THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

**Minutes of the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Human Capital
Subcommittee Meeting
November 15, 2017**

The English Language Learners Task Force of the Boston School Committee Human Capital
Subcommittee held a meeting on November 15, 2017 at 11:30am 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: John Mudd, Suzanne Lee, and Michael Berardino - Coordinator.
Other persons and BPS Staff Present: Emily Qazilbash, Chelsea Banks, Priya Tahiliani,
Karla Estrada, Mary Driscoll, Ligia Noriega, Doannie Tran, and Ceronne Daly.

I. Introductions

Suzanne Lee, lead of the Human Capital Subcommittee, opened the meeting by providing an
overview of the history of ELL Task Force and how the Human Capital Subcommittee fits into
the overall objectives of the ELL Task Force. There have been many good policies designed by
the district and the state, but the implementation isn't always effective. The Task Force is here to
monitor the district and connect with the community – be a "critical friend". One clear issue that
resurfaces every year is the lack of diverse teaching force with adequate language capacity to
serve the needs of the students in the district. The Task Force wants to discuss how to recruit
diverse teachers with language capacity, strengthening the pipeline of new teachers, and making
sure that these teachers stay in the district, which is where Professional Development also comes
in But first the Subcommittee wants to establish a baseline of the current teaching force in the
district and how the capacity of the teachers matches the needs of ELLs in the district.
Identifying this baseline data has proven to be extremely time-consuming or not feasible given
current information systems. One of the goals of the Task Force is to work with the district to
create the systems to easily provide data on the current capacity and placement of teachers and
paras.

II. Teacher Data

Chelsea Banks of OHC shared information from the City of Boston on PeopleSoft the HR
software used by the City of Boston. PeopleSoft does not currently include the option to track

teacher's language fluency, but there is a module in PeopleSoft that can be "turned on" and would enable OHC to track the language fluency of all teachers within the primary HR IS. Previously, when OHC has asked the City of Boston to turn on this module, they have been rejected citing costs. One of the goals of the Subcommittee will be to develop a memo to send to the City of Boston clearly outlining what OHC and the subcommittee would like in PeopleSoft and why we want these changes.

OHC does have teacher language information on the last 5 years tracked though Talent Ed. Currently all these teacher fluency data are self-reported and there is no standardized means in the district to assess the language fluency of educators. OHC has used these data to report on the language capacity of new hires, but this info is just in Talent Ed and is not stored or linked to PeopleSoft. It is important to note that reporting to know a language does not mean being able to teach in that language.

If/when the City of Boston turns on the language capacity module in PeopleSoft, there will still be the issue of collecting the language capacity information for the existing teachers in the district, not just new hires. The subcommittee discussed options for collecting this information. One option to gather data on educator (teacher and paras) language capacity is to send a request to all principals in the district to fill out a spreadsheet indicating the language capacity of all the educators in their school. Suzanne Lee also suggested utilizing the rich data presented by principals as part of Probable Org. Every year principals inform central office of the needs in their school, which involves the need for teachers with specific certification and language ability.

The second piece of the data needs of the subcommittee will be linking the information on teacher language capacity and licensure to the students in their schools to ensure that educators in the district are best-serving the needs of students. This will require bringing together OHC, ODA, OELL and IT. The subcommittee should develop a SMART Goal for automating the match between teacher language capacity and student language needs for ELLs in regular education, SEI classes, and will place a specific focus on automating the process for identifying the teachers serving SPED-ELL students.

III. Pipeline

Once the teacher fluency data are gathered in a centralized, systemic manner, the subcommittee can analyze areas of need across the district. The goals of tracking the language capacity of staff are both short-term and long-term. In the short-term, the goal is to build language capacity in schools to build a more welcoming and culturally appropriate school environment. In the long term, the goal s to build the capacity of properly certified teachers (e.g. bilingual teachers certified in ESL, SPED, etc.).

To address the areas of need across the district, OHC and principals will need to evolve the recruitment and development of teachers with the necessary language fluency. There are some current pipeline programs and some idea for future efforts:
  - The Community Paraprofessional Development Program (CPDP) – leverage opportunity to negotiate with BTU to allow principals to list positions with language and certification requirements.

