

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

November 21, 2014

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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 21st 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, LATF, 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:

(1) Establish a short-term and long term plan – [the train has left the station and ELL students are in the train ...]

(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

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.