Update
from the
Boston School Committee
English Language Learner Task Force
May 23, 2012
Background

The Boston School Committee ELL Task Force was created in October, 2009 for the following purpose:

- To provide guidance to the School Committee, the Superintendent, and BPS on the vision and development of a plan of action that responds to the new demographics of the BPS for students whose home language is not English;

- To identify mechanisms to address the needs of our increasing multicultural and multilingual district and its students;

- ELL Task Force presented recommendations to the School Committee in March, 2011. The School Committee endorsed the recommendations in June 2011 and approved the reconstitution of the ELL Task Force into a monitoring body that would meet during SY 2011-12 to review progress made towards implementing the recommendations.
1) How can the District transform its infrastructure, programs, instruction, and curriculum to successfully educate the ELL student population?

2) How can the District ensure that all programs needed by English Language Learners are available, accessible, and equitably distributed in all school zones?

3) What systems of accountability will the District need to develop in order to assess its performance as a district, in schools, and in classrooms?
Process

- Extensive year-long process including: visits to schools, testimony, research scans and input from collaborating BPS departments
- Site visit to Family Resource Center and Newcomers Assessment and Counseling Center
- Ten meetings of the full ELL Task Force
- Review and Analysis of data, reports, and studies regarding ELL programs in Boston and other cities
- Review of written BPS responses and updates to ELL Task Force recommendations
Key Themes

- BPS Improvements for ELL’s Will Benefit all Students
- Multilingualism/multiculturalism align with the BPS ELL policy and goals of Acceleration Agenda.
- To promote holistic education, global competitiveness and civic participation, BPS students should speak at least two languages (native tongue and one other) fluently.
- All policies should promote instructional quality, rigor, and a language-rich environment.
- Cultural proficiency is important for all BPS students, key BPS leadership, administrative, and instructional staff.
- BPS has made progress, but for sustained advances the work needs ongoing support and critical funding.
What is the BPS linguistic diversity?

- 46% of BPS students speak a language other than English as their first language
- BPS students’ families are from over 100 countries
- BPS students speak over 80 different first languages
- 40% of BPS students are either currently learning English or mastered academic English while attending BPS schools

Data as of April 17, 2012 from MyBPS > ELD Level tabs & May 24, 2012 “AllBPSwithTests.xls” file generated by BPS OIT
What is the distribution of ELLs - by language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish*</td>
<td>9,777</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian*</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdean*</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese*</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese*</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>17,125</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data as of April 17, 2012 from MyBPS > ELD Level tabs
## What is the distribution of ELLs - by program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number of ELLs</th>
<th>Percent of all ELLs</th>
<th>Percent in Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEI Language Program</td>
<td>5,767</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way Bilingual</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBE (HILT for SIFE)</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI General Ed.</td>
<td>10,168</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data as of April 17, 2012 from MyBPS > ELD Level tabs
What is the distribution of ELLs – by grade?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total ELL</th>
<th>Percent of ELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>9,281</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>3,097</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3,578</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17,125</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data as of April 17, 2012 from MyBPS > ELD Level tabs
In January, 2011, the following recommendations were approved by unanimous vote of the ELL Task Force. The recommendations were presented to the School Committee in March, 2011 and endorsed in June, 2011.

Seven priority goals:

- Recognize and Promote BPS as a Multilingual, Multicultural District
- Improve Student Assessment and Assignment
- Expand Program Quality and Quantity
- Improve Family/Community Engagement
- Support ELL Students with Special Needs
- Improve Data Systems and Use of Technology
- Ensure Accountability and Monitoring
1) Recognize and Promote BPS as a Multilingual, Multicultural District

BPS is a multicultural school district. 46% of BPS students speak a language other than English as their first language. BPS students’ families are from 100+ countries. 61% of ELL students were born in the United States.

Areas of Progress
- There has been some progress in this area, including the Dever/McCormack dual language expansion, approval of Margarita Muñiz Academy, summer pilot academy in East Boston.

Issues
- The reality of BPS as a multilingual, multicultural school body is not yet embedded in the district.
- Need for district strategy and action plan with clear outcomes to expand the number of seats in two-way bilingual and TBE programs, where ELL students excel.
- Prioritize the inclusion of cultural competency training and best practices throughout the district.
- Expand the number and type of world language programs throughout the district.
- Revise BPS mission statement to reflect and celebrate the multilingual, multicultural nature of the district.
2) Improve Student Assessment and Assignment

Areas of Progress

- Implementation of consistent and accurate language proficiency testing using validated and standardized instruments for assessment and assignment.
- Improvements at FRC and NACC- better customer service, more welcoming environment, better-trained staff.
- Hiring of Parent Liaisons at NACC to provide guidance and support for families.
- Better data collection and conversion to electronic files.
- Presence of Special Ed Bilingual Assessor at NACC.

