

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Remote Meeting

March 25, 2020

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Via Zoom

NOTES

ATTENDEES

ELLTF Members and Staff: Janet Anderson, Farah Assiraj, Roxann Harvey, Lisette Le, Suzanne Lee (Co-chair), Katie Li, John Mudd, Lorna Rivera (Co-chair), Maria Serpa, Fabián Torres-Ardila, Rosann Tung, Miren Uriarte, Jen Douglas (Coordinator)

WestEd consultants: Annette Gregg (Senior Engagement Manager), Melanie Packham (School Improvement Facilitator, Comprehensive School Assistance Program)

BPS Staff: Ibrahim Byiringiro (Research and Data Analyst, Office of English Learners (OEL)), Rachel Chen (English Learner Instructional Specialist (Supplemental Services)), Danisha Dumornay (Senior Project Manager), Daphne Germain (Director of EL Program Planning & Implementation, OEL), Faye Karp (Executive Director, OEL), Genevieve McDonough (Dual Language/English Learner Instructional Specialist, OEL), Ahmed Noor (Director of EL Community Outreach), Myriam Ortiz (Director of Community Engagement, OEL), Massielle Pimentel, Silvia Romero-Johnson (Assistant Superintendent, OEL), Eleni Saridis (English Learner Instructional and Support Specialist), Melody Soltani (EL Family Resource Specialist), Claudia Willis (English Learner Instructional and Support Specialist, OEL), Dunja Zdero (English Learner Instructional and Support Specialist)

Public: achanock (Zoom ID), Roxanne Harvey (Chair, SpEdPAC, and prospective ELLTF member), Audrey Martinez Gudapakkamtz (DELAC), Alan Jay Rom, Roger Rice, Marie Stinfil (DELAC), Jun Xie

HANDOUTS

Office of English Learners

- “Office of English Learners Assistant Superintendent Report: Presentation to the EL Task Force,” Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of OEL, March 25, 2021
- “DRAFT: Theory of Action,” Office of English Learners
- “Boston Public School’s Vision for Multilingual Learning” [DRAFT], Office of English Learners

- “Office of English Learners Roadmap for Quality Instruction for Multilingual Learning,” Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson (Assistant Superintendent of OEL), Annette Gregg and Melanie Puckham (WestEd Consultants)

ELL Task Force

- Minutes of the ELL Task Force Meeting, February 25, 2021
- “Massachusetts Vision for English Learner Success,” Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

CONSOLIDATED FOLLOW-UP LIST

FOLLOW UP: Request for clarification on vote date for BSC Goals and Guardrails.

FOLLOW UP:

- Obtain invites to LOOK Act Work Group meetings.
- Send follow-up feedback and questions to OEL.
- Request slides that have the research citations.

DISCUSSION

1. Welcome

Roll call

First	Last	Present?
Janet	Anderson	yes
Farah	Assiraj	no
Angelina	Camacho	no
Paulo	De Barros	no
Geralde	Gabeau	no
Lisette	Le	yes
Suzanne	Lee, Co-chair	yes

Katie	Li	yes
John	Mudd	yes
Lorna	Rivera, Co-chair	yes
Maria	Serpa	yes
Marie	St. Fleur, J.D.	no
Fabian	Torres-Ardila	yes
Rosann	Tung	yes
Miren	Uriarte	yes

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 25, 2020

See Minutes of the ELL Task Force Meeting, February 25, 2021.

Uriarte: Moved to pass
 Mudd: Seconded
 All in favor.

3. Chairs’ Report

Rivera: Shared a few updates from last night’s Boston School Committee (BSC) meeting:

- Budget was passed. There had been concerns about MassCORE implementation being an unfunded mandate, but actually it will be in the budget.
- ELLTF was thanked for feedback on the proposed Goals & Guardrails; will extend deadline for finalizing. Mudd: requested clarification on when this matter will be voted on.
- Reopening. BPS was granted a waiver from the state to delay reopening until 4/26/21. Rivera requested report about pooled testing, transportation. Consent is really low for pooled testing; remains a challenge.
- They are trying to identify a replacement student member to sit on the BSC.

Lee: Request for clarification about multilingual community engagement meetings. Concerns raised about how people are being notified about those meetings.

Romero-Johnson: To enact changes required in the LOOK Act, parents need to be engaged around moving from an English-only to bilingual perspective. Also, parents have come to believe and have heard from schools and teachers that English-only is the only or the best way. The Cabo-Verdean community requested an intra-community conversation, with conversation conducted in Cape Verdean creole. OEL used that approach and conducted other meetings in Haitian Creole and in Vietnamese.

FOLLOW UP: Request for clarification on vote date for BSC Goals and Guardrails.
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4. OEL report on summer programming and ACCESS testing

See *“Office of English Learners Assistant Superintendent Report: Presentation to the EL Task Force,” Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of OEL, March 25, 2021*

Uriarte: Who are the CBO partners for summer programming? What numbers of students will be served?

McDonough: Partners include TAG/Project ALERTA, Sociedad Latina, IFSI (both Haitian Creole and Spanish languages), ACEDONE (Somali language). About a quarter of total students will be served by partners.

