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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### Board Documents - Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Regular Meeting  
Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Chelmsford High School  
200 Richardson Road  
North Chelmsford, MA 01863  
Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### [Briefing](#)

**Comments from the Chair**  
**Comments from the Commissioner**  
**Comments from the Secretary**  
**Statements from the Public**


#### Routine Business:

Approval of the Minutes of the March 23, 2009 Special Meeting and March 24, 2009 Regular Meeting - **Vote**

#### Items for Discussion and Action:

1. [Update on State Education Budget and Federal Stimulus Funding for Education](#) - **Discussion**
2. School and District Accountability and Assistance - **Discussion**
  1. [Report from Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance](#)
  2. [Progress Report and Next Steps](#)
3. [2008 Dropout Report and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Initiatives](#) - **Discussion**
4. [Charter Schools: Amendment Requests from Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School and Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public School](#) - **Discussion and Vote**

#### Other Items for Information:

5. Education-Related News Clippings
6. [Executive Summary of 2009 Gaston Institute Report on English Learners in Boston Public Schools](#) 
7. Report on Grants Approved by the Commissioner
8. [Directions to the Meeting](#)

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### Briefing for the April 28, 2009 Meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: April 17, 2009

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, at Chelmsford High School. Board members are invited to arrive by 8:30 a.m. for coffee and a brief tour of the high school. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and will adjourn by 12:30 p.m. If you need overnight accommodations or any additional information about the schedule, please call Beverley O'Riordan at (781) 338-3118.

#### Overview

Chelmsford Superintendent Donald Yeoman and high school principal Allen Thomas will welcome the Board to Chelmsford High School, lead us on a tour starting at 8:30 a.m., and make a brief presentation at the start of our meeting. The agenda for our meeting includes an update on the state education budget and federal stimulus funding for education, discussion of the school and district accountability system, a report on dropout data and state dropout prevention and recovery initiatives, and a discussion and vote on two charter amendments.

#### Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta will report on current issues and activities and will invite Board member Jeff Howard to provide an update on the work of the Proficiency Gap Committee.

#### Comments from the Commissioner

1. **MCAS contract.** I am pleased to announce that the Department has awarded a second five-year contract to Measured Progress to develop, administer, score and report results of the Massachusetts Comprehensive

Assessment System and MCAS-Alternative Assessment. The Dover, N.H. testing contractor holds the current contract. The new award will total about \$146 million over five years. Measured Progress will be responsible for supporting the existing MCAS testing program as well as implementing improvements to the program. The enhancements that the company has committed to implement include a reduction in overall testing time for students and a shorter timeline for returning student results, so that schools and parents will receive results by the end of the academic year in which the tests are administered rather than in the fall. The Department issued the Request for Responses in October 2008. Five contractors expressed initial interest, three submitted questions, and only Measured Progress submitted a full proposal. An 11-member team of Department staff and external education stakeholders reviewed the proposal and recommended awarding the contract to Measured Progress. We have been pleased with the service that the company has provided over the last five years and look forward to working with them in the future. As we move ahead with the MCAS contract, we are also actively exploring funding and partnerships to develop curriculum-embedded, performance-based assessments that will measure a wider range of skills and content, including oral presentation, designing and constructing experiments, and team-based projects.

2. **Update on partnership with WGBH/WGBY.** Our partnership with WGBH and its Springfield affiliate, WGBY, has continued to grow. We are currently in discussions with them about ways to link Mass One, our online professional development site, with Teacher's Domain, an online repository of curriculum materials, multi-media resources, and video clips that teachers can use to enhance instruction. We are also working with them on development of a Boston-based academic quiz show for high school students, a NOVA Science Teacher of the Year award, and a marketing campaign to attract more people into the teaching profession. I plan to invite WGBH CEO Jon Abbott to join us at a future Board meeting to talk about these partnerships in more detail.
3. **Bureau of Special Education Appeals.** In January 2009, in response to an opinion request that I submitted, the U.S. Department of Education advised me that the current organizational structure of our Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) must be changed to bring it into full compliance with federal law. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education asked me to present a plan for doing so by April 15th. To assist me in the analysis, I engaged an impartial consultant, Lehigh University Professor Perry Zirkel, a national expert in special education law and due process hearings. He has been meeting with key stakeholder groups to get their perspectives on the various options open to us. These groups include parent advocates, school superintendents and special education directors, attorneys who appear before the BSEA, legislative leaders, the BSEA mediators and hearing officers, and others. We have been researching how other states handle their dispute resolution process and talking with other Massachusetts state agencies that might play a role in a restructured BSEA. I have made it clear to all concerned that I have only two objectives: to bring our dispute resolution process into full compliance with federal law, and to do it in such a way that we can continue to offer high quality, impartial services to parents, students, and schools. I have requested a 45-day extension of the deadline to submit our plan to the U.S. Department of Education, to allow sufficient time to complete our analysis while dealing with other pressing business, including implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. I will keep the Board posted on this matter.
4. **Reports to the Legislature.** The Department has filed the following reports with the Legislature, in response to directives in the FY09 budget and the General Laws:
  - *School Redesign: Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success* reports on the implementation of plans in all districts participating in the Expanded Learning Time grant program to provide students with more instructional opportunity in math, literacy, science and other core subjects, to integrate enrichment and applied learning opportunities into the school day, and to provide educators with increased opportunity to plan together and participate in professional development with other teachers and in collaboration with their partnering community-based

organizations. The report and link to the Abt Executive Summary of Year Two may be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/legislative.html?fy=2009>.

- *Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities* reports on the third year of this discretionary grant pilot program, under which six public higher education institutions and K-12 public schools have established partnerships that provide access to a range of credit and non-credit courses and support services to students with severe disabilities ages 18-22. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/legislative.html?fy=2009>.

5. **Follow-up to charter school policy discussion.** At our special meeting on March 23rd on charter school policy, the Board asked if the Department could follow up with research and data on several questions, including an analysis of mobility and attrition of teachers and students from charter schools. We will begin to address these questions in the reports we will be publishing this summer, including the first statewide report from our new educator data system and our first report on several new measures of student mobility. Some of the other questions that emerged from the charter school discussion are longer-term research projects that we will revisit as resources become available. I will keep you posted on our research agenda.
6. **Lurline Muñoz-Bennett.** I am pleased to announce that at a State House ceremony on May 27, 2009, the Massachusetts Arts Education Collaborative will award the Irene Buck Service to Arts Education Award to Dr. Lurline Muñoz-Bennett, Arts Education and Equity Coordinator of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This award is well-deserved recognition for Lurline's years of service to educators and students throughout the Commonwealth. Among her professional responsibilities, Lurline is the Department's liaison to two of the Board's advisory councils: arts education and racial imbalance. She is devoted to helping children learn through song and dance, poetry and painting, and to expanding educational opportunities for all students. We are grateful to Lurline for her work and congratulate her on receiving this honor.

### Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Reville will brief the Board on current issues and activities.

### Items for Discussion and Action

#### 1. **Update on State Education Budget and Federal Stimulus Funding for Education - Discussion**

I will update the Board on our budget planning, including the latest information we have on the state budget for the balance of FY2009 and the House budget proposal for FY2010 as well as the extensive work we are doing in connection with allocation of federal stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Secretary Reville will brief the Board on the education budget perspective from the Governor's office.

