

# **Presentation to the School Committee**

**English Language Learner Task Force (ELLTF)**

JUNE 10, 2020

# Agenda

- 1 About us
- 2 Our recent work
- 3 Recommendations

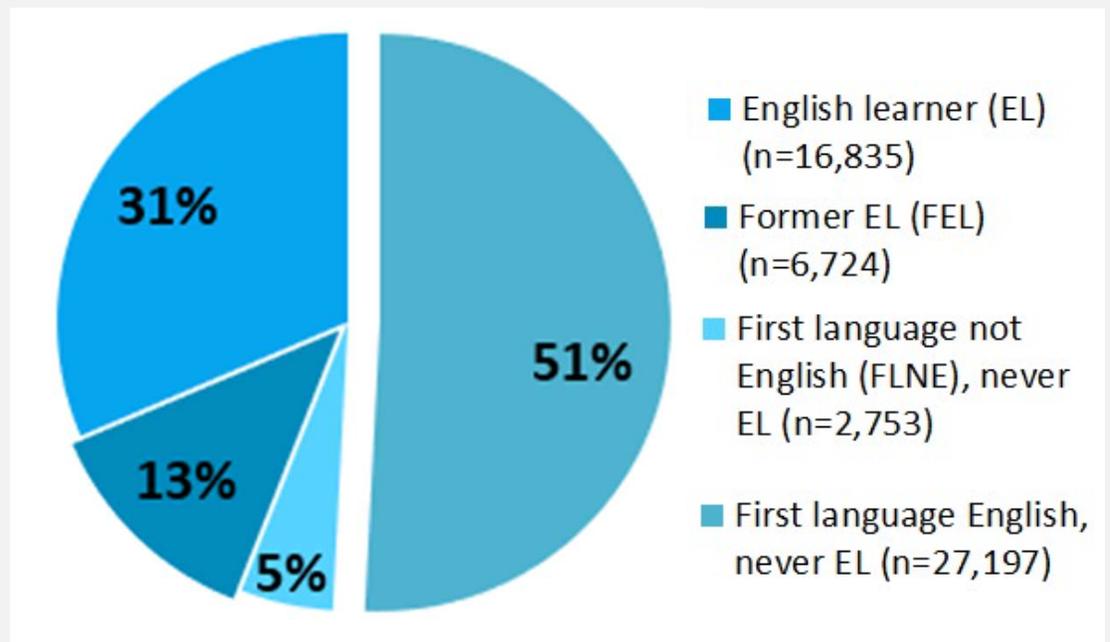
# 1 About us

- English Learners (ELs) in BPS
- Mission and membership of the ELL Task Force

## English Learners in BPS

Nearly one-third (31%) of BPS students are current English learners, and another 13% are former English learners.

About half (49%) of BPS students have a first language that is not English—including ELs, former ELs, and never-ELs.

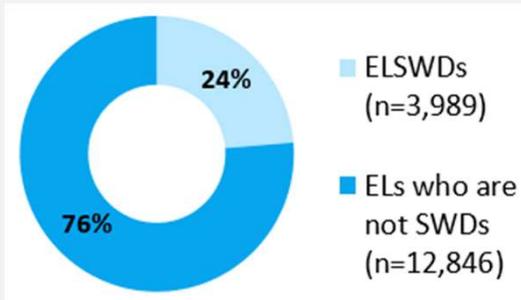


# English Learner Students with Disabilities (ELSWDs)

English learners with disabilities have the lowest performance outcomes of all students. They also have no reliable access to native language supports.

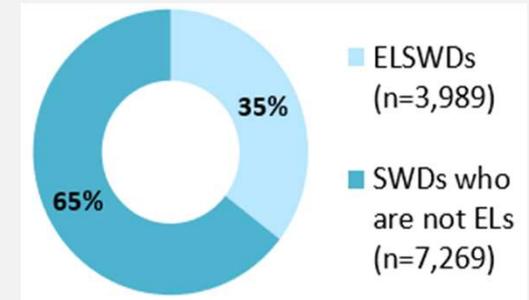
ELSWDs are...

One-fifth (22%) of all English learners.

