

MENDOZA PLAINTIFFS' COMMENTS ON SPECIAL MASTER PROPOSED
COURT SUBMISSION RE: MAGNET STATUS FOR DRACHMAN AND
ROSKRUGE K-8 SCHOOLS

January 16, 2019

Mendoza Plaintiffs do not object to the Special Master's determination that both Drachman and Roskruge should maintain their magnet status in the 2019-20 school year. However, they believe that the proposed Court submission falls short because it fails to adequately address what the Special Master in his cover email transmitting that proposed submission refers to as the "unremarkable" improvement plans that the District has prepared for these two schools.

Mendoza Plaintiffs respectfully suggest that "unremarkable" understates the problems with those plans. Here, they focus specifically on Roskruge because they believe that the proposed submission goes further in addressing the deficiencies in the Drachman plan than it does in addressing those in the Roskruge plan. In the following discussion, they reference both the Special Master's proposed submission and the District's December 4, 2018 Roskruge Bilingual K-8 School Revisioning Plan ("Roskruge Dec. 2018 Plan"), the most recent "improvement" plan for Roskruge of which they are aware.

In his proposed submission, the Special Master says that Roskruge should "retain its magnet coordinator through the following school year to test whether the school could be on its way to being integrated". He also says that the "possibilities that this will result in a positive outcome may well depend on the availability of an express bus from the eastern areas of the district."

Mendoza Plaintiffs believe that these directions are necessary but far from sufficient. As the Special Master knows, Roskruge did not have a magnet coordinator in place during the 2017-18 school year notwithstanding that the position was expressly included in its 2017-18 school plan. Learning about this after the fact (from a footnote in the District's 2017-18 Annual Report) allowed no opportunity for the plaintiffs and the Special Master to seek a remedy when it might have been effective for recruiting for this current school year. Such failure by the District to implement its own plan demonstrates that close monitoring by the Special Master and the Implementation Committee is essential going forward and that the Special Master's report to the Court should expressly incorporate such monitoring (inclusive of periodic reports to the plaintiffs).

What is imperative now, with a magnet coordinator apparently in place (as reflected on the school website), is that she have the plan and resources to effectively recruit students for the Roskruge K, 1 and 6th grades. Enrollment for this coming year is occurring **now** – for example, according to the TUSD website, the School Choice Fair is set for January 17. Yet, neither the Roskruge website nor the website of the District's

Language Acquisition Department (and presumably, therefore, not the magnet coordinator) is communicating a message (or providing the research and other materials) documenting the advantages of a bilingual education and biliteracy¹ that presumably would enhance the attractiveness of the school to a diverse population. Just as the Special Master pushed the District to prominently present the educational advantages of diversity, he should push the District to present (and ensure that the Roskruge magnet coordinator is conversant with) the advantages of a bilingual education. The Mendoza Plaintiffs believe that this requirement – which is a “given” and should have been part of the District’s readily available materials about its dual language programs long ago – also should be included in the Special Master’s report to the Court together with an undertaking by the Special Master and the Implementation Committee to monitor prompt follow up by the District to confirm that it is occurring.

Given that the District’s overall Dual Language Access Plan was developed in 2016, it is striking (and disappointing) that the District now is saying, in its “revisioning” plan, that it will only take the steps necessary to establish Roskruge as “an authentic K-8 TWDL model” **in 2019-20**. (Roskruge Dec. 2018 Plan at 1.)² In light of the fact that the District will not have a “final” implementation plan for Roskruge in place before the end of the 2018-19 school year (and therefore AFTER enrollment for the 2019-20 school year will be complete) (see Roskruge Dec. 2018 Plan at 1), it also appears that, as good and well-informed about the benefits of bilingual education as the magnet coordinator may be, she will be hampered in her ability to market the [as yet not fully developed] program to a diverse population this enrollment period.³ In light of these circumstances and

¹ The page of the Catalogue of Schools devoted to Roskruge says that Roskruge is a two-way dual language school that offers children a pathway to receive a special distinction on their high school diploma, the Arizona State Seal of Biliteracy, but it fails to state why anyone should want that seal or, more importantly, what the value is of the education that would support the earning of such a seal.

² Mendoza Plaintiffs have repeatedly commented on the fact that the individual serving as the Director of the Language Acquisition Department has been an “interim” appointment - now for three years - and fear that this circumstance both reflects an overall lack of District commitment to the work and responsibilities of the Department and leaves the individual who is “interim” with insufficient standing to press for resources and District follow through. This further underscores the need for Special Master and Implementation Committee monitoring and reporting as further discussed in the following footnote.

³ This not only impacts the District’s obligations to Roskruge as a magnet school; it also suggests that the District has fallen behind in its implementation of the Dual Language Access Plan. Given how integral Roskruge is to the dual language initiative in the District, Mendoza Plaintiffs additionally suggest that the Special Master’s report to the Court should expressly incorporate an undertaking by the

particularly that the District does not even intend to have a fully developed plan for TWDL implementation at Roskruge in place until the end of this school year (Roskruge Dec. 2018 Plan at 1), Mendoza Plaintiffs fear that the one year “test” that the Special Master is setting up is an unfair one and at minimum it must be extended an additional year -- to recruitment after the District – finally – has the Roskruge plan in place and the school has an up and running program that the magnet coordinator can invite parents/guardians and potential students to observe.

In that regard (and with specific reference to recruitment to 6th grade as noted above), Mendoza Plaintiffs believe that the Special Master does not fully appreciate the potential flexibility of the TWDL model and therefore the ways in which it can attract and support a diverse population. As the District itself recognizes through the TWDL models posted on the Language Acquisition Department’s website, there can be two parallel and complementary models at the middle school level, thereby opening the school to students who might want to come to Roskruge for the middle school years but who are not yet fluent in Spanish. There is both a Spanish as a second language model that provides Spanish language classes to students not yet fluent in Spanish as well as one class offered in Spanish AND a Spanish literary model in which students who already are fluent in Spanish study Spanish literature and a number of other substantive classes taught in Spanish. Copies of the models downloaded from the TUSD website are attached. So that there can be no doubt that Roskruge will pursue a TWDL program that maximizes the potential for integration, the Mendoza Plaintiffs request that the Special Master’s submission expressly call on the District to include both models in its plan for Roskruge.

Mendoza Plaintiffs continue to believe that Roskruge, as a model of TWDL education in the District, can move to integration as well as significant student achievement and that Roskruge must remain a bilingual education magnet school pathway for students from Davis Bilingual Education Magnet School and a wonderful magnet school option for students who desire to continue their dual language educations who have attended other dual language offerings within the District as well as a school that provides a robust dual language education for those entering the program in the early grades.

Special Master and the Implementation Committee to monitor and assess the overall status of the implementation of the Dual Language Access Plan in the District (and report to the plaintiffs as appropriate).