



Offering specialized language classes to people with emerging language skills

March 11, 2015

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 1, 2015

To Chair Sara Gelser and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Paulina Romo Villaseñor, the Executive Director of Downtown Languages, a non-profit school that provides educational services for immigrant adults and children. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 213. SB 213 to make the Early Learning Hubs permanent.

As a United Way agency, Downtown Languages has been receiving constant and extremely valuable support from the Early Learning Division to deliver our Pilas, Family Literacy Program successfully. The short term goals of this program are to get preschool aged children ready for school, school aged children better prepared to increase their academic performance and parents more literate and educated to be better adjusted in this society and help their children succeed. The long term goals are to help families feel more integrated, more educated and trained to eventually break away from the cycles of poverty.

The hub has been an enormous help for gathering information, forming partnerships as well as getting the financial resources we need to deliver our program. Last year, we were awarded the Social Innovation Grant to expand and complement the program that we already deliver to more than 130 Hispanic families per year. With the funds from the grant, we were able to work with Centro Latino Americano to provide case management services to all the families that we serve. The case manager conducted one-on-one

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meetings with several families to connect them with services and resources in the community such as energy assistance, food pantries, vital records, immigration services, financial and academic planning, etc. He also helped families to fill out applications for health insurance and employment. Additionally, the case manager organized and conducted developmental evaluations with parents and pre-k children to ensure that they were developing within typical expectations.

We believe in the hub's efforts to advocate, support and develop early learning as part of the education system. Education can change a family's future and the education of an individual starts well before they enter the educational system as it is now days. I urge your support of SB 213.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paulina Romo Villaseñor', written in a cursive style.

Paulina Romo Villaseñor
Executive Director