. Each year, we have seen more and more families interested in seeking bilingual education for their children.

As a small public school in a competitive arena, parents have so many options to choose from. Our program has helped us to boost enrollment and remain relevant. In addition to enriching the educational and cultural experience of our students, we are witnessing our students develop proficiency in a second language.

Starting a Dual Language program was a step in the right direction for our school and the community.

– Barbera, Brooklyn

Diana, Astoria, NY

Ever since I was pregnant, before I knew whether I was going to bottle feed or breastfeed, one thing was for certain: I was going to raise my son to speak his heritage languages: Spanish and French. I actively worked to be able to speak to my son exclusively in Spanish, and he started learning English when he was 2.5, in daycare. He spoke French to his dad and Spanish to me.

When my son was around 2, I started researching options for bilingual edu-
I grew up hearing many languages and was able to grasp the basics while young; my mom also had friends that spoke German, French and Yiddish. I eventually learned Spanish and studied Italian from 8th grade into my second year of college. I believe language learning is a good thing.

My youngest is actively learning Spanish in school, however, my oldest son was turned off to learning due to egregious treatment by local public school and I believe it’s due to ethnic bias.

His elementary principal had the nerve to speak to me condescendingly stating “we don’t need you around here brown ing up the neighborhood”...had a lot of problems and retaliation from them because I opted for an IEP and an appropriate placement for him in a private school due to the fact that he was already reading by the time he started kindergarten and they did not want him to work at that level. When I asked them why not, they said if we do it for you we have to do it for everyone... talk about how they try to dumb kids down! Such a disgrace what they purposely do to hold some kids back so theirs can look stellar. There is more but it’s too long to mention here. I’ve had college professors that because of my last name, think I am not a native English speaker; judgemental school and work experiences where the racially made comments about my last name and heritage were completely inappropriate, the micro-aggressions never ends. I just wish people were more open minded. When I explain that 80% of English words are borrowed and that the root language is Latin which is another word for Spanish, their eyes glaze over as if what do you mean English is not the end all be all..., sorry, no it is not. Multi-language learning broadens horizons..

- Darlene, Bay Shore

I’m not fluently bilingual or multilingual, but totally support multilingual education. As someone who has English as a first language, and have studied French and Spanish, I know how enriching studying different languages and cul-
I have a MA in Teaching English as an Other Language. Knowing more than one language is a big benefit for cognition; research supports it. When I travel in Europe and the Americas, it is rare that I meet anyone who only speaks one language.

We need to start teaching languages in preschool. I would suggest the predominant non-English language in any part of the country-Spanish for most places, but my niece’s children in the San Francisco area attend Chinese/English schools. Beside the language benefit, learning another language might help rid the country of xenophobia.

– Robin, Scotia

Dual language programs are great for children’s brain development. And it is great for children to be able to speak 2 languages and to be part of more than one culture.

Also, it is a much fairer way to have enriched learning than gifted and talented programs because with dual language, kids start on the same level, and there is no testing to get into the programs. All this I have learned from my daughter’s experiences in NYC public schools.

– Marija, New York

Although I personally don’t have children nor was I ever a part of a bilingual/multilingual family, I truly believe that this is important not just because it is always good for children to learn more than one type of language, but also that others will respect those who are different from them, language-wise and all!

– Joyce, Brookland

I grew up in a small town and my mom was kind of a tiger mother, so she found a French-speaking language tutor for me. I loved going to classes, and while I didn’t formally learn French until high school, it definitely gave me a leg up on everyone else.

I’ve kept learning French all my life, and I’m bilingual. It’s nice to be able to read newspapers and listen to podcasts in French. We often focus on dual language programs in big cities, but foreign languages really do help many kids, and it would be nice to start them everywhere.

– Mary, New York

I’ve benefited from my six years of French, even though how our country teaches languages is sorely lacking. As well as myself, I’ll be able to help clients as a therapist that others might not be able to because I’m working to know ASL. Language is critical to our communities.

– Jessica, Fulton

My children have attended dual language immersion program since preschool. It has been a wonderful journey for my family. The benefits of being bilingual in terms of employability, salary, and even health are very important. But it is also important how knowing a second language can expand horizons and opportunities to serve and grow.

– Vivian, Gastonia

I work for a migrant education program. I see every day the benefit of being multilingual. The children amaze me with their ability to switch back and forth at such a young age. I think we need to push for ALL children to be exposed to multiple languages in school beginning as early as possible.

– Liz, Fayetteville

Ya soy madre de solo una hija, por lo tanto no he tenido una mala experiencia. Yo pienso de esto tiene que ver porque yo soy bilingüe y puedo comunicarme de inmediato con cualquier persona sobre todas las preguntas que yo tengo. Pienso que el ser bilingüe es super importante para nuestros hijos. Ellos al ser bilingües se les abren más las puertas a cualquier situación.

Para mí en lo personal me gusta que mi hija hable y entienda los 2 idiomas porque en nuestras familias hay personas que no entienden el inglés y me gusta que mi hija pueda comunicarse con ellos sin necesidad de mí y de su papá. Yo soy una persona orgullosa de hablar Español porque de esa manera este la oportunidad de ayudar a aquellas personas que no hablan el Inglés.