#### 2. **School and District Accountability and Assistance - Discussion**

##### 1. **Report from Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance**

Joseph Esposito, CFO (retired) of Solid Works and former member of the Educational Management Audit Council, chairs the Board's 15-member Advisory Council on School and District Accountability

and Assistance. Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr and others in the Department have been working with the advisory council as we redesign our system for accountability and assistance. By statute, the advisory council is to present its findings and recommendations to the Board at least two times a year. At this month's meeting, Joe Esposito will present the advisory council's first report to the Board.

## **2. Progress Report and Next Steps**

Deputy Commissioner Baehr and Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy will update the Board on our progress to date and anticipated next steps in planning and implementing an improved system for school and district accountability and assistance.

## **3. 2008 Dropout Report and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Initiatives - Discussion**

The Board materials for last month's meeting included several documents highlighting state efforts to help increase the number of students who graduate from high school. At this month's meeting, Department staff will discuss some of these initiatives and the latest data from the School Year 2007-2008 Dropout Report. Associate Commissioner John Bynoe and Stafford Peat, Jenny Caldwell Curtin, and Rob Curtin will present the information and respond to questions.

## **4. Charter Schools: Amendment Requests from Barnstable Horace Mann Charter and Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public School (Change in Grade Span) - Discussion and Vote**

The boards of trustees of the two Horace Mann charter schools in Barnstable, the Barnstable Horace Mann Charter and Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public Schools, have requested that the Board amend their charters to reflect a change in grade span. The memo under Tab 4 explains the rationale for this proposed change. I recommend that the Board approve these charter amendments.

## **Other Items for Information**

## **5. Education-Related News Clippings**

Enclosed are several recent articles about education.

## **6. Executive Summary of 2009 Gaston Institute Report on English Learners in Boston Public Schools**

On April 8th I attended a symposium sponsored by the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, in conjunction with the release of the Institute's most recent report, *English Learners in Boston Public Schools in the Aftermath of Policy Change: Enrollment and Educational Outcomes, AY2003-AY2006*. Under Tab 6 is the executive summary of the report.

## **7. Report on Grants Approved by the Commissioner**

Under Tab 7 is a report on grants that I have approved, per the Board's vote in October 2008 to delegate grant approvals to the commissioner. This authorization allows us to make decisions and inform grant applicants on a timely basis. The Board also delegated authority to me to approve extended loan terms for charter schools, a routine administrative matter. I have not approved any such loan terms since my last report.

## 8. **Directions to the Meeting**

If you have questions about any agenda items, please call me. I look forward to seeing you at Chelmsford High School on April 28th.

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### FY2010 House Ways & Means Budget

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner

Date: April 22, 2009

This afternoon the House Committee on Ways and Means released its Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Recommendations, House # 4000, to the House of Representatives.

The House Ways and Means Committee members have recommended a total budget for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of \$4.434 billion. This amount reflects a decrease of \$93.4 million below the Department's FY2009 projected spending of \$4.527 billion, after all of the 9C budget cuts. The House Ways and Means budget represents a \$59.2 million decrease from the Governor's House 1 Budget.

As you may recall, the Governor's House 1 consolidated a majority of DESE's accounts. House 1 took 31 DESE accounts and consolidated similar accounts into 11 new accounts with budget language that gave the Commissioner some discretion in the allocation of limited FY10 resources to priority areas. The House Ways and Means Budget does not consolidate accounts as the Governor recommended, but does transfer all DESE IT funds to the Secretary of Education, as did House 1 in an effort to better coordinate the use of IT funds. The House Ways and Means Budget concurs with the Governor on the state-wide IT consolidation.

The FY2010 House Ways and Means Budget is scheduled for debate by the House of Representatives starting the week of April 27. I will send you an updated narrative and funding analysis when House #4000 is adopted by the House of Representatives and the final House Budget is released by the House Clerk.

The attached chart lists all of the Department's accounts in numeric order. The columns list the original FY09 DESE appropriations, the FY09 DESE appropriations after the 9C cuts, the specific FY10 House 1 account recommendations, the FY10 House Ways & Means account recommendations, and the variance between the two FY10 budget proposals.



We will continue to analyze the House Ways and Means Budget, and the details behind the major variances between the two budgets. I will provide you with an update on the FY2010 Budget and the Federal Stimulus funding at the April Board meeting.

The full text of the House Ways and Means FY2010 Budget Recommendations is available online at: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/10budget/house/>

If you have any questions regarding this budget, please feel free to call me.

**Enclosures:**



Analysis of House 1 (line-item detail) to House Ways & Means' budget (#4000)



Allocation of ARRA Funds to Local School Districts

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### School and District Accountability and Assistance System - Report from the Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: April 17, 2009

The fifteen-member, Board-appointed *Advisory Council on Accountability and Assistance* has met five times since its appointment in November 2008. The August 2008 law that established the Council delineates its role:





- Review and advise the Department and Board on the policies and practices of the office of school and district accountability.
- Develop and administer through the Department a post-audit survey of audited school districts and an annual survey to any schools and districts receiving technical assistance.
- Present its findings and recommendations to the Board at least two times annually.
- Review and comment on all regulations relative to the accountability and assistance program areas before Board approval.

Under the law, the Board is expected to "receive the advisory council's findings and recommendations at least two times annually."

On behalf of the Council, Chair Joseph Esposito will be presenting the first of the Advisory Council's reports to the Board this month. An outline of his presentation is attached.

As background, we have attached the August 29, 2008 memo to the Board that describes the roles of the Board, Department and Advisory Council as set forth in the statute signed into law last summer. In addition, we have attached the membership roster of the Advisory Council.

**Enclosures:**

-   AAAC Findings and Recommendations to Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
-  List of Members of the Advisory Council on School and District Accountability and Assistance
-  District and School Reviews – New Legislation and Next Steps (August 29, 2008 Memorandum)

last updated: April 23, 2009

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### School and District Accountability and Assistance System - Progress Report and Next Steps











To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: April 17, 2009

As reported to the Board at its October 2008 and February 2009 meetings, the Department is undertaking a redesign of the framework for school and district accountability and assistance. For your background information, we have included here as an attachment a copy of the [October 16, 2008 memo](#) to the Board that set the context for the redesign work.

The attached documents update our progress since February and will form the basis for discussion at the April 28th Board meeting:

1. *Redesigning the Commonwealth's Accountability and Targeted Assistance/Intervention System - Key Principles, October 16, 2008*  
 
2. *Highlights of Progress to Date, April 17, 2009*, which summarizes highlights of our work on accountability and assistance since August 2008.  
 
3. The latest revisions of the graphic depicting the framework for district accountability and assistance:
  1. Framework for District Accountability and Assistance, April 6, 2009  
 
  2. Framework for District Accountability and Assistance (Description), April 6, 2009  
 
4. *Comprehensive Annual District and School Trend Profile, January 29, 2009*  
 
5. *Gateways between Levels 3, 4 and 5, April 6, 2009*



6. *District Intervention at Levels 3 through 5, April 6, 2008*



7. *Level 4 and Level 5 School Intervention Options, April 8, 2009*



Deputy Commissioner Karla Baehr and Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy will present the report, respond to Board members' questions, and outline anticipated next steps.

#### **Enclosures**

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### Dropout Prevention and Recovery Initiatives and the School Year 2007-2008 Dropout Report

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: April 17, 2009

At the March 2009 meeting I provided Board members with a number of documents that highlighted state efforts to help increase the number of students who graduate from high school. At the April Board meeting staff from the Department will discuss some of these state initiatives and their role in helping to stem the number of youth who leave school without earning a high school diploma. The Board will also receive an update on the School Year 2007-2008 Dropout Report.

