

# ELLTF Strategic Priority Review

## Fall 2019

### THE REQUEST

At our September 2019 ELLTF meeting, the ELLTF agreed to undertake a process to think about how to be most impactful in advancing priorities for ELs in the year ahead. Each subcommittee was asked to answer the questions below.

#### **Step One: Identify One or Two Priorities.**

Of your subcommittee's current priorities, which one or two would the ELL Task Force have the power to advocate for or to make happen? Or, if not a current priority, which new one?

#### **Step Two: Identify Decision-makers, Action Steps, Timeline, and Anticipated Challenges.**

For each of the one or two priorities you have identified above, answer the following four questions:

- Which people/groups must we influence in order to make this priority happen? What real influence do we have over these people?
- What steps would the ELLTF take to actualize the priority policy or practice? List the steps.
- For each of the steps you named, what is the anticipated timeline to complete it? At which step do you anticipate the advocacy to be by June 2020?
- What challenges might the ELLTF face in influencing these people to actualize the priority in the timeline proposed? Would the ELLTF have actionable responses to these challenges?

### THE RESULTS

Attached here is one cross-subcommittee proposal and three subcommittee responses:

- Proposal for new Cape Verdean programming as a focal ELLTF project
  - With email titled "Services/Program for CV Students in BPS" (1 page)
- English Learner Students with Disabilities (ELSWD) Subcommittee
  - With ELL-SWDs Subcommittee Report on Current Priorities and Action Steps, November 21, 2014 (3 pages)
- Engagement Subcommittee
- Multilingual, Multicultural BPS (MLMC) Subcommittee

November 2019

**Proposal:** Each year, the ELLTF picks one ethnic group and focuses on building adequate EL programming by tackling all the components together—community engagement, staffing, school assignment, program design and program quality, evaluation—across the ELLTF subcommittees. Start with Cape Verdean community this year, next might be Haitian and/or Somali. The focus will be on groups that aren't getting what they deserve and need.

**SY2019-2020 Proposal:** The ELLTF subcommittees work together to support the Cape Verdean community's demand for:

- A K–5 or a K–8 dual language program
- One or more of the developmental bilingual programs
- A K–12 Cape Verdean strand in which the new programs listed above feed to Dearborn STEM Academy, Boston International High School, Jeremiah Burke High School and Madison Park Vocational High School, characterized by strong partnerships among social agencies, schools, parents and community stakeholders
- Equitable programs and services for Cape Verdean SLIFE and SWD students.

**The work necessary to advance these goals cuts across the priority areas of the ELLTF:**

- **Engagement.** Strong engagement of Cape Verdean parents and the community is at the center of each part of advocating for and implementing the components of a Cape Verdean strand.
- **Program design.** The ELLTF's role would be to . . .
  - Push elected and appointed decision-makers, as well as BPS senior staff, to lend their support to the creation of a Cape Verdean strand
    - Superintendent
    - Mayor's office, going through Christine Brandao, Cape Verdean community liaison
    - City Council, particularly Annissa Essaibi George as Education Committee Chair, Kim Janey for her education expertise and because her district has a substantial Cape Verdean population, and Andrea Campbell as the president
    - State elected leaders Rep. Liz Miranda and Sen. Nick Collins
  - Facilitate access, for example by helping to arrange meetings of Cape Verdean parents with the superintendent.
  - Push BPS to create programs, and do it in a community-responsive way, including:
    - Maintaining support from the superintendent
    - Working with and making requests/demands to the Office of English Learners and the Office of Special Education; facilitating access of Cape Verdean parent community to these decision-makers
    - Supporting the community in working with particular schools
    - Working with the Office of Human Capital to ensure adequate staffing; pushing HC to collaborate with the Cape Verdean community in identifying staffing candidates

- Support Cape Verdean community advocacy with the BTU to address staffing needs.
- Ensure evaluation of these new programs, with a strong community component.

