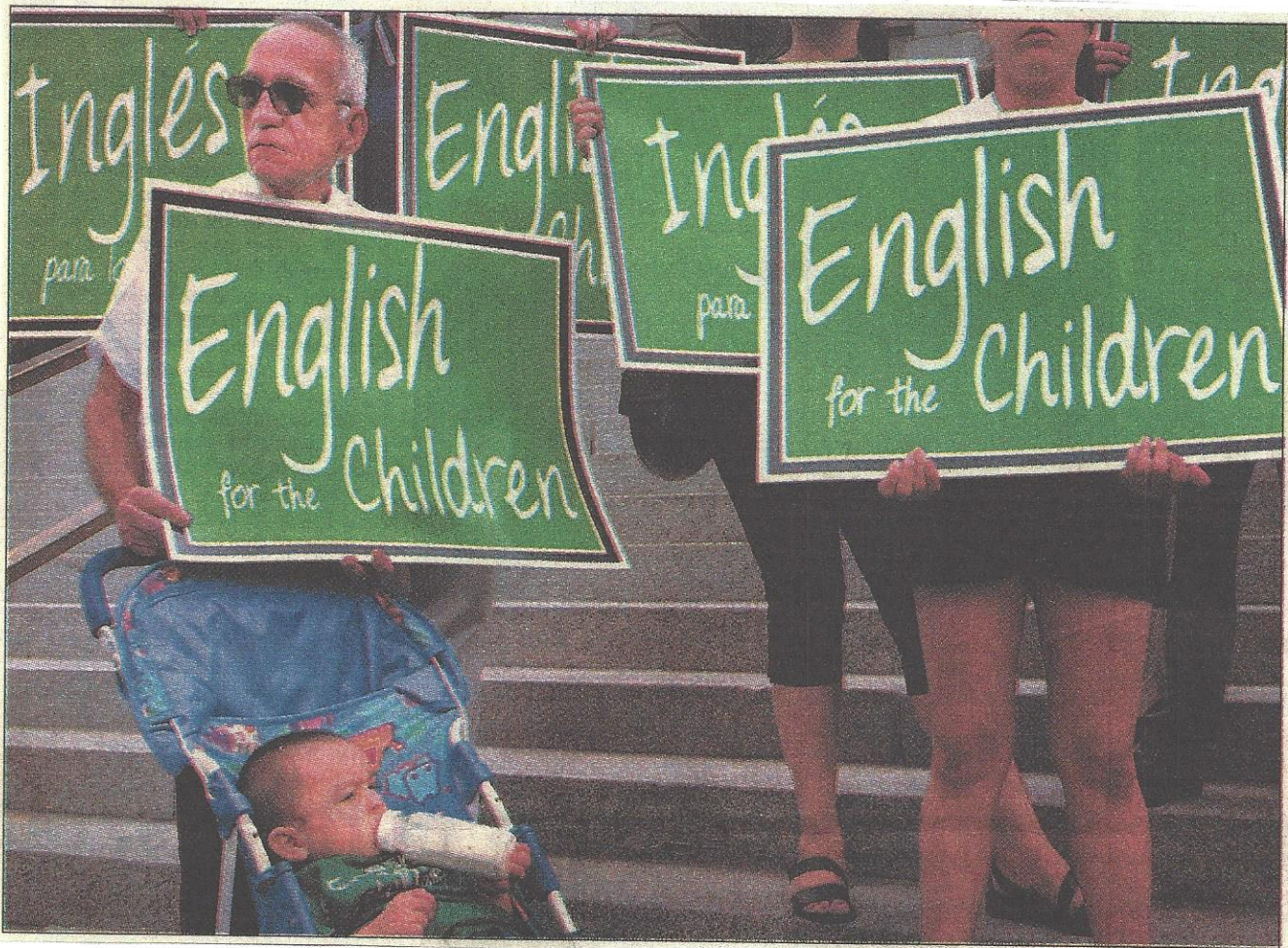


# THE DENVER POST

June 20, 2001

Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire FRONT PAGE



Adolph Ceja holds a sign supporting the group English for the Children at a news conference Tuesday on the west steps of the Capitol, as 1-year-old Vicente Sanchez drinks from a bottle in his stroller.

