

California State Senate

SENATOR
BOB HUFF

TWENTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



March 16, 2009

Dear Heritage School Supporter:

Up and down the state there has been a recent movement of culture-based “heritage schools.” Founded on a deep desire to preserve the culture and language of an indigenous people, the children of immigrant parents are sent to these schools to focus on foreign language and history.

The benefits of heritage schools are far-reaching. Not only do the students form a positive ethnic identity, but these schools help the student compete in an increasingly global economy. Moreover, the culturally enriching activities integral to the heritage school programs foster tolerance and diversity in our communities.

Until now, heritage schools have by default been treated as child care facilities, complete with unrealistic and unnecessary requirements – toilet-to-children ratios, teacher credentials, etc. This is unfair and counterproductive. The state should be doing as much as it can to encourage the continued operation of culture-based schools. Absent legislative reform, these schools can and will be shut down.

I have introduced Senate Bill 379, which will create a new definition in state code for schools operating mainly for foreign language and cultural education. Facilities that fall under this definition need only follow a basic set of health and safety requirements, including maintaining an emergency disaster plan and completing criminal background checks and health screening reports for staff members. This will ensure that these institutions clearly understand their responsibilities as they seek to further cultivate their students’ intellectual and academic capabilities.

We need your help! Please sign the attached letter in support of SB 379 and put it on your organization’s letterhead if possible. Please fax it to our Capitol office. If you’re interested in coming up to Sacramento to testify in committee, please contact Kelly Garman at (916) 651-4029 or email her at kelly.garman@sen.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Huff", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Bob Huff
Senator, 29th District