

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



Minutes of the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Meeting February 8, 2018

The English Language Learners Task Force of the Boston School Committee held a meeting on February 8, 2018 at 3:00pm at Bruce Bolling Building. For more information about any of the items listed below, contact Michael Berardino, ELL Task Force Coordinator, at bpselltaskforce@gmail.com.

Call to Order:

Task Force Members Present: Miren Uriarte, Suzanne Lee, John Mudd, Bob Hildreth, and Michael Berardino - Coordinator. **Other persons and BPS Staff Present:** Lisa Harvey, Blaine Dawkins, Priya Tahiliani, Faye Karp, Kim Tsai, Nicole Wagner Lam, Jacob Stern, Roger Rice and Alan Jay Rom (META) **Members Absent:** Janet Anderson, Samuel Hurtado, Alejandra St. Guillen, Geralde Gabeau, Abdul Hussein, Patricia Crain de Galarce, Maria Serpa, Paulo DeBarros, Farah Assiraj, Andres Alonso, Cheng Imm Tan, Diana Lam.

Introductions

Miren Uriarte, Co-Chair, of the Task Force opened the meeting.

Update HBAP Evaluation

Dr. Lisa Harvey from the Office of Engagement provided an update on the equity analysis of the Home-Based Assignment Process (HBAP). BPS, through the Office of Engagement, released a RFP for a partner to complete an equity analysis of the HBAP. The bid was awarded to Boston Area Research Initiative (BARI) out of Northeastern University. The analysis should be completed in the spring of 2018 when they will present the findings to the School Committee.

The equity analysis asks: “what schools are available to students (on their choice list) by: neighborhood, socioeconomic levels, racial/ethnic group, home languages, and by subgroup overlays (Special Education, ELs, middle school pathways)?” The analysis also asks several implementation questions: How has distance impacted families’ choice? What is the access versus entrance to high quality schools? How many open seats are there each year (where are the open seats? By school? By neighborhood? By quality)? How many students get their choices (1st and subsequent)? How many students are administratively assigned? To which schools? How many administratively assigned students stay in that school versus transfer? How has school diversity changed – are we more integrated or more segregated?

Overall, the HBAP policy was successful in assigning students to schools closer to home, but not by all that much. The average shift was ~200m and ~50 seconds shorter commute (one-way). This improvement was comparable across ethnicities.

These analyses require a great deal of data (choice data, registration and assignment data, waitlist data, transfer data) that had never been pulled before.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] What analyses will be done with the EL overlay? What data do they have? Will the analysis look at all ELs together or will be disaggregated so we can look at ELs by program type (Spanish SEI, Cape Verdean SEI, Gen Ed, etc.)?

A: [Lisa Harvey] They are pushing BARI very hard to provide a detailed analysis of the student assignment outcomes for ELs.

Q: [Suzanne Lee] We have heard that there has been an increase in the assignment of students to SEI Multilingual programs. Will the analysis be able to tell us how HBAP impacted the assignment of ELs to these multilingual programs?

A: [Faye Karp] The equity analyses will not be able to say that HBAP causes choice or assignment to multilingual programs.

The Task Force requested a copy of the RFP and the contract with BARI for the analysis.

Students from Puerto Rico

Dr. Lisa Harvey additionally shared information on the influx of students from Puerto Rico following the hurricanes. 169 students came from Puerto Rico. Of these, 122 are still Active Students in BPS, 6 registered, but were never assigned to a school, and 41 are inactive.

Of the 122 active students:

- All students are classified as Latino.
- 99% students' first language is Spanish.
- 51% female, 49% male.
- Evenly distributed across grades, with highest proportion in 4th grade.
- 95% (116) identified as LEP and 5% (6) identified as Never LEP.
- 7% have no reported ELD Level, 73% are at ELD 1, 4% at ELD 2, 8% at ELD 3, 7% at ELD 4, and 1% at ELD 5.
- Students were distributed across multiple schools with 15 schools receiving 3 or more students (max of 10), 11 schools receiving 2 students, and 18 schools receiving 1 student.
- 50% of the students were placed in Spanish SEI programs, 19% in SEI Multilingual programs, 11% in Dual Language Two-Way Immersion Programs, 15% in a Gen Ed setting, and 3% in Special Education settings.
- 94% were indicated as a Yes on the McKinney-Vento.

