

MENDOZA PLAINTIFFS' COMMENTS ON THE DISTRICT'S  
"REVISIONING PLAN" FOR ROSKRUGE AND "REVIATLIZATION PLAN"  
FOR BOOTH-FICKETT

December 17, 2018

Mendoza Plaintiffs provide their comments below to the District's "Revisioning Plan" for Booth-Fickett and "Revitalization Plan" for Roskruge. Mendoza Plaintiffs separately provide comments on the "Magnet Improvement Plans" for Borton, Drachman, and Holladay magnet schools, although many of those comments equally apply to Booth-Fickett and Roskruge. Mendoza Plaintiffs do not repeat all of those comments here but respectfully refer the reader to those comments.

*Objection to Plan to Remove Roskruge's Magnet School Status*

As Mendoza Plaintiffs stated in their November 14, 2018 "Comments on the District's 'Revisioning Outline' for Booth-Fickett and Roskruge", they vehemently oppose the District's plan to remove magnet status from Roskruge. Indeed, as detailed below, that action makes no sense given that the District's proposal to remove all attendance boundaries for the school and strengthen its dual language theme are absolutely consistent with magnet status. No explanation is provided in the "revisioning plan" for the decision to remove magnet status. Therefore, Mendoza Plaintiffs can only conclude that the sole reason for the proposal is that the District wishes to lessen its obligation to work to integrate the school (and to put Roskruge in the large group of schools (all District non magnet schools) that per the Court's September 6, 2018 Order, Doc. 2123, no longer are subject to Court oversight with respect to enrollment.) Not only is this unacceptable; it ignores the fact that the District's other plans for the school could actually increase its potential to become more integrated – particularly if coupled with the sort of marketing and recruitment effort that to date has been notably absent.

*Additional Statement Concerning Integration*

Mendoza Plaintiffs remain shocked that neither the Booth-Fickett Plan (for a school that does remain under Court supervision with respect to its integration status) nor the Roskruge Plan (that, notwithstanding the District's plan to remove it from the category of schools under Court supervision, still maintains an obligation

to work to reduce racial concentration and subject to the District's ongoing obligations to engage in no acts that will work against integration) meaningfully discuss integration notwithstanding that Mendoza Plaintiffs called attention to this issue in their comments on the "Revisioning Outlines".<sup>1</sup> Tellingly, the only reference to "integration" in these plans is in the Booth-Fickett "Revitalization Plan" where the District acknowledges that this K-8 school does not meet the USP definition of "integration" but argues that it nonetheless "essentially" meets the definition when compared to non-K-8 schools (in conflict with what the USP requires). Such reference heightens Mendoza Plaintiffs' concerns since it evidences a focus on trying to fit within a box labeled "integrated school" rather than a genuine commitment to integrate the school.

### *Roskruge*

#### Magnet Status

As stated above, Mendoza Plaintiffs oppose the Roskruge "Revisioning Plan" proposal to remove magnet status from the school. It will be no surprise that Mendoza Plaintiffs believe that Roskruge has not been adequately supported such that it has been given fair chance to move toward integration consistent with a true magnet program. Indeed, particularly because Roskruge had no magnet school coordinator for the entirety of the 2017-18 school year (2017-18 Annual Report (Doc. 2124-1) at II-12, fn. 9), Mendoza Plaintiffs are concerned that Roskruge has been unable to adequately engage in the outreach and recruitment that could showcase the attractiveness of an effective TWDL program or the value of receiving a certificate of biliteracy to families, especially to native English speakers and white families in the District. Further, it appears, particularly in the absence of any serious integration strategies or proposals in any of the District's "Revisioning," "Revitalization," or "Magnet Improvement Plans," that the District

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<sup>1</sup> In the District's initial "Revisioning Outlines," the District proposed to "maintain desegregation funding and transportation" for these schools notwithstanding that it also proposed that each would no longer maintain magnet status. Because the Booth Fickett and Roskruge Plans no longer contain the quoted language (and the District no longer proposes that Booth Fickett lose its magnet status), they ask whether, as part of the District's "Revisioning Plan" for Roskruge, the District continues to propose that it "maintain desegregation funding **and transportation**"?

lacks serious commitment to maintain or improve these schools' progress toward integration.

Recognizing that the other factor being used by the parties and the Special Master to assess magnet school viability is academic achievement, Mendoza Plaintiffs make the following two additional observations which further bolster their position that magnet status should not be removed from Roskrug: (1) The District provided an analysis of AzMerit results in each of the magnet "improvement", "revisioning" and "revitalization" plans. Significantly, Roskrug, whose magnet status is proposed to be removed, scored **higher** (with an overall achievement number of 65.70) than three of the "vulnerable" magnet schools whose magnet status the District proposes to maintain: Booth-Fickett (55.91); Holliday (52.53); and Drachman (61.37). (2) Effective dual language programs increasingly are recognized to be associated with high levels of academic performance.

