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RIVERGLADES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENTS LOBBY BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD TO FUND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM***— Hundreds of Supporters Sign Petition Seeking Creation of Broward County Dual Language Advisory Council —***

PARKLAND, FL (February 10, 2023) — A group of parents and supporters at Riverglades Elementary School are lobbying the Broward County Public Schools' board to provide funding for the BCPS Dual Language Program, an English/Spanish two-way, K-12 immersion program that is currently operating in 40 Broward County public schools.

On a recent call with the BCPS Dual Language Program's leaders, Riverglades parents were shocked to learn that, unlike Gifted and ESE (exceptional student education) programs, the Dual Language program has no guaranteed funding allocation from the county nor the state. A [petition requesting](#) funding for the program, as well as the creation of a Broward County Dual Language Advisory Council, already has generated hundreds of signatures and was presented to the school board on February 8, 2023.

Despite drawing considerable interest from local parents and attracting student enrollment in Broward County public schools, Riverglades Elementary School's Dual Language program has faced ongoing challenges since its inception in 2017 because of insufficient district funding and support — specifically in the areas of teacher hiring and retention, Spanish-language curriculum enrichment, and academic assistance for students. Additionally, the petition highlights that the inaugural Dual Language class at Riverglades is due to graduate to Westglades Middle School this year — yet the Broward County school board has failed to provide a definitive plan for Dual Language teacher hiring or program design at Westglades Middle School.

"Dual Language was a huge factor in my family's decision on where to send our kids to school, and we chose public school over private specifically because of Dual Language," said Parsiri Stelnik, a member of the [Friends of Riverglades Dual Language](#) initiative, who is also a Riverglades parent with a first-grader currently enrolled in the program. "There's no other comprehensive K-12 program in the county that gives students, including children like mine who do not have native Spanish speakers at home, the opportunity to become truly bilingual. That is invaluable in today's world — especially here in Broward, where more than a quarter of households include a fluent Spanish speaker. That's why it's so important to fund the Dual Language program and ensure its long-term success."

As part of "[Parkland Day: 60th Anniversary Celebration](#)" on March 11th, Riverglades Dual Language families will showcase a parade float on behalf of the Friends of Riverglades Dual Language. More than 150 supporters plan to accompany the float in support of the Dual Language program.

About the Broward County Dual Language program:

The BCPS Dual Language Program offers a school-within-a-school approach to second-language acquisition. The goal of the program is to provide students with the opportunity to become fully bilingual by learning, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English and Spanish, beginning in kindergarten or first grade. Students learn both languages in context. For more information about the program, visit www.browardschools.com/duallanguage.

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