



Office of English Learners
Farah Assiraj, Interim Assistant Superintendent

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To: Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent
Cc: Dr. Drew Echelson, Deputy Superintendent of Academics; Megan Costello, Senior Advisor, Office of the Superintendent; Jonathan Palumbo, Chief of Communications; Mary Dillman, Chief of Staff
From: Farah Assiraj, Deputy Chief Academic Officer & Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of English Learners
Date: February 25, 2022
RE: Rebranding the Office of English Learners

Dear Superintendent Cassellius,

I am presenting to you a rationale for the rebranding of the Office of English Learners. In the past years, the office has struggled with leadership, sustainability with staffing and supporting schools/teachers with instruction. While across the nation, the state and in the BPS, there has been a shift and transition to using Multilingual learners instead of English learners. Additionally, in our strategic planning towards increased native language access and programs we have set out to use synonymous language to reflect the changes in the LOOK Act and to promote the benefits of multilingual and multicultural education inclusive of students' intersectional identities, histories and communities.

The English learner framework that has been adopted centers English only and presumes that English is the dominant language and that in which all other language groups should assimilate towards. English only programming has been harmful in its adoption in the state and in the district when we moved away from Transitional Bilingual Education to Sheltered English Immersion programming. As we move towards undoing the harm of English only, we must also shift in view, perception and belief before practice that multilingual and multicultural education not only benefits those with other languages at home but monolingual English speakers.

I propose that the Office of English Learners is rebranded to the **Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME)**. This updated title will better reflect the new staffing model with bilingual support and our new vision for moving towards an equitable, racially, culturally, linguistically and ethnically responsive teaching and learning for multilingual learners centering multicultural education that represents the cultural diversity of our students. I strongly believe that if we rebrand the office to center multilingual learners and the multicultural assets of our students that we can attract more competent staff to join our team, create a more inclusive work environment that reflects the values of collaboration across the district, sustain the vision we set out with your leadership and develop a more responsive approach to teaching and learning reflective of our students. *This is the ripe time to make this shift in order to solidify our commitment of serving multilingual learners as outlined in the District and OEL vision.*

Boston Public Schools
Dr. Brenda Cassellius,
Superintendent

Boston School Committee
Jeri Robinson, Chair

City of Boston
Michelle Wu, Mayor



Here are other districts with similar department names:

- Cleveland OH Public Schools District: <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Page/78>
- Portland ME Public Schools District: <https://mlc.portlandschools.org/>
- Los Angeles CA Unified: <https://ca01000043.schoolwires.net/mmed>
- Austin TX Public Schools District: <https://www.austinisd.org/multilingual>
- Framingham MA Public Schools District: <https://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/domain/67>

Please let me know if you would like to meet to discuss further for your consideration, if you approve/ reject the proposed rebranding title or if there are other steps I should seek for approval. I welcome and look forward to hearing your feedback as well as others from the team.

Farah Assiraj

Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of English Learners
Deputy Chief Academic Officer

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