#### Boundary

Mendoza Plaintiffs in principle support a wide "catchment" area for a school like Roskrug particularly if it is to attract a diverse student population. Nonetheless, they are concerned that the "Revisioning Plan" contains no analysis of what the impact of a no-boundary attendance area for Roskrug's K-5 grades would be on other District schools (or how it could, if at all, affect Roskrug as an oversubscribed school, if it is such a school<sup>2</sup>).

As noted above, there is no discussion in the "revisioning plan" of transportation which presumably will not be available to students outside the Roskrug neighborhood unless they meet other USP criterion. Mendoza Plaintiffs therefore ask:

RFI: What if any TUSD transportation does the District plan to provide to Roskrug students who are not within its neighborhood to support their attendance at the school and has the District considered the impact of making the school a no-boundary school if it does not also offer TUSD transportation to the school?

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<sup>2</sup> Mendoza Plaintiffs have seen reports indicating that Roskrug is oversubscribed at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level (see, *e.g.*, Appendix II-I to the 2017-18 DAR, Doc. 2126-1, at 3 of 364) but they cannot determine what is occurring at the kindergarten and first grade levels based on the information of which they currently are aware.

## Dual Language Program

As they have previously stated, the Mendoza Plaintiffs generally support the proposal to make Roskrige a Two-Way Dual Language (“TWDL”) school which, they believe, if coupled with a robust and focused recruitment plan, among other things, could help Roskrige make meaningful progress toward integration. However, Mendoza Plaintiffs have significant concerns with the TWDL as described in the Roskrige “Revisioning Plan” and therefore cannot support it without further information.

Many of Mendoza Plaintiffs’ concerns with the Roskrige plan stem from the lack of analysis and discussion concerning the proposal to transition it into a TWDL school. Indeed, Mendoza Plaintiffs were surprised to see that the entirety of the discussion focusing on the proposal to transition to an “*authentic* K-8 TWDL model” comprises but a single page of the Plan. As the parties and Special Master will remember, the District hired an expert consultant, Rosa Molina, to conduct a review of the TWDL program, and provide recommendations to strengthen and expand the program (*see* May 3, 2016 Report re Two Way Dual Language Program Review (“Molina Report”)). Compounded by the fact that Mendoza Plaintiffs do not have a clear understanding of whether and to what extent the District has successfully implemented those recommendations, they are seriously concerned that the Roskrige “Revisioning Plan” makes no attempt to address important programmatic considerations including those that the Molina Report identifies as vital to a successful true TWDL program<sup>3</sup>.

For example, the Roskrige plan contains no discussion or analysis on programmatic considerations as they relate to student eligibility requirements. The District indicates that “[a]ll K-1 students will be eligible...” for the program, but that while “[a]ll [2-8 grade] students... will be grandfathered into the school...[,]” students at those grade levels must be assessed to ensure they “meet the Spanish proficiency standards for that grade level.” It is unclear whether the District has considered what it would do in the event that the distribution of students in grades 2-8 who are determined to be Spanish proficient are dispersed and/or uneven across those grade levels such that at some or all grade levels, there are not enough eligible students to meet minimum enrollment standards for a classroom.

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<sup>3</sup> Mendoza Plaintiffs understand that the District has convened a “steering committee” for Roskrige but they do not believe that the “steering committee” is the appropriate place to address and resolve many of the open matters they discuss herein.

Nor does the plan reflect any consideration of the impact of the above on the minimum requirement of two courses in Spanish for TWDL middle schools. (*See* Appendix V-34 of the 2017-18 TUSD Annual Report (TUSD TWDL Parent Presentation SY2017-18); Appendix V-36 at 22-24 (TUSD TWDL Framework.) (Indeed, there is no discussion of what core content classes would be available at middle school grade levels if there *are* sufficient TWDL eligible students in grades 6-8.)

Related, the District's plan does not address how many strands of the TWDL program would exist at any of the grade levels even though it is vital to the success of the program. Indeed, the Molina Report states that "thirty years of TWDL program development" indicate that "single classroom strands have great difficulty in fully developing their program from the elementary level to the middle school level.") Significantly, the District reports in its 2017-18 Annual Report that "[o]f the nine elementary and K-8 TWDL sites, four have two strands... [and that the District] 'plans to create two strands at the remaining five TWDL sites...'" (TUSD 2017-18 Annual Report (Doc. 2124-1) at V-67.) While Mendoza Plaintiffs understand that Roskrige is included in the reference to the schools with two strands as of 2017-18, it is unclear whether the District intends that under its plan there will be two strands at the K-1 grade levels (that are to be open enrollment) and whether, because of testing requirements at the 2-8 grade levels, Roskrige will be able to maintain two strands at these grade levels, and if not, how the District will address the issue. The fact that most District TWDL schools did not, as of the end of the 2017-18 school year, have two strands heightens Mendoza Plaintiffs concerns about whether the District is prepared to address this issue that is likely to arise and that the District does not seem to have considered in its "Revisioning Plan" for Roskrige.