The Denver Post / Cyrus McCrimmon

## Bilingual fray may go to ballot

Constitutional amendment proposed to limit dual-language education

By Eric Hubler

Denver Post Education Writer

Opponents of bilingual education formally brought their quest to Colorado on Tuesday, filing a ballot initiative meant to go before voters in November 2002.

It calls for a constitutional amendment mandating that English learners in Colorado public schools go into transitional classes "not normally intended to exceed one year," then be mainstreamed.

Pro-bilingual forces promised a fight, saying the state has no right to dictate classroom policies.

But voters approved similar measures in California in 1998 and Arizona in 2000

by wide margins.

Bilingual education includes a variety of strategies for using a student's native language — typically Spanish — instead of or in addition to English.

The announcement of the filing was made by Rita Montero, a former Denver school board member and liberal activist who turned against bilingual education after she tried to get her son out of Denver's bilingual program but, she said, was forced to keep him in it.

Bilingual education, she said, is "a program with great intentions that went far astray." She said the concept has been hijacked by radicals like she used to be who

have turned it into "the last bastion of the Chicano movement." She accused bilingual educators of exploiting Hispanic children to perpetuate their jobs.

Joining Montero at the state Capitol was Ron Unz, the California software entrepreneur who launched the California and Arizona campaigns. He calls his movement English for the Children. Initiative backers must gather about 80,600 signatures of registered voters to put the measure on the 2002 ballot.

Unz said rising test scores in California prove that banning foreign languages

Please see **BALLOT** on 13A

# Bilingual-education issue likely to go to voters in '02

BALLOT from Page 1A

from instructional use improves student performance. That has been contested in academic circles, however, with some saying California's massive experiment in reducing class sizes improved scores more.

And the researcher in charge of studying the shift says the question may be unanswerable.

Good teachers get good results and bad teachers get bad results regardless of what strategy officially is in use, said Tom Parrish of the American Institutes for Research in Palo Alto, Calif.

Montero and other speakers blasted Denver Public Schools. Joseph C'de Baca, a DPS teacher for 15 years, said his English learners grow up "bi-illiterate."

Asked why a constitutional amendment is the right way to address a single district's shortcomings, Montero said outlying dis-

tricts have an even graver shortage of qualified bilingual teachers.

"We're saying, give us fully qualified English speakers if you can't give us fully qualified Spanish speakers," Montero said.

Elaine Gantz Berman, president of the Denver school board, said DPS has already addressed the group's concerns by creating its English Language Acquisition program, under federal court supervision, in 1999.

"I agree that children should learn English as quickly as possible," Berman said. "I also think we need to tailor our program around the individual needs of the students, and our experience shows us that younger kids transition quicker than older kids."

A retired DPS principal, Alvina Lujan Crouse, said she supports Unz and Montero's contention that ELA is no better than "late exit" bilingual education.

"Many principals question the program," she said.

But Lorenzo Trujillo, a lawyer and Commerce City high school principal who will help lead the opposition to the initiative, said those are not issues that should be ad-

dressed in the constitution.

"There's going to be a significant campaign to educate the public that we also agree that English is important for all children. But by the same token we believe that local control is important," Trujillo said.



# Rocky Mountain News

WEDNESDAY

June 20, 2001 • RockyMountainNews.com

★ 50¢ May vary outside metro Denver

## Bilingual ballot bid

Opponents aim to stop language education programs with 2002 initiative. 4A

## Bilingual ed might wind up on ballot

Proposal's backers say English-immersion programs would work better for students

By Lynn Bartels

News Capitol Bureau

Colorado voters might be asked to dismantle bilingual education programs that critics say have created generations of "bi-illiterates."

Bilingual opponents unveiled proposals Tuesday they want to

put on next year's ballot.

"We're here to put a stop to bilingual education," Rita Montero, a former Denver Board of Education member, said on the west steps of the Capitol.

