

The Letters of the Franklin teachers and parents who supported Integrated Service Delivery

In 1998, 85% of all Franklin staff members signed on to support the reform design, ISD (See page 2). This letter was sent to the school board members and the district administrators. The support of those teachers made ISD possible in the Franklin school.

The second letter (See page 3) is another document that was sent by a parent who had two children in Franklin and was also an educational researcher. The letter tells three reasons why the school should implement the ISD.

The last letter (See page 4) is a Franklin teacher's scenario which strongly expresses why the pull-out system had difficulty meeting ESL students' needs.

June 3, 1998

Dear School Board Members and School Administrators,

We know you have heard various information about the possible restructuring of classes at Franklin School. It is important to us that you know that we support these changes to lower class size which will benefit all children:

- full day continuity for primary age children
- less fragmented time for ESL, S&L, Title, and Tag children
- more teacher time per child all day long
- more teaming possibilities among teachers

Franklin Staff Members:

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Lynn			
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Dear

The grapevine on the near west side has it that the Board is hearing a lot of opposition to the Title 1 waiver and restructuring plan proposed by the Franklin school staff.

As a parent of two children at Franklin (one in 2nd, one starting K in the fall) and as a educational researcher who is familiar with relevant research, I am writing to urge you to support the plan. I think the plan is a positive one for the following reasons:

** First, as I understand it, a vast majority of Franklin staff support it. There is nothing like commitment and buy-in to a school improvement effort among a school's staff. It seems foolish for the board or central administration to oppose the professionals who know their site and students the best. Site-based shared decision making can make an important difference.

** Second, the plan would reduce class size to around 16 to 1. This would simply be great for all kids. If we as a district are serious about improving achievement levels, especially for poor kids and kids of color, this class size reduction would be an important step to accomplish that goal. California mandated class size reduction for all primary grades in the state!!!

** And third, pull-out bilingual programs and pull-out Title 1 programs have terrible track records, in terms of boosting achievement. Pull-out programs also seem to re-segregate groups of kids when one of the major emphases of the school (pair) is integration and diversity. Using resource teachers in the classroom, coupled with lower class sizes, seems to have much more promise, especially for the limited English students and struggling readers. We've been using that model for special ed kids, haven't we?

Hmong and Spanish speaking families probably have concerns about losing the ESL program as it currently exists. The school must do outreach and communicate the ways in which these concerns will be addressed. But, this plan has merit and deserves the Board's support. The Franklin staff deserves much credit for a solid plan to improve learning, especially for those kids who have not been served as well as "privileged" kids.

Thanks for your consideration.

One Teacher's Case Scenario

The child I believe would benefit most is an ESL student. This student is the only one in my class who is below grade level in reading. I don't believe there is anything about this child to warrant an M-team and neither does his ESL teachers. But what ever we have done or haven't done in three full years of ESL, 1 year of kindergarten, and 2 years of 1-2, and two years of summer school has not met this child's needs. He is set up to fail. The third grade-reading test is simply out of his range as his skills at this point are first grade level. I don't believe that I lack the skills needed to teach this child to read. It's true that I don't speak Hmong but neither have any of his ESL teachers. I do believe that if I had been able to meet with this child individually or with one or two other students on a daily basis (in a reading group), rather than the three to four times a week made necessary by a class of 24, he would have done better. I think he also would have done better if his whole day of learning experiences were connected. This student has always been interested in and enthusiastic about the themes in the classroom, but because he is gone for ESL class for at least a third of center time each week, I have excused him from one center each week. I now believe I should have found some way not to do this because I also, in effect, excused him from that piece of learning each week. I was just trying not to make his days impossible, but it should have been different for him. The results have not been to his benefit.