5. Discussion with OEL and WestEd about draft Roadmap for Quality Education for Multilingual Learning

See:

- *“Office of English Learners Roadmap for Quality Instruction for Multilingual Learning,” Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson (Assistant Superintendent of OEL), Annette Gregg and Melanie Puckham (WestEd Consultants)*

For additional background:

- *“DRAFT: Theory of Action,” Office of English Learners*

- “Boston Public School’s Vision for Multilingual Learning” [DRAFT], Office of English Learners

For ELLTF members and OEL collaboration, a note-catcher:

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aGW4_vDq_mzC7cTe5aTpc2Rp7M4MUeCoArpvlv9F1d0/edit

Romero-Johnson and Germain presented slides about BPS’s Vision for Multilingual Learning — a draft of a framework and proposed program changes for implementing the LOOK Act within BPS. See the slide deck for details.

Lee: Invited ELLTF members to ask clarifying questions.

Uriarte: Three questions.

- Why you are framing professional development as “for all teachers”?
- Please explain the Content and Language Achievement (CLA) Model. Almost any change will improve on SEI, but we need more information.
- You’re talking about a progression from language-specific SEI to Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE). What will happen to the kids who are in multilingual SEI; what does that transition look like for the majority of kids who are in multilingual SEI? Also, for the kids who are in general ed, in an English-only environment: what is the plan for them?

Tung: Four questions about CLA:

- How is CLA different instructionally, in the classroom, from SEI multilingual?
- What percentage of ELs would be in CLA each year by years 3–4?
- How realistic is it to hire staff with academic language proficiency to teach in the proposed time frame?
- What is CLA certification?

Romero-Johnson response:

- Regarding the shift from current programs to the CLA Model, CLA is targeting students already in an integrated Gen Ed classroom so that we can transition them into a bilingual education model where they have access to native language support:
 - For students in *language-specific SEI*, they will move from English-only instruction into a transitional bilingual model until the conditions are right to move to dual language.
 - For *multilingual SEI* classrooms, many have a majority of Spanish speakers, so that group of students will need access to dual language pathways.
 - Everyone else is in *General Education (Gen Ed)*, but that environment lacks the linguistic and cultural supports that ELs need to thrive. We would address the areas missing by offering a thorough view of what that environment needs to look like with professional development for teachers and infusion of opportunities for heritage and language learning.
- Regarding staffing: We are collaborating with human capital and securing grant funds to support current (and future) staff to develop language proficiency to teach in a bilingual environment.

Lee:

- To clarify, CLA is basically the Gen Ed classroom? Because you will have ELs throughout?

Romero-Johnson response: Yes.

Serpa: Two questions:

- How can we include from the start the 4,000 ELSWDs? What will the collaboration with OSE look like?
- What is the plan for kids who don't know how to read (long-term ELs, kids with disabilities, etc.)? I am particularly concerned about middle school teachers who don't know how to teach reading but have students who don't know how to read.

Romero-Johnson response:

- In the CLA Model we want students to be eligible to be placed in all those environments; OEL will work with OSE to make that a reality. The content and language achievement model will provide that support. Teachers will know how to integrate language, literacy, and content.

Mudd:

- What is the philosophy of OEL and WestEd toward native language?

Romero-Johnson response:

- Home language support and development is part of the model.

Li:

- On slide 18, please explain how we should understand the boxes. Dual Language Model on left vs. SEI to TBE box on the right — is it a progression of SEI to TBE to DL? Position side by side instead if so. What is the TBE model and what will it look like? What is the timeframe to get from TBE to DL for all those students?
- Note that Ethnic Studies isn't fully developed right now just for 9th grade, just in English, let alone available for other grades, and in many languages.
- On slide 16, about "Moving from Current ELE to New ELE Options," my understanding is that SEI programs have separate teachers for science, math, history, etc. Are you advocating to get rid of ESL and then it's embedded into these content areas?

Romero-Johnson response:

- Slide 16 is more about K-8. All day your classroom teacher knows how to provide support. Students will have access all day, including in content area time, to first language supports.
- In moving to new ELE options, practices within a school will be shared and based on the same philosophies. Across BPS we would come to an agreement that the proposed CLA ways of teaching are the foundation for all classrooms, and for secondary programs, it will be more alignment of practices.

Anderson:

- Request to clarify what the TBE model is, as well as the timeframe to get there for all students.
- Request to clarify how many students would be enrolled in each of these models.

Tung: If you're currently in SEI-multilingual, you will end up in Gen Ed with CLA.

- What's the difference in certification for CLA and SEI?
- It seems the current plan gives more research-backed programs to students in the high-incidence languages and those in low-incidence language basically get Gen Ed teachers with a certification.
- How are ELD 1-3 vs ELD 4-5 served?