**From:** Paulo Amado De Barros <[paulo.debarros@cvcunido.org](mailto:paulo.debarros@cvcunido.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2019 3:36 PM

**To:** Priya Tahiliani <[ptahiliani@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:ptahiliani@bostonpublicschools.org)>

**Cc:** Suzanne Lee <[lee.suzanne28@gmail.com](mailto:lee.suzanne28@gmail.com)>; [ebruggeman@bostonpublicschools.com](mailto:ebruggeman@bostonpublicschools.com) **Subject:** Services/Program for CV Students in BPS

Dear Ms. Tahiliani,

We, the Cape Verdean parents of Boston Public Schools students, are writing this letter to address the following issues:

1. A dual language program
2. A developmental bilingual Education
3. A Cape Verdean K-12 strand
4. Equitable Program Services for Cape Verdean SLIFE Students and Cape Verdean Students Who Are Also Students with Disabilities

**Dual Language Program:** Our children have the same rights to develop both their native language and English, with the goal of becoming biliterate, as do children from other language groups. Such programs are permitted under the LOOK Act and exist for other language groups in Boston. It is also our understanding that the Cape Verdean language is the third most spoken language in Boston Public Schools. Nevertheless, there is no Cape Verdean dual language program to service our students. For us, this is a matter of equity, since there are dual language programs in Spanish and Haitian, the first and second largest languages in Boston Public Schools. We are asking that **Orchard Gardens K-8 School**, the **Mather Elementary**, **Lila Frederick Middle School** and **Holland UP Academy** be considered potential sites for the dual language program.

**Developmental Bilingual Education:** Again, based on the LOOK Act, it is our understanding that the DBE would also benefit our children a great deal, since it would support their bilingual and bicultural knowledge and skills. We are asking that this be one of the programs that can be fully implemented in one of the sites mentioned above.

**Cape Verdean Strand:** We would like to see a Cape Verdean K-12 strand, whereby the elementary and middle schools mentioned above would be feeder schools for the Dearborn STEM Academy, Boston International High School, Jeremiah Burke High School and Madison Park Vocational High School. With the strand, we feel that our children would have wraparound supports related to their emotional and social well-being; furthermore, it would benefit us, parents to know who to contact within a circle of academic, emotional and social support and information. Furthermore, having the schools located within the Cape Verdean enclave, would facilitate the development of strong partnerships among social agencies, schools, parents and community stakeholders.

**Equitable Program Services for Cape Verdean SLIFE Students and Cape Verdean Students Who Are Also Students with Disabilities:** For years Cape Verdean students have been shortchanged in terms of receiving SLIFE services. Students who came to the U.S. with gaps in their schooling or having received limited schooling are often placed in general education classes or multilingual classes instead of Cape Verdean SLIFE classes to which they are entitled. For Cape Verdean speaking students with disabilities, BPS does not even consider Cape Verdean teachers and support as part of their IEPs nor are Cape Verdean parents made aware that they can advocate for such services. We know of Cape Verdean students within the last school year who dropped out of school and have given up on education when BPS failed to provide Cape Verdean speaking educators as part of their IEPs.

We look forward to our continue discussions on a plan for implementation of these programs. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to call me at 617-645-6331.

Yours Truly,  
Paulo A. De Barros  
President, Cape Verdean Association of Boston

November 2019

**Identify one or two priorities the ELL Task Force has the power to advocate for or to make happen.** The ELSWD Subcommittee established four clearly-specified priorities in November 2014 (see attached for more detail):

1. **Revised IEP design process.** IEPs for ELSWDs that provide for linguistically and culturally appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (that reflect the intersection of special education legal requirements (IDEA 2004) and Language Learning Education provisions in TITLE III of NCLB), and provide needed access to native language instruction.
2. **Staffing.** Systems to accurately assess the need for ELSWD staffing (dually certified teachers with a Special Education and an ESL/TESOL or bilingual licensure), and strategies to recruit, hire, and develop ELSWD teachers, paras, and other support staff.
3. **Professional development.** Interventions to build staff capacity to ensure appropriate culturally and linguistically responsive approaches, so that ELSWDs needs for an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment are planned for and met, not handled as an afterthought.
4. **Guidance Document.** Complete, test and disseminate the ELSPED Guidance Document that articulates guidance procedures for all aspects of special education services for ELs.

In the past five years, this subcommittee has. . .

- Sustained a clear focus on those four consistent goals
- Maintained close relationships and met regularly with the Office of English Learners and the Office of Special Education
- Cultivated a relationship with the Office of Human Capital and passed off that portion of the work to a Human Capital Subcommittee

**Which people /groups must we influence in order to make this priority happen?** Targets and collaborators include: the superintendent, the School Committee, Academics (Curriculum, Office of English Learners, Office of Special Education), Schools, the Office of Human Capital.