"We're here to ask that our kids be taught in English so that they can be competitive with other kids and have the same opportunities to go to college and to get decent jobs."

She said Colorado has gone from one extreme — punishing students who don't speak English by slapping their faces or putting

■ Efforts to curb bilingual education are spreading/15A

soap in their mouths for speaking their native tongues — to keeping students in bilingual programs where they continue to speak their native language and never master English.

Montero is the chairwoman of English for the Children of Colorado, a group that wants to replace bilingual education with special immersion programs followed quickly by English-speaking classes.

Hispanic activist Paul Sandoval, who pushed for bilingual education while a Denver school board member and a state senator, denounced the campaign.

"I think it's a travesty," the Denver businessman said. "You have a good program working in this state right now. All they are going to do in my opinion is create animosity, friction and divisiveness."

Montero said she expects opposition from Hispanic activists who view bilingual education as "the last bastion of the Chicano move-

ment."

Montero was flanked by several Hispanic parents who said their children fell behind in most subjects after being placed in bilingual programs.

And Joseph C'De Baca, who teaches social studies at Denver's Grant Middle School, said some sixth-graders in bilingual programs still had not mastered English by the time they reached high school.

"Now they're bi-illiterate," he

See LANGUAGE on 6A



Ellen Jaskol/Rocky Mountain News

**Vicente Sanchez, 1, sits as his aunt, Amber Sanchez of Denver, center, and other activists announce at the state Capitol Tuesday their effort to get an initiative on the ballot that would dismantle bilingual education.**

## 2 proposals given to state panel

**LANGUAGE** from 4A

said.

Backers of the 2002 initiative submitted two proposals Tuesday to the Legislative Council, which must review proposals before sending them to the secretary of state.

One proposal replaces bilingual education with the immersion program while requiring taxpayers to spend \$5 million annually over 10 years to teach English to immigrants, primarily parents or other community members who pledge to help tutor non-English-speaking students.

Campaign strategists worried that state officials would eventually decide that pro-

posal was illegal because it bundled together two issues.

The law limits a ballot initiative to a single subject.

So to be safe, Montero said, they submitted another proposal that simply requires that English immersion programs replace bilingual education.

The initiative is similar to one that failed to get on Colorado's 2000 election ballot because of a technical problem.

Supporters will need 80,571 signatures to put the issue on next year's ballot.

Contact Lynn Bartels at (303) 892-5405 or [bartels@RockyMountainNews.com](mailto:bartels@RockyMountainNews.com).

# The New York Times

NATIONAL WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2001 A14

## Colorado Is New Battleground For Halting Bilingual Education

By MICHAEL JANOFFSKY

DENVER, June 19 — Fresh off successful campaigns to end bilingual education programs in California and Arizona public schools, Ron Unz has turned his efforts to Colorado, where a local group announced plans today to collect signatures for a ballot initiative next year.

"Bilingual programs had great intentions, but they went far astray," said Rita Montero, a former Denver school board member who is leading the statewide campaign for the group, English for the Children of Colorado. "Kids come back all the time and say they have really been hurt by this program. We want our kids to be successful. We're tired of people holding them back."

Efforts to end bilingual programs, in which students are taught in their native language as well as English for several years before moving into English-only classes, have gained some momentum around the country, through campaigns like those in California and Arizona, where some studies have shown that children are performing better in English immersion settings than they had been in bilingual programs. Voter approval of a ballot initiative ended bilingual programs in California in June 1998, and in Arizona last November.

Yet Mr. Unz, a California software developer who joined Ms. Montero at a news conference here, said he had been surprised by the relative lack of interest in other states and among federal lawmakers to end bilingual programs on a wider scale. He said his national organization, English for the Children, had discussed the possi-

bility of helping with a ballot initiative in Massachusetts and suing to end bilingual programs in New York City.

Opponents of ending bilingual education say children immersed in English have difficulties with subjects like math and science. But Mr. Unz and other proponents say that weaning children off their native languages over a number of years stunts their overall academic development, leaving them grades behind.

