

EXPLORING HOME LANGUAGE ACCESS OPTIONS at BPS (v 2.0)

Prepared by Maria B Serpa & John Mudd (Dec 14,2021) in response to Dr. Drew Echelson's invite at a Zoom meeting in Nov 2021. This document was shared and discussed with him on Dec. 15, 2021 and revised on Jan 11, 2022.

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Practical *Short-Term* Options

1. Coordinator

Assign a coordinator as point person to lead the 'native language implementation team' with a timeline to manage the 'home language access' implementation in different configurations that include the following options (may need to build the airplane while flying it).

2. Update the Language Policy

- a. Announce the new access to native language access policy at the highest level (School Committee, Superintendent) as soon as possible (January 2022). Include the benefits of bilingualism
- b. Communicate the updated policy statement about *home language access* to all BPS educators in both General and Special Education.
- c. Inform the parents (in their home language) about the research-based benefits of the change from "*English Only*" to "*English Plus*" with access to home language instruction in different ways.
- d. Encourage parents to understand that in speaking more of their home language with their children at home helps them with learning English! (Increased oracy and literacy in the home language helps with learning academic English).
- e. Require IEPs to have options for access to home language instruction within FAPE & LRE as well as English language goals and objectives.

3. ESSER Funds

- a. Provide immediate access to acquisition of home language materials and web resources appropriate for ELs with and without disabilities. (Lots of opportunities here!)
- b. Prioritize investment in *new and more effective approaches to recruit* and hire bilingual general and special education teachers, substitutes, and paras etc.
- c. Hire bilingual tutors (Boston area has college students from all over the world that can help BPS)
- d. Provide internships possibilities to highly proficient BPS *bilingual high school students* to use project-based language teaching listed under Section 4. (Students can teach their teachers at least social language communication in Spanish, etc. (Landurand and Cazabon)
- e. Pay community organizations and individuals (including artists, musicians, diverse sports,etc) to provide exposure and connection to native language as: aides, coaches, drama, dance, etc. in schools.
- f. Provide BPS monolingual English teachers with the possibility to learn another language beginning with Spanish. (many I know have shown that interest)
- g. Build teacher capacity to teach *literacy in the home language* and biliteracy (National Literacy Panel, 2006 not the National Reading Panel, 2000).
- h. Provide professional learning to special education and related services professionals to update them in Bilingual Special Education from pre-referral to IEP writing and placement to ensure FAPE2 in LRE2 in what is different between special Ed in one language and special education in two languages (with learning English as a new language).

4. Project Based Strategies for Home Language Access (Project Based Learning) under supervision of a licensed teacher, if needed

Home language access could be provided in creative and very engaging ways for students in the short term in collaboration between BPS and diverse communities/families. Given that "culture shapes experience and experience shapes the brain and the heart", the student's access to home language and home culture can also be provided in different ways with Teacher/adult guidance and supervision including:

- a. **Through the Arts:** music (popular songs, bilingual choir, playing musical instruments from home culture); theater (semester long culturally relevant plays in home language); 'BPS Got Talent' modeled after TV Got Talent USA or 'The Voice BPS' (modeled after the Voice USA, Voice Portugal etc.) in partnership with local artists etc.); Films & TV Series (foreign language and with English subtitles).
- b. **Through Cooking:** Students can partner with BPS cafeterias and collaborate in identifying recipes from home culture etc. (I am teaching Portuguese to my grand- daughter through cooking. I am sure other grandmothers have a lot to offer BPS.)
- c. **Through Gaming (online or F2F):** Students can be involved in researching culturally specific games, create and use them to teach others. Example including Bilingual Jeopardy Adapted, Who Wants To Be A Bilingual Millionaire among other options.
- d. **Through Multimedia Projects:** in home language (including contributions of immigrants to USA wealth creating; creation of videos, podcasts, etc.
- e. **Through Physical Exercise:** culturally specific. Experience culturally universal and specific games/sports such as soccer, chess, etc. (there are online versions that can be used)
- f. **Through Dance:** Teach dances from different cultures (Zumba, Samba, Salsa etc.)
- g. **Through Science and Math Based Projects** via home language to be shared to the school and family community beginning with healthy eating info in the home language. (applied science)
- h. **Reading/listening home language books and/or watching a planned video festival** or films, as basis for discussion in home language which can foster creative and high-level reasoning while they are accessing the home language communication skills.

5. Data Collection

- a. Complete the survey of how many bilingual teachers, paraprofessionals or other BPS staff by language group and proficiency are available.
- b. Identify and update report on the match of the language of teachers with the same language of students in single language SEI classes.
- c. Identify the number of bilingual teachers needed (for Long Term)

6. Changes in Practice (PHASE 1)

- a. Change the SEI -Language Specific designation to **Transitional Bilingual Education** (TBE) immediately and reverse what was done back in 2002 when BPS changed the designation of TBE to SEI-Language Specific with the same bilingual/ESL teachers.
- b. Change the SEI Multilingual designation to TBE and engage in appropriate planning for implementation for EL with and with no disabilities without having to wait for the ideal.
- c. Plan to remove ELs (WIDA ACCESS levels 1-3) from English Only classrooms placements and place them in dual language or TBE programs.
- d. Ensure SLIFE students have access to home language while learning English with a primary goal to empower them with bilingual proficiency and to prevent them from dropping out of school or a premature transfer to general monolingual English education.
- e. **Ensure that ELSWDs have access to home language** by hiring home language 'teacher assistants' as a start given the limited number of Special Education teachers that are ESL or bilingual. (Language barriers in school learning need to be acknowledged and addressed, because they are often devastating emotionally and cognitively to so many of these students).
- f. Require Principals to be accountable for hiring bilingual general and bilingual special education teachers and paras that match the languages present in their school in the current and future hiring cycle. (Proficient bilingual teachers can teach in both Ls, however English only speakers can only teach in English)
- g. Make sure that all teachers of EL students ensure access to, and learning at, grade level curriculum standards in Math, Reading, etc. as well as access to English as a Second Language (academic subject with # of minutes)
- h. Determine and provide teacher aides as interpreters at Madison Park High School for bilingual EL students who are WIDA levels 1-4 to prevent accidents with vocational activities and machines.
- i. Revise the Cabo Verdeano Dual Language Program to take into account the multiple dialects, and the use of Portuguese as the other official language in Cabo Verde that they all speak. Trilingual education is an option.

- j. Offer Heritage Language Program options beginning with Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian-Creole, Vietnamese etc. specially geared towards language recovery and empowerment for students with language loss a direct result of past inhumane policies of English only instruction.
- k. Align/connect World Language program offerings with Heritage Language Courses that are culturally Responsive and bring out their home language as an asset.
- l. Ensure equity in 'emotional wellbeing' to enable more joy and less suffering in school.

"Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his/her bones are formed, his/her mind developed. To him/her we cannot say tomorrow, his/her name is today."
- Gabriela Mistral *Nobel de Literatura em 1945*