

Parent to Parent about French Program Threat

When parents and community members are determined to respond to challenges to their French program, they have the power to affect decision-makers in their community. The following sample letter can be adapted by one or more parents to galvanize action by like-minded parents. It is critical that parents have ALL of the facts before drafting a letter to the community.

Today's Date

Dear Parent:

As a parent in [...School/District ...], I am [dismayed, outraged, stunned, astonished] by the [announced intention/decision] of the [principal/ superintendent/ Board of Education] to [eliminate/diminish] the French program and to remove the choice that our children should have to study French at the same level it is currently offered. We have already observed the progress that our children are making in learning the French language and their enthusiasm in studying about cultural practices of the French-speaking world. Shouldn't this vital program be continued and supported?

I understand through [the newspaper/board agenda/conversations with [other parents/an administrative announcement/the PTO/the PTA] that next year the [French Grade 8/ French IV] program will be eliminated in order to cut the educational budget. Such a decision would be unwise and would impede the goal of developing a critical language skill and cultural understanding in a period when we are focused on our economic viability, as well as vulnerability, in a global market and on national security.

We must be willing to take a stand on this issue, which will impact our children's educational experience now and in the future. Education in this country is decided at the local level, and we, as members of the community, have a responsibility and a right to influence educational decisions, which also impact the quality of life in the community in which we live.

I invite you to join me and other parents to speak in favor of retaining our current French program. On [day] at [time] I am holding a meeting at [place, address] to develop and initiate a plan of action to that end. Some possible actions may include: a letter-writing campaign to the school board members, administrators, and local newspaper; gathering of signatures for a petition, and speaking at the next school board meeting.

If you are unable to attend this meeting but wish to show support for the French program, please contact me: [e-mail address/telephone number]. You may also visit the American Association of Teachers of French Advocacy Resource Bank for additional ideas and advice on advocating for our French program: frenchteachers.org/advocacy.

Cordially,
Parent's name