

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

PRESENTATION TO BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
JUNE 8 2016

BACKGROUND

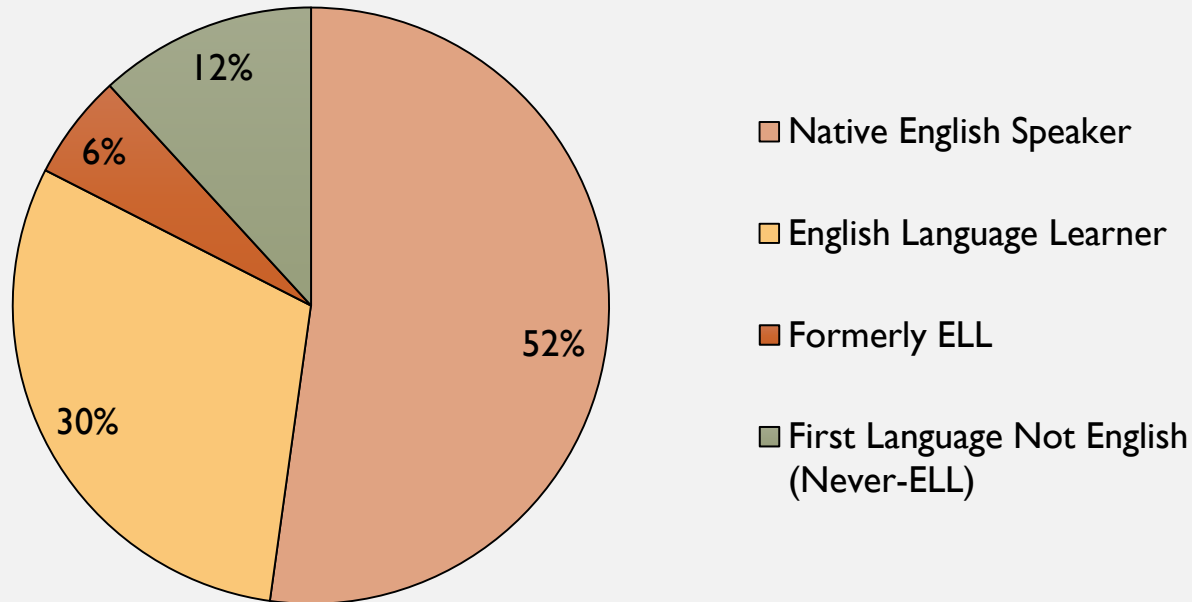
The English Language Learner (ELL) Task Force of the Boston School Committee was created in October, 2009 for the following purposes:

- **Provide guidance** to the School Committee, the Superintendent regarding the vision and a plan of action that responds appropriately to the growth in the numbers of students whose first language is a language other than English
- **Identify mechanisms** to address their needs.
- **Monitor** the district's progress in addressing the recommendations of the ELLTF approved by School Committee in March 2011

CONTEXT OF ELLS IN BPS

Distribution of Students in Boston Public Schools by Language Proficiency Group, 2015-2016 School Year

Total enrollment = 53,530.



- There are currently 16,228 ELLs in the district representing 30% of all students.
- Since the 2005-2006 school year, the percentage of ELLs in the district has increased from **16%** to **30%**. Over this time, the number of ELLs in the district has increased by 77%, while the overall population has decreased by 6%.
- There are **70** first languages spoken among ELLs in BPS.
- **21%** of all ELLs are also designated as SPED. These 3,432 ELL-SPED students account for **33%** of all SPED students in the district.

Source: Mass Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's District Profile for Boston (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/general.aspx?topNavId=1&orgcode=00350000&orgtypecode=5&>) and DART for ELLs (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/dart-english-language-learners.xlsx>). These numbers differ slightly from "Boston Public Schools At A Glance Fact Sheet".

COMPOSITION OF THE ELL TASK FORCE

- 15 members (currently 13 are active, see Appendix A)
- 2 new members are being proposed for your appointment to the Task Force:
 - Claudia Rinaldi, Professor of Education, Lasell College, with expertise in English Language Learners with disabilities.
 - Samuel Hurtado, Executive Director of South Boston en Accion, with expertise in parent engagement.

Vitae for both candidates are available on request.

