

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



To: Boston School Committee
cc: Superintendent Brenda Cassellius
From: Jeri Robinson, Chairperson
Re: English Language Learners Task Force Nominations:
Rafaela Polanco Garcia, co-chair; Roxy Harvey, member
Date: February 2, 2022

Tonight I am pleased to formally nominate two appointees to the Boston School Committee's English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force. First, I nominate Committee member Rafaela Polanco Garcia to serve as Task Force co-chair alongside long-time co-chair Suzanne Lee. Ms. Polanco Garcia will fill the leadership role formerly held by Ernani DeAraujo whose School Committee term expired in January. I also nominate Roxi Harvey, chair of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC), as a member of the ELL Task Force.

Ms. Polanco Garcia is BPS parent and immigrant with a background in law and bilingual advocacy. Her activism on behalf of the Latinx community in education includes working on the No on 2 campaign in 2016, helping to pass a sanctuary schools resolution, and passing the Student Opportunity Act. Since 2015, she has served as the Director of Parent Engagement and Organizing at St. Stephen's Youth Programs in the South End.

Ms. Harvey is a BPS parent who has served as chair of SpEdPAC since 2019, representing more than 10,000 BPS students with disabilities. She has been participating in ELL Task Force meetings as a member of the public for over a year, bringing her vast knowledge of special education issues.

Established by the Boston School Committee in 2009, the ELL Task Force serves as a monitoring body and thought partner that supports BPS in addressing the needs of our increasingly multicultural and multilingual district. Nearly one in every two students speaks a language other than English at home and students come from 139 different countries.

With their personal and professional experience, Ms. Polanco Garcia and Ms. Harvey will serve as valuable additions to the ELL Task Force. I look forward to discussing their nominations this evening and request that the Committee take action on this matter at our next meeting.