THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

**Minutes of the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Meeting**
**December 1, 2016**

The English Language Learners Task Force of the Boston School Committee held a meeting on December 1, 2016 at 9:00am 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.
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**Call to Order:**
**Task Force Members Present:** Miren Uriarte, Suzanne Lee, Janet Anderson, John Mudd, Kim Janey, Cheng Imm Tan, Paulo De Barros, Maria Serpa, Bob Hildreth, Michael Berardino - Coordinator.  **Other persons and BPS Staff Present:** Frances Esparza, Kim Tsai, Faye Karp, Elena Lanin, Eleanor Laurans, David Bloom, Priya Tahiliani, Korenza Maiden, Peggy Weisenberg, Aveann Bridgemohan, Irlande Plancher **Members Absent**: Geralde Gabeau, Samuel Hurtado, Abdul Hussein, Alejandra St. Guillen, and Diana Lam.

Michael Berardino opened the meeting in his capacity of Coordinator of the Task Force.

**Introductions**
Following introductions from all people present, Dr. Miren Uriarte welcomed everyone to the meeting. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the planning for the ELL Task Force for the year. It is appropriate that the meeting was starting with a budget discussion because that is where the "rubber hits the road".

**Budget Planning Updates**
Eleanor Laurans, Chief Financial Officer and David Bloom, Budget Director, from the Budget Office, shared information on the FY18 budget process. Eleanor Laurans informed the ELLTF that on Dec 9th, they would be releasing FY18 school budgets to each school leader. At this time, they are locking down enrollment projections for each school. This year, they are focusing on getting the school budgets to each school earlier so that principals can begin the hiring process as early as possible, which increases the likelihood of hiring high quality teachers. On February 1st, 2017, the public budget process begins with presentations to the School Committee. David Bloom (Budget Director) has been leading the process on evaluating the Weighted Student Formula (WSF). The BPS WSF is cited as a national model, which other large districts are beginning to emulate. BPS has a great deal of pride in this funding system, where the money follows the students, reflecting the level of need various categories of students present. The WSF is a living document and a system that needs to be continually evaluated. They are using more than just past student enrollment to help with enrollment projections, including demographic data and input from principals and community members. Last year, BPS had to make cuts to school budgets. This year, the goal is to have Central Office take on more of the burden of budget cuts. Even so, the FY18 budget might

require some politically complicated decisions. This makes the evaluation and support of WSF even more important.

One area of need under evaluation is the budget for ELs with disabilities. They are looking at other districts across the country to see how money is being allocated and what they do with the budgets.

Q: [John Mudd] We understand the changes and evaluation of the WSF, but under Superintendent McDonough there was a plan to also have program budgeting.
A: [David Bloom] This is important to diccuss. Last year there were cuts to SPED students in the WSF, but the overall budget for SPED services went up.
Q: [John Mudd] But this does not explain what the overall program funding is.
Q: [Miren Uriarte] We have to piece together what the budget is for ELLs. Some money is in the WSF, but some money is going to dual language programs and other money is going to OELL. How do we understand the overall ELL budget and what changes have been made it over the years?
A: [David Bloom] This is an interesting idea that we would like to discuss further.

Q: [Janet Anderson] What percent of the school budget is determined by WSF?
A: [Eleanor Laurans] 46% of the school budget is WSF, with school allocations, you get to 53% of the budget, benefits account for approx. 10%, and there are some services like SPED that are from Central Office, then there are facilities.
A: [David Bloom] According to the allocation tracker, 88% of school budgets across the district are allocated through WSF.

Q: [Janet Anderson] We are very interested in the enrollment projections for FY18. We know that the enrollment projections, especially for schools who serve mobile students, students who are more likely to enter school after October 1st, is a real "pain point". Can you say more about how you can deal with these student groups?
A: [Eleanor Laurans] They are aware of this massive problem that impacts schools inequitably. At this time they are infusing a huge amount of data into the hands of principals. That and starting the process earlier, so the issue of projections is more collaborative. The budget office is in the first year of this investment so there will be a learning process.

Q: [Suzanne Lee] How do the facilities budget work school to school? During her time as principal, she was often told that there wasn't enough money for building repairs and other projects.
A: [Eleanor Laurans] The facilities budget is done centrally. And they are aware this is not always equitable.