English Translation: I am the mother of only one daughter, and my experience hasn’t been bad. I think this is because I’m bilingual and can communicate immediately with anyone regarding any question I might have. I think being bilingual is super important for our children. When they are bilingual, doors open wider in any situation. Personally, I like that my daughter speaks and understands both languages because in our families there are people that do not understand English and I like that my daughter can communicate with them without my help or the help of her dad. I am proud to speak Spanish because it gives me the opportunity to help those that do not speak English.

– Ellie, Durham
My child is being raised bilingual. We are a bilingual household where my husband only speaks English. I am bilingual but try to only use Spanish to my daughter. My daughter has not attended a dual language immersion program because the options in Durham where we live are not affordable.

- Yda, Durham

Hola mi nombre es lety, tengo un hijo de 6 años y para nosotros seria de mucha suma importancia que en las escuelas los maestros pudieran entender el idioma español ya que los niños en ocasiones no pueden expresar todo lo que ellos quieren.

En mi ejemplo: a mi hijo le estuvieron dando terapias de habla desde los dos años en español,porque en el hogar es nuestro primer idioma y el a los dos años solo desa 2 palabras ,el pediatra me recomendó terapia de habla para el niño. Y mi hijo es muy inteligente solo que en la escuela no puede expresarse porque el no save hablar mucho inglés .en el pre k había una maestra que hablaban español y ella siempre me dijo tu hijo es muy inteligente - el mejor de la clase. Cuando el entro al kinder le dieron un reconocimiento por ser el niño mas viento portado en la clase, pero dos veces me llamaron porque mi hijo no participaba en clase y dificultad para leer. entonces yo explique ala maestra con mi poco de ingles que mi hijo tiene problema de habla y que el a recibido terapia en español,claro que por lo mismo el no save hablar mucho ingles,y en la esc.a una sola persona es la traductora,yo hable con ella y pedí que por favor el recibiera terapias pero en esta ocasión en ingles.

Por que yo se que si no es de esa forma a mi hijo se le hara muy dificil, y el ya no quieria ir ala escuela pero le dije que una persona le va ayudar para que el aprenda el idioma que su maestra habla. (ingles )y que un día el podra salver leer ,y ser el mejor de su clase...ceria de muy buena ayuda que en la clase hubiera alguien que hablara otros idiomas,por que asi los niños no saven en ingles sabria con testar en su idioma . Y no se desanimen ir ala escuela,yo pedi ayuda ahora que el es pequeño por ue quiero que siga asi de inteligente y no se desanime por no entender todo ala maestra. Esa es nuestra historia. Gracias.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ARE THE BEST WAY TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

While also improving education outcomes for native English speaking students


I know that if we don’t do it this way, things would only get harder for my son and he already didn’t want to go to school. I also told him that someone would help him to learn the language his teacher speaks (English) and that one day he would be able to read and he could be the best in his class... It would be very helpful if someone in class spoke other languages, so that children that don’t know English could answer in their own language and won’t feel discouraged. I’m asking for help now when he is young because he is smart and I don’t want him to feel discouraged because he doesn’t understand everything the teacher says. That’s our story. Thank you.

- Lety, Hillsborough

We Americans must raise our children to speak more than one language, like much of the rest of the world. bilingual education and curricula that introduce a second language at an early age will make America stronger in world events.

- Lynne, Chapel Hill

Oh how I wish I and my children and
grandchildren could have had language immersion. From Georgia we visited my uncle in Texas once a year during my early years, and I was fascinated to hear Spanish, music and language. Before my birth my parents had hired a high school student to try to teach them some Spanish. Taking Latin in high school was just a few steps from Spanish. In college I majored in Spanish – reading and writing well but not speaking fluently at all. I greatly admire bilingual people, and I have worked at it for 70 years – still working. I visited a language school in Oaxaca, Mex., in 2006 for a week of immersion – wonderful, just not enough for me. Similarities of words in different languages just fascinate me – like fitting puzzle pieces. Being bilingual is a treasure.

– Hazel, Richfield

Creo que muchos sufren ambos niños y padres por falta de recibir funciones escolar en ambos lenguajes. Yo e visto familias no poder ayudar como quisieran en la educación de sus niños.

English Translation: I think that many children and parents suffer because they are not getting school materials in both languages. I know of families that can’t help with their children’s education the way they would like to.

– Francisca, Charlotte

My son is not in an immersion program, We speak in our house just in Spanish. We really feel that we need support with a program of Spanish immersion but in North Carolina a child care with those characteristics are expensive.

– Maria, Durham

I have two children in a bilingual school program. They are in 5th and 3rd grade. Both started monolingual, and both are fluent now. It has been a challenge helping them with their homework, since I only speak English. But the way they interact with the world is so greatly improved.

They hold Spanish conversations with playmates at the playground and the nurses at the pediatrician. Their school doesn’t just focus on language, it is multi-cultural as well. My children have a level of cultural understanding that tops mine- and I’m 38.

I’m really looking forward to seeing the men my boys will grow into, and I believe learning in a multilingual multicultural environment will shape them for their entire lives.

– Jen, Chapel Hill

Bilingual persons are an economic asset in short supply. There is also the matter of personal freedom. People should be allowed to keep their native language as well as learning English.

