



June 2018

Dear Equity and Race Advisory Committee:

Thank you to the Equity and Race Advisory Committee (ERAC) for your advocacy on behalf of Concord International Elementary School's biliteracy work. Thank you to Principal Norma Zavala for her leadership as we have worked through this issue. And thank you to the staff and parents at Concord for their thoughts, good work and support on behalf of our students. I also want to thank Associate Superintendent Michael Tolley and Chief of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Kyle Kinoshita, and other senior staff for reaching out to better understand this issue.

The efforts of the teachers and staff at Concord have not gone unnoticed. We recognize that the biliteracy model at Concord is making great strides, and students are positively impacted by the work the teachers are doing to provide high-quality dual language instruction. As a district, it wouldn't be fair to cease our support of this progress through program and teacher development. But as it pertains to the request for an additional \$77,000 in Equity Funding, this is a request we can't meet. In this era when state K-12 funding support is becoming more restricted (i.e. class size reductions) and our local education levy authority is being cut in half next year, we can't fulfill all our financial commitments.

As a district, Seattle Public Schools has done more than most districts to support schools with high student needs by devoting an additional \$8 million of Equity Funding based on the percentage of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. As a school with high student needs, Concord is a recipient of these additional Equity Funds. In addition to Equity Funds, Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction (CAI) and English Language Learners (ELL) have also allocated funds to support the growth of the biliteracy model at Concord. This summer, CAI will be sending four Concord teachers to a biliteracy conference. In addition to funding teacher development, CAI is also working to address science curriculum needs for next school year.

This year, Concord has used \$77,000 of their 2017-2018 Equity Funds and other funding sources to purchase American Reading Materials in Spanish to meet the needs of their Spanish-speaking population. Purchase of the supplemental materials is a decision that schools can make with their Equity Funds, and in Concord's case, the decision to purchase supplemental materials was made as staff and families felt that it would have a positive impact on student learning. As a district, we laud the school for doing so. We encourage school communities to use Equity Funds to best meet the needs of their students and develop their program(s). In 2018-19, Concord Elementary will be receiving another \$67,000 Equity Funding allocation which can be used to continue the development of the school's biliteracy model.

Dual Language programs within our district are not fully funded, but we recognize that it is only fair and equitable to provide dual language programs in schools where a high percentage of our student population are ELL. The challenge lies in answering each individual school's need, and this is not always realistically possible. The outlined challenges at Concord are not confined to one school: funding shortfalls, implementation challenges and the points raised during the Concord discussion are linked to a systemic issue in many of our high needs schools. And as a district, we need to attend to this by

centering our focus on the bigger initiative that includes all dual language schools. By doing so, we will be able to accomplish the strategic goals we have set around educational excellence, racial equity and the success of every student.

We are not deprioritizing Concord's needs, nor are we minimizing the importance of the community's voices. In fact, we fully recognize that this year was challenging for the Concord community. Though I wasn't present for the discussion from the beginning, attending one of the ERAC meetings where the Concord community presented on the background and lessons learned was enlightening. When we implemented our first district-wide elementary ELA adoption in many years, extra work was required on the part of teachers to develop supplemental materials, a significant challenge historically, and a huge lift when the entire English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum changed in one year. At the same time, the Concord community expressed differing preferences on how best to support ELA. We also discovered in the past few months that dual language immersion has several interpretations within our school communities.

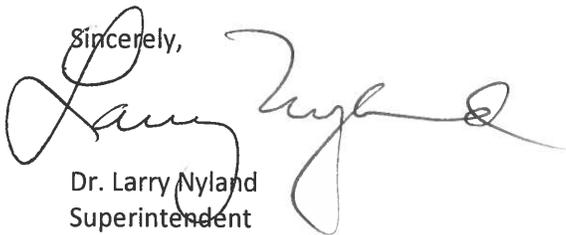
The district convened a dual language task force in Spring 2016, and since its inception, the task force brought forth recommendations, uncovered potential issues and provided updates on ongoing work. One of their recommendations was for dual language schools to continue collaboration efforts. Through increased collaboration, schools can share best practices and instructional resources. And furthermore, schools find commonality in their work. My understanding is that the dual language task force has made recommendations that may assist with the current challenges at Concord. Michael Tolley will be reviewing the recommendations with Michele Aoki, director of that program. Upon further review of the task force recommendations and how they relate to Concord, information will be shared with the Concord community in the fall.

I certainly wish the district could do more. Unfortunately, our budget from state and local sources continue to be constricted. The need for full funding of public education has been a consistent message to the state legislature. As stated earlier, what we can offer Concord are the allocated Equity Funds, continuing CAI support and ELL support. If there are financial needs above and beyond what Concord is allocated, then, like with any other school with additional needs, we ask that a funding request together with a plan of implementation be submitted through Principal Zavala. Once the plan is submitted, we can review and determine the feasibility.

As far as next steps, the district will reach out to Concord in the fall. By that time, Michael Tolley and Michele Aoki will have had time to review the recommendations and determine the correlation to some of Concord's challenges.

Thank you for the retirement wishes and the kind words. I am grateful for my time at Seattle Public Schools, as I had the opportunity to partner with organizations such as the ERAC and work towards equitable outcomes for every student.

Sincerely,



Dr. Larry Nyland
Superintendent
Seattle Public Schools