Despite state and local efforts to reduce the dropout rate, in Massachusetts the percentage of students leaving public school each year without having earned a high school diploma has been relatively constant. Over the last decade the statewide dropout rate has hovered around 3.5%, and on average approximately 10,000 Massachusetts high school students dropped out of school annually. While the dropout rate has remained steady, the cost to individuals, state, and local governments has changed dramatically.

High school dropouts earn almost \$500,000 less over their lifetime than their counterparts who have a high school diploma. The average high school dropout will impose a net fiscal burden of nearly \$275,000 on taxpayers over his/her working lifetime.

Dropout prevention and recovery is not about one single program or initiative - it requires community and family efforts as well as educational initiatives to strengthen curriculum and instruction, provide effective professional development, address academic and nonacademic barriers to learning, and create a variety of educational pathways to meet the varied needs of our students. Below is a brief summary of the 2007-08 Dropout Data Report, as well as overviews of several current dropout prevention activities.

### School Year 2007-08 Dropout Report

According to the 2007-08 High School Dropout Report (attached), in the 2007-08 school year, 9,959 or 3.4 percent of students in grades nine through twelve dropped out of school. This rate represented a decrease of 1,477 students and 0.4 percentage points from the 2006-07 school year. While a continued focus on data quality certainly is a factor, it should be noted that the Department did not make any significant changes to the methodology for the 2007-08 school year, which suggests that the decrease is real and not a consequence of changes in reporting.

While the results show we have much more work to do, the dropout data are encouraging among various student groups. The five largest racial/ethnic groups all saw their dropout rate decrease in 2007-08 as compared to the 2006-07 school year, with Hispanic students showing the largest decrease of 0.8 percentage points. Two of our student groups with the highest dropout rates, Hispanic males and African-American males, had decreases of 0.9 and 1.1 percentage points respectively. In addition, special education, low-income, and students with limited English proficiency all had a lower dropout rate for the 2007-08 school year than the year before.

### **Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission**

In August 2008, Chapter 315 of the Acts of 2008, an Act to Improve Dropout Prevention and Reporting of Graduation Rates, was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Patrick. The Act established a Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission to make recommendations on ten topic areas including: setting a goal and timeline for reducing the statewide dropout rate, creating a dropout prevention and recovery grant program, and considering whether to raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18.

The 27-member commission is chaired by Secretary of Education Paul Reville and co-chaired by Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Suzanne Bump and me. The commission includes state legislators and/or their designees, representatives from public school districts, higher education, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, a variety of youth-serving state agencies, and community-based organizations. A list of members is attached.

The commission's report, including findings and recommendations with any proposed legislation, will be submitted to the House and Senate Chairs of Education and the Chairs of the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means by May 15, 2009. We will provide copies to the Board.

### **Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group**

In the summer of 2008, the Department created a Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group. The Work Group is organized and supported by two units at the Department - the Office of Urban and Commissioner's Districts and the Office of Secondary School Services - with additional support from the New England Comprehensive Center. Seventeen urban districts volunteered to participate in the work group over the next several years.

The participating districts are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Somerville, Springfield and Worcester. Students dropping out of school in these 17 urban districts account for nearly half of the Commonwealth's annual dropouts.

The work group is investigating research and evidence-based national and state dropout prevention and recovery models. The research findings will be used to develop or enhance urban school district dropout prevention and

recovery efforts. The work group will also be a forum for planning and sharing promising practices among districts in areas such as alternative education models, transitions, policies and protocols, and student support efforts.

## **Youth-Focused Summits**

As a follow-up to the March 2007 Graduation Rate Summit, five regional summits throughout Massachusetts are currently underway. The regional summits are funded in part from an America's Promise grant and are co-organized by the Department, the Executive Office of Education, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Commonwealth Corporation.

The summits are intended to support regional teams in understanding and using youth-related data including student graduation, dropout, youth employment, and state and regional labor market information. Dr. Andrew Sum from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University developed regional data packets for each of the state's 16 Workforce Investment Boards. The summits will bring together regional partners from the fields of business, community organization, education, government, and workforce to craft a comprehensive youth agenda that addresses dropout prevention and activities that promote college and career readiness. It is expected that more than 1,000 individuals will participate in the Youth-Focused Summits.

## **Early Warning Indicator Index**

The Department is in the process of piloting an Early Warning Indicator Index (EWII) in urban districts to help identify students as early as grade nine who may be at-risk for not graduating on time. In the spring of 2008 the Department used data from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) to identify four indicators that best predict a student's likelihood of not graduating on time. The indicators are a student's:

1. grade 8 attendance rate
2. grade 8 MCAS mathematics score
3. grade 8 MCAS ELA score
4. incidence of mobility (moving in/out of a district or school one or more times) in grades 7 and/or 8

In October 2008, Department staff prepared incoming ninth grade student rosters for 24 urban school districts. The rosters list students in five risk categories that range from a very high risk to low risk of not graduating within four years. Districts have used the EWII for a variety of purposes including establishing a student buddy system, early support service interventions, and family home visits. The Department is preparing to send out a survey this spring to further ascertain how the index is being used, whether changes in the format need to be made, and if school district staff members need technical assistance to use the data. If the pilot is successful, the Department can expand the EWII to all high schools in the Commonwealth.

## **Strengthening Alternative Education**

Alternative Education is an initiative within a public school district, charter school, or educational collaborative established to serve at-risk students whose needs are not being met in the traditional school setting. Alternative Education may operate as a program or as a separate self-contained school; programs may function within a single school or be affiliated with one or more schools or school districts. Students who may benefit from an Alternative



Education include those who are pregnant/parenting, truant, suspended or expelled, returned dropouts, delinquent, or students who are not meeting local promotional requirements.

The Department continues to work to enhance the field of Alternative Education across the Commonwealth through annual trainings including regional networking events and state conferences. The Department recently released an Alternative Education promising practices and FAQ document. In the 2007-08 school year, the Department added an Alternative Education data element to SIMS to increase knowledge about Alternative Education in Massachusetts through new methods. The increased capacity in SIMS will provide the Department important student-level information within each Alternative Education program/school. The Department will also use these data to increase targeted technical assistance and to promote and replicate promising practices in the Commonwealth.

### Next Steps

I will provide a copy of the report of the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission to the Board in May. In addition, I will periodically update the Board on these various initiatives and their impact in helping to increase the number of students who graduate from high school and reduce the dropout rate.

We are committed to strengthening the capacity of schools to engage all students in learning so that they meet high standards of performance and graduate from high school well prepared for the future. Our initiatives on dropout prevention and recovery, Alternative Education, and related topics, under the leadership of Associate Commissioner John Bynoe, Stafford Peat, and others, and in collaboration with school and community partners, are a vital part of our work. We look forward to discussing these issues with the Board.

### Enclosures:



Press Release



2007-08 High School Dropout Report



Members of the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission

last updated: April 23, 2009

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## The Massachusetts Board of Education

### Charter Schools - Approval of Charter Amendments for Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School and Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public School

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner

Date: April 17, 2009

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#### Proposed Amendments

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.11(1), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) must approve major changes in a school's charter, including grades served. Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School (BHMCS) and Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public School (MME) are both part of the Barnstable Public School District (District). BHMCS is currently chartered for and is serving all students in grades 5-6 in the District and requests a change to become a grades 4-5 school serving all students in the District. MME is currently chartered for and is serving grades K-4 and requests a change to become a K-3 school. Both schools have requested this change as part of a district reorganization that is being implemented to reduce costs.

