



Cape Verdean ELLs in Boston Public Schools

Recognizing their Needs and Gifts
Cape Verdean Educators Network and
Cape Verdean Community Unido

Objectives

- Review demographic information and research findings about Cape Verdeans in general and Cape Verdean ELLs
- Explain the problem with placement of Cape Verdean ELLs in appropriate language-specific SEI/SPED/SIFE programs
- Propose the establishment of a cohesive and robust K-12 strand that would meet the linguistic and cultural needs of Cape Verdean ELLs
- Propose key components of wrap-around services for Cape Verdean ELLs
- Establish working partnership with OELL
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Research: Portes, 2011; Vigil, 1995; Suarez-Orozco, 2002

Statement of the Problem

- Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE programs in Cape Verdean neighborhoods have been dismantled.
- Cape Verdean ELLs are being assigned to schools that are outside their neighborhoods and do not house language-specific SEI/SIFE programs.
- Existing SEI/SIFE multilingual programs do not appear to meet linguistic and cultural needs of Cape Verdean ELLs.
- There are no known SPED services (within SEI programs) available to Cape Verdean ELLs.

Demographic Information on Cape Verdeans in Boston

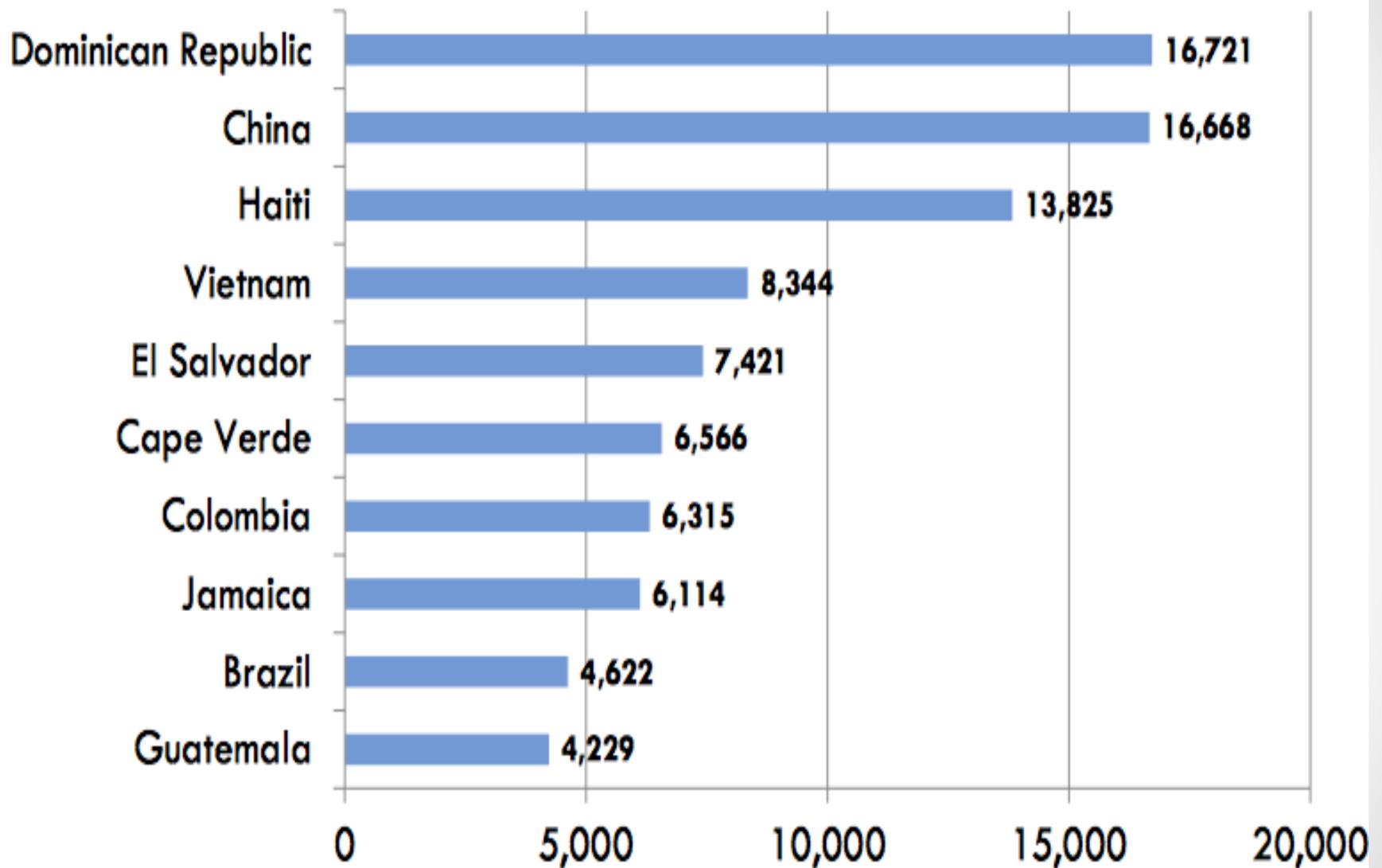
Source:

NEW BOSTONIANS 2013-2014

Boston Redevelopment Authority, Research Division

March 2014

Countries of Origin among Boston's Foreign-Born, 2007-2011



Dorchester

2000

- 30.5% of residents are foreign-born
- Top 10 countries of origin among foreign-born:
 1. Vietnam: 17.9%
 2. Haiti: 13.3%
 3. Jamaica: 8.5%
 4. Dominican Republic: 8.0%
 5. Trinidad and Tobago: 5.4%
 6. Ireland: 3.4%
 7. Barbados: 3.2%
 8. Honduras: 3.1%
 9. Poland: 2.5%
 10. Guatemala: 1.6%

Today

- 31.6% of residents are foreign-born
- Top 10 countries of origin among foreign-born:
 1. Vietnam: 16.1%
 2. Cape Verde: 12.8%
 3. Dominican Republic: 11.7%
 4. Haiti: 10.9%
 5. Jamaica: 6.8%
 6. Trinidad and Tobago: 4.6%
 7. Guatemala: 2.6%
 8. Ireland: 2.5%
 9. Barbados: 2.5%
 10. China: 2.3%

Roxbury

2000

- 20.2% of residents are foreign-born
- Top 10 countries of origin among foreign-born:
 1. Dominican Republic: 23.2%
 2. Haiti: 12.4%
 3. Jamaica: 5.6%
 4. Trinidad and Tobago: 5.2%
 5. Nigeria: 4.2%
 6. Honduras: 4.0%
 7. Barbados: 2.6%
 8. Vietnam: 1.5%
 9. Colombia: 1.4%
 10. Cuba: 1.3%

Today

- 23.6% of residents are foreign-born
- Top 10 countries of origin among foreign-born:
 1. Dominican Republic: 23.0%
 2. Haiti: 10.3%
 3. Cape Verde: 8.1%
 4. Jamaica: 4.6%
 5. Trinidad and Tobago: 4.4%
 6. China: 4.1%
 7. Honduras: 3.8%
 8. Ghana: 3.1%
 9. Nigeria: 3.1%
 10. Guatemala: 2.9%

Top African Countries in Boston

1. **Cape Verde (38.5%)**
2. **Nigeria (12.3%)**
3. **Morocco (7.2%)**
4. **Ethiopia (5.8%)**
5. **Ghana (3.7%)**
6. **Liberia (3.3%)**
7. **Sierra Leone (2.8%)**
8. **Egypt (2.3%)**

Unemployment & Income

74

- The percentage of foreign-born and native-born who are unemployed are very similar, at 10.5% and 10.4%, respectively.
- The average yearly income of the employed foreign-born population is \$41,893.61, compared to \$56,363.32 for the native-born.
- The median yearly income of the employed foreign-born is \$30,000, whereas for native born, the median income is \$40,180.

Diversity in Boston Public Schools

- **47% of BPS students speak a language other than English as their first language (27,000 students).**
- **30% of BPS students are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or English Language Learners (ELL) (17,300 students).**
- **BPS students come from more than 100 countries.**

Cape Verdeans in BPS

- Total ELLs in BPS:
8,000
 - Cape Verdean: 1,400
 - SEI: 623
 - Gen. Ed: 736
- ELLs in BPS:
 - Elementary: 58.5%
 - Middle: 13.6%
 - High: 27.9%
- Cape Verdean:
 - Elementary: 31.1%
 - Middle: 19.7%
 - High: 49.2%
 - www.bpsataglance.com
 - www.scholarworks.umb.org

Many other Cape Verdean students are labeled Black. They lose the ethnic marker after exiting SEI programs and are no longer monitored.

The following data comes from the study
“Improving Educational Outcomes of
English Language Learners in Schools and
Programs in Boston Public Schools, 2011”
conducted by UMass Boston.

Languages in BPS

The **most prevalent** native languages other than English in BPS include Spanish, several dialects of Chinese languages, Vietnamese, **Cape Verdean Creole**, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Somali.

Cape Verdean Creole is the third most prevalent language among LEP students and the sixth most prevalent first language at BPS. The proportion of LEP students whose first language is Cape Verdean Creole has increased from 6.9% to 8.2%.

LEP: :Limited English Proficient

There is a long-standing community of Cape Verdeans in Boston, constantly nurtured by new immigration from their island nation, with a mix of immigrant generations and immigration statuses in this group of students.