- University partners – work with local universities to establish expectations of graduates from Schools of Ed to come into BPS fully certified and ready to fill the necessary positions.
- Look at Higher Ed programs in other parts of the country (i.e. California) where students go to school one extra after their Bachelors to allow new teachers to enter fully certified in ESL and subject/elementary.
- Boston Teaching Fellows has helped build some knew teachers of color that will reflect the student body in the district.

Mary Driscoll pointed out that the coding of teacher positions and the assignment of teachers to ELL and SPED-ELL classes are huge problems. The subcommittee could provide support for resolving these issues which are being considered in the current BTU contract negotiations.

IV. Principals Focus Group

Mary Driscoll and Ligia Noriega agreed that the subcommittee should organize a focus group of principals to hear their opinions on the human capital needs in the district as well as he strengths and barriers to achieving their human capital goals. School leaders and their Personnel Subcommittees need orientation into what to look for in hiring ELL, SPED, and SPED-ELL teachers. (This issue was also raised by the SPED-ELL subcommittee.)

V. Subcommittee Membership

The Subcommittee will be meeting every other month. Emily Qazilbash and OHC will take the lead on organizing meetings along with the ELL Task Force Coordinator, Michael Berardino. The Subcommittee agreed that for the data-related goals, issues around pipelines, and the principal focus group, Mary Driscoll and Ligia Noriega should be directly involved with the subcommittee to allow the link between school, principals, staffing, and academic policies. The subcommittee may need to involve representatives from the offices of Technology and Data and Accountability as well as Academic departments in aspects of its work.

VI. Proposed Subcommittee goals
Below is a list of the proposed Human Capital Subcommittee goals:
1. **Data: Current teacher assignments and needs for ELL students:**
    a. Where are the ELL students of which language in each school and by class?
    b. If a single language SEI class, there should be match between the language of the teacher and students.
    c. If multilingual, then match between language of largest number of students and teacher.
    d. If general education, what are the certifications and languages capacity of teachers, if any?
    e. What are the gaps/needs by class, school, and district? [SPED-ELL student/teacher data is a priority for SPED-ELL subcommittee; do data together.]

2. **BPS Language Capacity of Teachers: Overview**
   a. What number and percent of teachers and of paras have competency in which languages?
   b. What certificates do they have? How do we define fluency?
   c. Where are they assigned/teaching?
   d. Where could more efficient assignment of staff reduce the identified gaps/needs?

3. **Establish interdepartmental strategies and action plans with OHC, ASSET team, and Schools division to recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse teaching and other staff** that reflect the student body of the Boston Public Schools overall and ensure that ELL and SPED-ELL students have teachers with the appropriate language, licensure, certification, and professional development so that students have access to qualified teachers, paras, and other staff who can communicate in their home/native language.

4. Evaluate the importance of **staff assignment issues** and **prepare action plans** to address these issues.

5. **Convene a focus group of Principals/Headmasters** to discuss staff hiring and teacher/school leader evaluation issues in relation to the performance of ELL and SPED-ELL students.

VII. Next Steps:

1. OHC will draft a memo regarding the necessary changes to PeopleSoft and the rationale for the changes. The Subcommittee will review the memo and ask the Superintendent to send the request to the City of Boston. Task Force members will also utilize connections with the City of Boston to request these changes.
2. Subcommittee will encourage the use of Probable Org meetings to bring attention to the educational issues of ELL and SPED-ELL students with school leaders, and to gather data on teacher-students matches in these areas.
3. Through the help of the Schools division – Suzanne Lee will convene and lead a focus group of principals to understand their views of the challenges and obstacles that exist and what the subcommittee should focus on. Mary Driscoll and Ligia Noriega will help organize these focus groups.
4. Begin discussions around teacher pipeline: OHC will share current pipeline work around teachers and paras (e.g. The Community Paraprofessional Development and other Programs), as well as teacher coding and assignment issues.
5. Develop timeline for work.

Meeting was adjourned.