

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



Minutes of the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force SPED-ELL Subcommittee Meeting October 24, 2017

The English Language Learners Task Force of the Boston School Committee held a meeting on October 24, 2017 at 1:00pm 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: John Mudd, Maria Serpa, and Michael Berardino - Coordinator. **Other persons and BPS Staff Present:** Priya Tahiliani, Cindie Neilson, Ivonne Borrero, and Ellen Kelleher.

I. Introductions

Maria Serpa and John Mudd, co-leads of the Subcommittee opened the meeting. All present introduced themselves

II. Updates/Changes to Personnel

BPS has added Ellen Kelleher who splits her time between OELL and SPED focusing on students who are both ELLS and have diagnosed disabilities. There have been no further changes to the central office personnel as it pertains to SPED-ELLs

III. Review of Draft SPED-ELL Priorities

Maria Serpa and John Mudd led a discussion of draft priorities for the school year. The goal of the subcommittee priorities is to have a clear set of goals for the school year, which fit into the ELL nd Task Force goals of monitoring and supporting, while also fitting in with the priorities of BPS including those of OELL and SPED. The goal is to turn these into SMART Goals, with clearly outlined measurable objectives. [The Human Capital issues raised by the SPED-ELL subcommittee will be dealt with by the new Human Capital subcommittee.]

Priority #1: *“IEP – A Pilot Study of random selection of SPED-ELL IEPs to examine the adequacy/appropriateness and implementation of Individual Education Programs for ELSWDS, who require additional and different teaching and learning; (e.g. learning a ne language, adapting to a new culture, achieving at grade level in academics and the impact of a disability within a dual language context) to ensure Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). The study will examine the language access needs including: (a) ELD Level, (b) corresponding L2 language learning goals, (c) Languages of instruction and related services for each goal etc.”*

The subcommittee affirmed that a detailed review of the IEPs and their implementation for SPED-ELLs is a priority for the school year. Language access of all SPED students needs to be a continued focus of the subcommittee.

Maria Serpa will help design the Pilot Study by providing a memo of the objectives of the research including the number of IEPs to review, the parameters for selecting IEPs to review, and the parameters to review the IEP design and implementation. Once the research parameters have been agreed upon, Maria Serpa, Patricia Crain, and John Mudd will work with BPS staff to establish a procedure for reviewing how IEPs are designed and implemented relative to agreed checklists developed by the district.

Priority #2: *“Update Achievement Performance Data for SPED-ELL students in comparison to non-ELL SPED students and to ELL students without disabilities.”*

Through the work of OELL, SPED, and the ELL Task Force achievement data reported by the Office of Data and Accountability and other groups will report of outcomes for SPED-ELL students compared to non-ELL SPED students. The ELL Task Force will ensure that outcomes for SPED-ELLs are included in all future data requests. The timing of these reports will be discussed at the next meeting.

Priority #3: *“Update and Automate Staff Assignment Data in relation to SPED-ELL student language learning (FAPE) and program needs (LRE).”*

The subcommittee will continue the work from the previous year on updating the data on the staff assignment data.

BPS is working on transitioning to a new IEP data system, which will be much more accessible; it will be easier to get data on the contents of IEPs to help in any type of analysis. On the other hand, there is still a difficult system to access data on the adults in the district. Therefore the system is still not automated. This will require someone with IS expertise to merge the databases to create an automated system to link students and the teachers that serve them.

BPS agrees to update the staff assignment data manually and will bring a draft of SMART goals to the next meeting to accomplish this task. Automation will require further work in collaboration with the Office of Human Capital and perhaps other data departments in BPS. The SPED Office is also developing a detailed database on all of the 1-to-1 paras in the district. This data is housed in the SPED Office and can be automated and part of any SMART Goals. The outstanding issue is with classroom paras. To fulfill this priority, the subcommittee needs to address the capacity in the district.

Another potential goal to better understand the capacity of the staff is to look closely at one school. Last year, the subcommittee looked at the Umana, which was an easier task since the assumption was that any SPED-ELL in the school was a Spanish speaker. This year, the analysis could focus on a more “typical” BPS school to understand how teachers/schools are fulfilling the language needs of SPED-ELLs.

“Update and build capacity to automate the staff assignment data in relation to SPED-ELL student language learning and program needs” by 1) updating current data manually and developing more efficient systems to compare the language needs of students and teacher language capacity at each school in the district, 2) look at 1 to 2 schools as a case study to understand how the language and program needs of SPED-ELLs are being fulfilled, 3) [REDACTED] and 4) develop an automated system to understand staff capacity in relation to student needs.