2015-2016 ELL TASK FORCE GOALS

1. Recognize and Promote BPS as Multilingual, Multicultural District.
2. Improve Data Systems and the Use of Technology
3. Improve Student Assessment and Assignment
4. Expand ELL Program Quantity and Quality
5. Support ELL Students with Special Needs
6. Improve Family and Community Engagement
7. Ensure Accountability and Monitoring

(Details objectives and activities under each goal appear in Appendix B)

ORGANIZATION OF THE ELL TASK FORCE

- Bi-monthly meetings of the Task Force
- 4 Subcommittees met monthly, headed by a member of the Task Force
 - **Data and Student Assignment** (Janet Anderson)
 - **Program Quality** (Suzanne Lee)
 - **English Language Learners with Disabilities (ELL-SWD)** (Maria de Lourdes Serpa)
 - **Parent Engagement** (Rev Cheng Imm Tan)
- The Task Force holds discussions with district staff and others involved in initiatives and programs that affect the education of ELLs in BPS. It also conducts sites visits, and is open to input from parents, staff, community organizations and others via direct communication with the Task Force.

COLLABORATIONS

- In a year of transition for the district, the ELL Task Force has forged relationships with new district leaders and strengthened partnerships with BPS offices.
- Works most directly with Office of English Language Learners (OELL) (staff in attendance at every meeting).
- Works as needed with other district offices. This year worked with:
 - Student Support Services (including SPED and OELL), Office of Engagement, Citywide Parent’s Council, Office of Strategy, Data and Accountability, Student Assignment, Budget Office, Office of Human Capital, and Communications Office.
- Engages with parents, community-based organizations, and experts through its subcommittees. There are members of the public in attendance at every meeting of the Task Force.

DATA & STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Improve Data Systems and Use of Technology

Priorities for 15-16	Progress
Monitor capacity to produce accurate information that meets the requirements of USDOJ/USDOE reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality and accuracy of USDOJ/USDOE report. Notable improvement in data collection from schools
Identify a calendar of data requests and reports for the academic year to obtain data in a timely way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively good flow of data to the subcommittee from BPS departments. Developed a calendar of data needed for meetings in 2016-2017 (see Appendix C).
Jointly develop and consistently review a set of indicators of appropriate program placement and achievement of ELLs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiting for longitudinal study of program quality and student outcomes.
Determine if current distribution of programs responds to the distribution of linguistic groups in neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated conversation between BPS and key community based organizations on ELL programming (i.e. language specific programs in particular neighborhoods).

DATA & STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Improve Student Assessment and Assignment

Priorities for 15-16	Progress
<p>Assess the impact of home-based student assignment plan on placement, programs and outcomes of ELLs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of impact of Home-Based Assignment plan on ELL assignments has been requested. Recent preliminary report to School Committee on Home-Based Assignment plan did not include data on ELLs. Will continue to request this assessment. • Met with Welcome Center and Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center to discuss in-take process, specially as it related to waiting period for ELL families and their position on Round I placements.
<p>Keep informed about the progress of universal enrollment and its potential impact on ELL students and families to ensure equitable access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with district strategic leadership to discuss ELL student assignment and the need to balance choice and program integrity. This discussion continues. • Reviewed article by E. Setren on ELLs in Boston charter schools, showing strengths and weaknesses of the report. (See Appendix D) • Full discussion of Enroll Boston with Boston Compact staff and Mayor’s Chief of Education in December.

<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor quality and scope of USDOJ/USDOE reports. • Communicate next year’s data requests to variety of BPS departments at the end of this year to assure timely access to the data. • Continue to request report on impact of Home Based Assignment plan on placement, program accessibility, and outcomes for ELLs. • Continue to monitor policy changes affecting student assignment to insure equitable access by ELLs. • Continue to provide input on needs of ELLs to Enroll Boston as requested.
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PROGRAM QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Expand ELL Program Quantity and Quality

