I have read the Choice Study and I feel that implementing any of the recommendations would be hasty, ineffective, and a disservice to the students in the language immersion programs.

**Inadequate Data**

It seems like the recommendations were made with political implications in mind rather than the best interests of the students and families. Metis wants the Board to be able to show some immediate actions are possible to solve their perceived lack of equity but any action would be unsupported by data. In Recommendation 8, Metis acknowledges that “MCPS does not systematically track participation in or attrition from its choice and special academic programs.” We simply do not know enough about the effectiveness of the programs to make changes at this time. We do not know whether any of the recommendations would make things better or worse. It would be irresponsible to implement any recommendation based on the hopes and dreams of a consultant.

**Study Does Not Address the Core Values**

Another problem with the study is that Metis only looked at one of the core values when making recommendations - Equity. They ignored Learning, Relationships, Respect, and Excellence. It is deeply troubling that Metis ignored 80% of the core values for their study. If aligning the choice programs to the strategic planning framework is the goal, then Metis has failed completely by focusing on one core value to the detriment of the others.

**Recommendation 4a Would Not Increase Representativeness of the Applicant Pool**

The problem that Recommendation 4a purports to solve is that the applicant pool for language immersion programs was not representative. Unfortunately, the recommended solution would not solve the problem. By removing the sibling preference, MCPS would only redistribute seats among an allegedly unrepresentative application pool. The solution is to make the applicant pool more representative, not to redistribute seats amongst the applicant pool.

**Recommendation 4a Would Reduce Equity for Disadvantaged Families**

Ending the sibling preference would also exacerbate any lack of equity and make it less likely that socio-economically disadvantaged parents would enroll their children in the language immersion programs. Without a sibling preference, parents run the risk of having children in multiple schools far from home. When faced with this prospect, most disadvantaged parents would not apply to the language immersion programs because of the burden on the family. Perhaps one or both parents work longer hours to make ends meet, only have one vehicle with which to transport the family, or depend on the school bus to get the children to and from school.
MCPS should not make it more difficult for these parents to give their children a quality education. Where is the equity in that?

**Recommendation 4a Would Reduce the Effectiveness of the Language Immersion Programs**

Ending the sibling preference would also make the language immersion programs less effective and adversely affect the core values of Learning and Excellence. The vast majority of families in language immersion programs do not speak the language of the program. It is a significant benefit to these families that all their children learn the foreign language, learn it together, and support each other in their learning. Without the support from siblings, only those families with the resources for tutoring would be able to provide additional resources for their children to excel. Where is the equity in that?

**Proposed Solutions**

There are some common sense methods to improve the language immersion programs and make them more equitable. MCPS must make the programs better known among all applicants by increasing outreach to underserved communities. MCPS should also increase the number of seats to close the gap between supply and demand. This is not without expense, but if any county has the resources, it is Montgomery County.

I encourage you to wait for proper data and to fully understand the ramifications of the recommendations before making any changes.

Thank you for your time.