Joseph C'de Baca, who has taught in the Denver public schools for 15 years, most recently social studies in a middle school, said bilingual education "keeps kids bi-illiterate," adding, "The intentions were good, but it has been mismanaged and politicized, hurting instruction."

For an initiative to reach the ballot in Colorado, supporters must submit valid signatures of 80,571 registered voters by three months before Election Day. Mr. Unz said two versions would be drafted — one that would cost taxpayers almost nothing or even save money by ending bilingual programs and another that would provide \$5 million for programs to help non-English-speaking parents learn the language.

Colorado law requires any initiative to address one subject only, and Mr. Unz said that if the two-part version did not withstand a legal challenge, the version ending bilingual programs only would go forward. An effort last year to end bilingual education with a ballot initiative failed after supporters were unable to submit signatures in time.

# THE DENVER POST

Tuesday, August 20, 2002 7B

Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire

## Language barriers

It's plain to me that the Founding Fathers were exceptionally brilliant men (witness the principles of self-government they delineated so eloquently in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution), but their one glaring omission was failing to codify English as the language of the land.

Of course, that assessment has the advantage of hindsight. In the context of the times, English was the language of the former British colonies. True, some Founders toyed with deep hatred for the British toyed with making classical Greek or Hebrew the "official" language, but nothing came of such impractical ideas.

The Founders weren't given to stating the obvious — the Bill of Rights was an afterthought listing "natural rights" they considered a given, for example.

Little could those 18th-century visionaries imagine that some day, Americans would be locked in battle over what language to use in public schools or that Anglophones would fret about the possible erosion of English as the official language. Tom and Alexander and George in their wildest dreams couldn't have foreseen the storm brewing in Colorado about a ballot initiative to replace current bilingual education with a one-year course in English for non-English-speaking children.

I have mixed feelings about bilingual education: It's a euphemism for a program for monolingual Spanish-speaking children. A child whose native language isn't English or Spanish is more likely to get total immersion than bilingual instruction.

That's how I learned English when my late parents enrolled me in kindergarten in Homestead, Pa., in 1948. My parents wanted to preserve our Greek heritage and reasoned that my brother and I should learn Greek first. Once we started school, we'd learn English quickly enough, which we did.

My mother, Cecelia, was born in Greece but emigrated to Beaver Falls, Pa., as a child, and grew up American, picking up English rapidly. She had a gift for languages, and majored in Latin and classical Greek, earning a bachelor's degree from Geneva College and a master's from the University of Pittsburgh. Mom also learned French. Once, while working on her master's thesis, she discovered the only available material on one topic she needed was in German. She got a German grammar and a dictionary and translated the book.

At home, we spoke Greek. Period.

When my brother, Nick, and I started school, educators were rigidly hostile toward students' speaking languages other than English at school. (We weren't alone — other kids spoke Ital-



PETER G. CHRONIS

ian, Polish or German at home.)

Our parents also sent my brother and me to Greek school, thrice weekly after regular school. We resisted because Greek school marked us as "different." Besides, it cut into play time.

In high school, I took two years of Latin and two

years of Spanish, followed by a year of Spanish at the University of New Mexico. Both Nick and I became fairly fluent in Spanish. In fact, in 1962 when my Marine Reserve outfit was in California for annual summer training, I almost didn't make it back across the border from Tijuana because the U.S. border guard thought my Spanish was *too good* when he overheard me conversing with his Mexican counterpart.

After I left home, my Greek fluency faded, until I met my Greek-born wife. Our son, David, learned Greek first, and English by total immersion in preschool.

Total immersion usually works for children, who are remarkably adaptable. Adults, though, may find it impossible to learn a foreign language in a one-month total immersion regimen, for example. That's a lot different than a child learning a new language over the course of a year.

Some kids, though, may need a little help with English, so having teachers who can switch to Spanish to clarify things they don't understand would be a benefit.