Priority #4: *“Support the preparation and completion a single BPS SPED- ELL Guidance Document that integrates the three drafts of SPED-ELL GUIDANCE documents presented at the ELL Taskforce at the end of last year. This guidance must address the language access needs.”*

BPS has developed a public document, which includes the SPED-ELL Guidance Document. The specific document is still be reviewed and edited. There were originally three documents, which OELL and SPED merged into one. They have been sharing this document with stakeholders and incorporating feedback. They recently shared the document with LATFs, who asked for a few changes. Once these changes re incorporated, Ivonne Borrero and Ellen Kelleher will share with the subcommittee. The review of this document will be looking at what exactly are the literacy goals outlined in the document and how language development is included in the goals. There is still a gap in the document covering the language access and the language of instruction needs of SPED-ELL students. Furthermore, it is important that the IEPs and the guidance document include not only academics, but also address the emotional needs of SPED-ELLS.

Priority #5: *“Support the design of a district wide Professional Development Model and capacity building to prepare professionals that can meet the needs of SPED-ELL students and to develop coordinated action plans WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS for staff development with timetable for implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes.”*

The subcommittee agreed that Professional Development should be a continued priority for the school year. The district has developed a PD vision in the “BPS Essentials for Instruction Equity” which is available on the BPS website (<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/6648>). The Essentials were developed by the ASSET Team and address the needs of SPED-ELLS. The district is also working with local universities to make sure they are training teachers in line with the Essentials so they are ready to teach ELLs, SPED students, and SEPD-ELLS.

A concern was raised that while the Essentials presents a vision, there is a major gap in how this will be operationalized to improve teacher classroom instruction and how the outcomes of this professional development will be evaluated. Cindie Neilson and Priya Tahiliani agreed to present what the district is now doing for professional development of the the Essentials at the next meeting. The subcommittee will need to review the adequacy of the PD model and focus on the practicality and feasibility of implementing this PD model and determin how BPS can measure the effectiveness of the PD model.

Priority #6: *“Examine and develop recommendations for the Language Learning and Cultural Needs of the SPED-ELL students in substantially separate classrooms in addition to the disability.”*

The subcommittee agreed that it is important to examine and develop recommendations for the Language Learning and Cultural Needs of SPED-ELL students. However, the SPED Office is currently reviewing and detailing the substantially separate model in the district. Therefore, the SPED Office asked that the deep look at the language learning and cultural needs of student in substantially separate classrooms wait until next year when they district has a better handle on the Sub Sep program. It was also agreed that this Priority be included with Priority #3 (bring the total number of priorities to 6).

Priority #7: *“Assess the importance of current parental choice in student assignment compared to grouping SPED-ELL and non-Sped ELLs to address the dispersion issue to ensure that they receive appropriate programs (FAPE in LRE) for instruction and related services (or assign this to an appropriate subcommittee for inclusion in its SMART Goals).”*

The subcommittee agreed that the issue of understanding, evaluating, and making recommendations based on the current student assignment process is key to the work of the subcommittee. Specifically, the subcommittee will look at the topics of dispersion of SPED-ELLS through the district and the potential to

add grouping of students to improve services. The goal is to understand how to leverage existing resources and to start the conversation about changing the system to better serve SPED-ELLs. How can the subcommittee and the entire ELL Task Force keep the issue of dispersion in the minds of everyone in the district? The ELL Task Force will also work through the Student Assignment Subcommittee to recommend that this topic is part of the equity analysis of the home-based student assignment system.

OELL and SPED will also share their work looking at the programs and enrollment in 8th grades across the district (although currently this analysis looks at ELLs and SPED, but not SPED-ELLs).

Additional goals for future work: The subcommittee also identified numerous topics, which cannot be part to the priorities for this school year but are of critical importance. The topic of assessment is particularly important, especially since current instruments are only in English. Are the tools that are not necessarily normed for current student body appropriate to assess SPED-ELLs?

1. **Transition of SPED-ELLs** to the world of work (required by IDEA 2004)
2. **Eligibility Process** (culturally and linguistically responsive assessment)
3. Inclusion
4. **Independent Evaluations (Initial or Reevaluation)**
5. **Preschool and K Screening For Special Needs** (Chapter 71B) in addition to **Preschool and K Screening for language learning proficiency** (Chapter 71A)
6. **Intake process** at Parent Welcome Center & Newcomers Assessment Center
Clarification about the current process for (a) ELLSWDs with an IEP (b) ELLs who may exhibit indicators of a possible disability (c) Who is in charge?

Next Meeting Agenda: CURRENT FOLLOW-UP BEFOERE MEETING marked with an asterisk*

1. BPS will bring draft SMART goals for Priorities #1 and #3
*Maria Serpa will have provided a 1- page statement of the purpose of the IEP pilot study.
2. BPS will give dates for providing updated performance measures of SPED-ELL students in comparison with non-ELL SPED students
3. Review revised Guidance document
*BPS will send current consolidated draft to subcommittee members now.
*Maria Serpa will prepare draft of section on language access and language of instruction.
4. BPS will present description of current professional development

Establish Calendar for Year

The subcommittee agreed to meet once a month for the remainder of the school year. (SPED and ELL agreed to schedule these meetings rather than depend on the office of the Deputy Superintendent to do it.)

The meeting was adjourned