The fastest growing native language groups in this period were the Vietnamese (42.8% increase), the Somali (38.8% increase), and the **Cape Verdean Creole speakers (33.5% increase).**

How Many Cape Verdean ELLs became FLEP?

Of the 1,627 LEP students in SY2006 who became FLEP students by SY2009, 56% were native speakers of Spanish, 13.7% of Chinese languages, 7.9% of Haitian Creole, 7.6% of Vietnamese, 4.1% of Cape Verdean Creole, 2.4% of Portuguese, 1.3% of Somali, and 7.1% of other languages.

Where did the others go if many SEI programs have been dismantled?

Data from study (Cont'd)

Recommendation 3: The large transfer of ELL students out of ELL programs between SY2006 and SY2007 points to the need for the district to have a clear and consistent process **for the transfer of students out of ELL programs.** It also needs to develop and communicate clear criteria for designating students as LEPs.

Recommendation 4: The district should refrain from transferring students with low English proficiency out of ELL programs, particularly students transitioning out of elementary school and those in middle school and in high school. Dropout rates among LEP students at these grade levels and at these levels of proficiency are very high in comparison to the rates of similar students in ELL programs.

Recommendation 16: Spanish, Haitian Creole, and **Cape Verdean Creole speakers** have the highest dropout rates among LEP students. They also face the greatest challenges in terms of attendance (except Haitian Creole speakers) and suspension rates.

Recommendation #16 (Cont'd)

The district should seek support from community groups working with these populations for a better cultural understanding and for **help with student engagement.**

These and other students at risk of dropping out need mentoring, academic support, and wrap-around services delivered by culturally competent staff who are able to provide linguistically appropriate services to the students and clear information to parents.

Implications:

1. Cape Verdean families continue to arrive to the U.S. from Cape Verde, bringing their children with them.

2. Cape Verdean Creole continues to be the 3rd most prevalent native language spoken in BPS.

3. Nevertheless, in the past years there has been a systematic dismantling of Cape Verdean SEI programs; in addition, caps have been placed on schools that house Cape Verdean SEI programs (information received from Newcomer Assessment Center).

School Choice, According to BPS:

In March 2013, the Boston School Committee approved a new school choice plan for kindergarten-grade 8 to give more students access to **quality schools closer to home.**

The plan took effect for the 2014-2015 school year.

The new plan supposedly **offered families all the six choices within a mile of home.** However, this plan has resulted in Cape Verdean students being denied Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE classes.

Source: BPS at a Glance, 2014

Programs for Cape Verdean ELLs that have been dismantled:

1. Elementary:

- Condon (It is now multilingual). Students at the Condon Elementary are placed in mainstream programs even when their ELD levels are 1 and 2.
- Emerson, located in the heart of the Cape Verdean enclave was closed down (It is now a district charter with no Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE programs).
- New SEI Center: Orchard Gardens was chosen as an SEI site, but does not seem equipped to service Cape Verdean SEI students. Presently, it has a cap and does not accept new Cape Verdean ELLs. In addition, the distance discourages parents from sending their children there. **Where is the “neighborhood” school?**

Middle School:

- The Dearborn: under BPE. It is unknown what provisions have been made for Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE students.
- The Dearborn also has a cap. It is not listed as a choice at the Newcomer Assessment Center. Hence, SEI/SIFE teachers at the Dearborn have five students in some of their classes. Parents at the Center are told there there are no available seats at the Dearborn.
- Lila Frederick has more than 40 Cape Verdean ELLs and no Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE program. There are no established SEI/SIFE programs; nevertheless, Frederick Middle is located in a Cape Verdean neighborhood.

High School:

Brighton High: Cape Verdean students are being sent to Brighton; they are failing because they have to wake up too early; There is a Portuguese SEI strand but there are no Portuguese-speaking teachers; needless to say, there are no Cape Verdean speaking teachers either. **Plus, it is not a “neighborhood” school.**

Burke High School:

The Burke houses a thriving Cape Verdean SEI program. Recently it lost its SEI director due to retirement. In addition, it does not have a guidance counselor who speaks Cape Verdean Creole.

Boston International School:

This school is open to Cape Verdeans; it does not, however, house a Cape Verdean SEI program. In addition, students cannot easily reach it by public transportation. In short, it is not a “neighborhood” school.

Madison Park High School:

This vocational/technical school houses a multilingual program.

Questions for Consideration

1. What was the rationale for dismantling the Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE programs? Where did the decision originate?
2. How do these changes align with the new BPS “neighborhood” school policy? Why can’t Cape Verdean parents have the choice language-specific SEI programs?
3. Who, in the Newcomer Assessment Center is advising Cape Verdean parents, based on their language/literacy assessment results?
4. How were Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE centers deleted from school choice at the Newcomer Assessment Center?
5. Why is there a cap on schools that are Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE centers? Why are these seats not available to Cape Verdean ELLS?