– Maryann, Gatesville

I was a “migrant nurse”.....that is, an RN who worked with migrant farm workers.....mostly Hispanic. I hired one of my patients to be a live-in nanny. She spoke no English and so my daughter grew up bilingual, speaking Spanish like a native born speaker. The nanny learned English. It turned out very well for everyone!

– Deb, Carrboro

My child attends a dual language public school, FPG Bilingue, at which I am a teacher. My experiences at this school as both a parent and teacher, combined with research on the topic, have convinced me that we NEED more dual language schools in America. I have 15 years experience as a teacher in a variety of settings, and the dual language model has amazed and thrilled me.

My daughter started kindergarten unable to meet grade level standards, but by the end of the year was speaking, reading, and writing in both Spanish and English. Could this be attributed to one amazing teacher? Well, yes, but as the art teacher I teach all 570 or so students, and over the years I have seen how they grow and learn and develop a sense of pride and understanding of themselves and each other. The children engage in a depth and scope of learning that I’ve never seen before. An amazing sense of community permeates the school. The Spanish language is elevated so that it becomes an asset for the Spanish-speaking children, and a new way to communicate and understand the world for the English-speaking children. Now that I’ve experienced it, it’s shocking that we don’t have more dual language schools. This school and our students give me hope for the future.

– Jessica, Durham

Ohio

We’re a monolingual family and I feel that as a loss and a shortcoming. Languages should be celebrated, supported, taught, maintained and valued, as should the cultures that center on them.

I think state education should teach languages from kindergarten, as that’s when it’s easiest for a child to learn. Communication is key to inclusion, understanding and community.

– Deborah, Cleveland

I teach immigrant and refugee high school students. They are the eager to learn, but many programs struggle to help the students gain proficiency in English and don’t continue to teach them in their own language to be fully dual language.

Support for dual language programs are fully needed if we are ever to become a country with great assets in our people.

– Aleesha, North Field

Both our children grew up bilingual and are as adults now glad they did. It opened their eyes to another culture when they were little, and now keeps opening doors for them that are closed to others, professionally as well as on a personal level.

Today’s world is multicultural and multi-lingual, and that fact does not diminish the appreciation of knowing where you come from and of your background - it strengthens it. No reason to be afraid of losing your roots, or the country’s roots, on the contrary!

– Ursula, Bay Village

Learning multiple languages is experienced by children in other developed countries. Why would we not want to give children this opportunity when they are young and can easily learn.

In my family there is a mother who speaks English and a father who speaks Spanish and is learning English. It would be great for my grandchildren to learn Spanish while they are little and can absorb two languages.

– Diane, Columbus
I have taught in Spanish to children whose first language is Spanish. They need instruction in their first language to help them understand the content when they are learning in English! These children succeeded much more than the children who were forced to learn in a second language of which they understood very little. We need bilingual people in this country.
- Janet, Beaverton

I support dual language programs and am planning to enroll my child in a dual language immersion program!
- Chris, Portland

As a caucasian fourth generation native Oregonian with only spoken and written English competency, I have often felt short-changed by educational curriculums lack of second-language emphasis, and handicapped by my inability to converse conveniently with those whose primary language is other than English. Let's create more opportunities for kids, not less.
- Tod, Lake Oswego

We live globally, let's speak globally. Then we become smarter.
- Donna, Hood Rieke

Every resident of the United States has ancestry showing the diversity of our country. It's time to celebrate how the richness of our ancestry and languages makes us a stronger nation. We have lost our way and become our own worst barriers to our nation's many positive attributes from the richness of our ancestry.
- Eileen, Jasper

By the time I was ten, I had lived in four different cultures in two different countries – The Barrio in Chula Vista, a Spanish speaking community (where I was a minority), Oklahoma (I think one can argue that is a culture of its own) the Navajo Reservation, where not only was I a minority, learning the language was next to impossible – there's a reason code breakers used it, to Costa Rica, where I was also a minority but had much better luck with the language. These were vital experiences. They widened my world view and helped me to learn what it's like to be a minority, and what it's like to be misunderstood when communicating. It taught me that English is a very hard language to learn, and that the most important part of communication is being understood, not the perfection of ones grammar.

I learned to accept people for who they are, and to be curious about where they come from, not afraid. The world is an interesting place, and being exposed to differences early on helped foster a lifelong interest in learning more about other cultures and accepting people as individuals.
- Wendy, Eugene

My son has become a more creative, flexible thinker, thanks to being raised in a bilingual atmosphere. All children should have this opportunity.
- Constance, Philadelphia

I worked with families and children in early childhood for 40 plus years. Dual language helps children and their parents adapt to their new environment much quicker. Children often help the adults and the English speaking children also benefit from hearing and learning other languages culturally and cognitively.
- Bill, Mountain Top

Dual language makes people more open to others and more skillful at learning different languages, increasing their knowledge, and in the end making them smarter.
- Emilia, Queluz

Ask the Native Americans about their language being eliminated for English throughout US History, They were only recently allowed to use their native Cherokee in their own schools in North Carolina. Diverse cultures and languages are vital to build a sound background for all children
- Harry, Florence
My grandfather, born here to a Pennsylvania Dutch speaking family, learned English as a second language. He enjoyed what success he seemed to have largely because he could easily master German as an adult. It was an advantage!