Q: [Cheng Imm Tan] The student enrollment projections are important and it great to hear that the budget office is using more data to develop the projections, however there is a real issue between projections and the reality in the schools.
A: [Eleanor Laurans] The schools receive funding based on the enrollment projections and the WSF. There are Fall Enrollment Reconciliations. If schools get more students at the beginning of the year they will get more money from the budget office. And if they get fewer students, they are supposed to get less money. They take the money back from the schools, which is always more challenging.

Q: [John Mudd] There are rumors circling around the city that late arriving students are being administratively assigned to low-performing schools that the district wants to keep open.
A: [Eleanor Laurans] This is an issue with Home-Based Assignment, late arrivals seem to be disproportionately assigned to low performing schools, but there is no intention about these assignments and no motivation to keep these schools open.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] WSF covers 88% of funding, but there are shortages. Where does the loss come from?
A: [David Bloom] The broad answer is that 88% of funding comes from WSF. In the autonomous schools, the salaries may rise during the year and there will be a shortfall from the WSF allotment. If the salaries and teachers lower over the year, the WSF allotment will help these schools.
Q: [Miren Uriarte] How can this be made more transparent to schools?
A: [Eleanor Laurans] This is a real struggle and the description of the WSF alone will not solve this. There needs to be more information.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] There is a continuing major struggle with the immigrant and low-income/economically disadvantaged connection that needs to be addressed within the budget.
A: [Eleanor Laurans] This is a major issue and the budget office is at their disposal to discuss solutions.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] There is a real commitment to the home-based assignment plan, but at this point we do not have an adequate evaluation of its effective. We cannot do much until we get an adequate evaluation. However, at this point there are some things we can evaluate around the edges. Administrative assignment is one concern, if students are being assigned to schools to keep enrollments up.

Faye Karp from OELL offered an overview of the additional budget requests from OELL for FY18. The investments fall into two categories: maintenance costs and new investments. For maintenance costs, OELL is proposing to have more resources for NACC to increase the testing for incoming potential K0-K2 ELLs, which is aligned with new DESE requirements. For new investments, OELL is proposing additional resources to pilot some additional programs including new programs for SLIFE students, ELs with disabilities, and other targeted programs

Q: [Miren Uriarte] How do these new investments align with the Strategic Implementation Plan?
A: [Faye Karp] OELL went through the OEL budget and the SIP and "tagged" items that match the SIP initiatives and milestones.
[Frances Esparza] There are proposals for increased investment in K1, especially for dual-language programs. They are moving towards a Cape Verdean dual language program.

Q: [Suzanne Lee] Are the new testing mandates from DESE funded or unfunded?
A: [Faye Karp] They are not funded.
Q: [Suzanne Lee] In this situation this would helpful to know for the sake of transparency and also to help in advocacy.

Q: [Janet Anderson] WSF doesn't always work for dual language because not all the students are ELLs.
A: [David Bloom] There are rumors/perceptions in the district that dual language programs are more expensive. They wanted to understand if this is true, so they evaluated the BPS dual language programs and reviewed programs nationally. They found that dual language programs are not more expensive and do not need to be expensive.
Q: [Maria Serpa] There is a misperception that dual-language programs are more expensive than SEI programs. How did we get to the perspective that dual-language is more expensive? It should be one teacher for each classroom. In fact it should be more affordable than SEI programs, where you need multiple teachers in the classroom. Where did this come from? The perception is that dual-language is more expensive, but the reality is that is that it is not more expensive. The only thing costs money is the curriculum.
[Paulo Debarros] There needs to be education around the dual language programs, and make sure the Cape Verdean dual language program is not just seen as a boutique program.

[Cheng Imm Tan] It is important that there is an investment in dual-language programs. These programs are important and for everybody, not just ELLs, therefore the burden of the budget and the advocacy

should not just fall to OELL. Additionally, dual language programs should be promoted, but it is also important that there is a continuum of programs offered.