Proposal of a K-12 Cape Verdean SEI/SLIFE Strand

K-5

Proposed Site: The Mather Elementary

Rationale: the school

- is located in Cape Verdean neighborhood.
- already has a Vietnamese SEI strand; therefore, infrastructure is already in place.
- will become a feeder school for middle schools in the same neighborhood.

K-5

- **Proposed Site: The Condon Elementary School**
- **Rationale: The School:**
 - Although the program is currently designated as multilingual, there is a large number of Cape Verdean ELLs at the school.
 - The structure is already in place to reverse the program to language-specific SEI, namely Cape Verdean.

K-8

- **Proposed Site: Orchard Gardens K-8 School**
- **Rationale: The School**
- already has a Cape Verdean SEI program that needs to be strengthened with Cape Verdean speaking staff

K-8

- **Proposed Site: The Martin Luther King School**
- **Rationale: The school**
 - is in the heart of the Cape Verdean community
 - Cape Verdean ELLs already attend the school; it is a matter of adding an SEI program that will meet their needs

Middle Schools

- **Proposed Sites:**
- **Lila Frederick** is located in the heart of the Cape Verdean community and already has a large number of Cape Verdean students.
- **Dearborn** has been designated as a STEM school and should be a choice of Cape Verdean students as well.
- **One of these middle schools would become the feeder school for high schools housing Cape Verdean SEI/SIFE programs.**

High Schools

- **The Burke High School** already houses a robust SEI program.
- **International High School** is also an option for Cape Verdean ELLs.
- **Madison Park** must be an option to Cape Verdean ELLs because of the vocational strand and location.
- **The Dearborn**, which has been expanded to high school will also offer the STEM option for students. It is also situated in the heart of Cape Verdean community.

SLIFE PROGRAMS

- **The Dearborn** already has a SLIFE program, which would continue to service Cape Verdean ELLs.
- **Lila Frederick** would also be a potential site for SLIFE.
- **The Burke** was a site in the past and could become one again. There are experience staff in SLIFE there.

DUAL LANGUAGE

- **The Mather Elementary** and the **Condon** would already have an SEI site that could house the dual language Program.
- As the dual program expands to middle and high school, it can be housed along with existing SEI programs

Services

Assessors (Newcomer Assessment Center)

- Assessors working with incoming Cape Verdean ELLs should possess linguistic, cultural and academic skills that encompass all grades (K-12).
- Likewise, assessors should understand research-based rationale for SEI/SIFE programs and must base their recommendations on the linguistic and cultural precepts that undergird the goals of language-specific SEI/SIFE programs.
- They also should have knowledge of Cape Verdean-specific SEI/SIFE programs in order to provide families with choices that meet their children's linguistic and cultural needs.



Services (Cont'd)

Newcomer Center personnel also

- should have an understanding that they have an added responsibility: to inform newly arrived families of the goals of SEI and SIFE programs and advise them to select programs that best fit the newly arrived immigrant families and their children. If the assessors find that no adequate choices are available for the families, they **MUST** advocate for these families by looking for adequate programs.

Services (Cont'd)

Welcome Centers

- Welcome Centers have the responsibility to also educate newly arrived Cape Verdean families, as they assess their children's academic skills.
- Welcome Centers must also have a more transparent communication with the Newcomer Assessment Center, in order to, together, advocate for the correct placement of Cape Verdean ELLs.



Services (Cont'd)

Teaching Personnel

- Teachers, especially those servicing SEI and SIFE students, must have a clear understanding of the research-based rationale for SEI and SIFE programs. They must also follow the pedagogical, linguistic and cultural precepts that are the rationale for SEI and SIFE programs.

References

- Boston Redevelopment Authority/Research Division, March 2014
- Uriarte, Miren; Karp, Faye; Gagnon, Laurie; Tung, Rosann; Rustan, Sarah; Chen, Jie; Berardino, Michael; Stazesky, Pamela; de los Reyes, Eileen; and Bolomey, Antonieta, "Improving educational outcomes of english language learners in schools and programs in boston public schools" (2011). *Gastón Institute Publications*. Paper 154.

Our Cape Verdean ELLs have a right to an education that will enable them to establish successful lives in the U.S. and become productive members of their respective communities.

We have an obligation, therefore, to ensure that they are part of an educational setting that provides linguistic, cultural and emotional support, as they begin their journey in their new country.

It is for these reasons that we are here to advocate for their rights and to ascertain that they are receiving the services they need in order to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Thank You!