

Montgomery County Public Schools Community Forums
Board of Education
Montgomery County Public Schools
Quince Orchard High School
15800 Quince Orchard Road
Gaithersburg 20878
Thursday, October 11th 2007.

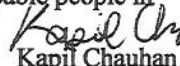
Good Evening. I am Kapil Chauhan, a 9th grader at Springbrook high school. I am currently involved in the Montgomery County Region of Maryland Associations of Student Councils, or more commonly known as MCR. I also participate in Project Change, the "You Have The Power!" branch, where we deal with bullying in Montgomery County schools. But more importantly, today I am here to discuss the topic about allowing Hindi to be a language printed in brochures and other informational papers, such as hand outs, emails, etc.

First of all, I would like to bring to the Boards attention that Montgomery County pronounces *Diwali* a Special Day of Commemoration ^[1]. Yet Montgomery County does not use Hindi as commonly, if they ever do, as they do with Chinese, Spanish, Korean, French, Vietnamese, etc. I always see brochures, pamphlets, hand outs, etc in all those various languages, which is good because there are many Korean and French speakers who have trouble understanding English. But it's unfair that those kids who speak Hindi and have parents who can't understand English very well, to have a less opportunities than the average student. I know for a fact, many kids cannot understand English, but can speak Hindi. I remember that during one of my classes, a 10th grade Hindi speaking girl followed the 9th graders to their assembly because she had trouble understanding English. That might be a future hurdle to fix, but that proves there are people who don't understand English, and they're usually placed in ESOL, but during that learning process, they're missing out on valuable experiences, such as Saturday School, and other things. Another indication that something was wrong was that there's a boy in my school, I am not entirely sure what grade he's in, but he's at least in 10th grade. He is made fun of because he can't speak English and he has trouble understanding rules on pieces of paper, which is hard in Gym class. These two indicators alerted me that lots of kids are not bilingual and not as fortunate as others.

I found out also that 5,990 people in Montgomery County are Hindi Speakers, which is .737% of the whole Montgomery County population. ^[2] It may not be as large as other languages, but it makes up a pretty big percentage compared to smaller languages and I'm 100% sure about 2000 of this Indians can't speak English or understand it very well. Why should that number suffer from a small editable error?

I also find that websites are also like this. We all know the Internet is a very good way for us to access information, but in several sites ^[3]^[4], there are little or no conversions to different languages, other than Hindi. My dad's even told me that he doesn't know if school lets out early until he checks the school page, but how do Non-English speakers access this information? I find this sort of hard to understand.

But as I see my time is running out, I'll end on the note that I would like to see Hindi put as an alternative language for hand outs, brochures, pamphlets, websites, etc. There are many capable people in helping out with technological issues and I hope to see this change soon.


Kapil Chauhan
MCR, MCJC Liaison
Project Change Member

[1] <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/commemoration/index.asp>

[2] <http://www.usenglish.org/foundation/research/ia/languages/hindi.pdf>

[3] <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cultmpl.asp>

[4] <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/>