**ODA – ELL Achievement and Reporting Data:** Nicole Wagner Lam and Elena Lanin from ODA and Faye Karp from OELL presented data in response to a detailed data request from the ELL Task Force. The data request had three main areas: 1) Detailed description of ELL performance on the 2016 PARCC/MCAS data; 2) overview of changes to the testing format (e.g. MCAS 2.0); and 3) Description of the data processes for ELLs in the district.

**ODA – PARCC/MCAS Presentation**
Nicole Wagner Lam and Elena Lanin from ODA presented detailed data on the 2016 PARCC and MCAS results. The slide deck compared Grade 3-8 PARCC and Grade 10 MCAS outcomes of ELs to former ELs and Never ELs. The test outcomes were reported using Composite Performance Index (CPI) and Student Growth Percentile (SGP). All results included students in the Horace Mann (in-district) charter schools. The presentation began with the ELA results.

ELA CPI Results: First, they compared CPI for the ELA test for 2015 and 2016. Overall, all BPS students had lower CPI for 2016 than 2015 (from 74.35 to 74.31) for the Grade 3-8 ELA PARCC but ELL students had a higher CPI in 2016 than in 2015. On the Grade 10 ELA, ELLs had a 3-point increase in CPI from 2015 to 2016, larger than the overall increase. When looking at CPI, ELLs had the largest one-year gains amongst the groups covered.

ELA SGP Results: For Grade 3-8 PARCC ELA tests, the district had a lower SGP in 2016 than in 2015 (49 to 46). ELLs had a slightly lower SGP dropping from 51 to 50, but still higher than the district wide SGP.

ELA results by ELD Level: Next, ODA presented the ELA outcomes by ELD level. As expected, the CPI increases as the ELD increases (students with higher levels of English proficiency score higher on the ELA tests). ELs at ELD Level 5 had higher CPI than all BPS students. Unexpectedly, the SGP is higher for ELLs with higher ELD.

ELA results for ELLs by grade level:  ELLs in Grade 3 and Grade 5 had the highest CPI, while Grade 4 ELLs had the lowest CPI. Grade 4 has always been a grade were performance dips for ELLs. OELL is doing more research on this, but this dip might be influenced by the performance of long-term ELLs (LTELs), who struggle to improve their ELD.

ELA Results by grade level and ELD Level: Across all grades the pattern of higher CPI for higher ELD holds true.

ELA Results by Language Group: The presentation shows that ELLs with first language of Vietnamese and Chinese had the highest CPI, while ELLs with Spanish and Cape Verdean as first language had the lowest CPI. Similarly, Spanish and Somali speakers had the lowest SGP for the PARCC ELA tests.

Due to time constraints, Nicole Wagner was unable to present on the PARCC/MCAS Math results.

The ELLTF members had several suggestions for the slide deck including creating separate charts for CPI and SGP, which are difficult to interpret when included on the same chart. The members also wanted to see BPS CPI/SGP on the charts as a reference point.

Q: [Maria Serpa]: The Grade 10 test scores are important, but they are always high, probably because of the design of the assessment. It would be great to see how these students are doing relative to their time in

the country. Are these long-terms ELLs or are these students new to the American education system? Can you compare outcomes by prior education levels?

A: [Faye Karp] Only about 20% of incoming ELLs come into BPS with transcripts. Therefore this type of analysis is very difficult.

Q: [John Mudd] Beyond the test results it would be great to see these results by Program Type. How are ELLs in SEI, dual-language, and Gen Ed doing on these tests?

A: [Faye Karp]: These types of results will be included in the EL Longitudinal study.

Q: [Paulo Debarros] Are the Portuguese speakers from Brazil or do they also include Cape Verdean students?

A: [Nicole Wagner Lam] The national group was part of the data request, but based on the scope of the data request, they were unable to add this to the presentation. This is something that they will be looking at moving forward.

Q: [Miren Uriarte] The PARCC results by language group are very disturbing. Spanish-speaking students are the lowest performing ELLs, but this is by far the largest subgroup of ELLs. How are they dealing with this group?

**ODA/OELL – Data Discussion**

Faye Karp of OELL then provided information on the data processes for ELLs in the district. There has been confusion regarding the number of ELLs in the district, specifically the number of ELLs in the in-district charter schools. There has been confusion among ELLTF members on the number of ELLs in the districts and in different types of schools.