#### Background

In response to severe anticipated financial constraints, the Barnstable school committee and superintendent began a planning process, in September 2008, to restructure grade levels and facilities in the district with implementation occurring in fall 2009. The Horace Mann charter schools were involved in this planning process and on January 20, 2009, the Barnstable school committee voted to accept the recommendation of the superintendent to move all grade 4 students in the district to BHMC. In addition, the school committee voted to accept the superintendent's recommendation to move all grade 6 students from BHMCS to the Barnstable Intermediate School. This action by the school committee, as agreed to by the boards of the charter schools, requires each charter school to seek approval from the Board for a change in grade span. Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School will serve grades 4 and 5; Marstons Mills Horace Mann Public School will serve grades K-3, as will all elementary schools in the district.

The BHMCS board of trustees voted to approve this amendment request on January 22, 2009. The MME board of trustees voted to approve this amendment request on March 12, 2009. As required by charter school regulations, both amendment requests were approved by the Barnstable school committee and the local teachers' union on March 17, 2009. The proposed changes will be implemented in the 2009-10 school year and would not have a significant impact on students because of the demonstrated ability of each school to implement a supportive school environment and rigorous academic program.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Department has reviewed this request and it appears reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. I recommend that the Board approve the amendment requests of BHMCS and MME as described in this memorandum.

If you have any questions regarding these amendments or require additional information, please contact Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner, at 781 338-6500; Mary Street, Director of Charter Schools, at 781 338-3200; or me.

### **Enclosures:**

Correspondence from Barnstable Horace Mann Charter School  
Correspondence from Marstons Mills East Horace Mann Charter Public School  
Letter from Patricia Grenier, Superintendent, to Parents/Guardians

last updated: April 23, 2009

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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for  
Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy

## English Learners in Boston Public Schools in the Aftermath of Policy Change: Enrollment and Educational Outcomes, AY2003-AY2006

Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston  
In collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education, Boston

*Miren Uriarte and Rosann Tung, Principal Investigators*

April 2009

# Executive Summary



This Report is part of *English Learners in Boston Public Schools in the Aftermath of Policy Change: Enrollment and Educational Outcomes, AY2003-AY2006*, a project of the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education, Boston.

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# English Learners in Boston Public Schools: Enrollment and Educational Outcomes in the Aftermath of Policy Change, AY2003 to AY2006

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## Explanation of Terms

Models	
<b>Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)</b>	Model for teaching English Learners which relies on the use of simple English in the classroom to impart academic content, using students' native languages only to assist students in completing tasks or to answer a question.
<b>Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)</b>	Model for teaching English Learners that relies on the student's own language as a bridge to the acquisition of English as a second language.
Study Populations	
<b>English Learners (ELs)</b>	Students who are enrolled in a program for English language development.
<b>Limited English Proficiency Students (LEPs)</b>	Students whose first language is a language other than English and who are unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English
<b>Native English Speakers (NES)</b>	Students whose first language learned or first language used by the parent/guardian with a child was English
<b>Native Speakers of a Language Other than English (NSOL)</b>	Students whose first language learned or first language used by the parent/guardian with a child was a language other than English
Outcomes: Engagement	
<b>Median Attendance Rate</b>	The attendance rate measures the percentage of school days in which students have been present at their schools. Attendance is a key factor in school achievement as well as an important factor used to measure students' engagement with school.
<b>Out-of-School Suspension Rate</b>	The out-of-school suspension rate is the ratio of out-of-school suspensions to the total enrollment during the year.
<b>Grade Retention Rate</b>	The proportion of students required to repeat the grade in which they were enrolled the previous year.
<b>Annual Drop-Out Rate</b>	The annual drop-out rate reports the percentage of students who dropped out of school in a specific year (MDOE, 2007b). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reports only on the high school drop-out rate, that is, school desertion taking place after the ninth grade.
<b>Transfer Rate</b>	The proportion of students who transfer out of the district in a given year.
Outcomes: Achievement	
<b>MCAS Pass Rates in Math and ELA</b>	Pass rates are the sum of the proportions of students scoring in the Advanced, Proficient, and Needs Improvement performance categories in MCAS exams on these subjects in a given grade in a given year.

Varied terms are used to refer to students whose verbal, reading, and/or writing skills in English are limited, who cannot do classroom work in English, and who are placed in language acquisition and support programs in American schools. Often the terms “English Learners” (“ELs”), “English Language Learners” (“ELLs”), and “students of limited English proficiency” (“LEPs”) are used interchangeably. In this report, we use the term “students of limited English proficiency,” or “LEPs,” to refer to those students whose first language is not English and who are unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English. This is the definition used by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (MDOE, 2004.) LEPs can be enrolled in General Education programs as well as in special language acquisition and support programs. We use “English Learners,” or “ELs,” to refer to those students who are enrolled in a program of English language acquisition or support. We do not use the term “English Language Learners” in this report but the term is interchangeable with “English Learners,” but not with “LEPs.”







**English Learners in Boston Public Schools:** Enrollment,  
Engagement and Academic Outcomes, AY2003-AY2006  
FINAL REPORT

*Rosann Tung, Miren Uriarte, Virginia Diez, Nicole Lavan,  
Nicole Agusti, Faye Karp, and Tatjana Meschede*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, Massachusetts voters approved a referendum against the continuance of Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) as a method of instruction for English language learners. The study undertaken by the Mauricio Gaston Institute at UMass Boston in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston finds that, in the three years following the implementation of Question 2 in the Boston Public Schools, the identification of students of limited English proficiency declined as did the enrollment in programs for English; the enrollment of English Learners in substantially separate Special Education programs more than doubled; and service options for English Learners narrowed. The study found that high school drop-out rates among students in programs for English Learners almost doubled and that the proportion of English Learners in middle school who dropped out more than tripled in those three years. Finally, although there have been some gains for English Learners in both ELA and math MCAS pass rates in 4th and 8th grade, gains for English Learners have not matched those of other groups and as a result gaps between English Learners and other BPS populations have widened.

**The policy change:** Referendum Question 2 became law as Chapter 386 of the Acts of 2002 in December and was implemented across the state in the Fall of 2003. It replaced a wide-ranging set of bilingual programs with Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs, whose main purpose is to expedite the learning of the English language. Unlike TBE, which relies on English Learners' own language to facilitate the learning of academic content as they master English, the SEI model is based on the concept that the English language is acquired quickly when taught through meaningful content and effective interaction. SEI programs rely on the use of simple English in the classroom to impart academic content, using students' native languages only to assist students in completing tasks or to answer a question. The law requires that English Learners (ELs) be placed in SEI programs for no longer than one year and then transition into mainstream classrooms. Parents can seek to "waive" the placement of their children in SEI programs and request to have their children placed in General Education or in bilingual education programs.

The implementation of Question 2 has varied substantially across the state (DeJong, Gort & Cobb, 2005; Rennie Center, 2007), but there is still scant information about its impact on the outcomes for ELs in the state. In 2007, the Mauricio Gaston Institute at UMass Boston in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston began a study with the purpose of assessing the changes brought about by the new policy and the impact on the engagement and academic outcomes of students of limited English proficiency. The study focused on Boston Public Schools during the last year (AY2003) of TBE and the first three years (AY2004, 2005, and 2006) of implementation of SEI.

