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Dear Harnett County Schools Leadership,

On behalf of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), I write to express our profound concern and strong opposition to the decision to eliminate six dual language immersion (DLI) programs impacting approximately 1,100 students in your district.

We must be direct: this decision is not just educational-it is deeply inequitable.

While schools may remain open, the transition to English-only instruction for multilingual learners represents a fundamental dismantling of access to high-quality, research-based education. Dual language programs are not enrichment opportunities-they are essential pathways to academic success, biliteracy, and long-term opportunity.

Eliminating these programs sends a harmful message to students and families: that their languages, identities, and potential are not worth sustaining.

We are particularly alarmed by the conditions surrounding this decision:

- Families being forced into impossible choices-accept English-only instruction or self-transport their children up to 30 miles away
- The lack of capacity in remaining programs to serve displaced students, effectively denying access in practice
- The destabilization of educators who are now being forced to abandon bilingual instruction or leave their school communities
- The disproportionate impact on rural and low-income families, who are least able to navigate these barriers

Let us be clear: this is not access-this is exclusion.

As someone who has lived and worked in North Carolina, I know the years of effort, advocacy, and community trust required to build dual language programs. These programs are not easily created-and they should not be easily dismantled.

At a time when we should be expanding opportunities for multilingual learners, your district is moving backward.

NABE stands firmly with the families, educators, and community members who are raising their voices in opposition. We will continue to support local advocacy efforts and bring national attention to decisions that undermine educational equity.

We urge you to:

- Reverse the elimination of these dual language programs
- Engage transparently and meaningfully with affected families and educators
- Commit to solutions that preserve and expand access to bilingual education

This is not just a local issue-it is a matter of educational justice.

We expect leadership that reflects the needs of all students-not decisions that leave multilingual learners behind.

In solidarity and accountability,
Dr. Margarita Machado-Casas
President
National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)