

Good evening trustees,

My name is Maurice Lelli. I was born in St. Etienne, France and my first language was French.

At the front of my elementary school in France, there was a quote that read:

“L’ignorance est la plus grande maladie du genre humain” *Voltaire* (French philosopher)

“Ignorance is the greatest disease of mankind”



My father took a picture of this and made sure that my sisters and I understood what this meant. Imagine, he was a coal miner for 16 years and with very little formal education - no fault of his own, and yet he knew how important this was.

From France, we moved to Italy, my parents' hometown, where I learned Italian. After a few years, we moved to Canada where I obviously had to learn English. I am also quite fluent in Spanish, thanks to my knowledge of Italian, being the two most similar Latin-based languages.

I am the president and CEO of a medium-sized nutraceutical company and we do business in the U.S. and in Europe. We manufacture nutraceutical products, mostly in Italy where I am able to utilize - to my advantage, my fluency in Italian. The company V.P. / liaison whom I deal with in Italy, is also French-born and speaks 5 languages. She communicates with me in three different languages because she knows I can understand and makes for a healthy working relationship. In the U.S., they often request English-Spanish labels on our products and most of the key personnel are also fluent in Spanish.

What I would like to point out is that perhaps we shouldn't jump to conclusions when addressing our children's education and most importantly, their future. The policies and procedures for proposing any changes that may impact almost 600 children, needs to be followed accordingly, not as per the existing unsubstantiated direction taken by an individual who is not representing the majority of the families from St. Francis Xavier Catholic School. Also, the current I.L. policy states that a school can only be surveyed every three years and we just completed a survey in January 2019. Parents are tired of being surveyed again and again because of a few parents who claim to represent the entire community.

In the motion being presented tonight, it indicates that the program takes away from the 300-minute day. Teachers do not teach 300 minutes continuously, as no child has that attention span. The day consists of both instruction and independent work, as it should. This is common knowledge.

In the previous meeting we had about two years ago at SFX, I provided various documented studies on the importance of children learning multiple languages from an early age. It was concluded that those who learned multiple languages were able to develop parts of their brain that actually put them at a noticeable advantage well into university and beyond, over children who had learned only one language.

Yes, your children may not come out of this program being fluent in another language, but at least you should be happy to know that according to these studies, they are developing parts of their brain that will improve their cognition, focus, planning, personality, and proper social behavior, just by taking one I.L. program. Imagine!

If we've learned anything from this pandemic, it's that the world has become much smaller. In the corporate world, if you check the **About us** page on most large corporation websites, you will notice multiple head quarters spread around the globe. Your children may ultimately be working for or even running their own international corporation. Why not?

These are just a few examples I can give and trust me, I can go on and on.

In ending, I would like to emphasize that I specifically chose SFX for my daughter because of the IL program. She's now 10 and has made friends, so impossible for me to even remotely consider moving her to another school. Parents who are not happy with this program have the option of moving their children to a non-IL school. I don't see why I should, when I specifically chose this school.

Thank you for your time.