– Charlotte, Summerville

TENNESSEE

In many countries, being able to speak multiple languages is the norm, not the exception. There are many subtle, comfortable ways we could work on this at a national level. I hope we will make it a priority!

– Linda, Knoxville

I do not have school age kids yet. However, we are a bilingual household and want to do anything to help create a bilingual and bicultural community for them to be raised in.

– Sue, Memphis

TEXAS

I taught bilingual (Spanish/English) preschool and first grade for nearly 30 years in El Paso, Tx. The very best years were the ones when the class was a mix of Spanish dominant speakers and English dominant speakers.

The kindergarteners emerged speaking and reading in both languages. The friendships formed removed the them versus us barriers and demonstrated what it’s like being a welcoming border community. Both languages are part of our daily lives here and should be valued and supported with educational opportunities.

– Bennett, El Paso

I am raising bilingual, bicultural and biliterate children, now 10 and 8. I am interested in continuing doing so. I see the benefits at a daily base; they are more aware, more informed, they have more opportunities, more interested in the world, more stable and proud about their roots. Amongst some. Dual Language Elementary School has been an incredibly positive support for our home language (Spanish). I would like to see all middle schools approaching this effort in

– Aileen, Austin, TX

I was raised in a Spanish-speaking household. Although I heard Spanish throughout my childhood, I rarely responded in Spanish. I didn’t know how important my language was to me until I got pregnant and decided that I wanted to raise bilingual/bicultural children. I really didn’t think about it in those terms; I just remember telling my husband that I wanted our son to feel connected to my heritage. But it was more than that. I wanted him to understand that the world is not limited to the one that surrounds us day to day, but that there is a world beyond our borders – in different countries, with different customs, and different languages.

By learning Spanish, more of that world would be available to him, and he could know it on a more intimate level. I didn’t want my child to live in a cultural bubble; I wanted him to see the world how I saw it.

– Shoshana, Houston

I’m pleased to say that like me, she studied two “foreign” languages in school, beyond her two native languages. She too, is successful in her career because of her multilingualism. Both she and I, beyond the communication skills we have, more importantly, respect others and understand different cultures are precisely that. Different. Not inferior, as many monolingual Americans believe. All other major countries embrace multilingualism. Yet we are the backward nation. Ignorant. Prejudiced.

– Deborah, San Antonio

I am an immigrant, a Portuguese speaking naturalized citizen. She did not suffer discrimination because of language, but she was discriminated for looking Latina (I am a Brazilian). When my oldest child was very young, her father spoke Spanish to her and I spoke Portuguese.

She was a late speaker, which we understand it is normal for a child exposed to more than one language. She never developed full fluency, but she did develop the ability to communicate in Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French and English. Obviously her linguistic experience was an advantage. Being bilingual or multilingual is a great advantage for any person.

I volunteer in several bilingual programs working mostly with Hispanic children. Racism and discrimination are very evident currently, and we need to work to help all children deal with bullying.

– Odilia, Austin

As a teacher for over 35 years I have taught many of these children. I began teaching four year old migrant students. The program was very helpful in the student’s transition to use more than one language once they started first grade.

– Lois, Houston

In almost every other country, kids leave school with 2 or more languages. Vocabulary acquisition is at it’s highest when children are about 3 years old. Teaching language should begin early, not the upper grades when that optimum learning time is past. Having a 2nd or 3rd language opens doors not only to understanding, but also to business and employment opportunities. It’s a small
world. America can no longer afford to be parochial.

- Carolyn, Austin

I taught in bilingual and dual language classrooms for nearly 30 years and I can tell you the best years were the ones that we had students that only spoke English and students that only spoke Spanish and some that spoke some of each or another language at the beginning of the school year.

By the end of the school year everyone spoke and read in both languages and sometimes a little of something else also. I advocated for these children to be in the gifted programs because they already understand that their are different ways of representing something, different perspectives, and multiple ways of expressing yourself and understanding others. I highly recommend it.

- M, El Paso

My children have one parent whose first language is English and another whose first language is Spanish. We have tried to raise them bilingual, bicultural and biliterate. The dual language programs in Austin are for the purpose of teaching English to non native speakers, not preserving or teaching language or cultural literacy, the schools do not offer parent meetings or information bilingually.

The parent meeting offered about dual language was in English with only white parents in attendance. One of my children is registered as ESL and the other as English native. Why? AISD can’t answer and won’t change their status. They live in the same household. The system is only focused on English language superiority.

- Monya, Austin

After trying to get our local schools to teach Spanish to the English language kids and failing, i moved my 7 year old daughter to Mexico to live. She attended Jose Vascuels School, in San Miguel de Allende, and was soon bilingual. Her facility in languages helped her become fluent in Italian, French and some Portuguese. She is truly a citizen of the world and has benefited greatly!

- Shirlene, San Antonio

Because of my Mom I am Bilingual, Bicultural, Tolerant, Inclusive, Intelligent, and conversive in Love.

- Bell, Austin

VERMONT

The best dual language program I ever heard of was in Urbana, Illinois. The kindergarten enrolled 50% Spanish speakers and 50% English speakers and classes were conducted in Spanish and English.

As the children progressed to 5th grade, the percentage of English used in instruction increased, and the percentage of Spanish decreased. The children were able to communicate with each other regardless of native language, and all the children were bilingual by the end of grade 5. WIN-WIN!