SY16-17 EL Enrollment: As of 11/30/2016 there were 17,139 ELLs in BPS. This number includes ELLs in Horace Mann charter schools and Level 5 schools.

SY16-17 EL Enrollment by Grade: Overall, ELs represent 31% of all students. The percentage is much higher in earl grades including 52% in K1, 38% in K2 and 1st grade. There is decline in the percentage of ELLs in each grade but a slight uptick in 9th grade where ELs comprise 32% of all students.

SY16-17 EL Enrollment by School Type: There are 17,139 ELs in BPS. 16,139 ELs are in "traditional" public schools. 487 ELs are in the in-district Horace Mann charter schools including 174 ELs at UP Academy Dorchester and 91 at Dudley Street Neighborhood School. 513 are in the Level 5 schools including 284 at UP Academy Holland and 229 at the Dever.

EL Reporting: Faye Karp presented a sample of the number of ELs reported from different source. For the October 2015 DESE reporting, there were 16,228 ELS. According to ASPEN on 10/25/2015 there were 16,890 ELs in grades K0-12. According to ASPEN on 10/25/2015, there were 15,504 ELs in grade K2-12. For the Paragraph 54 DOJ/OCR reporting from October 2015, there were 13,045 ELs included.

EL Reporting Differences: The different number of ELs is the result of a couple of reporting factors. DESE enrollment data comes from the SIMS file that districts report to DESE three times over the year. This is static data whereas the BPS enrollment fluctuated daily. Furthermore, DESE considers the in-district charters to be their own LEA. Therefore, when DESE reports BPS data these schools are excluded from the totals. BPS has to request the data directly from the Horace Man in-district charters and these requests sometimes take up to 2 months. Additionally, DESE often reports just on K2-12, while BPS reports on K0-12 numbers.

Q: [John Mudd] How is this possible? These are BPS students and BPS teachers?

A: [France Esparza] The Commissioner of education considers these schools to be autonomous. The state values this autonomy to allow the Horace Mann schools achieve their stated goals. OELL considers the ELs in the Horace Mann schools to be their responsibility, so they request the data and make sure they are aware of their outcomes. The PARCC/MCAS data presented earlier was the merge of the PARCC data from BPS and from each Horace Mann school.

The number of EL students presented in Paragraph 54 Summary Analysis differs for a few reasons. The Paragraph 54 report is structured that they have one "main" list of K2-12 ELs in "traditional" schools one tab in an Excel file and they keep the ELs in other school types in separate tabs (22 other schools in the latest reporting). These "separately" reported schools follow a different instructional model (e.g. dual language schools) and/or report to a different LEA. For ease of report, OELL includes only the "main list" if students in the summary analysis of our level of service, but all EL students are reported to the US DOJ and OCR.

Q: [John Mudd] From this information, what is most important for the ELLTF to know/understand?
Q: [Miren Uriarte] Get information for Horace Mann and all the schools together and maybe look at them separately. What set of data are you most confident in?
A: [Nicole Wagner Lam] A takeaway is to always look at the data source. Identify where the data is coming from. The confidence in the data source depends on the nature of the presentation and the data request.

**Minutes from October ELL Task Force Meeting**
The minutes from the October ELLTF were unanimously approved.

**Discussion of ELL Task Force Goals and Priorities**
The ELL Task Force reviewed the ELLTF Goals and Priorities and the subcommittee structure. Miren Uriarte opened the discussion – the ELLTF has incredible leeway, but we do not want to overwhelm the district leadership with requests for meetings and data. We want to treasure this privilege and make sure we maintain it by being focused with our Goals and Priorities and always working towards the established goals. Each subcommittee should think about the 2-3 main things they want to accomplish this year. We also have to think about how do we evaluate ourselves. How do we know if we are reaching our goals? What are the intermediately steps we can take?

[Paulo Debarros] These meetings and the work of the ELLTF are great, but how do we make sure changes are actually being made on the ground? We hear a lot of words here, but when we look at what is happening with the Cape Verdean community, things are not improving.
[Suzanne Lee] We need to have an independent means to see what is happening on the ground.
[Frances Esparza] Invited everyone to attend the January 10th meeting where all the LATFS are receiving PD. This is a change from the previous administration where LATFs would have 2-3 PD sessions per year. Now they have the expanded ELD framework and PD for instruction. They have seen that LATFs are even doing PD for how students are being instructed.

