

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Remote Meeting

November 12, 2020

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

NOTES

ATTENDEES

ELLTF Members and Staff: Janet Anderson, Angelina Camacho, Paulo De Barros, Geralde Gabeau, Lisette Le, Suzanne Lee (Co-chair), Katie Li, John Mudd, Maria Serpa, Marie St. Fleur, J.D., Rosann Tung, Miren Uriarte, Jen Douglas (Coordinator)

BPS Staff: Dr. Brenda Cassellius (Superintendent), Faye Karp (Executive Director, Office of English Learners (OEL)), Daphne Germain (Director of EL Program Planning & Implementation, OEL), Ellen Kelleher (Director, OEL / SPED), Genevieve McDonough (Dual Language/English Learner Instructional Specialist, OEL), Parvex (Administrative Assistant, School Committee), Silvia Romero-Johnson (Assistant Superintendent, OEL), Andrea Zayas (Chief Academic Officer)

Public: Carolyn, R. Fields, Suleika Soto, Peggy Wiesenberg

HANDOUTS

Office of English Learners

- “Office of English Learners Assistant Superintendent Report: Presentation to the EL Task Force,” Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, November 12, 2020.

ELL Task Force

- Minutes of the ELL Task Force Meeting, June 30, 2020
- Minutes of the ELL Task Force Meeting, September 24, 2020
- Minutes of the ELL Task Force Meeting, October 8, 2020
- Setting ELLTF Priorities - Draft 11-5-20_JD 11-12 - with roles
- ELL Task Force, November 12, 2020 – slide deck with agenda and discussion instructions

CONSOLIDATED FOLLOW-UP LIST

FOLLOW UP: Schedule a February ELLTF meeting. LATER: DONE.

FOLLOW UP: Synthesize members' comments on the priorities planning document.
LATER: DONE.

DISCUSSION

1. Chairs' Welcome

- Introductions from each member to Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, as people are coming into the meeting.
- Announcement of Zoom protocols.
- Roll call.

First	Last	Present?
Janet	Anderson	y
Farah	Assiraj	n
Angelina	Camacho	y
Paulo	De Barros	y
Geralde	Gabeau	y
Lisette	Le	y
Suzanne	Lee, Co-chair	y
Katie	Li	y

First	Last	Present?
John	Mudd	y
Lorna	Rivera, Co-chair	n
Maria	Serpa	y
Marie	St. Fleur, J.D.	n
Fabian	Torres-Ardila	n
Rosann	Tung	y
Miren	Uriarte	y

• Approval of Meeting Minutes

Tung: Moves that we accept the notes for the past three meetings.

Le: Seconded.

Lee: Objections? There were none.

Lee: Want to publicly thank Faye Karp for her great job holding the interim role during the challenging time of the pandemic—you were there to guide the work. We are so thankful to you and we are lucky to have you in the district.

Karp: Expressed gratitude and credit to the ELLTF team.

2. OEL Presentation: meet Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for OEL

See handout: "Office of English Learners Assistant Superintendent Report: Presentation to the EL Task Force," Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, November 12, 2020.

Lee: Invitation to Cassellius to introduce Silvia, coming from Madison, Wisconsin.

Cassellius: Looks forward to working together on LOOK Act, interpretation services improvements especially for Asian families, DOJ and META agreements, and more. If we're able to build healthy accountability systems internally we may not need those external forces.

Romero-Johnson: She started as an interpreter and has had a career as an educator. Interpreting served her well when she moved into her role as a bilingual math teacher at the middle and high school levels. It became very obvious that there were needs at the district level and she was recruited to become a teacher leader for bilingual education programs, alongside a surge on behalf of parents to move into asset-based programs. Parents wanted their children to develop both English and their home language. Spanish was the largest home language in the district. She led the movement of transitional programs into dual language.

Following that, she became a principal. An opportunity came up to lead a school moving to dual language and moving to a new building. The school went from enrolling predominantly English speakers in the home to enrolling predominantly Spanish speakers. She then moved into a district level position and her focus was to always engage the community. As part of their communication plan they started a radio program in Spanish so that the largest language group in the district would always be in the know about what's happening and know how to reach the schools.

Now she is excited to be at BPS and take what she has learned to use it in the service of this community. Learning more and more about the needs in Boston, as stakeholders share with her the systemic challenges that exist. She will rely on groups like the ELLTF to give feedback. She will want to know: Are we going in the right direction? Is our vision bold enough?

Lee: Let's pause for a moment to ask questions of the superintendent before she needs to leave.