**Method:** The study used an administrative database provided by the Boston Public Schools (BPS) which includes demographic and enrollment information from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) on each BPS student enrolled in AY2003, AY2004, AY2005, and AY2006. Using a unique identifier for each student, results from the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) have been merged with the SIMS, thus allowing for the analysis of academic outcomes. Researchers also collected and analyzed documentary data pertinent to the implementation of Question 2 and interviewed personnel of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) and the Boston Public Schools to understand the context of the implementation of the policy.

## 1. Who are Boston's English Learners?

The terms English Learners, English Language Learners, and students of limited English proficiency and their acronyms (ELs, ELLs, and LEPs) are often used interchangeably. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) defines students of limited English proficiency as students “who are native speakers of languages other than English and who are not able to perform school work in English” (MDOE, 2004). Starting from this definition, Figure 1 presents BPS enrollment in AY2006 using native language and English proficiency as the prisms through which BPS' populations are examined. “Native language” is the first divider (green row); out of the 59,211 students in BPS in AY2006, 34,790 (68.8%) are native English speakers (NES) and 24,421 (31.2%) are native speakers of other languages (NSOLs). NSOLs are speakers of many of the world's languages, but the largest language groups are Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Chinese (several dialects), Cape Verdean Creole and Vietnamese.

FIGURE 1. SCHOOL POPULATIONS DEFINED BY LANGUAGE. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AY2006

<b>Total</b>	All BPS (59,211)			
<b>Native Language</b>	NES (34,790)	NSOL (24,421)		
<b>Language Proficiency</b>	EP (34,790) <sup>1</sup>	EP (14,695)	LEP (9,726)	
<b>Program Participation</b>	In General Education (34,790)	In General Education (14,695)	In Gen Ed <sup>2</sup>	In EL Programs (8,614)

Note. (1) A small number of students who are Native English Speakers were also identified as LEPs. (2) LEP students in General Education are students who have opted out of programs for English Learners or who have transitioned to General Education but still retain their LEP designation; they amount to 1,112 students.

NSOLs are divided into those who are proficient in English (EPs) and those who are of limited English proficiency (LEPs) (blue row). The majority of NSOLs in Boston Public Schools (60.2%) are proficient in English, although they speak it as a second language. English proficient NSOLs have been determined to be capable of doing schoolwork in English and may have entered BPS as English speakers or may be students who have transitioned from bilingual education. Students of limited English proficiency (LEPs) are NSOLs who have been determined not capable of regular classroom work in English; in AY2006, 39.8% of all NSOLs fit this criterion.

By the MDESE definition, all LEPs are eligible for programs for English Learners, whether they are specific programs—such as Two-Way bilingual programs or Sheltered English Immersion programs—or ESL and other language support services for those students transitioning into General Education programs. In Boston in AY2006, 88.6% of LEPs were enrolled in specific programs for English Learners (rust cell) and 11.4% (1,112) were enrolled in General Education programs. Students in specific programs for English Learners accounted for 14.5% of BPS enrollment.

The study presents the trends in enrollment and in academic outcomes for each of these groups covering the last year of TBE (AY2003) and the first three years of the implementation of SEI (AY2004-AY2006) in the Boston Public Schools.

## 2. How did the demographic characteristics of English Learners change as a result of the implementation of SEI in Boston?

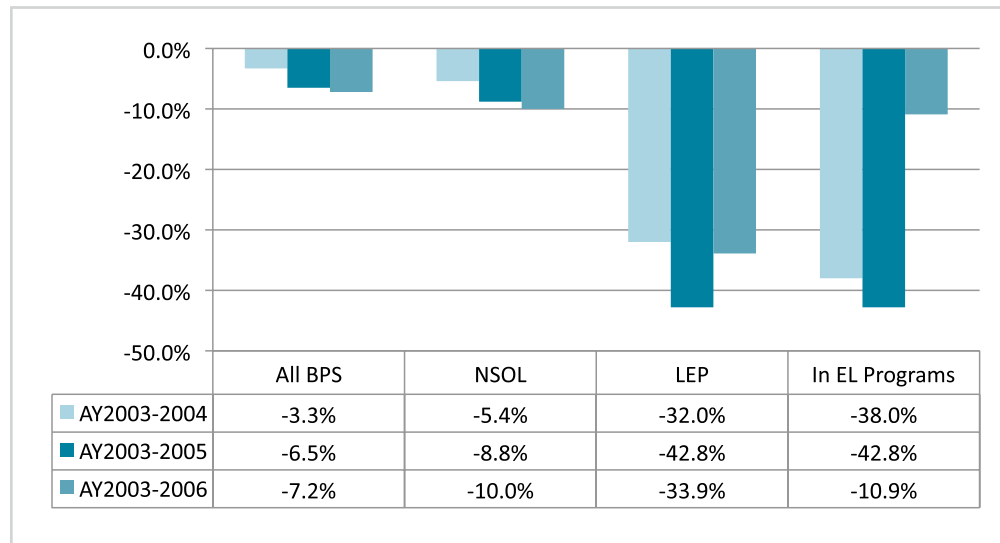
A review of the demographic characteristics of NSOLs, LEPs, and LEPs in programs for English Learners and in General Education programs revealed minimal changes in gender distribution and the proportion of students from poverty backgrounds.<sup>1</sup> There were slight changes in the racial distribution of all groups, which showed a decline in the proportion of white students, an increase of Black students, and a stable presence of Asians and Latino students from AY2003 to AY2006.

## 3. How did enrollment in programs for English Learners change?

Important findings in the study of English Learners in Boston include the decline in enrollments in EL programs, the reduction in available services for EL students, and the increase in enrollments of ELs in Special Education programs as the implementation of SEI unfolded. In that period both the identification of students of limited English proficiency and the enrollment in programs for English Learners declined (Figure 2). Findings include the following:

- The number of students identified as of limited English proficiency (LEP) declined 33.9% between AY2003 and AY2006. This decrease took place in the context of much smaller declines in overall and NSOL enrollment (less than 10%).
- The proportion of students identified as LEP among BPS and NSOL students also declined: from 23.1% to 16.4% among the overall BPS population and from 54.2 to 38.8% among NSOLs. LEPs increased as a proportion of the elementary school enrollments, but decreased among both middle school and high school students.
- The decline in the identification of LEP students appears to be due to under-identification of students of limited English proficiency at the district's Family Resource Centers, which mis-assessed the language ability of students because of the type of testing conducted. Parents were also a source of mis-identification by withholding information on native language and home language use in order to avoid having their children designated as LEPs and placed in SEI programs. This lack of accurate reporting is a by-product of lack of parental orientation as to their rights under the law to request a waiver of SEI instruction.

FIGURE 2. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–AY2006



- Enrollment of LEPs in programs for English Learners fell by 42.8% in the first two years after the implementation of Question 2 and improved in the last year of observation. By AY2006, the decline in EL enrollments, at 10.9%, was still higher than that of NSOLs and of the overall BPS enrollment.
- Enrollment declines were due to (1) the district's decision to transition to General Education 45.2% (or 4,366) of the students in TBE at the start of the implementation in the Fall of 2003; (2) the continued mis-assessment and mis-assignment of LEP students; (3) the placement in General Education of a sizeable number of students whose parents "opted out" of SEI programs for their children and the district did not provide alternative programs as required by law; in AY2006, 1,112 students were LEPs in General Education programs who received minimal, if any, language support services.

