



Oregon Chinese Coalition

俄勒岡華人聯盟

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December 9, 2020

To: Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero
Deputy Superintendent Claire Hertz
Regional Superintendent Dr. Esther Omogbehin
Enrollment and Program Balancing Project Manager Megan Salvador
PPS Board of Education

Re: Enrollment & Program Balancing project scenarios for Chinese Dual Language Immersion (DLI)

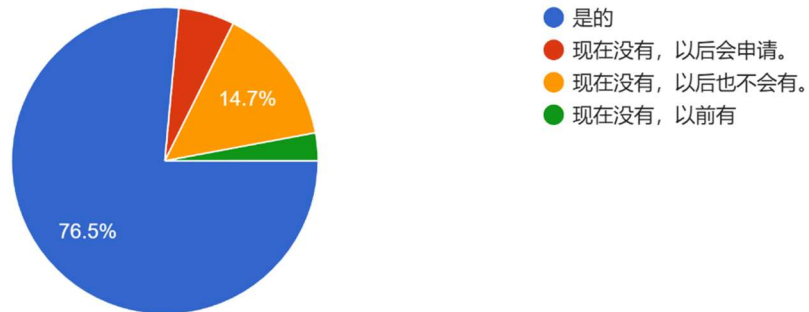
Over the past two months, many parents of students in the Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) at Woodstock Elementary School and families in the community brought to our attention PPS plans to relocate MIP out of Woodstock Elementary School. During this period, we have worked with affected families and the broader community in order to try to understand the motivation behind the proposal.

We conducted an online survey to the Chinese American families in SE Portland to gather their input regarding the proposal. Here are some findings:

Out of 34 responses, 76.5% have children in MIP at Woodstock Elementary, 14.7% don't have children in MIP and don't plan to apply in the future, 5.9% don't have but will apply, and 2.9% (1 response) is from MIP alumni family.

您自己有孩子在Woodstock中文班吗?

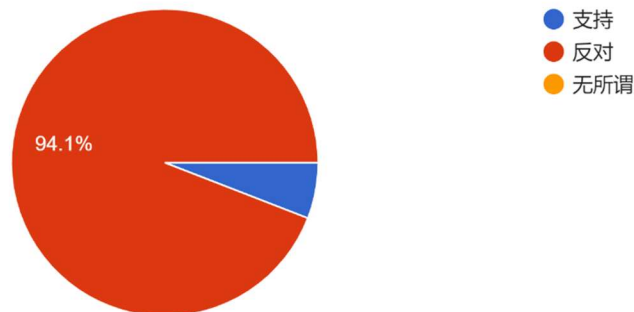
34 responses



When asked if they support relocating MIP to Harrison Park School, 94.1% of respondents oppose it, while the only two families who support it don't have children in MIP.

您支持将中文双语教室搬到Harrison Park School (靠近华人集聚的82街) 吗?

34 responses



For this purpose, we have created a WeChat group for the parents in MIP. It is evident from our discussions that the benefits of attending MIP at Woodstock Elementary extend far beyond learning Mandarin itself. Families greatly value the opportunity for their children to be in a diverse learning and social environment, which provides demonstrable educational benefits for all students. Woodstock Elementary and its surrounding neighborhood provides this type of environment for Chinese American students.

Therefore, relocating MIP out of Woodstock Elementary will eventually undermine the success of this program, as many parents, especially non-Chinese American parents, will pull their children out of MIP in the new location, regardless of whether it is relocated to Harrison Park School or Creative Science School. The most disturbing consequence of this decision is ethnic

gerrymandering. I would like to share a similar case from 2019 at Northern Virginia's Key Elementary School, which argues against the relocation of a key bilingual program on the grounds of ethnic gerrymandering. This article makes it evident that PPS' proposal lacks total consciousness for racial justice, which includes the importance of integrating PPS schools and neighborhoods that were once redlined to intentionally exclude communities of color.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/in-northern-va-a-fight-over-moving-a-bilingual-school-stirs-questions-of-race-and-class/2019/03/03/58f8c9c6-289c-11e9-b2fc-721718903bfc_story.html

I would like to further share a few comments from the survey:

If MIP is relocated out from Woodstock, it is almost certain much less non-Chinese families will send their children to the new school for learning Chinese. With the prevailing xenophobia against Chinese American, PPS' proposal is definitely not helping address this issue.

By bringing MIP to a school closer to the neighborhood where many families are facing financial challenges, what MIP currently enjoys such as parents' involvement and fundraising potential will be very different. The future of MIP then will have a lot of uncertainties.

We are calling on PPS to seriously consider social and racial aspect in its decision. It is clear to us that PPS should keep and support the MIP at Woodstock Elementary, especially given that Flagship funding is no longer available. Regarding the issues highlighted in the current proposal, they can be addressed without compromising MIP at Woodstock Elementary.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Hongcheng Zhao

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