Romero-Johnson response:

- In order to implement Gen Ed programs, we have a lot of work to do in terms of staffing. We want to offer additional seats in the future and are working toward that point.
- The current philosophy is that students benefit from heterogenous environments except for newcomers at ELD 1, and they are not getting their needs met being grouped in ELD 1–3. Also, many ELD3s have been at that level for a long time and also don't get their needs met in the current program.
- It will be insufficient to say that the current gen ed environment will support our diverse ELs. Therefore, teachers will need deeper training. We are proposing thorough support for teachers to meet needs—whether newcomers, SLIFE students, long-term ELs, or students who are progressing through levels. It is something we must do to change the current trajectory for students.

Mudd:

- About 40% of ELD 1–3 are in Gen Ed and I'm not clear that's the appropriate placement. Do you plan to review those placements? It gets at the numbers of who will be participating in those programs and what numbers you are anticipating.

Romero-Johnson response:

- 40% refers to ELD 1-3 students in low incidence schools without a language specific programs and ELD 4-5, if they are not in a Dual Language program, are only served through the Gen Ed model.

Uriarte: Trying to understand the scope and the numbers.

- What do you know about the outcomes of kids in different kinds of programs—Gen Ed versus either of the SEI types?
- If you are moving most students at ELD levels 1–3 into Gen Ed it will take a long time, it's a lot of movement, it's going to take a lot, and meanwhile kids grow up. You need to ground this a little bit more so we know what the numbers are that you're moving and what the science is behind the CLA method. I was hoping that we would be finding some of those kids who are in Gen Ed and fishing them out; some are there because their parents didn't trust the SEI program but they might make a different choice with a quality bilingual program.

Romero-Johnson response:

- Research is shared in the slide appendix: slides 25-30 [note that ELLTF received a slide deck that is just 22 slides long].
- I am proposing that we do this in cohorts of schools, not all schools all at once. We are trying to build up the availability of seats in dual language, knowing the complexities of building those programs. Then the rest of the environment needs to be responsive, include attention to home languages, be multilingual. But we are also saying that the Gen Ed environment needs to be transformed. We will bring you the research connected to that. We aren't saying just "bring all the kids together" but that there are certain needs that must be attended to.

Lee: We understand there have been LOOK Act Work Groups going on since last year. I wish we were notified. We have a rich understanding of ELs and EL programming; we could have been involved in that thinking.

Romero-Johnson response: We can invite you to those workgroup meetings.

Mudd: What is the process ahead?

Romero-Johnson response: Currently we are expected to present the plan to the School Committee in May.

Li: I hear from people that the professional development available has been useless. They need deep /ongoing coaching as well as training. I'm all for heterogenous classrooms but if teachers don't know how to teach in them it ends up being a segregated classroom when you walk into it. I want to caution about going right to the mainstreamed model because there is a level of language discrimination that happens.

Romero-Johnson response: We cannot continue to avoid the need to change the Gen Ed environment, with coaching, thorough support. Our ELs belong in those places and those environments have to change to meet their needs.

Lee: What role will WestEd play? Will they see this through implementation?

Romero-Johnson response:

Current contract goes through June 2021. There may be other consultants who work with us on other pieces of this process.

Uriarte: We will take a deeper dive and give some more feedback. To summarize, it sounds like we are looking for:

1. A good definition of CLA
2. The TBE models you are considering
3. The number of kids impacted by each process along the line
4. The training of teachers, how to be carried out, how the certification will work

FOLLOW UP:

- Obtain invites to LOOK Act Work Group meetings.
- Send follow-up feedback and questions to OEL.
- Request slides that have the research citations.

6. Public Comment

Rice: In the 5-year time line it looks like you're killing off the SLIFE program. The Newcomer Academy has a very good SLIFE program and kids can move on to BINCA (or come back to Newcomer Academy if needed). Will they be able to do something like that? Or will they be moved to Gen Ed and that's that?

Romero-Johnson: We are looking for a lot of fluidity. SLIFE will continue, will first language development and support. There are many newcomers who have grade- and age-level appropriate schooling and they progress very quickly. But the Newcomers and SLIFE will share the content and language achievement model.

Rice: Make clear that SLIFE remains for those who need it. Does CLA include a defined period in the day for English language development?

R-J: Yes. There will be a specific time in the day for learning writing and reading in English. And also, all-day and all-content.

Rice: What are the options for parents for the ACCESS test? You have been working on the language for communication to parents for a long time? Who should we talk with if it's not you?

Romero-Johnson: Lots more schools have been and will be coming in for in-person schooling. No one will be threatened about taking the test, but everyone will have the opportunity to come in and take it and be provided transportation (what sort is to be determined).

Other public comment submitted in writing from Audrey Martinez-Gudapakkam (DELAC parent): My question for Ms. Romero-Johnson is regarding ACCESS testing. I am concerned that only one letter would be sent, since even if translated many EL families struggle with illiteracy and might not see this letter. Could communications also be sent with audio or video? Also, many parents I know want their children to be re-tested so that they can qualify for more EL supports because they have noticed that during this year their children have fallen behind in English and need more support. So, its concerning to hear that not all students may be tested before the end of the school year. I am also concerned that there are only 182 summer program spaces in Allston Brighton when there are approx. 1,000 EL students in Allston Brighton.

7. Adjourn