FY19 Budget Discussion

Nate Kuder, Budget Director, presented information on the preliminary FY19 budget. He provided an overview of the budget process and the changes to the process since the FY15 budget. For FY15, they added the Budget Collaboratives, where OELL was involved with signing off on school budgets. For FY16, the Budget Office refined guidance and clarified expectations by refining school-level guidance and ELL Team training for Budget Collabs and by expanding knowledge of ELL services and budget requirements across the district. For FY17, they provided additional clarity and quantified expectations with OELL producing school-by-school FTE recommendations based on projections and required appropriate budgeting before sign-off. For FY18, OELL partnered with Planning & Analysis teams to develop enrollment projections and review feedback and the Budget Collaboratives introduced a new requirement for schools to build out their classroom model for review by the team. For FY19, they are jointly monitoring ELL student enrollment patterns by language and neighborhood and forming an Academic Programming Team as part of the BuildBPS process. Overall, these steps are allowing the Budget Office to make more precise estimates, with a nuanced understanding of the academic settings for

ELLs. If a school leader says they are running a SEI Spanish classroom, they have to show that they have the teacher to run this model. There has been a great deal of recoding, mapping, and building out class models. Now they have the opportunity with the BuildBPS process to think through program design and help identify where programs should be placed.

There are 3 types of budgets relating to ELLs: (1) the OELL budget, (2) the ELL program budget, which includes any teacher that fits into an ELL category and includes translations, and (3) accounts directly for ELL services, which is primarily in the schools. They are reporting on ELL Program Budget today. The projected ELL Budget for FY19 is \$94 million, which is \$5 million higher than for FY18 and \$24 million higher than the budget for FY14.

Q: [John Mudd] When you say the Program Budget is \$94 million up \$5 million, it would be helpful to understand what the increased money is being used for. What is new? What is growing?

A: [Nate Kuder] The Budget Book, which provides details on how the money will be spent will be published in March and that should provide more detail for the ELL Program Budget.

The increase in the ELL budget is in part due to expected increases in costs and contracts (approx. \$3 million). The remainder of the increased budget is from an increase in the projected enrollment of ELs for FY19. The district underestimated the number of ELLs for FY18; part of this increased projection is a correction from this year. The projections were hampered by changes to the ACCESS test, which determines the ELD level of ELLs. With the newest iteration of the ACCESS test, fewer ELs advanced from ELD 3 to ELD 4, and more ELD 4/5s remained ELs rather than being reclassified as former ELs. This produced more ELs overall and more ELs in ELD 1-3, who are the ELs requiring additional funding and programming. But there were also issues with the projection methodology that cause projections lower than actual enrollment.

The WSF for ELs (K-5 ELD Levels 1-3; 6-8 ELD Levels 1-3; 9-12 ELD Levels 1-3; All Grades ELD Level 4-5) have remained the same, so the increase in the budget is simply due to the increased projections of ELs. For FY18, the district projected to have 9,104 ELs at ELD Levels 1-3, while the actual enrollment was 9,914. The district also projected to have 7,278 ELs at ELD Level 4-5, while the actual enrollment was 7,477. For FY19, they are projecting 10,960 ELD 1-3 and 7,625 ELD 4-5.

Q: [Suzanne Lee] Was the under-projections due primarily to the changes in the ACCESS scores or to the methodology? Can we get an understanding of how many new ELLs enrolled in the district?

A: [Nate Kuder] This analysis has not been done at this point, but the majority of the under-projections were in ELD 1-3. A side effect of this was that some classrooms that were traditionally under-enrolled, which is costly to schools, actually had closer to full enrollment, a much more cost-efficient setting.

Q: [John Mudd] WSF is additive, so an ELL in ELD Level 1-3, who has a disability will get the WSF funding for all categories they fall under. This is logical, but has there been an evaluation to see if the WSF is adequate, especially for ELLs with disabilities.

A: [Nate Kuder] The WSF allocations are designed to account for the staffing needs associated with the student population. For instance, ELLs in Grade 9-12 at ELD Level 1-3 have a higher weight than ELD Level 1-3 in Grade K0-5 or 6-8 because the costs to decrease the class size at the high school level are higher than in middle school or elementary school grades. WSF assumes schools will run some sort of ELL programs, but there are no further differences in WSF depending on the type of program. The Inclusion Task Force is currently evaluating the effectiveness of WSF funding for SPED students. But really the only evaluation of the WSF is through the Finance Department and currently the focus is on compliance with DOJ and META.

