

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



OFFICE OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

Dear English Learner Task Force members,

The [executive summary](#) provided to the Department of Justice on October 15, 2021 outlines Paragraphs 54 and 55 Per Successor Agreement. The findings from the four components of ESL (correct delivery type, minutes, grouping, and ESL certification) provide a District Overview and action plan areas to strategically align district resources and support with the identified potential contributing factors.

The DOJ reporting data on October 15, 2021 demonstrates the following:

- % of ELs receiving appropriate ESL instruction has moved from 90% in October 2020 to 72% in October 2021.
- % with appropriate ESL minutes have moved from 87% in October 2020 to 76% in October 2021.
- % of ELs appropriately grouped for ESL have moved from 83% in October 2020 to 56% in October 2021.
- % of ELs whose ESL teachers are certified has moved from 78.7% in October 2020 to 80%.
- % of ELs with correct ESL type, minutes, grouping, and teacher has moved from 65% to 41%.

The Office of English Learners has experienced significant leadership changes over the years and staffing shortages as of late that has diminished the capacity for support to schools. Under the new leadership of Dr. Drew Echelson, Superintendent of Academics; Farah Assiraj, Deputy Chief Academic Officer; and Aketa Narang Kapur, the newly appointed Assistant Superintendent of the Office of English Learners, the Office of English learners will move towards shifting the trajectory of the October reporting and working with schools to increase services for ELs and ESL staffing thus demonstrating progress in meeting DOJ compliance.

We recognize that our schools across the district are faced with a labor shortage and there are a variety of factors that may have contributed to the October DOJ reporting:

- We currently have nearly 30 ESL positions posted on TalentED. We will continue to widen our recruitment strategy with the teacher pipelines and support for MTEL requirements.
- We have a tremendous OEL team - Faye Karp, Ignacio Chaparro, and Steven Ramirez - who has been working closely with ODA and OIIT to develop a data dashboard and provide the DOJ reporting in accordance with the submission dates. In addition to the needs for ESL

teachers, we are working diligently on cultivating OEL staff and filling the numerous vacant positions to increase support for schools and LATFs.

- We have some of the lowest level of data entry compliance in the past 6 years, and about 12% of ELs (~2,000) have no data entry in Aspen SIS. We are working with school superintendents and individual schools to triangulate the root issues and ensure that our data input for the DOJ December meets the threshold for reporting. We are launching a data dashboard that will help facilitate easier data input.
- We will be working to address the ELs with disabilities to ensure schools are reporting the services. We currently have 2 full-time positions to support ELs with disabilities and look forward to filling both roles to ensure that this group of students is receiving the services and targeted support to attend to both the needs of language acquisition and the disability.
- Due to COVID disruptions, almost half of all ELs did not participate in ACCESS 2021. These students were required to complete the WIDA Screener for leveling purposes beginning in September 2021. ELD levels are still in process at the time of this report for students who didn't take ACCESS; therefore the ELD level may not match appropriate service requirements. OEL has stipended 9 teachers to assist schools with scoring. We anticipate that we will see a significant increase in the December reporting.

While we have some challenges to overcome, we are fully committed to meeting the needs of our Multilingual Learners whether they have been in BPS since Kindergarten, are newcomers, SLIFE, and/or also have a disability. Our Multilingual Learners deserve our priority, top resources, and the best educational experience that will lead them towards success as multilingual learners valued for all of the assets and language(s) they bring to our Boston schools' community. We will forge ahead with a renewed vision for Multilingual Learners and a strong commitment to ensuring that we make improvements and gains with English learner services and outcomes.

We are seeking your feedback to inform and weigh in on the contributing factors and action planning outlined by OEL. Please review the DOJ Executive Summary and provide feedback for OEL [here](#) by November 5, 2021.

Please expect more communication from our incoming Assistant Superintendent of English Learners, Aketa Narang Kapur, and a follow-up communication on our action plan progress.