

Dear Neighbor:

Test scores are going down, enrollment is declining, veteran principals are leaving, and taxes are continuing to rise. There's an uncomfortable truth that more people in our town need to know: **all is not well in Evanston's public schools.**

We are a diverse group of Evanstonians—parents, teachers, longtime residents, and proud D65 & ETHS alumni—who are deeply concerned about the state of our public schools.

We've created this newsletter, which aggregates data about D65 & D202 and summarizes reporting on schools from our local papers, to help more Evanstonians get a picture of what is happening.

This issue revisits a story about parental dissatisfaction with the state of the English-Spanish bilingual (aka two-way immersion or TWI) program, raising questions about the district's continued support for the program.

Parent and Teacher Concerns Grow about D65's Commitment to Bi-Lingual Education

After getting phone calls and e-mails from parents alarmed about the bilingual education program at Dewey elementary school, which has the District's largest concentration of Hispanic students, the *Evanston RoundTable's* Duncan Agnew began investigating, but struggled to get answers from D65.

Based on FOIA-obtained e-mails, [the story](#) appeared on July 21 of last year. It reported that three teachers in the school's two-way immersion program were leaving, and revealed the frustrations of teachers and parents who had spent months complaining to D65 leaders about "lack of support" and "low prioritization" for bi-lingual education at a school where nearly one-fourth of the students (94 of 370) are in the program. Agnew's story quoted one frustrated parent's e-mail to the District: "You are dishonoring the voices of all the Spanish-speaking families at Dewey by not answering our concerns."

The *RoundTable* also reported that teachers at Dewey had complained to D65 administrators about a micro-aggression, charging that the school's principal, Kimberly Watson, had disparaged lesson plans written in Spanish as "gibberish."

The *RoundTable* shared the FOIA-obtained e-mails with Thomas A. Saenz, President of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, a leading Latino civil rights organization. [Saenz told the RoundTable](#) that the District's alarming lack of responsiveness raised questions about its commitment to bi-lingual learning. "When [the alleged "gibberish" comment] is coupled with some of these other complaints..., then it really raises an issue that the district has to investigate, because if you lack commitment to dual immersion, it will not succeed," Saenz said. "There's no question."

Hispanics are the fastest-growing demographic in the city, and account for over 20% of D65 students.

Thank you to the many people who have already signed up online to receive this newsletter.

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