A final aspect of the changes in enrollment which followed the transition to SEI was the increase in the enrollment of LEPs in Special Education programs (Table 2). The proportion of LEP students in EL programs who participate in Special Education programs has increased at a greater rate than for other populations: from 6.5% to 9.0% in the case of full or partial inclusion SPED programs and from 4.7% to 11.0% in the case of substantially separate SPED programs.

TABLE 1. PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS.  
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–AY2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	10.5%	9.8%	10.4%	10.4%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	7.9%	8.6%	8.7%	8.8%
<b>NES</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	12.4%	11.3%	11.9%	11.8%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	9.7%	10.2%	10.2%	10.2%
<b>NSOL</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	8.0%	7.7%	8.3%	8.5%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	5.4%	6.3%	6.6%	6.7%
<b>NSOL EPs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	7.6%	7.8%	8.1%	8.0%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	3.5%	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%
<b>NSOL LEPs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	8.3%	7.5%	8.6%	9.1%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	7.0%	10.3%	11.6%	10.4%
<b>LEPs in General Education</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	11.3%	11.3%	10.8%	10.7%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	8.4%	8.8%	8.9%	8.4%
<b>LEPs in Programs for ELs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	6.6%	5.8%	6.2%	9.2%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	4.8%	6.7%	6.8%	10.9%

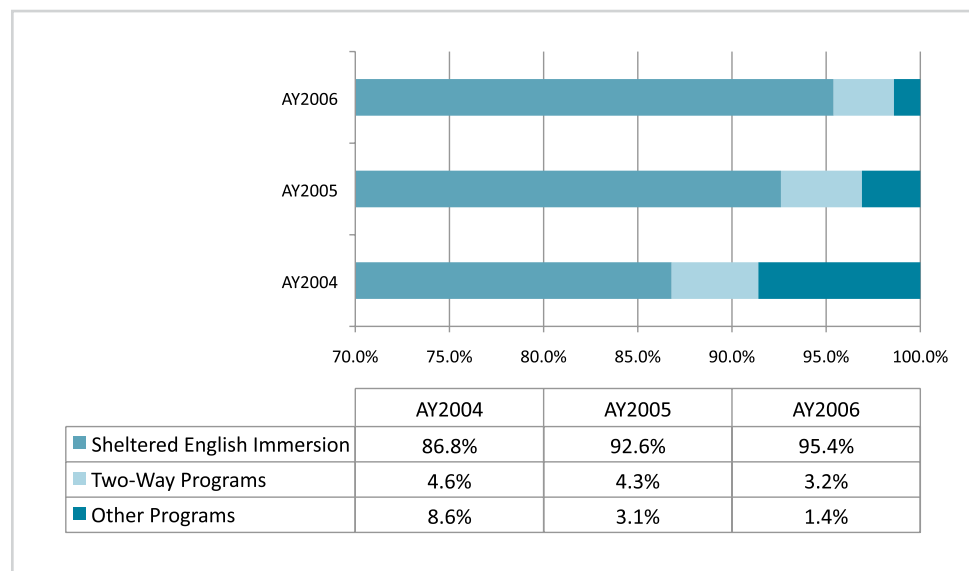
#### 4. How have the characteristics of the programs for English Learners changed as BPS made the transition from TBE to SEI?

Changes in the characteristics of the programs offered to English Learners in Boston and elsewhere in Massachusetts are, first of all, a by-product of the change in policy that mandated the transition from TBE to SEI. The critical change is in the role of a student's native language in instruction. While TBE relies on the English Learners' native language to facilitate the learning of academic subjects as they master English, SEI relies uses students' native language only to assist students in completing tasks or to answer a question. This change had implications for the way instruction took place in the classroom, for the types of materials and books allowed in instruction, for the content imparted; for the teaching skills required, and for the organization of programs. This study did not focus on the intricacies of the execution of SEI in the classroom, but it did look at some of the changes in the organization of programs and the results of the process of implementation. The key findings were the following:

- After the implementation of Question 2 in September 2003, an increasing proportion of students were enrolled in SEI programs, from 86.8% in AY2004 to 95.4% in AY2006. The greatest concentration takes place in high school, where 97% of students are in an SEI program.

- Between AY2004 and AY2006, the number of students of limited English proficiency whose parents “opted out” of their participation in EL programs grew from 431 in AY2004 to 1,112 in AY2006. Students who “opted out” enrolled in General Education programs.

FIGURE 3. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ELs. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2004–AY2006



- This process of “opting out” appears to be conflated with the process of parental waivers allowed under Massachusetts law. Under Question 2, parents can waive their children’s participation in SEI without losing their rights to language support services, as happens in the “opt out” process.
- The district has not been proactive in using the waiver provisions allowed by the law to develop a wider array of program options for LEP students. As a result, the number and the type of services available to Boston’s English Learners have declined.



## 5. What are the engagement and academic performance outcomes of students in programs for English Learners and how have these changed since the implementation of Question 2?

In examining the engagement and academic performance of English Learners, a comparison of outcomes for LEP students (both in General Education programs and in programs for ELs) with the outcomes of other groups across the four years is presented.

### *Engagement*

In regard to engagement, we analyze the performance of ELs in key engagement indicators such as attendance, out-of-school suspensions, and grade level retention as well as the drop out rate.

**Attendance.** Students in EL programs showed the highest attendance rates of all groups across the four years. Attendance rates were highest among elementary EL students and lowest among those in high school. The rate of attendance among all ELs declined slightly in the four-year period, as the attendance rates increased or remained stable among other groups.

**Out-of-School Suspension.** Students in EL programs have lower out-of school suspensions than all other groups. Suspension rates have tended to decrease among all groups, but the decline has been less pronounced among students in EL programs than among the other groups considered here. LEPs in middle school have higher rates of suspension than LEPs in elementary school or high school. Although students in EL programs outperform others in this indicator, the weaker decline of the rate in this group indicates some effect of the implementation of SEI, particularly among middle school students.

**Grade Retention.** The rate of grade retention has tended to be higher in the two LEP groups than in the English proficient groups, showing that there is wide difference in the practice of retention that affects the groups differently. Grade retention is highest among high school students. Retention in this group increased from 17.2% to 26.4% from AY2004 to AY2006. Grade retention increased among students in EL programs while it decreased or remained relatively stable among others. At the end of the period of observation, LEPs in EL programs showed the highest rate of retention of all groups.

TABLE 2. OUTCOMES ON ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AY2003–AY2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>Attendance</b>				
All BPS	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
NES	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%
NSOL	96.1%	96.1%	95.6%	95.5%
LEP in General Education	95.5%	95.0%	95.6%	95.6%
LEP in EL Programs	96.1%	96.1%	95.9%	95.6%
<b>Out-of-School Suspension</b>				
All BPS	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
NES	9.6%	8.7%	7.9%	7.8%
NSOL	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.9%
LEP in General Education	5.2%	4.5%	4.1%	3.9%
LEP in EL Programs	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.5%
<b>Grade Retention</b>				
All BPS		8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
NES		8.7%	8.8%	8.9%
NSOL		6.2%	6.4%	6.4%
LEP in General Education		12.2%	13.3%	7.6%
LEP in EL Programs		12.1%	13.0%	13.7%
<b>Middle School Drop-Out Rate<sup>2</sup></b>				
All BPS	1.1%	0.4%	4.0%	2.6%
NES	1.3%	0.4%	4.2%	2.6%
NSOL	0.9%	0.4%	3.5%	2.6%
LEP in General Education	2.3%	0.0%	3.9%	3.7%
LEP in EL Programs	0.8%	0.3%	2.7%	2.7%
<b>High School Drop-Out Rate<sup>3</sup></b>				
All BPS	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
NES	8.7%	5.9%	9.0%	11.7%
NSOL	6.5%	4.6%	7.2%	9.8%
LEP in General Education	3.5%	0.8%	13.7%	11.9%
LEP in EL Programs	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.1%

**Middle School Annual Drop-Out Rate.** Native English speakers showed the highest middle school drop-out rates in all but AY2006, when LEPs in EL programs showed the highest rates. LEPs in EL programs had minimal rates during the TBE year of AY2003, the lowest of all groups. LEPs in EL programs showed the highest rate increase of all groups in the four years of observation. The magnitude of the increase compared to that of others may indicate that the implementation of SEI worsened the drop-out rate among these middle school students.