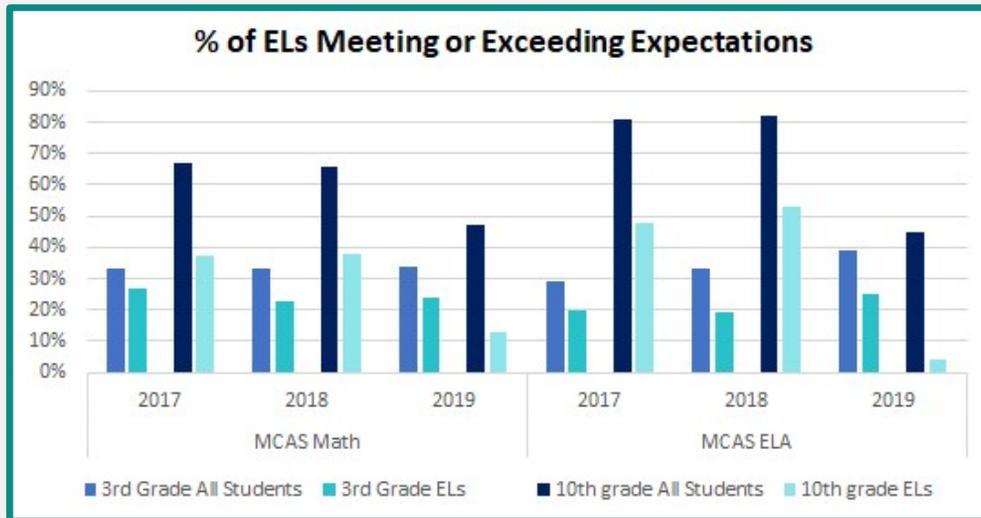


ELSWDs are...

One-third (34%) of all students with disabilities.



# EL Outcomes



**ELSWD student outcomes fall below all other subgroups.**

**ELSWD Students Grades 3-8 Math (2018)**



**ELSWD Students Grades 3-8 ELA (2018)**



## 4- Year Graduation Rates

		2017	2018	2019
Graduated	All Students	73%	75%	73%
	ELs	61%	64%	63%

**Sources:** Graduation rate data from BPS. 2017-2019 MCAS data from DESE. 2018 MCAS data from OSE, April 2019.

## Original ELLTF Mission

The English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force was created by the Boston School Committee in the context of the intervention of the Department of Justice on behalf of EL students in BPS.

Specifically, the Task Force was founded to:

-  **Provide guidance** to the School Committee and the Superintendent regarding a vision and a plan of action to respond appropriately to the growth in the numbers of students whose first language is a language other than English.
-  **Identify mechanisms** to address the needs of ELLs.
-  **Monitor** the district's progress in meeting the educational needs of ELLs.

## ELLTF Members

**Suzanne Lee, Co-chair**, Former Principal, Josiah Quincy School

**Lorna Rivera, Co-chair**, Member, Boston School Committee; Director, Gastón Institute for Latino Public Policy, UMass Boston

**Janet Anderson**, Executive Vice President, EdVestors

**Farah Assiraj**, Founder & Executive Director, Peregrinum

**Angelina Camacho**, Parent

**Paulo De Barros**, Executive Director, Cape Verdean Association of Boston

**Geralde Gabeau**, Executive Director, Immigrant Family Services Institute

**Lisette Le**, Executive Director, VietAID

**Katie Li**, Teacher, Charlestown High School

**John Mudd**, Advocate

**Maria Serpa**, Professor Emerita of Education and Special Education, Lesley University

**Marie St. Fleur, J.D.**, St. Fleur Communications, Former State Representative

**Alejandra St. Guillen**, Former Director, Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement

**Fabián Torres-Ardila**, Associate Director, Gastón Institute for Latino Public Policy, UMass Boston

**Rosann Tung**, Independent Researcher, Parent

**Miren Uriarte**, Professor Emeritus of Human Services, UMass Boston, Former Member, Boston School Committee

## **2 Our recent work**

- Current goals
- Recent work
- Lessons learned
- A shift in mindset in programs and practices

## ELLTF Current Goals

-  Recognize and promote BPS as a multilingual, multicultural, district.
-  Promote and monitor progress toward a BPS in which all departments and schools assume responsibility for outcomes of EL students.
-  Monitor, assess, and advocate to improve policies related to ELs.

## ELLTF Recent Work (1 of 3)

	area	status
<b>STUDENT ASSIGNMENT</b>	Make the impact of student assignment policy on ELs transparent.	An analysis of the Home-based Assignment Policy (HPAP) on EL students and families is yet-to-be completed.
<b>PROGRAM QUALITY &amp; PLANNING</b>	Implement the LOOK Act, with a vision and programs to move beyond SEI.	<p>An overall strategy plan to implement the LOOK Act is still needed, for a strong and comprehensive response.</p> <p>✓ At this point, 3 small dual language programs are being considered and developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K1-K2 is at VietAID. Parents are looking for a school for Grade 1, but not yet successful.</li> <li>• Cape Verdean leadership formed a dual language committee to work on Cape Verdean dual language program.</li> <li>• Haitian community continues to advocate to expand dual language program at the Mattahunt.</li> </ul>

## ELLTF Recent Work (2 of 3)

	area	status
<b>FAMILY &amp; CMTY ENGAGEMENT</b>	Advocate for comprehensive school engagement strategies.	Requires more centralized support.
	Create a system to assess and track staff language skills for all positions.	✓ Collected for new hires. Still needed for all staff.
<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>	Produce and maintain data on SEI teacher-student language match.	✓ Manual snapshot prepared in Spring 2018. No ongoing system.
	Write job descriptions and employment qualifications that include appropriate language requirements.	Not implemented system-wide.
<b>ELSWDs</b>	Include access to native language in IEPs.	Not implemented.
	Implement a Language Access and Cultural Responsiveness Checklist in IEP creation.	✓ Ready to be piloted. Implementation stalled.