Q: [John Mudd] This is something that could be raised prior to the Budget Collabs, so that there is a place to have the conversations of adequacy with all the key stakeholders together.

The changes to the ELL Programming fit into three categories.

- 1) Planned phase-outs or program conversions
 - a. Curley phasing out SEI Spanish programs
 - b. Greenwood Dual Language Spanish rolling up to grade 6
 - c. Umana Dual Language Spanish rolling up to grade 4
 - d. MEES grade K2 replace BLH rolling TLH
 - e. Orchard Garden taking full capacity BLK in grades 6-8 (now full K-8)
- 2) Recoding schools to match appropriate service delivery models
 - a. Irving combined BLS and BLM program into one multilingual program
 - b. Timilty will be running standalone SEI Spanish classrooms in Grades 6-7
- 3) SEI Program Expansions and New Programs
 - a. Multilingual: Expansion at Hennigan (Grade 6), Jackson Mann (grade 5), BCLA (grade 11). New Programs Quincy Upper (grade 6) (this expansion is to create more access to high quality schools for ELLs. This means opening up to all ELLs who are likely non-Chinese speakers).
 - b. Spanish: Ellis (Grade 4), Sumner (Grade 4), Russell (Grade 3), Otis.

Next steps: 1) Continue to improve projections methodology for ELLs with better projections by language and neighborhood and increased accuracy by ELD level and setting. 2) Revisit program decisions and be more strategic in program design and placement by partnering to evaluate program placement by geography and language. 3) Evaluate funding and service delivery requirements in context of choice and program models.

Q: [John Mudd] Has the Title I money from previous years been accounted for in this budget? Where is this at this point?

A: [Priya Tahiliani] At this point, they are working to figure out the best options for how to spend the money that was misallocated in previous years. They are exploring and discussion options.

[Roger Rice] There were FY17 issues with Title I. META is asking BPS to come up with ways to compensate for the under-spending for ELLs. META does not have prescribed options for the money, but just know that something must be done. There have been a series of proposals that have made it the superintendent's desk, but they have not seen anything yet.

Q: [John Mudd] Is part of the Budget Collab and Probable Org processes to discuss how services for students will actually be provided? Looking at SPED-ELL students, we have heard that the assumption is that these are monolingual students and the discussion of services is built out from this assumption. There should be a focus on language access and language development, which are likely not being provided currently for many SPED-ELLs because of the monolingual assumptions.

A: [Nate Kuder] The discussion of about providing services for SPED students does assume the students are otherwise in a Gen Ed setting with push-in/pull-out services. If you build out programs for SPED students in a SEI Spanish program, it is a challenging prospect to find all the right elements. At the school level, you need to have staff that is SEI endorsed and speaks Spanish fluently and has the correct licensure for the disability. You need the family to live in the correct zone and the family to choose that school. Right now the enrollment projection methodology looks at projections for ELLs and projections for SPED students, but not SPED-ELLs. The logic behind the Budget Collabs and Probable Org was to ensure that there were programs and services available for the most needy students, but they have not been able to do this for SPED-ELLs. This is something that will be important to consider moving forward.

Nate suggested after the budget season to work together on ways to use Budget Collab as the place to begin the process of building classroom models for SPED-ELLs. Start with this population and build out from there.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] How do we deal with addressing staffing needs in BPS? OHC indicates that it is a budget issue, but the budget is hamstrung by OHC, unions, and the principals.

A: [Nate Kuder] Through the Budget Collab they have been working on classroom maps. It might be possible to build out these maps starting with SPED-ELL students, which would give a clear picture of where the teachers are and where teachers are needed. There has to be a serious conversation about using Probable Org to force principals and OHC to collect these data.

Q: [John Mudd] Who is this? Who can we push to make sure this data is collected and analyzed?

A: [Nate Kuder] Use Budget Collab to ratchet up the pressure and the need for more data and change. Budget Collab can get everyone on the same page.

Update on LOOK Bill

Priya Tahiliani, Interim Assistant Superintendent of OELL, shared a slide deck providing an update on the LOOK Bill. The slide deck provided information on the demographics of BPS and the city of Boston, as well as the benefits of language supports for ELLs (“numerous research studies and meta-analyses have demonstrated the benefits that native language supports and dual language programs provide to English Learners students in comparison to monolingual English instruction”).

