

ELL Task Force of the Boston School Committee
ELSWD Subcommittee Meeting

May 22, 2018

Bolling Building

ACTION MINUTES

Subcommittee Members present: John Mudd, Priya Tahiliani, Cindie Neilson, Ivonne Borrero, Ellen Kelleher

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of April 24, 2018 were approved unanimously with no additions or corrections.

2. Review Agenda

John suggested adding a report on the ELTF Human Capital Subcommittee.

3. Review write-up of results of IEP Pilot Project

Ellen will prepare a brief write-up of the IEP Pilot Project explaining the methodology for selection of IEPs and the results of the review.

4. Update on planning for native language access under the LOOK Bill

Priya reported on meeting with the Program Quality subcommittee of the ELTF. They expressed surprise and concern about how much OEL was planning and doing.

She noted that OEL staff is on-board with the move to native language and building native language support into classrooms, even SEI. They are adding books to libraries and creating the environment for the expanded use of native language. Next year, they will work on ESL curricula for SLIFE and Dual Language classrooms.

She noted the plans for heritage language programs in Spanish and Mandarin at the Quincy and estimated the growth of 1-3 dual language programs per year. BPS is behind other districts, but Boston has a greater diversity of languages than many other school systems. The critical issue is how to staff these programs. BPS is a union district with limitations on teacher assignment and changes in classroom position descriptions. There is a need to develop strategies with the BTU.

The subcommittee raised questions about what models BPS would be using and which experts BPS was consulting in the process of designing its new approaches under LOOK?

Priya described the new process of asking schools to apply for dual language programs so that they take ownership. She plans to present the OEL Instructional Vision at the next ELTF meeting.

5. Bilingual Psychologist presentation

There was no presentation by the Bilingual Psychologist.

John said that in his reading of the guidance document, it reflects a past approach where the predominant concerns were a worry about the over-identification of EL students as needing Special Education, the higher proportion of BPS students as Special Education compared to national averages, and it notes only the Question 2 requirement for SEI without any mention of the new opportunities under the LOOK Bill. Given the subcommittee's commitment to try to change the culture of BPS to move in the direction of supporting the use of native language, he hoped the bilingual psychologists' guidance document could be used to reinforce this movement toward the vision, the value, and the importance of native language in the education of these students.

Cindie said that she thought these comments were helpful and would take them back to the authors of the document. Perhaps they could add a piece on the value and new opportunity for the use of native language.

6. Review Draft Guidance Document Vision Statement

Ivonne noted that they had added a section on access to native language suggested by Maria.

Cindie said that the revised guidance looked great with a lot of work put into its development. She asked whether key sections should be pulled out so that they did not get lost by being added to the already large procedure manual.

Cindie said that she and Priya would go through the revised guidance with a fine-toothed comb, and they would make sure to get it out to the group in time for a review at the final meeting of the subcommittee with Maria present on June 19 at 2:00. [note different time]

7. Review Draft Guidance Document description of pilot project on native language access

Cindie raised the question of whether the 10 pilot project schools as described in the April 24 Minutes of the subcommittee would be the same as the Tier 3 schools in the new reorganization plan that have high proportions of EL and SWD students. She suggested we wait for the selection of these target ELSWD schools until the Tier 3 schools are chosen.

Cindie said we needed to be clear what our expectations are for these schools next year. John asked if there were any further written elaboration of this pilot project effort to help schools deal ELSWD students. Priya expressed concern that we need less writing and more doing. She said she would prepare whatever re-write of the pilot project contained in the Minutes that she thought would be helpful at this time.

8. Progress on guidance to Schools on hiring of ELL, Special Education, and ELSWD teachers

Ivonne noted that she had participated in the hiring of the para pool.

There was discussion about how unresponsive OHC was to the concerns and needs of OEL and OSE.

John said he would contact Zack Scott and James Bacon to see how best to proceed in developing guidance for School leaders and their Personnel Subcommittees in hiring EL, Special Education, and ELSWD teachers.

9. Update on planning for ELSWD students support under BPS central reorganization

No discussion.

10. Public Comment

No public present; no public comment.