*ELL TF Goal #1: Recognize and promote BPS as a multilingual and multicultural district.*
[Kim Janey] This goal is missing the expansion of dual language programs. Some of the TF members believe the entire district should move towards a dual language model, while others believe in a continuum of programs.
Promote the expansion of dual-language and other programs such heritage language programs that expand BPS as a multilingual and multicultural district.
[Frances Esparza] One area where the ELLTF can continue advocacy is for the expansion of dual-language programs and overcoming the perception/stigma that these programs are more expensive. They

have an advisory committee working on analyzing and advocating the dual language programs and need a person from the ELLTF on this committee (Kim Janey volunteered).

[Paulo Debarros]: There are issues around the counting of Cape Verdean ELs and this impacts the perceived demand for dual language and other programs. This is an example of issues on the ground.

[Frances Esparza]: When OELL talks to the principals, they are saying that the Cape Verdean parents do not want a dual-language program or a language specific program. This is frustrating because the principals need autonomy, but they might not be reflecting the desires of the families served.

[Miren Uriarte] One idea is to have the Program Quality Subcommittee focus on ELs whose first language is Cape Verdean this year, as a case study to discuss the systemic issues.

*Goal #2: Improve Data Systems and Use of Technology* – Suggestions include including issues related to the reporting of data beyond just the calendar of data requests.

[Maria Serpa]: Concern is that there are 4 different data systems that contain data for ELLs (and especially ELLs with disabilities). How do we know if the systems are all talking to each other and that all the data is in one place? Last year the ELL-SPED Subcommittee made a request that OELL had to conduct by hand. There was no procedure in place to link the requested data.

[Frances Esparza] OELL has requested funds for a data system that will import all the necessary data and all OELL to look at all the data in one place.

The Task Force suggested that we monitor and support the implementation of this new data system as a Priority for 2016-2017.

*Goal #3: Improve student assessment and assignment* – Emphasis on the equity impact of the home-based assignment plan.

[Janet Anderson] The assessment of the home-based assignment is going to take some time, but there are areas where we can get preliminary analysis of student assignment.

[Miren Uriarte] The district is committed to conducting the evaluation of the home-based assignment plan. However, at this point they do not have the capacity to conduct the evaluation internally. At this point it might be best for MIT to complete the analysis because they know the data the best. To address the potential conflict of interest that MIT has, BPS could have an oversight committee to make sure the analysis is on the up and up. Otherwise, if a new researcher were to look at this, it would take 3 years just to get to know the data. There is data. There are tables with information on the outcomes; let us at least see the tables that exist.

[Kim Janey]: Kim has had the recent experience of working with a family that recently arrived from the DR. Working with this family to help get them registered and enrolled in a school of their choice has been eye opening. The assignment process in person, on the ground, does not work effectively. How can we monitor that it actually works for newcomer families?

*Goal #4: Expand program quantity and quality*: The priorities will look to deepen the understanding of programing in the district. The idea is to pick a specific language group as a case study to understand program quality in the district.

*Goal #5: Support ELL Students with Disabilities* – John Mudd and Maria Serpa brought additional changes to the language of this Goal. Maria Serpa introduced the changes but first wanted to discuss the lack of movement in Special Ed, but the extraordinary work being done by OELL for ELs with SPED. The subcommittee finally has the numbers around language capacity and it is as they feared, the majority of EL-SWDs are being instructed as if they are English fluent students (monolingual). This is an outrage. Furthermore, it is concerning that there was no mention of ELL-SWDs in the SIP.

*Goal #6: Improve Family and Community Engagement* – Add language around the parents of ELLs with disabilities.

[Miren Uriarte] We have to be aware of the language we use and the role of the Task Force. We can monitor but we cannot demand changes. We want to work with the departments. Therefore, we should consider tweaking the language to say promote, etc. If we say things like monitor we have to make sure we are actually making the commitment to monitor the work of BPS and commit the time and energy to this work.

 **Public Comment**
Aveann Bridgemohan shared her experiences with the Mattahunt and the dire situation facing students from Haiti.