Mudd: Asked for clarification about numbers reported in the *Globe* related to high-needs students and in-person learning. The information came from a *Globe* reporter who reached out to an ELL Task Force member. The reporter shared the following data:

- 11,400 students estimated to be high-needs and eligible for 4-day in-person, in-school instruction
- 3,000 applied to take advantage of this opportunity.
- 200 will be accepted for 4-day, in-person, in-school instruction at the Henderson, McKinley, Carter, and Horace Mann schools.

Cassellius: Bringing back students is both a facilities challenge and a labor challenge. We don't have agreement with the union but we are planning to bring students back on Monday. We also are working with the BPHC to certify our buildings as safe to reopen with the COVID numbers high and rising. We are balancing the academic and the health and safety of the child. The BPHC has approved just four schools at the moment. We will prioritize additional schools as we are able, starting with our youngest learners first. The numbers you quoted are accurate. We do think there are some students who defaulted to the 2-day option because they are unaware of the 4-day option. Black and Latinx parents have disproportionately chosen remote over in-person learning. There are children who literally can't access online services through a computer, who need physical services so their bodies don't regress as well, and these are the students prioritized to return on Monday.

Mudd: Raised the question of using other community spaces for children to return to learning.

Cassellius: We are working with our in-person / high-priority task force to identify the students we can safely bring back. We have parent representation on there as well and Andrea is a part of that work. Now with the governor's recent announcement there are parents who think "oh, we'll be open next week" and others who say "that is hocus pocus." The science is changing in terms of the best way to understand community spread and how much virus is in the community that could come into the school buildings.

Lee: We know things are very challenging. We are sometimes finding out information through the Globe.

Cassellius: It's not the way I want you to find out information either. Communication is something that has been quite challenging for us in terms of trying to get our message out. We appreciate everyone's grace and patience with us. We are going to just keep trying.

Zayas: Thank you to everyone in this group who participated in the hiring committee for the Assistant Superintendent of OEL.

Romero-Johnson: I've been holding many one-on-ones and will hope to meet with each of you. [See slides for statement about goals.] The pandemic has shone a light on areas of historical inequities; it is not surprising to me that existing pain points like translation and interpretation have become particular issues at this time.

Soto (parent): Are parents considered stakeholders in any of this?

Romero-Johnson: Yes.

Soto: I know this meeting is in English. I don't see other languages happening here. How are we ensuring that parents of ELs are a part of this planning?

Karp: Shared info about DELAC and ELACs.

Uriarte: Hope that the priorities for the year will include some substantial planning around the LOOK Act, creating a process to use the opportunities that are provided. I see here priorities that have been around for the past several years.

Romero-Johnson: I promise you there will be a plan, and one that is aligned with the strategic priorities. I am still in my entry period. I do think that the plans the team has already been working on are right on target and I do need them to keep working on that while we develop a forward-looking and bold plan.

Mudd: Make sure that others within BPS who are advancing aspects of the Operational Plan are aware of your needs and incorporating your plans.

Zayas: Curious if you all would want to see some of the dashboarding around priorities like what Charles Grandson and his team are doing. We don't have a district-wide dashboard around the operational plan but I can bring that feedback to them.

Lee: We have been waiting to find out how we can participate in those meetings on the Operational Plan.

Zayas: Those meetings aren't happening; they have pivoted to the Equity Roundtable work.

Gabeau: I am concerned about when resources are developed but parents are not made aware of those resources. They just sit and we need ways to get them into the hands of families that need them—let's plan for that alongside building the resources.

3. ELLTF Discussion of Priorities for SY20-21

Lee: See the slide with the meeting dates for the year. Can we approve these dates?

ELLTF meetings for the remainder of SY2020-2021

- December 10, 3–5 pm
- January 21, 3–5 pm
- February: No Meeting
- March 25, 3–5 pm
- April: No Meeting

- May 13, 3–5 pm
- June: TBD

Uriarte: I am concerned not to see a meeting in February because of the budget process.

Lee: Let's pencil in a meeting in February.

FOLLOW UP: Schedule a February ELLTF meeting. LATER: DONE.

At the last meeting, ELLTF members shared your priorities for the 2020-2021 school year. We have synthesized that input into a draft statement of priorities — actionable, measurable objectives that closely align with the ELLTF's role.

These priorities are organized into three categories of work:

- Promote the creation and adoption of a LOOK Act IMPLEMENTATION plan.
- Continue to advocate for the District to meet the educational and social/emotional needs of ELSWDs.
- Continue to regularly monitor and advocate.

In the next portion of the meeting, members broke into groups to digest the statement of priorities and identify the role that each member will play. A final version of that document will be made available at the next meeting.

FOLLOW UP: Synthesize members' comments on the priorities planning document.

4. Public Comment

None.