- Georgia, Brattleboro

VIRGINIA

When our daughter was 6 months old and I went back to work, we chose to hire a nanny who spoke the local language. Since birth, she has learned Russian, Latvian, and French fluently through immersion at home. The nanny would speak one language to her and my husband and I spoke English.

As my daughter grew older, we continued her language learning by putting her in language immersion programs. Now that she is in Kindergarten, she is trilingual.

She attends a Spanish immersion school in Northern Virginia. After school and on weekends, she attends French language classes.

- Bethany, Alexandria

WASHINGON

I teach in a school with about 75% Hispanic children. Most of them are growing up at least bilingual, and I see that as a wonderful advantage for them. Many of their parents don’t speak much English, and our school is teaching them, too! I wish our public schools nationwide taught other languages better, so more Americans could be bilingual.

- Larry, Fairfax

My kids had the opportunity to be a part of a dual language program. I think it’s a great program and much needed!

- Bernice, Alexandria

My child’s child care program had at least one caretaker in each classroom who would only speak Spanish to the children (others spoke English). By the time my daughter was three, she could understand Spanish better than her parents. Diversity is an integral part of our country’s history and present - and certainly not to be feared. Diversity is beautiful!

- Annette, Charlottesville

Children raised in an environment where they are immersed in a language other than English and can learn it fairly effortlessly can be a very valuable asset for our nation. We should do all we can to support such environments and encourage literacy in both English and the other language of the child’s environment.

- Glenn, Fairfax

We live in a world that is global. Our children need to be prepared with multiple languages for moving easily through that world. Growing up fluent in two languages makes it easier to learn even more languages. What is more, each language bears special cultural characteristics.

Learning multiple languages opens humans to respect for multiple cultures. If we are ever going to have a peaceful world we need more young people with innate respect for other cultures. Growing up bilingual helps develop that kind of respect. I am a retired teacher living in Mexico, where there are many private bilingual schools. I have met their graduates, young people totally fluent in two
languages, capable of living with respect in multiple cultures. We need to promote this kind of multi-cultural respect in our public schools in Washington State.

- Catherine, Spokane

Having lived in foreign countries at many times the value of being able to communicate with other people in their own language makes for greater understanding and cooperation in many areas. It also expands your awareness of cultures other than your own and works to resolve issues peacefully.

- Duane, Seattle

I have been a Montessori educator for over 40 years. We have always had a very diverse population at our school, and have offered a program with exposure to three different languages, English, Mandarin, and Spanish.

Although we initially thought this would be helpful to the ESL students, we found that they actually picked up the other languages more quickly than the English only students. We were additionally thrilled that the English only students were able to begin to learn other languages, and began to have a more nuanced understanding of language.

- Rebecca, Camas

I taught for many years the methods and values of critical thinking for college students through an emphasis on thinking across cultures and an understanding of linguistic diversity was an essential core aspect of our approach.

- Douglass, Seattle

My great grandmother sang me to sleep with German Lieder (songs/lullabies) and it just seemed normal growing up that way. We lived a number of years in California, where almost every other road had a Spanish name. It seemed right to take a Spanish class in Middle School.

Then I took Latin in High School and more Spanish in College. I had expected to need the Latin for Nursing School, but ended up going into the Army. I served in Iran, where I learned a bit of Farsi, then went to Germany for my next tour and lived on the economy. Of course I learned German.

- Susan, Lakewood

My 31-yr-old son, having speech cerebral palsy ADHD & Autism Spectrum Disorder, began his dual language education in 1988-1991 pre-schools & kindergarten with ASL. The experience greatly reduced our communication stress & increased our abilities to grow in our potential. The accommodation in respecting individual ability allowed both of us to expand our cognition towards better opportunities in civil society.

- Michaelene, Port Orchard

I benefited greatly from graduating from a K-12 Spanish Immersion program. It has allowed me to make friends with people I could not have connected with otherwise. It made learning other languages easier. It has also led me to my career as an English language instructor in the community college system where I work primarily with immigrants and refugees.

- Marie, Seattle

We are a bilingual family. Spanish and English are spoken equally in our home and we knew when we had our two boys that we wanted them to have a dual language education.

My husband is a native Spanish speaker and I am a native English speaker so our boys have learned both. They have attended Spanish immersion schools since Pre-school and will continue through high school. To deepen their language learning we will be moving to Mexico next year to completely immerse them in the language and culture for two years.

To be bilingual is an amazing thing and I am so grateful for the opportunities it has given our family and the love of other cultures it is developing in my children. I believe more people, especially children should be given the opportunity to have a bilingual education.

- Heather, Seattle, WA

My husband and I lived in Europe for two years in the early 2000’s—an experience with being a (privileged) immigrant and in language immersion that forever changed us. When we returned to the US, we were committed to pursuing, when the time came, a bilingual education for our then infant son.

Fourteen years later, we have three bilingual kids who have learned in Spanish and English for their entire school careers (up through grade 8). Childhood is the best time to learn languages and wire the brain for language acquisition—including languages like music and...
computer coding. The acceptance and patience that comes with a bilingual education is something that we value for our children as well. Learning about other cultures from such a personal perspective is what makes us understand each other, and enables us to celebrate and accept one another. More people should have this experience!