The goal of the LOOK Bill is to encourage the development of EL programs that support bilingualism and biliteracy. It does this by (1) giving districts flexibility to choose EL programming that best fit the needs of their population (removes “one size fits all” default model of SEI; provides opportunities for two way immersion and dual language programs; incorporate community input from mandatory EL Parent Advisor Council); (2) ensuring that EL programs are accountable for data drive, high quality instruction (sets up rigorous expectations for teacher qualifications, holds districts accountable for properly certified educators; folds EL program evaluation into DESE’s existing 6-year Coordinated Program Review); and (3) elevating statewide standards of EL education and biliteracy (creates the State Seal of Biliteracy, which recognizes students with proficiency in English and 1 or more other languages; adds Pre-K students to the list of those who may be categorized a ELs).

OELL will be negotiating with DOJ to create data-driven, high quality instruction programs for the 2019-2020 school year. In order to create new EL programs in BPS, DESE will be reviewing ALL of the EL programs in the district.

Reimagining EL Programs: (1) Program structure: intensive program for newcomers, expand the seal of biliteracy by using Title I funds to help students pay for AP tests, TBE 2.0 and transitional programming, and more dual language programs; (2) Staffing: bilingual, bicultural, co-teachers; (3) Materials: bring in materials from own culture, CLSP, bilingual; (4) Technology: multimedia, multimodal, technology platforms.

To develop this work, OELL and BPS are partnering with stakeholders and working with students and families, teachers, schools, and external partners to get input and feedback. To create a strategic plan, OELL is looking for school input, student/parent input, teacher input, and Task Force input. OELL is working through a 5-step process: (1) brainstorming and gathering information; (2) outreach with students and families; (3) firming vision with dual language principals; (4) collecting feedback from LAT-Fs; (5) discussing with EL Task Force Subcommittee and then the EL Program Strategic Plan will be shared with stakeholders.

For the implementation process, engaging stakeholders is crucial in ensuring the success of any new EL programs and the process to engage all relevant stakeholders will take time. As OELL partners with stakeholders, OELL will concurrently implement the following for SY18-19: Integration of native

language support, expansion up of Spanish and Haitian Creole dual language programs, and launching new dual language programs for next year being created right now.

Q: [John Mudd] The brainstorming for EL programs is really the key part of the process. It is best to go to the community with some clear options. In this process, will there be discussions around student assignment and the potential to address the issue of grouping ELs to improve program quality and fidelity? Is there an opportunity to have this conversation?

A: [Priya Tahiliani] This is something that they will have to discuss and renegotiate with DOJ. The DESE guidelines are not out yet, but will be coming out soon.

District Performance Meter

Nicole Wagner and Jacob Stern of ODA presented on the District Performance Meter. The superintendent has asked to create district wide metrics that show if the district is on track to produce graduates that are college, career, and life ready. They are in the process of developing these metrics are looking for input and feedback from key stakeholders. Once they develop the metrics they will be on a public website that the public can access, select one of the metrics, and analyze by subgroups.

One of the metrics is specifically looking at ELLs making progress in their language development. They are trying to determine if the more appropriate metric would be the DESE definition of ELLs “making progress”, which is a measure if students are making the expected growth in their language development, which may or may not include proceeding to the next ELD Level. The other potential metric is advancing to the next ELD Level.

Updates from School Committee

Miren Uriarte shared concerns around a situation in East Boston from 2 years ago where a student who was involved in an incident was reported to the police, who then alerted ICE to the student. Ultimately the student was deported stemming from the incident in high school. Part of the issue was that the report around the incident referenced “gang” activities, which triggered criminal justice involvement and ultimately ICE. There isn’t a clear understanding if the student had any gang involvement and the inclusion of the term “gang” stemmed from third-hand comments from another student. Community organizations including the GBLN have been pushing towards clear guidance around this issue. The City of Boston and BPS specifically affirmed that this city is a sanctuary city

Roger Rice provided input adding that BPS has been very secretive about this topic, first saying they had no data on the topic, which they later said they did have data. Then they said they didn’t have an MOU with law enforcement, but they actually do have an MOU. BPS created a website to provide resources for immigrants in Boston, but there should be more for immigrants. There are a bunch of lawyers in Boston who would do pro-bono work to help immigrants the second any issue arises.

The meeting was adjourned.