RFI: Did the District implement in 2018-19 its "plans to create two strands at the remaining five TWDL schools" that did not have two strands in 2017-18? Please identify how many TWDL strands exist at each grade level of each TWDL school. Please also provide a copy of the referenced plans for the creation of two strands.

RFI: Has the District conducted any kind of follow up assessment, audit or review, regardless of whether or not it was conducted by Rosa Molina or whether it is an "official" assessment, audit or review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Molina Report? If not, why not? If the District has conducted such a review, Mendoza Plaintiffs request that they be provided with a copy.

RFI: Please detail what kind of assessments would be conducted in the Roskrige TWDL target language (Spanish) to measure student progress as part of the transition to a TWDL school as proposed in the Roskrige plan.

Beyond the programmatic issues identified above, the Roskrige “Revisioning Plan” does not make clear how English Language Learners (“ELLs”) fit in to the District’s plans at Roskrige. They therefore ask the following:

RFI: How would English language instruction requirements under the State’s SEI model affect ELLs’ eligibility to participate in the TWDL program at each of the K-1 and 2-8 grade levels?

As was their concern when they saw the “Revisioning Outline”, Mendoza Plaintiffs expected to see greater discussion of how Roskrige would fit in relation to the District’s greater Dual Language vision and in relation to feeder and other schools. They continue to believe that these issues must be addressed in the Roskrige plan.

Moreover, Mendoza Plaintiffs believe that the transition of Roskrige into an “authentic TWDL” program, one with an effective design that adequately considers the vital issues identified in the Molina Report, is a big undertaking that requires careful planning (including with regard to the issues identified above). They therefore do not understand how implementation of the Roskrige “Revisioning Plan” would involve “no additional costs for SY 2018-19” and urge the District to reassess the issues identified above as well as the budget required to transition to a successful TWDL program at Roskrige that comports to the recommendations in the Molina Report.

#### *Short Term Strategies to Address Student Achievement*

In this dual language school, the strategy to strengthen teacher team collaboration (6-8<sup>th</sup> grade) focuses on math and English language arts teachers and fails to mention or include teachers in the partner language. Mendoza Plaintiffs believe this is a serious omission particularly when coupled with the failure to include a timeline for implementation of the Two-Way Dual Language Immersion Environment Check list to identify teacher strengths (in contrast to the other strategies for which a time line for implementation is set forth).



*Booth-Fickett*

Mendoza Plaintiffs generally support the District's plan, as reflected in the District's "Revitalization Plan" for Booth-Fickett, to expand its Math/Science theme to include Engineering and Technology, but believe that such expansion must be adequately supported. Mendoza Plaintiffs were surprised that the Booth-Fickett "Revitalization Plan" does not go into any analysis or discussion that would allow the Mendoza Plaintiffs to understand what such a shift in magnet theme would entail or what the budget implications would be, especially given the proposal to "offer additional retention incentives" and incentives to teachers in hard-to-fill positions (As Mendoza describe in greater detail in their comments on the "Magnet Improvement Plans", they also are disappointed that the plans addressed here do not reflect consideration of how these schools' themes would inform the educational programs and experiences they are providing to their students.) Consistent with comments the Special Master has made in the past, they question whether a school with as many challenges as Booth-Fickett currently faces also can be expected to effectively expand its magnet theme and add the necessary new staffing. They also therefore ask:

RFI: On what basis did the District determine to expand the Booth-Fickett theme to include engineering and technology? And what changes will the addition of this theme entail for the course offerings at the school?

Mendoza Plaintiffs further remain very concerned that while the District no longer is pursuing an "AVID Academy," it still seeks to implement a specific AVID strategy, "Cornell/Focus Notes, for all classrooms" at Booth Fickett, suggesting it potentially continues to view AVID as more of an intervention than as what it truly is – a college-readiness program.

Mendoza Plaintiffs understand AVID instructional practices (including Cornell/Focus notes) to be designed for middle and secondary school students to strengthen their organizational and other skills to prepare them for higher education. They therefore are confused by the fact that the District proposes implementation of Cornell/Focus notes at Booth-Fickett's **K-5** grade levels and ask:

RFI: On what basis does the District propose to implement Cornell/Focus notes at the K-5 grade levels of Booth-Fickett? Please also provide any additional information or research on which the District relies in regard to the appropriateness of Cornell/Focus at the elementary grade level. Mendoza Plaintiffs also are

interested in learning of any other school districts of which TUSD is aware that have implemented Cornell/Focus notes at elementary grade levels.

RFI: To the extent the implementation of Cornell/Focus notes at the elementary level are appropriate and supported by research, how would the Booth-Fickett teachers receive professional development particularly given that, as Mendoza Plaintiffs presume, such training would be different depending on the grade levels involved.

Mendoza Plaintiffs again express their concerns that the District says implementation of the Booth-Fickett plan will require “no additional costs.” They do not believe that this statement reflects serious thought on what resources would be required to successfully implement the Booth-Fickett plan to turn that school around while expanding its theme, and urge the District to reassess budgetary requirements.