

Good evening trustees,

My name is Mona Gobran. I am a mother of two children, ages three and six. My daughter attends school at a Toronto Catholic District School Board in the neighbourhood that we live in. My son will be attending the same school in September of this year God willing. I am writing this letter to express my satisfaction in the Portuguese International language Program that is currently being implemented at the school and to show my support and do what I can to make sure it stays in place for my children and future families.

I would like to point out that I am not Portuguese nor do we have any exposure to Portuguese (or other Latin languages for that matter) prior to our daughter attending JK at her school. Being born and raised into a different culture than what we have in Canada [Africa] I encourage my children to learn about and embrace as many cultures as possible. This helps foster an inclusive Christ centered mentality which is very important living in a city like Toronto, the third most multicultural city in the world. This is something we should be proud of as Torontonians and continue to encourage through programs such as the International Language Program whenever possible.

In such a large city like Toronto, it is important to feel a part of smaller communities. One of the things that we love about our school is sense of belonging to the community that the school serves. I can tell you from my experience during the time my daughter has been at the school, I have felt a part of the Portuguese community without being Portuguese myself. This is something that cannot be understated.

Multiple studies show that learning a second language at an early age improves cognitive skills and academic performance. It helps contribute to brain development and overall learning with those who learn a second language and even helps them score higher on reading, verbal fluency and general intelligence assessments. It's about making a person a better thinker. If you believe the studies mentioned above, you can only imagine what allowing young children to learn a third language and culture would do for them. It ignites a spark of curiosity to wonder how people in other cultures do and say things. They say knowledge is power and the International Language Program is an excellent foundational tool to expand an already curious mind. Thank you.

Mona Gobran