**High School Annual Drop-Out Rate.** Among high school students, both groups of LEPs showed the lowest drop-out rates in AY2003, while under TBE. But beginning in AY2004, this pattern is reversed. At the end of the period of observation, LEPs in EL programs showed the highest rates of all groups, followed closely by LEPs in General Education. Although the high school drop-out rate of all groups increased, the increases in the rates of both LEP groups was most pronounced, signaling that there are other factors that affect LEP groups and disproportionately contributed to these increases. The dimension of the increase in the

drop-out rate of LEP students, whether in EL or General Education programs, appears to be a salient effect of the transition to SEI in Boston.

### *Achievement*

Improvement in the academic achievement of students of limited English proficiency was one of the promises of the sponsors of SEI programs in Massachusetts. This study of Boston's English Learners shows that the outcomes in this regard are equivocal at best.

*TABLE 3. OUTCOMES ON ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003-AY2006*

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>Grade 4 ELA MCAS Pass Rates<sup>4</sup></b>				
All BPS	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
NES	75.1%	78.1%	74.6%	72.0%
NSOL	85.6%	86.6%	82.9%	86.3%
LEP in General Education	17.9%	29.2%	34.0%	-
LEP in Programs for ELs	55.1%	57.1%	-	56.9%
<b>Grade 4 Math MCAS Pass Rates<sup>5</sup></b>				
All BPS	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
NES	62.3%	68.6%	66.5%	71.2%
NSOL	74.2%	80.5%	79.3%	84.4%
LEP in General Education	29.9%	37.1%	38.7%	-
LEP in Programs for ELs	56.7%	57.6%	-	63.0%
<b>Grade 8 Math MCAS Pass Rates<sup>6</sup></b>				
All BPS	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
NES	44.7%	50.6%	52.7%	51.9%
NSOL	62.2%	66.2%	56.9%	63.6%
LEP in General Education	16.4%	17.8%	7.6%	-
LEP in Programs for ELs	33.1%	31.7%	-	33.3%
<b>Grade 10 ELA MCAS Pass Rates<sup>7</sup></b>				
All BPS	65.5%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
NES	62.4%	73.9%	74.2%	83.4%
NSOL	73.9%	79.4%	77.9%	88.4%
LEP in General Education	72.8%	38.2%	37.9%	-
LEP in Programs for ELs	45.1%	26.3%	34.7%	43.2%
<b>Grade 10 Math MCAS Pass Rates<sup>8</sup></b>				
All BPS	66.8%	68.7%	61.1%	67.9%
NES	72.1%	68.5%	59.9%	69.3%
NSOL	64.1%	75.2%	71.1%	76.1%
LEP in General Education	72.0%	55.0%	31.9%	-
LEP in Programs for ELs	69.5%	63.4%	46.9%	45.4%

- LEPs in EL programs have made improvements in their fourth grade ELA and Math pass rates in the four years of observation. Nevertheless, pass rates in both areas among students in EL programs are low and substantial gaps remain when comparing LEPs in EL programs to groups that are proficient in English.
- Eighth grade Math pass rates were lower for LEPs in EL programs than for NES students and English proficient NSOL students. Between AY2003 and AY2006, pass rates in Math increased among most groups of eighth graders, but the improvements were stronger among those who are English proficient when compared to those in EL programs. Significant gaps remain between the pass rates of LEPs in EL programs and those of English proficient groups.
- LEPs in EL programs did not make improvements in their tenth grade pass rates, even as pass rates climbed for English proficient students across most years. Both in ELA and Math, but particularly in Math, LEPs in EL programs lost ground in the four years examined here. This decline has tended to enlarge the gaps between the groups. By AY2006, LEPs in EL programs trailed all groups in both Math and ELA pass rates.

## Selected Recommendations to the Boston Public Schools

### *Recommendations regarding the environment for English Learners in the district*

- Develop thorough in-service training, professional development, and the hiring of new staff with high level of knowledge and expertise in order to build an institutional culture that is well informed about the best, most recent information about the process of learning for ELs and about the requirements for the implementation of SEI.
- Develop, codify, and share with the public the district's vision for the education of newcomers. A new and different message about the importance of educating English Learners appropriately must emerge from the top leadership of the district.

### *Recommendations regarding the assessment and identification of students of limited English proficiency*

- Under strong OLLSS leadership, implement consistent and accurate language proficiency testing, offer evidence-based EL programs, and support accountability measures in line with the district's vision.
- Improve substantially the effectiveness of the district's identification and assessment of students of limited English proficiency for literacy in their native language and English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
  - o Family Resource Centers, Language Assessment Centers, and Newcomer Centers, as the first points of contact with families whose home languages are not English, should have bilingual staff trained on the legal and policy issues related to English Learners and capable of conveying to families their rights to bilingual education, LEP designation, information about waiving and opting out, and choice of programs.
  - o Rectify the assessment procedures for English Learners so that they are appropriately and accurately evaluated for literacy in their native language,

for their English proficiency, and for their ability to carry out classroom work in English by conducting the full gamut of testing: English listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- o Develop a consistent way to define, identify, and code students who are LEP so that the databases are accurate and usable for research, evaluation and program planning.
- Inform parents through multiple avenues—such as the BPS website, the Family Resource Centers, the Newcomer Center, community-based organizations, and schools—about existing program options, waivers, and opting out, so that they do not feel the need to withhold information about their children’s language ability and use from the system in order to have their children not participate in SEI.

### *Recommendations regarding the participation of LEP students in EL and General Education programs*

“Choice” for English Learners means access to an appropriate set of programs, suited to their English language proficiency and their native language proficiency. These choices may run the gamut from English immersion to native language literacy programs, with many options in between.

- Increase the menu of options for LEP students to include programs for students who use the waiver provision.
  - o Educate central office staff, intake staff, school leaders, teachers, parents, and the public at large about waivers, what they accomplish, and students’ rights to waivers. Provide families with the opportunity to “waive” out of SEI and into other language programs.
  - o Cease encouraging families to “opt out,” which leaves students without access to English Learner services and programs.
  - o With a vision of equity and excellence, and the goal of bringing the best programs to the students BPS serves, develop alternative, evidence-based EL programs, particularly for groups of students clustered by language.
- Develop clear criteria and processes for English Learners to transition from designation as LEP to no longer LEP (English proficient).
- Provide language support, testing, and monitoring to all students of limited English proficiency regardless of the program in which they are enrolled.