Issues

- Concern that new student assignment process will impact improvements made by OELL and at NACC in terms of assessment and location of programs. BPS should make sure that the needs of ELL students are front and center in development of new student assignment policy.

- The district should distribute programs for English Learners by language, grade level, and zone, including in higher-performing schools, to reflect Boston’s neighborhood compositions and to give parents greater choice.
2) Improve Student Assessment and Assignment

Issues (cont)

- New school assignment process must take into account disproportionate number of ELL students who do not participate in the initial rounds of school selection, including creating enough seats for students arriving after first rounds of enrollment.

- Need for information campaign to encourage families to enroll during prime months.

- Some concerns expressed about continued long waits for testing at NACC during peak times, despite improved training and staffing system.

- Improve system for assessment and assignment of students who have interrupted learning, ie SIFE.

- Issue of lack of seats in some neighborhoods, eg East Boston, which forces some students to go to school outside their neighborhood.
3) Expand Program Quality and Quantity

Areas of Progress

- Dramatic increase in number of teachers undergoing category training and other professional development related to ELL instruction.
- Summer professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders.
- Expansion of afterschool and summer programming targeted to ELL students.
- Mauricio Gastón Institute/Center for Collaborative Education report that identified where ELL students are succeeding academically and documented best practices.

Issues

- ELD Level 4 and 5 students meeting or exceeding BPS average MCAS scores, with lower dropout rates than BPS average. Need new narrative throughout district about academic achievement of ELL students to inform BPS staff, parents, and community.
- Cultural competency is a key factor in academic success. Need to embed cultural competency into all trainings, including new teacher orientation. Cultural competency best practices need to be scaled up and operationalized across district.
- BPS needs action plan with concrete goals for recruitment and retention of a diverse pool of teachers and school leaders, especially bilingual and bicultural staff and those with expertise in working with English learners.
4) Improve Family/Community Engagement

Areas of Progress

- Expansion of Parent University and improved language capacity.
- Improved communication and outreach effort to educate families about registration process.
- Creation of ELL Youth Advisory Committee.
- Improved customer service at FRC and NACC.
- Outreach and collaboration with community organizations.

Issues

- Address lack of centralized interpretation services and improve quality of translation services by instituting clear BPS standards.
- Develop communication and outreach plan from Office of Communications, OFSE, Office of Welcome Services, OELL and other departments in order to clarify respective roles and increase effectiveness of outreach effort.
- Increased collaboration with community partners.
- Need more work to engage high school ELL students to better inform them.
5) Support ELL Students with Special Needs

Areas of Progress

- Implementation of policy that states that all Special Education ELL students are entitled to both Special Education and ELL services in a manner appropriate to each individual student’s need.
- Expanded professional development to LAT Facilitators and Special Education coordinators and administrators.
- Creation of OSESS/OELL Joint Workgroup.
- Improved data collection to identify ELL students with disabilities.

Issues

- Develop protocols for academic assessments for ELL students with disabilities and an action plan to ensure native language assessments for major languages.
- Action plan to address overrepresentation of Spanish-speaking ELLs in special education.
- Action plan to understand why some ELL students with disabilities remain long-term ELL students and to take steps to remedy the situation.
- Create pathways for dual certification (ESL/Special Education).
- Improved communication to families of ELL students with disabilities to ensure that families understand their rights and choices.
6) Improve Data Systems and Use of Technology

**Area of progress**

- More capacity by OELL around data. Increased understanding of who ELL students are and where they are located.
- Electronic files.

**Issues**

- OELL has greatly increased its ability to collect and analyze data on ELL students. We want to ensure that this high level of data capacity continues and that the district as a whole improves its data capacity.

- Ensure that the increased data capacity is integrated into the new student information system.

- Increase use of technology resources in the classroom to improve academic skills of ELL students and native English speakers learning world languages.
7) Ensure Accountability and Monitoring

Areas of progress

- Signing and finalizing the agreement with Department of Justice that established long-term policies and programs to ensure that the services and services provided to ELL students are of high quality, delivered by qualified teachers and tailored to the specific needs of each individual student.

- Creation of cross-functional teams- eg OSESS/OELL.

- OELL quarterly written responses to ELL Task Force recommendations.

Issues

- Need for continuation of cross-functional teams and written updates on progress towards meeting ELL Task Force recommendations.

- Need for ELL Task Force to continue with quarterly meetings 2012-13
Next Steps

- Request written BPS response to the recommendations by June ELL Task Force meeting.

- Continuation of ELL Task Force through June 2013 to monitor progress and provide support towards implementation of recommendations.