Helping youngsters learn to function in English is fine. Using public funds to preserve a specific heritage is not. Families who want to pass on their traditions should do what my parents did: Pay out of their own pockets for private instruction.

Also, at some point, the training wheels have to come off the bicycle, or the child will never truly learn to ride. And that would be a mistake: Language has caused severe divisions in Canada, where the province of Quebec made French the official language, even for signs on private businesses.

We shouldn't risk creating a similar barrier between the Anglophone and Spanish-speaking populations in the West. But neither should we unduly restrict the options open to local school districts that best know student needs.

Peter G. Chronis (pchronis@denverpost.com) is a member of the Denver Post editorial board.

## Bilingual ed again target of activist

# Activist targets Colorado bilingual program

## Unz promises initiative to 'dismantle' program

Unz promises initiative to 'dismantle' program

By Eric Hubler  
Denver Post Education Writer

The man who claims credit for "dismantling bilingual education" in California and Arizona says Colorado could be next.

Ron Unz, a California software entrepreneur turned education activist, said Tuesday that "the likelihood is very high" that he will seek to place an initiative on the 2002 Colorado ballot that would make English the only language of instruction for most children who start school speaking other languages.

The initiative — which bilingual teachers say they'll fight — would be very similar to one that failed to get on the 2000 ballot because of a technical challenge. It was modeled on Unz's 1998 California initiative and his Arizona one in 2000.

Colorado's initiative last year, led by

Please see UNZ on 18A

## Ron Unz: physicist, executive, candidate

He's been a theoretical physicist, a financial software executive and a candidate for governor of California. But to Coloradans, Ron Unz wants to be known as the man who saved a generation of immigrant children from dead-end lives.

Unz calls himself politically conservative but pro-immigrant.

He was born in Los Angeles in 1961 and showed an early talent for science: He was a Westinghouse sci-

UNZ from Page 1A

conservative think-tank director Linda Chavez and Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo., deserved to pass but suffered from "the worst possible campaign," Unz said.

Though Unz calls himself a conservative Republican, he said the issue won in California and Arizona by running nonpartisan campaigns. Involving Tancredo was "just completely insane" because many voters view him as anti-immigrant, Unz said.

"The one thing you want to do is keep away people who have a lot of very negative baggage on this issue," Unz said.

Instead, Unz said he probably will team with former Denver school board member Rita Montero, who helped craft Denver Public Schools' program for English learners but has grown increasingly critical of it.

Unz calls his movement English for the Children. He said he grew interested in, and ultimately infuriated by, bilingual-education programs because his Yiddish-speaking mother, like every other immigrant his family knew, learned English simply by going to school with English-speaking children.

Bilingual education, as the term is used in the United States, means teaching children math, social studies and other academic subjects in their native language while they learn English gradually.

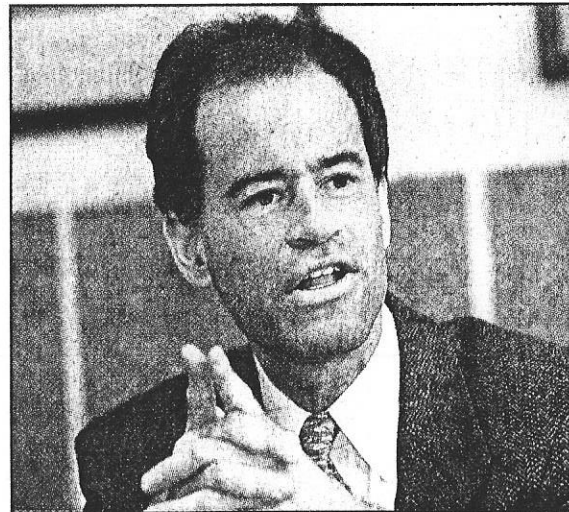
That approach may make sense for teenagers with no exposure to English, but not for young children, Unz said. Instead, he favors — and California and Arizona now require — that most non-English-speaking children spend a year in an English im-

ersion class, then move into mainstream classes.

He says those briefings only deepened his impression of such programs: "They're crazy and they don't work."