Priorities for 15-16	Progress
Determine the status of evaluation of outcomes of ELL students required by Agreement with USDOJ/USDOE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed Dec 2015 USDOJ submission via presentation to ELL Task Force by OELL. Reviewed proposal for research on student outcomes now being conducted internally.
Assess the quality and impact of the various models of English language learning, including dual language, language-specific SEI, multi-lingual SEI, and SIFE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided input into the allocation of funding for ELL programs. Waiting to review research on student outcomes by program being conducted.
Work with BPS in the development of an action plan to recruit, hire, develop and retain a diverse pool of teachers and school staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial work on this has begun.
Act as a thought partner by bringing to bear the expertise of the members of the ELL Task Force on plans for ELL initiatives. Developing first a protocol for this process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suzanne Lee participated in the OAGTF and the Women Educator of Color's Leadership Development Workshops. Rev Cheng Imm Tan led workshops on Cultural Competence and on Parent Engagement for LATF's. Dr. Maria Serpa led joint training with LATFs and COSESS.

Next Steps:

- Review and comment on research on ELL outcomes by program.
- Participate, review, and comment on OELL masterplan for 2016-2017.
- Focus on hiring policies and practices including ways to insert priority on cultural and linguistic competence in the recruitment and hiring process.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Support ELL Students with Special Needs

Priorities for 15-16

The IEP Design Process
Implementation of IEP's

Progress

- ELL/SWD's ELD level is now included in IEP's.
- Discussion identified need to include student's ELD goal and staff assignment code that identifies the type of language support special required for the student. This designation should also be recorded in the SIEMS.
- OELL is improving the availability of translators for IEP meetings.

Developing a Guidance
Document for the Assessment of
ELL-SWDs

- The Guidance Document for Assessment of ELL-SWDs or students suspected of having a disability has been developed by the district and submitted to the Special Education office.

Next Steps:

- Provide input in the development of digital IEP.
- Monitor the inclusion of ELD level and goal of the student and a staff code that identifies the type of special education teacher required in the new digital IEP's to be developed next year.
- Monitor the deployment of translation services by OELL so that timely translations and professional interpreters for non-English speaking parents are available.
- Discuss and support the development of a plan of action for training and implementation of guidance for the assessment of ELL-SWDs.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Support ELL Students with Special Needs

Priorities for 15-16	Progress
Hiring of Highly-Qualified Personnel for ELL-SWDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical data/policy gaps identified including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No record of 2nd language capacity of teachers in both regular education and SPED. ○ Improvement needed in the school level process of projecting specific language supports required for ELLs. ○ Principals not required to indicate specific language needs of ELL-SWD's at probable org.
Professional Development for Relevant Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions about specific trainings delivered highlighted the need for comprehensive PD in this area. BPS expressed a deep commitment to conduct PD focused on culturally and linguistically sustaining practices as fundamental to progress in addressing the needs of ELL-SWD's. • ELLTF members have participated in PD for the district. (Dr. Maria Serpa led joint training with LATFs and COSESS and Rev. Chen Imm Tan led workshops on Cultural Competence and on Parent Engagement for LATF's.

Next Steps:

- Review and discuss OHC and SPED-OELL reports identifying # of SPED teachers with specific language competence and estimating current need of teachers or paras who can provide support in the students' native language.
- Support embedding cultural and linguistic competence (sustaining practices) in recruitment and hiring.
- Support and focus on cultural and linguistic competence (sustaining practices) of teachers and paras to meet the needs of ELL-SWDs.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Improve Family and Community Engagement

Priorities

Document the experience of parents of ELLs in BPS

Progress

- Worked with OE, Citywide Parent’s Council, Countdown to Kindergarten, and OELL to identify bright spots and concerns
- Meetings included representatives from community-based organizations such as BMA, DSNI, Families First, YOFES, CVC-Unido, and MAC in the work of the subcommittee.
- Conducted site visits to the Umana, Mildred Orchard Gardens, JQS Upper, Newcomers Academy/Boston International High School, and Mattahunt.
- Identified many bright spots:
 - Close partnership between OELL and OE
 - Parent University
 - Countdown to Kindergarten- outreach/engagement of parents
 - Creation of DELLAC to involve ELL parents
 - ESOL classes in schools encourage parent involvement
 - Academic Parent-Teacher Teams give parents understanding and tools to support their child’s learning
 - Partnerships with community organizations
 - Principal leadership and vision in a school(s) that seek parent input, fosters parent community and supports parent engagement
 - Creation of a translation services by OELL

