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HUNDREDS TURN OUT IN SUPPORT OF BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

***— Riverglades Elementary families team up with Eagle Ridge Elementary
families to lobby for state legislation on behalf of multilingual education —***

PARKLAND, FL (March 13, 2023) — Hundreds of supporters of Broward County Public Schools' Dual Language program turned out at the [Parkland Day: 60th Anniversary Celebration](#) Parade on March 11. [Friends of Riverglades Dual Language](#), a parent-run organization, showcased the prize-winning float as part of an ongoing campaign to secure funding and support for the program.

Dual Language is an English/Spanish two-way, K-12 immersion program that is currently operating in 40 Broward County public schools, including Riverglades Elementary School in Parkland, Florida. Renée Pyka, a Riverglades parent who has a kindergartener in the program, said, "The program helps the whole community. I love that it's inclusive – everyone in the school was invited to join the fun and to help plan, set up, and walk in the parade. My kindergartener teaches our whole family what he learns in Dual Language, so even though my older son is not in the program, he still gets to be a part of the movement and benefit from having Dual Language in our school."

A [petition](#) requesting district funding for the program and the creation of a Broward County Dual Language Advisory Council generated hundreds of signatures and was presented to the school board in February. Broward County school district representatives including School Board Chair Lori Alhadeff, North Regional Superintendent Dr. Jermaine Fleming, and Bilingual/ESOL Director Victoria Saldala met with Friends of Riverglades Dual Language members on March 1 and expressed support for the program, but did not provide specific timing or concrete next steps regarding the requests outlined in the petition.

Parents have also requested clarity on the school district's plan for Riverglades Elementary's pilot Dual Language class, who are currently fifth graders and are expected to become the first Dual Language class at Westglades Middle School in the fall. However, school district representatives at the March 1 meeting would not confirm when, or if, a Dual Language teacher would be hired at Westglades Middle School. Fifth graders are expected to begin course selection for sixth grade in early April.

In an additional effort to secure state-level legislation supporting Dual Language and other multilingual immersion programs, Friends of Riverglades Dual Language has partnered with [Dual Language parents at Eagle Ridge Elementary School](#) under the name Friends of Multilingual Education. "Fluency in a second language is becoming essential in our globalized world – and we have the opportunity to give that advantage to our children in our local public schools through the Dual Language program. I am joining Friends of Multilingual Education to show the county and the state the urgent need for funding and support," said Sandy Haynes, an Eagle Ridge parent.

The group is working to secure a state-level advisory council as well as categorical funding for teacher compensation, teacher training and certification programs, curriculum enrichment, academic assistance for students, and dedicated administration for multilingual immersion programs in Florida public schools.

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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