**What real influence do we have over these people?** We have very little influence without the support of the superintendent.

**What challenges has the ELLTF faced in influencing these people to actualize their priorities?**

The lesson the ELSWD Subcommittee draws from their work over the past five years is that there is not commitment yet in the system to deal with the question of ELSWD students. Put differently, there is no order / no mandate with which departments and schools must comply. If there was a system commitment, reflected in some kind of mandate, then the issue could be handled as one of compliance. There is not much possibility of making change by continuing to press for changes as a matter of educational urgency (“educational urgency” being distinct from compliance). In the absence of a compliance demand, it is difficult or impossible to push for changes, including those that seem to the subcommittee like they could be relatively simple to accomplish.

**Would the ELLTF have actionable responses to these challenges?** The ELSWD Subcommittee would have more hope of successfully advocating on their priority issues if they were to be in the position of monitoring whether the system was in compliance with a policy mandate. The ELSWD Subcommittee wants the ELLTF to reaffirm its backing for their November 2014 outline of priorities, and they want those priorities to be endorsed by the superintendent and the SC.

**Specifically, the ELSWD Subcommittee proposes that the ELLTF commits to advocate for the following priorities to be reflected in the superintendent's strategic plan (if they are not already present in the draft document):**

- A plan to require that native language be required in ELSWDs' IEPs, instruction, and support services
- A plan to address staffing needs and correct the shortage of bilingual ELSWD teachers, including an accurate assessment of the need for ELSWD staffing and strategies to recruit, hire, and develop ELSWD teachers, paras, and other support staff
- A plan to use the provisions of the LOOK Act to move the system beyond SEI, in which ELSWDs get to participate fully (i.e., with the needs of ELSWDs addressed as a central component)

**The ELSWD Subcommittee also proposes that the ELLTF make a request to the Opportunity and Achievement Gap Task Force that they collaborate with us on two priorities:**

- Give high priority to the achievement gap of ELs and ELSWDs
- Include language diversity as well as racial and ethnic diversity as a staffing criteria

ELL Boston School Committee Task Force  
*ELL-SWDs Subcommittee*  
*Report on Current Priorities and Action Steps*

November 21, 2014

Members: Maria de Lourdes B. Serpa, Ed.D. Chair, Cheng Tan, M.Div. ; John Mudd, Ph.D. ; Maria Campanario-Araica, M.Ed, and Mercedes Orozco, CAGS

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ELL-SWDs Subcommittee of the *ELL English Language Learners Task Force* held two meetings on November 3 & 14, 2014 at Lesley University with two major purposes: (1) To follow-up on the decision made by the ELL School Committee Task Force to deepen a shared understanding about the critical issues affecting English Language Learners with Disabilities (ELL-SWDs) at BPS and (2) To discuss and plan for recommendations to be presented to the ELL School Committee Task Force at the November 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 meeting.

ELL-SWDs are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) according to (IDEA 2004). These students have additional and or different needs when compared with English Proficient students because they are in the process of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. To ensure appropriate services to this segment of the BPS Population four priorities emerged from this subcommittee: IEP, Hiring, Professional Development & Guidance Document.

**1. IEP Design Process.** IEPs for ELL-SWD students must reflect the intersection of Special Education legal requirements (IDEA 2004) with Language Learning Education provisions (TITLE III of NCLB)

**Need:** IEPs which provide for linguistically and culturally appropriate education in the least restrictive program environment specific to ELL-SWDs

**Action Steps:**

***a. Procedures: There must be***

- (1) Program codes to identify ELL-SWDs that reflect both language/cultural and special needs across different disabilities and levels of English proficiency.
- (2) Appropriate staff assignment codes to ensure qualified staff for this school age population
- (3) Reinstatement of the designation of bilingual-TESOL special education teacher in SEIMS.
- (4) IEPs for ELL-SWDs must include English language Learning development goals

***b. Parental Participation/Level of understanding***

- (1) There needs to be linguistically and culturally responsive communication and interaction with parents
- (2) Ensure meeting times with parents are at a convenient time for the parents

***c. Interpreters and translations- information is needed about the following questions:***

- (1) How are interpreters made available and appropriately qualified?
- (2) How does Boston vet Interpreters for IEP meetings?
- (3) Accuracy and adequacy of translations for parents

NOTE: This is a much broader issue that needs to be addressed

## 2. Hiring of Highly Qualified Personnel for ELL-SWDs

**Need:** Increased availability of dually certified teachers to ensure that Special Education teachers who are hired must hold both a Special Education as well as an ESL/TESOL or bilingual licensures by language groups.

