

Implementing the Acceleration Agenda: Helping English Language Learners acquire language mastery and fluency



Boston is a city of immigrants. Nearly 28% of our students are in the process of learning English, and this is our fastest-growing population. With the assistance of an English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force and under the guidance of Dr. Johnson and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Eileen de los Reyes, BPS has revolutionized our approach to supporting ELL students and their families. Already, we have invested \$10 million to expand ELL services and more than 2,000 students completed a four-week ELL Summer Enrichment Academy. Within the last year we have identified 5,000 additional students as Limited English Proficient, bringing the total number of ELL students to approximately 17,000.

The reforms are already getting results. This fall, ELL students demonstrated gains in proficiency rates across all grades in ELA MCAS scores. Third-grade and eighth-grade ELL students saw double-digit gains in the proficiency rate, and BPS has dramatically improved identification of English-language proficiency for students who had been incorrectly tested in the past. As we continue to implement the Acceleration Agenda, we will help English Language Learners acquire language mastery and fluency.

- **Guaranteed service**

In the past, only some of the students who needed help learning English actually received assistance. We have reorganized our approach to identifying and teaching these students so they will receive appropriate language services no matter what school they attend.

- **Better communication**

BPS has improved our outreach to families who do not speak English. This will help them take full advantage of the in-class, summer school and tutoring opportunities we now offer.

- **Stronger education**

By training our current teaching staff and hiring skilled new teachers, integrating technology, improving our curriculum and strengthening outreach and family engagement, our students are gaining the language skills they need to succeed both in school and in life.

More students are receiving ELL services and more teachers are being hired and trained

BPS has hired or trained 2,261 teachers with ESL licenses or Category I, II and IV training. Another 809 teachers have completed two of three category training elements, and 776 teachers are now ESL-certified.

Principals and teachers are developing school plans to provide services to all ELLs

This work has already begun and will accelerate next year. Principals and headmasters are responsible for delivering appropriate services in all programs at their school.

Student assignment and assessment will ensure appropriate program placement

Enrollment Services will ensure students are placed in programs that are appropriate for them and BPS will ensure schools are properly equipped to teach these students. Many ELL students arrive in Boston too late to initial rounds of school selection, so BPS will launch information campaigns to help them access programs no matter when they arrive.

ELL programs are being aligned with overall district academic goals

Our current ELL programs vary in quality across the city. We are evaluating each program in collaboration with higher education and non-profit partners and are fixing gaps where they exist. We are creating a more robust curriculum for all ELL students.