

**ELL Task Force of the Boston School Committee  
ELSWD Subcommittee Meeting**

**May 22, 2019**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Subcommittee Members: Maria Serpa, John Mudd, Cindie Neilson, Kim Tsai, Ellen Kelleher

**1. Reading**

At Maria's suggestion, Ellen read an opening selection in Spanish to demonstrate how difficult it is for ELSWD students to understand classroom material and how important it is to have access to native language for those students to have an opportunity to learn.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes of April 24, 2019 were approved unanimously.

**3. Review of updated data and discussion**

Cindie had not been able to have the updated data prepared for the meeting, but the group continued the discussion of what data and information would be valuable in planning for pilot projects for next year.

There is still the outstanding issue of targeting a group of similar language, disability, and grade level students versus a focus on Resource Room students. Cindie has argued that targeting Resource Room students might have a broader impact.

What are the needs of those students in Resource Rooms? Many are there for speech and language issues, but BPS has a number of Spanish-speaking bilingual speech and language specialists, so these students may already be receiving the support they need (although not in other languages). Even those Spanish-speaking students may need academic support in math and reading. Are they receiving it or not, and what would it take to provide that support?

There was a discussion of what a pilot project would be designed to demonstrate. Although there is evidence that access to native language is beneficial to ELSWD students, these studies are outside of Boston. It would be important to show this result in BPS.

Similarly, it will be important to show how it would be feasible for BPS to provide access to native language given the reality of student dispersion and limited resources. Cindie suggested the possibility of introducing a Spanish-speaking para in one or two schools.

**4. Next Steps**

Cindie will talk to Priya about what would be most important to test in terms of access to native language and what resources might be available for pilot projects. She would then write a paragraph description to send to subcommittee members before the next meeting.

Ellen also described some schools, especially dual language programs, where they were providing native language support to ELSWD students. As before, the subcommittee asked if it would be possible for her to provide short vignette descriptions of these programs.

**5. Next Meeting: June 19, 2019 at 3:30**

**6. Agenda for June 19**

- Review updated data and description of possible pilot projects
- Review vignette descriptions of places where access to native language is now being provided

**7. Public Comment**

No public comment.

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