Unz largely self-financed his ballot initiatives in California in 1998 and Arizona in 2000. But the campaigns were relatively cheap, he says, because his publicity came mainly from news coverage.

He then decided to make himself an expert on bilingual education and set out to meet the country's leading



**Ron Unz, the California entrepreneur who successfully financed initiatives to dismantle bilingual education programs in California in 1998 and Arizona in 2000, said Colorado may be the next state he targets to get rid of the programs.**

John Prieto  
The Denver Post

merision class, then move into mainstream classes.

The initiative would not make bilingual education illegal, just harder to obtain, Unz said. In many cases, parents could apply for waivers to keep their kids in bilingual classes.

Unz visited The Denver Post Tuesday armed with press clippings supporting his contention that California districts that moved aggressively to end bilingual education have higher state test scores than those that delayed implementing the new law.

The California Department of Education

bilingual-education experts.

He says those briefings only deepened his impression of such programs: "They're crazy and they don't work."

Unz largely self-financed his ballot initiatives in California in 1998 and Arizona in 2000. But the campaigns were relatively cheap, he says, because his publicity came mainly from news coverage.

— Eric Hubler

best for their community, Carlos said.

Both sides agree that the key to success in this country is becoming literate in English, Carlos said; the dispute is over tactics.

Unz said he's targeting Colorado largely because reports of dissatisfaction with Denver's English Language Acquisition program convinced him he can win here. New York and Massachusetts are also on his list.

"Denver Public Schools has an excellent program to transition students who don't speak English," said school board President Elaine Gantz Berman.

A key feature of Denver's program is that it aims to mainstream kids in three years, "which is considerably shorter than what the traditional bilingual program had done historically," Berman said.

Many other districts in Colorado and across the country also aim for a three-year transition. Unz said the problem with that figure is that "somebody just made it up."

He said it's the result of a crude compromise between the most vociferous English-only advocates — who think it takes six months to become fluent — and pro-bilingual education researchers, who think it takes five to seven years.

Reigning in bilingual education won't limit anyone's freedoms, Unz said.

He noted that a previous political fight that was cast in terms of civil liberties hasn't really affected anyone. "English has been the official language in Colorado now for 12 years. It doesn't mean anything," Unz said.

isn't so sure.

"We have a three-year study, but we don't have any specific conclusions as yet," said Leslie Fausset, chief deputy superintendent.

Silvana Carlos, a former Greeley school psychologist and president of the Colorado Association for Bilingual Education, said many children learn better in programs like the ones Unz opposes. She said her organization will fight the initiative.

"Our mission is to protect the language rights of all kids," Carlos said.

Parents and local school officials need to be able to decide what approach works



# Rocky Mountain News

FRIDAY

FRIDAY, MARCH 23/2001

★ 9A

## Parents say kids are denied English-only classes

By Holly Yettick

News Staff Writer

A small group of Spanish-speaking parents say Denver schools are barring their children from English-only classes.

About a dozen of these parents and their supporters gathered Thursday outside U.S. District Court to draw attention to their concerns, which also include a lack of data, knowledge about the district's English Language Acquisition program and qualified teachers.

Three submitted letters asking Chief Judge Richard Matsch for help. He presided over the 1995 case that spawned Denver Public Schools' court-monitored English Language Acquisition program.

Under the program, Denver schools need parents' permission before children can receive extra help reserved for non-English speakers.

"No parents should be put into English Language Acquisition

against their will," said Denver school board President Elaine Berman. "If it's happening, we need to address it immediately."

It's happening, the parents say.

Guadalupe Martinez says her two youngest children are being taught in Spanish at Greenlee Elementary even though, with help from a translator, she signed a waiver requesting English-only classes.

Martinez, a single mother who works two jobs to support her four children and speaks little English, said she didn't realize what was happening until she attended a parent/teacher conference nine months later.

Miguel Alfaro said his son lost ground academically at Schenck Elementary after he was instructed in Spanish.

Like Martinez, he believes his children have a better chance of succeeding in this country if they learn English at a young age.

