

PANG EA

Parents for a Global Education Association

~~4~~ How would you balance Cambridge families' desire for world languages in elementary school within the constraints of the available time, assuming no changes to the length of the school day?

I believe it's time to introduce world languages to our elementary schools, I would explore starting to introduce world language for grades 3 to 5, meeting at a minimum three times a week. Introducing the program slowly-grade by grade, to ensure success.

Finding the time will be a challenge and will require tradeoffs. We need to examine closely how every instructional minute is used to see where we can shave off time to put towards world languages. And there may be tradeoffs with other specials. I believe we can get there.

Other school systems with short days like ours have found a way to introduce world languages so we need to learn from them.

By introducing world languages teachers could benefit by making more planning time available to them.

~~2~~ What steps do you feel the school committee can take to support recruitment of low-income families to the Cambridge immersion programs, to ensure families of all background can benefit from these programs?

I recognize that many good efforts have been made by members of the three immersion schools to recruit low income families. The school department needs to support your efforts. I have many ideas on this subject that we should explore:

- **Explore the start a three year old "immersion program" that might attract a diverse group of students that would be a feeder system to the immersion programs.**
- **Work with the Community Engagement Team (CET) that would visit low income families and try to recruit them to join an immersion program.**
- **Active participation by school administrators to reach out, encourage, recommend the immersion program to more families.**
- **Consider changes to the Parent Information Center that could be more immersion friendly to families.**
- **Explore starting a new immersion program in another part of the city.**

~~3~~ What level of resources should the District provide to support the Ola Portuguese and Chinese immersion programs in middle school?

The Chinese immersion program students are now in their fourth grade, and there is a commitment by administration to meet and discuss with parents and the

community how the program will look in the middle schools. Principal Yung is a big supporter and I look forward to those discussions.

The Ola program has shown growth in the last two years and has seen two additional staff members hired. There is an Ola teacher in the middle schools as well that teachers students Ola students in grades six thru eight. Space will be provided in the new school to allow Ola to grow. Principal Williams is a strong supporter of the Ola program. We just need the numbers to increase.

4= How could the Sheltered English immersion programs work together with Amigos, Ola and Chinese immersion?

I think we need to review the SEL programs to see if a fit is possible. My understanding is that most of the students are among those whose parents are here for targeted work assignments or untenured faculty and may not stay for an extended period. This needs to be studied so we can determine the best way to build collaboration.

What languages do you consider to be the most important for students to learn in the 21st century?

It is very difficult to weigh the merits of certain languages over others, but certainly these languages are particularly important as potential for elementary and secondary instruction and for the 21st Century:

- 1. Spanish is the most widely spoken second language in our region, and it is important that our students be able to speak with one of the largest linguistic minority in our city, in the nation and the principal language of our most of our South American neighboring countries.**
- 2. Chinese dialects are key because they represent the second largest linguistic population in the world and one with which we in the United States will be making strategic partnerships in business, culture, arts and entertainment, and diplomacy.**
- 3. As the Arabic speaking populations migrate to the US and as the Middle-East continues to be the focus of our foreign policy and commerce, this language is probably going to be a necessity for a meaningful share of our emerging students.**
- 4. French merits value because of our North American neighbors in Quebec and because of the important role of the French language in literature, diplomacy and in European culture in general.**

It is difficult to exclude some languages like Portuguese or some of the other Asian, European and Middle Eastern languages from this list since each represents an important constituency and a part of our city. The 21st Century will probably see a smaller world with many language heard everywhere.

PANGEA is an organization of parents and community members advocating for the development, support, and promotion of language immersion programs in Cambridge for all children. We believe that effective crosscultural and communication skills are integral to a global education. Language immersion programs are one way to fill that need. Strong world language programs can also provide these skills.