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Improve Family and Community Engagement

Priorities	Progress
Document the issues facing parents of ELLs in BPS (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the following challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uneven understanding of what parent engagement entails. ○ Uneven understanding by principals of their role in improving parent engagement. ○ Lack of parental understanding of ELL programs and choices. ○ Lack of clear cultural and linguistic competency standards and accountability for all schools.
Develop knowledge-based recommendations of practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced in-depth literature review of immigrant parent engagement to be used as we examine practices in coming year. (See Appendix E)
Monitor the availability of translated materials and phone supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with OELL, OE, Office of Communications, parents and school staff (principal and others) to better understand how communication takes place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ District-wide: examined communication around school registration and district wide meetings to gather parent input. ○ At the school level: examined how schools handle parent orientation and parents are oriented at schools and communicated. • Bright Spots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creation of a translation services by OELL. ○ Superintendent’s meetings with linguistic communities. ○ School-level communication in schools with adequate bilingual staff. • Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination of communication among different offices to assure broad linguistic coverage. ○ Translation and interpretation at the school level remains very uneven.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Improve Family and Community Engagement

NEXT STEPS

- Work with OE and OELL to develop common understanding of ELL parent engagement and parent engagement rubric that can be implemented.
- Examine bright spots in site visits to identify successful elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DISTRICT

- Support district wide commitment to better train, support, resource and hold school leaders and educators accountable for parent engagement for all students, including ELLs.
- Build culturally and linguistically welcoming school environments and culturally relevant curriculum that affirms our diverse student body and families. Commitment to better train, resource and hold school leaders and educators accountable to this recommendation.
- Build language capacity at the district and school levels, both oral and written, to communicate with parents in schools.
- Ensure adequate information and outreach to familiarize new immigrant parents with the school registration process (including the registration timing and schedule) and to help parents understand how to pick schools that best meet their child's needs.

BRIGHT SPOTS

- The relationship between the ELL Task Force and OELL, the Office of Student Support Services, and the Office of Engagement as well as with other offices in the district.
- Data and Information
 - Improvement in the quality and accuracy of reports to USDOJ/USDOE (per presentations to ELLTF).
 - Ongoing communication about data needs and a good flow of information for discussion.
- ELL students with disabilities
 - Inclusion of key variables in the IEP such as ELL students' ELD level.
 - Improvement in the availability of translations for IEP's through the newly created Translation and Interpretation Unit.
- Creation of DELLAC by OELL
- Growing support for ELL parent engagement made possible:
 - By stronger collaboration between OELL and OE,
 - By efforts of Countdown to Kindergarten,
 - In schools with appropriate bilingual staff,
 - By principals and teachers who seek parent input and foster parental engagement.
- For making the budget understandable: Budget Office

CONTINUING CHALLENGES

- Data and information gaps
 - The lack of analysis of the impact of the home-based student assignment plan on the placement, program accessibility, and outcomes for ELLs - Continuing concerns about the way student assignment is impacting programs.
 - The lack of information about language assets of the district.
- Student Assignment
 - Achieving a balance between parent choice and program options and integrity in the process of student assignment.
- Program Quality
 - Different definitions at the school level of what constitutes an SEI, a multilingual SEI, a dual language, and other programs.
 - Continued gaps in the cultural competence and linguistic skills between staff hired and the requirements of an increasingly diverse districts.
- ELLs with disabilities
 - Continued problems in the deployment of appropriate linguistic resources for the assessment and delivery of programs to ELL students with disabilities.
- Parent Engagement
 - Effective and vibrant ELL family engagement is not yet the norm.
 - Despite improvements in translations and interpretations, continuing gaps remain in parents of ELLs' accessibility to information: about their child, *on how to pick schools*, and about events and services at both the school and district level.
 - Schools are not yet adequately resourced and held accountable for parent engagement.

NEXT STEPS

- Evaluate Subcommittee Structure
- Review priorities for 2016-2017
- Develop work plans for 2016-2017 in collaboration with district leaders.

REQUEST TO BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

- Re-appoint the ELL Task Force for year 2016-2017
- Appoint two new members:
 - Dr Claudia Rinaldi
 - Samuel Hurtado