The principals of Greenlee and Schenck deny the parents' accusations.



Marc Piscotty/News Staff Photographer

**West High School sophomores Jessica Mendoza, left, and Thanya Mendoza, both 15, carry a sign Thursday protesting Denver Public Schools' policy on bilingual education.**

Schenck Principal Ana Garcia-Gustafson declined to comment on the particulars of Alfaro's situation. But she said, "We do not force children into any classes, English- or Spanish-speaking. If they (the Alfaros) have an issue with this, I

would be happy to sit down and readdress the issue."

Greenlee Principal Josephine Garcia says Martinez's children have been receiving English-only instruction all along.

Some English-only students

share a classroom with children who receive some Spanish instruction, Garcia said.

"Parents who want English only — we work with them," Garcia said. "I welcome them to talk about it."

Martinez says there are many more parents who are too scared to complain that their children have been forced to receive Spanish instruction.

But school board member Lucia Guzman, who represents a heavily Hispanic district in north Denver, says she believes she would have heard more about it if it were widespread.

Board members have heard about other problems with the English Language Acquisition program in recent months.

In December, court monitor and University of Colorado education professor Ernest House submitted a report that indicated five of 15 schools he evaluated had "significant numbers of misplaced students."



# THE DENVER POST

March 23, 2001

*Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire*

## DPS bilingual project attacked

By Eric Hubler

Denver Post Education Writer

Almost two years after Denver Public Schools introduced a plan to assimilate students who don't speak English, there's widespread agreement that the program needs improvement.

On Thursday a small group of protesters led by English-first activist and former school board member Rita Montero gathered at the federal courthouse to file complaints that some students who can function in English are in Spanish classes — even though their parents want them moved.

Denver's English Language Acquisition plan was created in the settlement of a

### Complaints filed with federal court

1995 civil-rights lawsuit against DPS alleging the district had no consistent policy on mainstreaming non-English-speaking students.

But it is inconsistently applied, according to Ernest F. House, the University of Colorado-Boulder education professor who is monitoring it for three years for federal Judge Richard P. Matsch.

Those who favor immediately immersing Spanish speakers in English classes say DPS keeps some children in classes conducted in Spanish against their parents' wishes. Meanwhile, those who favor a

gradual approach to mainstreaming kids complain the plan pushes some into English classes before they're ready.

"Our commitment is to try to provide parents the options that they want," responded Wayne Eckerling, assistant superintendent for educational services. "If parents want English only, then we're willing to do that. If they want native language then we're happy to provide that."

Still, the program has problems, according to House's latest report to Matsch, in December.

"Of the 15 schools visited this fall, eight

■ **DPS:** Denver Public Schools' pay-for-performance project attracts Gov. Bill Owens' attention. / **Page 7B**

have the program elements in place, four schools are marginal, which means they have significant problems, and three schools fall far short," he wrote.

He said in some cases students are assigned to English-speaking classes because the native language classes already have so many students. Appropriate tests are not always administered soon enough to guide placement. And sometimes students

Please see ELA on 7B

### DPS bilingual plan spurs inconsistency complaints

ELA from Page 1B

with adequate test scores are not removed from the program.

At least five schools had "significant numbers of misplaced students," House wrote.

Also, "teacher qualification varies greatly from school to school," House wrote. Overall, only 61 percent of the teachers are "fully qualified," he wrote.

Schools in mainly Hispanic neighborhoods tend to do a better job than those in mainly Anglo neighborhoods that have a small but growing Spanish-speaking population, House wrote.

Eckerling attributed the inconsistencies to the district's reliance on individual schools.

"That's the challenge always for the district — it's a site-based system," Eckerling said.

Guadalupe Martinez said she wants her 8-year-old son to be educated in English "because he was born in the United States, and just because he's Hispanic doesn't mean he should be in a class for

Hispanics. I can teach him Spanish."

But the boy is in a Spanish class at Greenlee Elementary and she can't get him transferred, Martinez complained. She said he has always spoken English with his siblings but his English reading skills are deteriorating.