– Elizabeth, Seattle

Ashley, Seattle, WA

My 4 yr old son has been in a French immersion preschool for the last 6 months. Over the last couple months I have noticed my son walking around the house singing in French or just whispering to himself with the most accurate French pronunciation, it’s amazing to me!

I took 2 years of French in high school and I never had the accuracy of pronunciation my son has. And the ways the school has incorporated French culture through holiday celebrations and educational events has impacted our whole family and given us a deeper appreciation for the French culture and community.

We feel lucky to attend Seattle Public Schools’ Dual Language Spanish program at McDonald International. My children are not only gaining valuable language skills but also exposure to culture and social justice issues that is helping to make them global citizens. Please support our state’s Dual Language Schools and Dual Language Teacher Pipelines!

– Kate, Seattle

My husband is from Cuba and speaks Spanish and English. I only speak English. It is important that our children be able to communicate with their entire family and since English is the dominant language spoken in our home, having our children attend an international school has been essential. It has given them the ability to read and write letters to family and friends but most importantly, when they are face to face visits, they can effectively communicate.

My children’s bond with their family has given them more self confidence and happiness than can be described with words and they will only grow to become better world citizens because of it. We adore our public international school.

– Lesley, Seattle

Although my children are all now in their 30’s, they are a product of a bi-cultural union and an emphasis upon both sides of that union including language. The results: The oldest girl is now a Director for Microsoft with a double Masters Degree in Business Administration and Personnel Management; Our son is a Senior Financial Analyst with Splunk, a Silicon Valley Startup emphasizing cloud utilization in business, again with a double Masters in Business Administration and Finance; and our youngest daughter is a Dr in Physical Therapy at a local Washington hospital in the Tri-Cities. I wanted them to know who they were, including learning their mother’s native language Spanish and it has served all of them very well. This is something that absolutely should be maintained in our schools to broaden the horizons of our youth.

– Michael, Walla Walla

My children spent 5 school years in West Berlin, one going to a German-American school for a while. His teacher had a nervous breakdown so the rest of his time was in the American military school. My younger child went to the British military school and learned in their way. When we came back both boys were ahead of grade level. They formed good friendships with their classmates. It definitely broadened all our perspectives of what was normal growing up.

– Marie, Port Angeles

My Senior and Sophomore sons both did the International Spanish Academy in Bellevue School District. Both have

Supporting dual language immersion and home language use is CRITICAL TO BUILDING INCREASED POSITIVE SELF IDENTITY in the early years, strengthening cross-cultural social skills, and creating equitable early education settings that meet the needs of an emerging linguistically diverse community
been fluent since around 5th grade and have continued Spanish into high school. They have each traveled to Central America and Europe with no language barriers. They are proud to be students of the world. Because of their file language, they feel they have no boundaries!

– LeiMomi, Bellevue

Our boys did not have access to another language. I paid for a secondary language program for our older son. The following boys had maybe a basic Spanish class. The ability to communicate in multiple languages is vital to the economy and job availability in this country now more than ever.

– Constance, Anacortes

When my family came from the Philippines in the 1950’s they were told not to speak their language and definitely not to teach their children their language. My father and now I am cut off from our native tongue and culture. We are unable to maintain relationships with our family in the Philippines and cannot share in traditions and story with those immigrants who came later than our family.

When my son was born I vowed that I would fight to give him the opportunity to learn the language of his father, Spanish. Today my son is privileged to attend an independent Spanish Immersion School. He was not accepted into the local Public Immersion School but was put on the waitlist.

We are fortunate to live close to another opportunity and have the flexibility to attend it. He is learning his language and culture, and feels connected to diverse people across the world, he is gaining a skill set that will benefit him in life. For now we are happy he can talk on the phone with his Abuela in El Salvador. All children deserve the opportunity to learn languages and cultures and be citizens of the world.

– Kalayaan, Seattle

My son, at the age of 4, was placed in a preschool that focused on dual immersion, Spanish and English. We were so happy. Our son was learning English and Spanish and as a result was becoming fluent in both languages. His aptitude for language increased and he was doing it with no struggle. This is such a crucial time to offer dual languages, as the Language Acquisition portion of the brain is actively seeking and learning language. These programs benefit students, families and communities. I wish they had this program when I was younger.

– Robyn, Lacey

I graduated from a K-12 Spanish Immersion program and as a white girl raised by white English speaking parents, it opened doors for me in employment, and created social connections that I would not have had otherwise.

In my mind dual language would have been even better because I would have learned more about culture and language from my peers in addition to my teachers.

More importantly, it would have benefited native Spanish speaking kids, many of whom struggle with English Only or pullout ESL/ELL programs. There is strong evidence that kids who learn to read and write in their first language progress faster at learning to read and write in English. When those who are prone to struggle are successful, our entire community benefits from this strength.

I teach English to adult immigrants and refugees. My daughter is 7 months old and I would LOVE to get her into a dual language program knowing how much it will benefit both her and her peers no matter what their first language is.

– Marie, Seattle

My family is bilingual, but I am not. It will be so valuable for my children to be able to speak two languages. Not only to communicate with their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, but also to open up a world of experience and opportunities as they grow older.

