

## Update on Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program

March 2014

Parent Advisory Council  
John Norquay Elementary

### Purpose

1. Provide Committee with an update on the progress of the program and its successes
2. Current challenges of the program from parents' perspective
3. Sustainability and further development of the program

### Program Overview - Classes

- 5 EMB classes – 5 EMB Teachers – 116 Students
  - 1 Kindergarten Class (22 students)
  - 1 Grade One Class (24 students)
  - 1 Grade Two Class (24 students)
  - 1 Grade Two/Three Split Class (22 students)
  - 1 Grade Three Class (24 students)
- 2011 there was intake of 1.5 Kindergarten and 1.5 Grade One intake
- Since then intake has dropped to only one class of Kindergarten students per year

### Program Overview - Location

- Norquay is located in the Eastside at 4710 Slocan Street, between East 29th and Kingsway
- About 80% of the EMB students live outside the Norquay catchment
- Farthest distance from school is one family commuting from near UBC

### Program Overview - Curriculum

- 50% Mandarin and 50% English Instruction
- Some EMB teacher do half days in each language, some do alternate teaching days in each language
- Mandarin Subjects Taught – Mandarin Arts, Math, Physical Education, Health and Career
- Traditional Chinese and Hanyu Pinyin taught from Kindergarten to Grade 3
- Simplified Chinese and Hanyu Pinyin will be taught from Grade 4 and up

### Program Overview - Funding

- EMB funding transferred to Norquay:
  - \$25,000 for 2011-12 school year
  - \$25,000 for 2012-13 school year
  - \$17,000 for 2013-14 school year
- These funds are on top of general funding for all students to help with the development of the program to ensure its sustainability
- Review of accounting of funds in progress

## Program Overview - Enrolment

- Students are assessed for strong English language skills for entry to the program – no students are ELL
  - About 90% of families are non-Mandarin speaking
- For Sept 2014 - 173 families applied for 22 spots in the EMB program, of which about 90 were first choice
  - Because of Sibling Priority only 2-4 spots were available
  - Between 169 to 171 families were turned away
- Since program start in Sept 2011, only 4 EMB students have left the program, 3 from change of residence

## Program Successes

- **Increase in school enrolment** due to the program - results in increase funding with many more “bums in seats”
- **Phenomenal demand** for the program – drawing families back into public education
- **EMB activities** – Chinatown parade, class plays, cultural field trips, etc.



## Program Successes Cont'd

- **Equipping students for Global Community** – this is recognized by parent that their child can “Talk to the World”
- **Fundraising for new playground** – in part due to EMB parent support



## Program Successes Cont'd

- **Revitalization of the school community** – PAC has become extremely active and has organized free waffle breakfasts 2x a year, Hot Dog/Pizza days, Bingo night and many other community building activities
- **Expanded After School Childcare Spaces** – almost double to support this district program
- **Highly dedicated teachers** who care deeply about the program and devote many hours of their own personal time to develop much of their own Mandarin teaching and resource materials for their classes

## Program Challenges

- **Curriculum development** – additional language resource required, support for teachers including Mandarin Language consultant to help establish and review goals of the program
- **Classroom materials** and sourcing Mandarin resources
- **Standards** – introduce an international testing standard which will bring credibility to the program and ensure students are on the right track
- **Sustainability of the program** – need to increase intake at Kindergarten and allow for another intake at Grade 4 (if only 22 students are starting in Kindergarten)

## Program Challenges Cont'd

- **Expansion of the program** – enough demand to add an extra full class at Norquay and to offer the program at another school (or convert Jaimeson to an EMB program)
- **Continuation of program to secondary school** – there was a commitment from the outset of the EMB program that EMB program will continue into high school, but sentiment now has seemed to change and no word on plans for EMB students after Grade 7
  - EMB students entering Grade 8 will be beyond the Mandarin 9/10 and possibly Grade 12 Mandarin levels. High school is only 4 years away for the oldest EMB students.

## Program Next Steps

Parents are asking the Committee for the following:

- **Continued Support and Funding** to ensure the program's development, stability and sustainability. Including clear accounting of how EMB funds are spent.
- **Curriculum Development** for Mandarin Language Arts including Teacher support for resource materials, assessment tools and access to Language Consultants
- **Expansion of the program** through increasing the intake with either a second class of Kindergarten or K/Gr.1 class at Norquay or a second school site
- **Start Planning for EMB High School** options, whether it be developing a mini-school or adding 2-3 Mandarin high school courses at the level of the EMB students

謝謝

'Thank you Committee members for your time, vision and support of this amazing Program.'



Norquay Parent Advisory Council