**Action Steps:** BPS Academic departments and the Office of Human Capital need to implement the following:

**a. *Project Teacher Need - - information is needed about the following questions***

- (1) What is the projected need for ELLSPED teachers? Who is doing it and is this adequate? How are projections made for dually certified teachers? Are both language and disability codes used?
- (2) Who is responsible for ensuring appropriate job descriptions that are specific to serving this school age population?

**b. *Targeted Recruitment Strategy-***

- (1) Devise and implement a targeted recruitment strategy involving all Academic departments and the Office of Human Capital (This is also a requirement of the DOJ Settlement Agreement, paragraph 46 and 47.)
- (2) Provide guidance and training for principals/headmasters and personnel subcommittees in hiring ELL-SPED teachers.
- (3) Make sure that the BPS goal which states that teachers should reflect the diversity of the students in the schools includes not only race, but also language(s), culture(s) and disability needs.

**3. Professional Development.** Clarification of PD plans, capacity, and adequacy with Ross Wilson, Shakera Walker, Antonieta Bartolomey , Eileen de los Reis & Eileen Nash.

**Need:** To build capacity to ensure appropriate culturally and linguistically responsive professional development which increases Teacher Quality in ELL Special Education and Inclusion that addresses the needs of ELL-SWDs from the start.

**Action Steps:**

**a. *Clarification***

There is an urgent need for clarification about who is in charge of Professional Development at BPS and at what level? What is happening now? What is needed? How will it be funded and implemented?

**b. *Planning and delivery***

- (1) What are the long and short term plans to provide PD to the different groups including: Principals, *ESL ,Bilingual & Sped* Teachers, Evaluators, LATE, etc.
- (2) What is the process for including all ELL-SWDs needs in District PD that expands and integrates research-based knowledge related to appropriately educating ELLs in the Least Restrictive Environment? (PD for UDL, Math etc. must include what is different and additional for ELLs; not as an after- thought).
- (3) Pathways must be developed to meet the need for training for dually-certified teachers serving ELL-SWDs.



(4) BPS must have PD to ensure that any Curricular Initiatives must be inclusive and reflect the needs of ELL-SWD students. Examples: UDL & Expeditionary Learning must be integrated for ELL-SWDs.

(5) BPS must ensure that teachers receive PD in culturally responsive, socio-emotional development

(6) PD should be classroom embedded, ongoing and multifaceted.

#### 4. Guidance Document DOJ

**Need:** In the absence of MA state guidance for ELL-SWDs there is a pressing need for articulating guidance procedures that clearly indicate what is additional and/or different about the implementation of Special education services from pre-referral / RTI to eligibility legal processes for ELL-SWDs.

#### Action Steps:

- a. (1) Establish a short-term and long term plan – [the train has left the station and ELL students are in the train ...]
- b. (2) SST Draft document to establish a plan for creating this document with review of other states and school districts.

#### Additional Issues that must be addressed in the future include

1. **Transition** of ELL-SWDs to the world of work (required by IDEA 2004)
2. **Eligibility Process** (culturally and linguistically responsive assessment)
3. **Independent Evaluations**
4. **Preschool and K Screening For Special Needs** (Chapter 71B) vs., **Preschool and K Screening for language learning proficiency** (Chapter 71A)
5. **Translations and interpreters**
6. **Intake process** at Parent Welcome Center & Newcomers Assessment Center
  - a. Clarification about the process why two stops for parents of ELLs and ELL-SWDs?
  - b. Walk us through the process for (a) ELLSWDs with an IEP (b) ELLs who may exhibit indicators of a possible disability (c) Who is in charge?

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BPS has increased interdepartmental collaboration between Special Education & the Office of English Language Learners and has appointed Maria Campanario-Araica, MEd, as the ELL-SPED Liaison-Director in July 2014 to serve as a 'bridge' between both departments.