They will more easily be able to travel, work here or abroad, understand others in a unique way. Being multilingual is a gift that we should give every child in our country.

– Andrea, Lake Forest Park

My children attended a dual language elementary school with tremendous benefit to multiple aspects of their education. My older daughter has dyslexia and her Spanish immersion allowed her to learn to read in a language much easier than English. She now has confidence to face challenges in academics with creativity.

Dual language abilities brings our nation’s children on par with multiple other developed countries where two languages are considered minimum for jobs and community relationships.

– Rebekah, Seattle

My family is multilingual, and we speak Russian mainly at home, and I know many families in our community that are the same way. My youngest sister entered preschool being only able to speak Russian, and so it was hard for her to integrate into the school, though we made sure to enter her into preschool to insure she had a working knowledge of English before sending her.

As she spent more time in an English speaking community, her Russian has gotten worse over time, and now she takes a class to be able to read and write in it. A dual language program would

"Dual language abilities brings our nation’s children on par with multiple other developed countries where two languages are considered minimum for jobs and community relationships."

Rebekah, Seattle, WA
have been so helpful in helping her to integrate into English, and also to hold onto her Russian.

– Anahit, Redmond

We are a bilingual bicultural family living in North Seattle. We have an almost 6 year old and a 1 year old. We found PCPE, the only Spanish Preschool Co op in the Seattle area, when our oldest was 1. We were so excited because biliteracy is a priority in our family. My son spent three wonderful years at this Co op, he is not only fluent in Spanish, but he also has a strong community of friends who are also bicultural/bilingual, and a sense of pride in being able to navigate this life in two different languages.

I realize not everyone is able to attend a Co op, and the bilingual preschool options are just way too expensive for a lot of Hispanic families. Therefore, I would love to see more early education spaces that are affordable and bilingual/dual immersion. My son was able to get into a dual immersion public school (he is in K now), which is an option school, not in our neighborhood.

We happily do the commute knowing he can continue his bilingual journey there, but we would absolutely LOVE to have a neighborhood school that offered such a program. It seems like we definitely have the demographics who would benefit from this over in our neighborhood, more so than in the neighborhood where my son’s school is.

– Lourdes, Seattle

Our 3-year-old is in a Spanish-English immersion preschool program and we love it! His first language is English but some of his classmates are native Spanish speakers and they help each other out in each of their first languages. I am continually impressed by the breadth of vocabulary my son has in both English and Spanish and believe the dual language curriculum will make him a better reader, speaker, and thinker in both languages.

– Karen, Seattle

I am bilingual in Spanish and English, but as a single Mom had a hard time teaching my child both so my daughter is falling behind in Spanish. Our school, Tukwila Elementary, just started a voluntary Spanish group taught by Moms. I wish my child could learn it full time. It’s good for her brain.

– Kellyn, Tukwila

My son is a second grader in a dual language Mandarin-Chinese program in Seattle. This dual language education has helped to ensure he’s seeing educators of color in his classrooms. If he were in a traditional classroom I don’t think he would have the same level of diversity in the teaching corps since 92% of teachers in WA are white.

He’s also staying more connected to his racial and ethnic heritage which is helping him develop a positive self-identity. A dual language education is also teaching him empathy and connections vital for an increasingly global world.

– Erin, Seattle, WA

My husband and I are both public school teachers who have taught in Portland, Oregon, New York City and Seattle. We are both bilingual in English and Spanish and taught for six years in dual language immersion programs.

We are a bilingual, bicultural family and Spanish is extremely important to us, as my husband’s family is Dominican. In Seattle, the options for Spanish immersion or Dual Language programs in public school are very limited, and the quality of the programs is highly variable. We are very committed, passionate public school teachers, but because Spanish language and literacy is of such importance to us, we have decided to send our two children to an independent Spanish immersion elementary school in Seattle.

We are advocating for the passing of this bill to strengthen dual language programs so that bicultural, bilingual children such as ours, Joaquin and Belén, can attend high-quality programs in public schools!

– Rachel, Seattle

I did not learn a second language (Spanish) till graduate school. It was difficult and time consuming and I never became fully fluent. However, I wanted an International career. It would have been so much easier had I learned a second language when I was young, as various nieces and nephews have.

– David, Freeland

I can’t tell you what a fan I am of bilingual education! I am American born Caucasian, but through a series of fortunate opportunities I am essentially trilingual or more. I had the great opportunity to take 5 years of Spanish in middle school and high school.

Then my military father was transferred to NATO and Brussels, Belgium when I was a senior in high school. I became a French major, spent a year abroad in France, majored in French, and later gave tours of San Francisco in French! But subsequently as a physician in the US I have had so many opportunities to speak Spanish with patients that I am now quite fluent. Through other travel opportunities, I also learned a fair amount of conversational German and some Japanese.

While working in Shelton, WA I met many children attending the bilingual elementary school. These children were already bilingual or trilingual, and suitably proud of their skills. Now I often work in New Mexico where about 40% of the population is bilingual.

In New Mexico the majority of such people grow up bilingual. Bilingual students do better in many aspects of school, including math and other subjects. They are smarter overall and have less likely to drop out. They have more employment opportunities.
ApparentHalf of the world's population is now bilingual, but unfortunately that is not true here in the US. Let’s provide such wonderful opportunities for our own children!

