November 30, 2017

Dear Adams 14 Parents & Guardians,

I want to address recent comments that have come to my attention related to the Biliteracy program here in Adams 14 School District. In a small and tight knit community such as ours, hearsay can easily spread without being fact checked.

I want to be clear that at no time have I ever entertained the idea of eliminating our elementary Biliteracy Program in grades K-3. As an English language learner growing up, I understand the value in having English Language Development (ELD) programming. Spanish was my first language.

Through federal law and state statute, we are mandated to provide English language development programming for all our students who are English language learners. In Adams 14, we offer ELD programming to support students in grades K-12 through a series of initiatives such as K-5 Systematic ELD and 6-12 constructing meaning. Additionally, we are one of only three school districts across the state which provides a Seal of Biliteracy on diplomas of high school students who master two languages, the district is committed to continuing and growing this pathway for our high school graduates.

Although biliteracy or bilingual education is not a required method of instruction per H.R.1, in Adams 14, due to the percentage of students entering kindergarten whose primary language is Spanish as measured by the required WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), we are able to provide K-3 biliteracy programming. We see the value of meeting the needs of our K-3 students by developing strong literacy skills in their native language as they develop English language proficiency. The Adams 14 K-3 Biliteracy Program has been possible through our partnership with the University of Colorado—Bueno Center. For this we are thankful and appreciative.

As a District, we are responsible for meeting the needs of our English language learners by growing their English language acquisition as measured by the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners test (ACCESS). Additionally, we are responsible for growing our English language learners’ academic proficiency as measured by the Colorado Measures of Academic Success test (CMAS).

As we continue to work towards improving the academic success of our students, we want to ensure our students are college and career ready. Recent state data continues to put Adams 14 as a low performing district. Many of our students are below grade level in both reading and math. Although growth has been made giving us reason to celebrate, it is not enough, and I am not satisfied. As a result the Colorado State Board of Education has given Adams 14 one year to make improvements in our schools.

Despite the challenges we face because of our turnaround status, I believe Adams 14 will be one of the best school districts in Colorado. As your Superintendent, I want to be transparent about the work we are doing to improve our district. I also want to be honest and acknowledge that as a district we need to improve communication with staff, parents, and the community. I am committed to making these improvements.

I also need your help in addressing hearsay as it distracts us from achieving our goal to improve our schools. I believe in transparency and if there are untruths being spread, I want to address it right away because in the end it is deterring away from putting our students first.

I believe in better and I know that we are working diligently to ensure the success of not only our English language learners, but ALL of Adams 14 students. Again, I want to restate that at no time have I ever entertained the idea of eliminating our elementary biliteracy program in grades K-3. I have an open door policy and should you have any questions or concerns, you can feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Dr. Javier Abrego,
Superintendent