- The Assessment and Welcome Center has Odila Mercedes Orozco, CAGS, as the Bilingual Special Education Teacher Assessor to address ELL-SWDs.
- Special Education has Mr. Carmelo Sanchez, M.Ed. as the Coordinator of Translation Services

Special Thanks to all members of this subcommittee and to BPS for Supporting Maria-Campanario and Mercedes-Orozco's participation.

**Identify one or two priorities the ELL Task Force has the power to advocate for or to make happen.**

The Engagement Subcommittee was working to advance four recommendations during SY2018–2019:

1. District-wide, better train, support, resource and hold school leaders and educators accountable for family engagement for all students, including ELLs.
2. Build Culturally and Linguistically welcoming school environments and culturally relevant curriculum that affirms our diverse student body and families. Make a commitment to better train, resource, and hold school leaders and educators accountable to this recommendation.
3. Build language capacity at the district and school levels, both oral and written, to communicate with parents in schools.
4. Ensure adequate information and outreach to familiarize new immigrant parents with the school registration process (including the registration timing and schedule) and help parents understand how to pick schools that best meet their child/ren's needs.

Toward these goals, the worked on two projects:

1. Develop a data tracker in collaboration with the Office of Engagement. There is little data collected at the school level to measure engagement, and the data that is available is not compiled in any one place. This project proved unwieldy and time-consuming. It was attempted but not completed.
2. Do a pilot study of four dual language schools. The Engage Subcommittee conducted three focus groups to gather information about the engagement of EL families.

The Engage Subcommittee is currently in the process of figuring out what goal(s) to focus on, and how they can best have influence.

**Which people /groups must we influence in order to make this priority happen?** To be determined.

**What challenges might the ELLTF face in influencing these people to actualize the priority in the proposed timeframe?** In initial conversation about identifying new actionable goals, the committee identified at least two challenges, each of them related to determining the ELLTF's appropriate role:

- Getting to parents. The Engage Subcommittee feels it could be useful to be working directly with parents. There is an existing, if neglected / not supported, infrastructure to facilitate parent voice in the system, comprised of the Citywide Parent Council (CPC), District English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC), and SPEDPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council). How could this infrastructure be a resource to the ELLTF's work? How could the ELLTF be a resource to it?
  - ELLTF role: Should we try to convene parents? To serve as a conduit between parents and BPS decision makers?
- Getting access to information about engagement—from schools, from the district. It is hard to know whether and how engagement is happening for EL families and all families, and hard to know whether advocacy has impact.
  - ELLTF role: Should we try to have more focus groups to hear parents' concerns?

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**Identify one or two priorities the ELL Task Force has the power to advocate for or to make happen.**

Two possible priorities are identified toward the goal of affirming a multicultural, multilingual BPS.

1. Establish a BPS policy that every student should graduate with proficiency in at least two languages.
2. Develop an inter-departmental plan with OEL and World Languages, as well as OOG, on both language and cultural proficiency expectations/standards.

**Which people /groups must we influence in order to make this priority happen?** Targets and collaborators would include: the superintendent, the School Committee (the chair and other members), Academics, and Schools.

**What real influence do we have over these people?** Not sure. This would be a new policy for BPS, although consistent with Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP).

**What steps would the ELLTF take to actualize the priority policy or practice?** The ELLTF would need to approach the superintendent, the School Committee (chair and other members) to get agreement on a policy.

**What challenges might the ELLTF face in influencing these people to actualize the priority in the proposed timeline?** Many. There is little that could be accomplished without the commitment and backing of the superintendent and the School Committee for a new multi-lingual, multicultural policy.

**The MLMC Subcommittee proposes that the ELLTF advocates for the following priorities to be reflected in the superintendent's strategic plan (if they are not already present in the draft document):**

- Establish a BPS policy that every students should graduate with proficiency in at least two languages, and make a plan with benchmarks toward this long-term goal (for example, 3-, 5-, and 10-year goals).
- Specify who will collaborate to create an inter-departmental plan that builds a map to adapt BPS curriculum, staffing, instruction, and support services to the unique cultural and linguistic needs of (different linguistic) subgroups, and by when this work will be complete and implemented.