– Marilyn, Tumwater

I have been trying to teach my child another language. I wish it was part of the school curriculum.

– Patricia, Seattle

My husband was an FBI agent assigned to Puerto Rico for five years. While there, I earned a Master’s degree in Teaching English as a Second Language. Ultimately, I taught secondary students at a private school serving K-12.

My students were bilingual and trilingual. They were no smarter than mainland US students, but their intellectual capabilities, worldview, and college potential was so much more.

My daughter, at four, attended her preschool there. The teachers spoke Spanish and English all day, but mostly Spanish. Within four months my daughter went from speaking no Spanish to being fluent in Spanish on the playground! I am a firm believer in the value of dual language learning.

– Kathryn, Bothell

We are a single language home so we feel very fortunate that our children have access to a Dual Language Program (Spanish/English) at our neighborhood school in Northshore School District. We feel strongly that our program would benefit from increased support and that other families should have access to dual language programs.

– Jennifer, Woodinville

As a teacher I know the importance of bilingual programs in our districts. I support our ELL programs, and urge the government to do the right thing and keep funding for these important programs.

– Emily, Vancouver

My son Ezra is three years old and he has been in a Spanish immersion child care and preschool since he was 18 months old. My son has had an amazing experience learning two languages and how to navigate multiple cultures. His class is full of children from different backgrounds and different cultures and they are all learning how to communicate together across multiple languages.

Every child should have the opportunity to be in a dual language environment. I know from the brain research that being able to think and learn in two languages gives children better cognitive flexibility and that matters for the long run. But right now, what I know is that my son can say I love you in two languages.

– Hannah, Seattle

I read bilingual stories to the children of ESL students in our community. It gives them a chance to hear stories read to them and to develop their Spanish and English skills. Recently I attended an event where I met one of my former learners. Now in about the third grade, he is doing well.

I would like to see more preschool and toddler books available in Spanish for ESL students and readers like me. Translation can be fairly tricky!

– David and Ann, Longview

I studied at California State University in Fresno to be a bilingual instructor. My second language was in Spanish, and, at the time, in the 1970s and early 1980s, California had bilingual school for native speakers of Spanish.


THE INDIAN NATIONS AT RISK TASK FORCE FOUND EVIDENCE THAT SCHOOLS THAT RESPECT & SUPPORT A STUDENT’S LANGUAGE & CULTURE ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE SUCCESSFUL IN EDUCATING THOSE STUDENTS
I eventually taught in bilingual classrooms in the Yakima, WA area for Migrant Head Start, tutored in Fresno, CA, for Fresno County Dept of Education.

After I stopped being involved so much in education, my focus was on social services, where I was hired to be a bilingual person working with those who were in abusive situation and homeless, and later with the WA State Dept of Social and Health Services, in Yakima County, WA.

Learning another language and making use of it to communicate effectively is very important. It broadens one’s thinking and learning experiences, one’s understanding of all nations and cultures, and more. In those situations where I worked with Spanish speakers, I also ended up working with many other speakers of languages from around the world.

When one learns other languages, one is far more intelligent than people who only want to speak one language.

- Sara, Renton

I have been a dual-language educator for 6 years. I have consistently seen that students who are taught to read in their home language first, and then their second language, consistently perform better on overall literacy levels, standardized tests, and curriculum-based assessments.

Having a strong foundation and literacy in a home language has consistently been proven to be the most effective way to teach literacy to students who speak more than one language. Please support these efforts that will strengthen our education system as a whole.

- Rebecca, Bellingham

I grew up in a bilingual family that spoke English and Spanish. The school took that to mean Spanish was my first language and put me in ESL though I spoke English fluently.

Kids called me stupid. I grew up wanting to throw the Spanish away completely, to buy my way into the English classes. I grew up on the border in Arizona and whiteness was a heavy currency, it packs a lot of privilege but comes with a heavy cost if you’re not actually white. It impacted my self-esteem greatly.

Now I have a child and I’m trying to teach him English and Spanish, though now my Spanish is limited. We live in Washington and the Mexican side of his family is on the other side of the country. I want him to grow up with Spanish being family, not foreign. I want him to feel proud as a young man of color, not in spite of it.

- Celeste, Seattle

**WISCONSIN**

My daughter takes Ojibwa & Spanish in her primary elementary school (K-2nd) & it helps with her reading & writing in English. My son will be entering K this fall & I’ll definitely sign him up for this optional language class. I think it’s as important as art, science, & gym in addition to math, reading, & writing.

- Leslie, Ashland

Languages are a resource to be preserved and valued. It is silly to teach Spanish as a foreign language to some and not at the same time work to preserve native Spanish skills, for example.

- Susan, Custer

I sent my American sons to bilingual schools, because I thought it was important. We need to start treating multilingualism as a blessing!

- Chris, Milwaukee

**WYOMING**

In my town we have a large Hispanic community, and they have not only moved our economy forward but have enriched our lives with their culture.

Our one bilingual school has a waiting list and the second language that they teach is Spanish. A sign of how important parents feel learning a second language is to their children’s education.

- Dara, Gillette

To learn more about our stories or to contact our staff please contact: nina@momsrising.org
MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America’s families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its “Best of the Net” list.