Eckerling said he was not familiar with individual cases, but said the district is committed to putting students in programs their parents want.

Proponents of bilingual education, meanwhile, say DPS is correct to teach Spanish-speaking students academic subjects in Spanish while they learn English.

"To use the native language is very appropriate and very effective," said Silvana Carlos, president of Colorado Association for Bilingual Education.

House will report to Matsch through the next school year. Then Matsch is to rule on whether the program is satisfactory. Thursday's complaints will be among the factors Matsch considers.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2001

## Anti-bilingual ed initiative could resurface in 2002



**Peter Blake**

**Colorado Politics**

Ron Unz, the Silicon Valley entrepreneur who financed the initiatives that ended bilingual education in both California and Arizona, may turn his attention to Colorado in 2002.

He thought about running one here during the last cycle, but backed off in late 1999 after being advised that he probably wouldn't have enough time to get through the inevitable legal challenges and collect the necessary signatures before last August's deadline.

He was surprised, then, to see Linda Chavez, the future not-quite labor secretary, and her One Nation Indivisible organization launch their own anti-bilingual campaign about the time he opted out. Of course it foundered, just as his allies predicted.

Chavez had to start collecting signatures before the state Supreme Court finished its review, and when it ruled July 10 that the title was misleading, the early signatures became invalid. There was not enough time to start all over.

Unz, in Denver Friday, said he will probably try a different strategy to promote his cause. "I can't move forward without credible local support," he said. By that it was clear he meant to attract at least as many liberals as conservatives. Chavez's effort, by contrast, was immediately associated with conservatives.

Not that he expects the support of the establishment in either party. He said the backers of bilingual education outspent him 25-to-1 in California and 10-to-1 in Arizona, but he won both states with over 60 percent of the vote.

Unz, whose group is called English for the Children, expects to gain allegiance primarily by promoting the positive results that were produced by his initiatives. Last summer *The New York Times* front-paged the striking improvement in test scores garnered by former bilingual ed students who immersed themselves in English "as if it were a cold bath" after the 1998 vote. By the time Colorado might vote, he expects even more reassuring statistics to be available.

He'll have to make his go/no go decision for Colorado by this summer, 16-18 months ahead of the election. Meanwhile he'll also be working on a local initiative for New York City, the ultimate bastion of liberalism, which has an off-year election this fall. As the saying goes, if he can make it there, he can make it anywhere.

He concedes that one element working against him is that although the Colorado bilingual program has problems, it's not quite as bad as the one that was operated in California, where only 5 to 6 percent of the students learned passable English each year.

He's not afraid of a court challenge should the initiative pass. The challenge in California was rejected by the courts, and the opponents in Arizona — which is in the same federal circuit — haven't even launched one.

In California and Arizona, Unz said, "my main goal was not whether it won, but how it won. I wanted it to be seen as a unifying, not divisive issue."

In other words, he doesn't welcome the support of those who are anti-immigrant or anti-Latino.

He maintains that the abolition of bilingual education isn't a partisan issue. In California the initiative was opposed by most top Republicans and Democrats, all the unions and most of the major papers. Yet the issue won anyway. "The issue cuts across all ethnic and ideological lines," he maintains. "It divides the elites from the ordinary folks."

Fortunately, he had the support of the ordinary folks, and there were more of them.

**Moving on?** Troy Eid, chief counsel to Gov. Bill Owens, is a leading candidate for regional director of the Environmental Protection Agency. At least he has wrapped up all the support he needs from Colorado, including Owens, Sens. Wayne Allard and Ben Campbell, and even Democratic Attorney General Ken Salazar.

Unfortunately for Eid, there are five other states in the region, and although Colorado is the largest, the others are likely to have their own favorite candidates.

Eid was confident he could withstand the glare of the usual FBI background check. "I do lead an extraordinarily boring life," he said. "I'm very happy in suburbia and rarely stay up past 9:30."

Peter Blake's column appears Wednesdays and Sundays. You can reach him at (303) 892-5119 or pblake2@aol.com.