## ELLTF Recent Work (3 of 3)

	area	status
<b>LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>	District strategic planning	The ELLTF developed ELLTF Strategic Plan Recommendations to provide a vision and action recommendations to move the district toward building the capacity to provide excellent services to ELs.
	District operational planning	The ELLTF participated responsively in the processes of operational planning and in setting remote learning standards for ELs.
	OEL leadership	The ELLTF advocated for the selection of knowledgeable, strong leadership for OEL.

## ELLTF: Lessons Learned in 10 Years of Work (1 of 2)

- Positive change in education of ELs has been the result of district actions in response to **the intervention of the DOJ**. But we need to study how this intervention currently relates to the district's capacity for EL program innovation.
- **Leadership at the highest levels of BPS has been critical** to keeping the needs of EL students in focus. Without this focus, outcomes quickly decline.
- **Designing programs without the needs of ELs in mind results in lower outcomes for ELs and** — because of their numbers in the enrollment — **also results in lower outcomes for the district.**

## ELLTF: Lessons Learned in 10 Years of Work (2 of 2)

- The situation of **ELs with disabilities** represents a vulnerability for BPS that the district continuously fails to address.
- At this point in time, the district is only marginally capable of serving ELs appropriately because of **the lack of multilingual staff** aligned to meet the needs of ELs in schools.

**IN SUM:** We conclude that a shift in mindset in programs and practice is required to embrace the language and cultural diversity of the district.

## A shift in mindset in programs and practices: what does that mean?

Acknowledge the programmatic and policy implications that one-half of BPS students are bilingual and one-third are ELs.

Take ELs into account in all BPS decision-making — budget, data, academics, staffing, and so on.

Recognize that language is the vehicle for learning. All ELs need access to content in their native language until they acquire academic proficiency in English.

Take students' language into account consistently and in all areas, but especially in assessment, placement and service delivery for ELs.

Engage cultural and linguistic minority communities in decision-making regarding BPS policy affecting ELs.

## **3 Recommendations**

1. Vision and Plan for full implementation of the LOOK Act
2. Take Needs of ELs into Account
3. Strengthen OEL
4. The challenges posed by COVID-19

# What is the LOOK Act?

An Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids” — the LOOK Act — was signed into state law in November 2017.

## The LOOK Act:

- Eliminates the mandate that schools use Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) as the default English learner program model.
- Gives districts greater flexibility to establish programs based on the needs of their students.

## Recommendations (1 of 4)

**REC 1. Develop a vision and plan for implementing quality bilingual programming for all ELs, including ELs with disabilities**

- A. Convene a **committee of stakeholders and experts in bilingual and dual language education**, charged with collaborating with OEL to quickly develop a plan to take advantage of opportunities in LOOK Act.
- B. **Ensure strategic plan initiatives meet the needs of EL and ELSWD students** — in literacy, MassCORE curriculum, transitional schools, and high school reform.

## Recommendations (2 of 4)

### C. Build district capacity to fully implement the LOOK Act

- \* **Expand and strengthen existing SEI Language Specific Sites** to provide bilingual instruction by bilingual teachers.
- \* Support **existing dual language programs**.
- \* Implement and monitor the Vietnamese, Cape Verdean, and Haitian **emerging dual language programs** as **tests of the district's capacity for program innovation**.
- \* The district should use demographic data effectively to locate EL programs in **schools that are accessible to where linguistic minority communities reside**.

## Recommendations (3 of 4)

### REC 2. Take needs of ELs into account, for example

- \* **Create language gap reduction goals** paralleling the race and ethnicity goals
- \* **Increase multilingual staff in critical BPS languages** to work in and run EL programs and appropriately staff all areas of the district, including instruction, curriculum, parent engagement and policy areas.
- \* **Strengthen family and community engagement** in the processes of design and implementation of programs
- \* Require the Office of Special Education to **develop plans and make progress in implementing strategies for ELSWDs.**

## Recommendations (4 of 4)

### REC 3. In the midst of transitions in BPS, strengthen OEL.

- \* **Maintain its integrity.**
- \* Strengthen its focus on **instruction.**
- \* Maintain and support **OEL's expertise** in data analysis, in monitoring compliance, and in family engagement.
- \* Hire a **strong, knowledgeable leader** with expertise in EL programs.

### REC 4. Proactively engage the challenges posed by COVID-19.

- \* **Continue to study successful efforts at engaging EL students online** across the US.
- \* **Strengthen engagement with EL families and community organizations** in order to assist the district in maintaining student engagement.
- \* **Provide professional development** for teachers of ELs and ELSWDs in the use of remote learning technology, combined with family outreach.