### *Recommendations regarding the engagement and academic achievement of English Learners*

- Review the implementation of Boston’s SEI programs at the school and district levels, assessing the resources necessary, the outcomes achieved, and the needs for guidance and for support in relation to the implementation of SEI instruction.
- Review the practice of grade retention among LEP students in EL programs. High rates of grade retention are correlated with high drop-out rates. Because LEPs showed disproportionately high levels of grade retention compared with other groups (as demonstrated by the divergent rates), BPS should examine closely this practice in relation to LEP students.

- Assess the capacity of and provide support to middle school and high schools to mount state-of-the-art dropout prevention programs that: identify risk factors in the early grades, support the development of strategies school by school, and eliminate key risk factors before students enter high school.
- Offer evidence-based programs for ELs, document their implementation, improve the quality and consistency of classroom pedagogy and curriculum, and support appropriate accountability measures for these EL programs.
- Offer and mandate teacher training and qualification on SEI sheltered content instruction and ESL in the 20 hours of professional development which is part of the contract with the Boston Teachers' Union.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations Regarding State Policy and Practice*

Data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education suggest that statewide outcomes for LEP students have also worsened in the time period covered by this study. For example, the drop-out rate among LEP students increased from 6.1% in AY2003 to 9.5% in AY2006. While MCAS pass rates in fourth grade ELA and Math have improved, outcomes for eighth and tenth graders have declined and, overall, gaps between ELs and others have not narrowed (MDOE, 2003–2006, 2005, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Although the declines in the state outcomes have not been as salient as those found in this study of ELs in Boston, the downward trend in the education of this growing group of students must be addressed.

First of all, it is important that State of Massachusetts undertake a study leading to a better understanding of the status and the trends in the education of English Learners in Massachusetts, particularly after the sweeping change in policy and practice that Question 2 represented. Both California and Arizona, the two other states faced with the referendum-mandated implementation of restrictive language policies in their public schools, have conducted comprehensive studies of the policy's impact on student outcomes (Arizona Department of Education, 2004; Parrish et al., 2006; Wright & Pu, 2005). There has been no comparable examination in Massachusetts. Although this study examines the impact of the implementation of Question 2 on the state's most populous district and the one with the densest population of students of limited English proficiency, it is limited in its capacity to offer generalizations about ELs across the state. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has access to data which would allow such a study.

If the research findings about EL outcomes at the state level are as consistently negative as those documented for Boston students in this study, the state has the responsibility to either radically improve the implementation of SEI or change state policy in regards to the education of English Learners. Although voters forced this change, it was up to policy makers and state government to execute the voters' mandate in a way that mitigated harm to students. This study found that the distance between policy and implementation was quite large in Boston, both because of the district's own limitations and because of the state's "hands off" approach to the implementation of the policy. Regardless of the opinion one holds about the relative value of different models of instruction, what is clear—and highlighted in this report—is the difficulty of implementing such a rapid and highly disruptive policy change in an urban district already burdened with very complex problems. Neither the legislature nor the DESE took into account the time and resources necessary—particularly the requirements related to the professional development of teachers. In Boston, both teachers and students have paid a high price for that oversight.

Nevertheless, in the five years since the implementation of SEI, there has been ample time to accumulate and share best practices, and to assess and expedite professional development for teachers. There has also been time to assess the differential approaches to parental waivers by districts and the resulting expansion or contraction of programmatic offerings for ELs. We do not assume that all children learn through the same instructional methods, and we should not make that assumption about English Learners. Again, regardless of one's opinion about the policy itself, every effort must be made to improve the experience of schooling of English Learners in Massachusetts under SEI.

If the outcomes of English Learners continue to lag behind the improvements of other student populations and achievement gaps continue to widen, as is the case in Boston, then it has come time to assess critically the current policy. Such a assessment would need to address the relative value of immersion (SEI) and transitional additive approaches (TBE, Two-Way bilingual programs) as models of instruction. The study just presented could not make conclusions about these questions because of the lack of comparative data for the TBE period prior to Question 2 and the small number of students in Two-Way programs. At the state level, such a study is possible and the relevant data is available. An understanding of SEI implementation, approaches to waivers, program options, and enrollment trends of English Learners across the state would provide information about how best to serve these students. In addition, research in other states, with and without restrictive language policies, points to several promising program options for English Learners.

Finally, if the state finds that SEI is an inferior model of instruction, then the state must work to change the restrictive language policy, expand the evidence-based programmatic options for English Learners, and ensure that teachers are prepared to deliver those options effectively.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Defined as those who are receiving free or reduced price lunch.
- <sup>2</sup> (1) Differences in dropout rates between LEPs in EL programs and LEPs in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.03$ ) in middle school in AY2003. (2) For this analysis enrolled students who did not attend any days were not excluded.
- <sup>3</sup> (1) Differences in dropout rates between LEPs in EL programs and LEPs in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.03$ ) in high school in AY2003, AY2004, and AY2005; (2) Differences in dropout rates between LEPs in EL programs and NSOL (EP)s are also statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.001$ ) in high school in AY2004, AY2005, and AY2006; and (3) Differences in dropout rates between LEPs in EL programs and NES are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) in high school in AY2003. (4) For this analysis enrolled students who did not attend any days were not excluded.
- <sup>4</sup> (1) MCAS pass rates in AY2005 for students in EL programs (Row E) and in AY2006 for LEPs in General Education (Row D) are not reliable because of low numbers of test-takers and restrictions in reporting scores for small groups of students in a school or grade. (2) Differences in Grade 4 MCAS ELA scores for students designated as LEP in EL programs and those designated as LEP in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P>.000$ ) in AY2003 and AY2004; (3) All differences between LEPs in EL programs and English proficient NSOLs are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for all years. (4) All differences between LEPs in EL programs and Native English Speakers are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for all years for ELA pass rates.
- <sup>5</sup> (1) MCAS pass rates in AY2005 for students in EL programs and in AY2006 for LEPs in General Education are not reliable because of low numbers of test-takers and restrictions in reporting scores for small groups of students in a school or grade. (2) All differences between LEPs in EL programs and English proficient NSOLs are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for all years. (3) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and Native English Speakers are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.011$ ) for AY2003 for Math pass rates.
- <sup>6</sup> (1) MCAS pass rates in AY2005 for students in EL programs and in AY2006 for LEPs in General Education are not reliable because of low numbers of test-takers and restrictions in reporting scores for small groups of students in a school or grade. (2) All differences in Grade 8 MCAS Math pass rates for LEPs in EL programs and those in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P=.001$  for AY2003,  $P=.006$  for AY2004) in AY2003 and AY2004. (3) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and those of English proficient NSOLs and NES in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) in AY2003, AY2004, and AY2006.
- <sup>7</sup> (1) Differences in Grade 10 MCAS ELA pass rates are significant (Chi2 Test  $P=.006$ ) in AY2004. (2) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and English proficient NSOLs are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for ELA pass rates in all years; (3) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and NES students in ELA pass rates are statistically significant each year (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ); in AY2004 (Chi2 Test  $P=.017$ ). (4) MCAS pass rates in AY2006 for LEP students in General Education are not reliable because of low numbers of test-takers and restrictions in reporting scores for small groups of students in a school or grade.
- <sup>8</sup> (1) Differences in Grade 10 MCAS Math pass rates between LEPs in EL programs and those in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) in AY2003 and AY2004; (2) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and English proficient NSOLs in Math pass rates are statistically significant for AY2004 (Chi2 Test  $P<.001$ ), AY2005 (Chi2 Test  $P=.001$ ), and AY2006 (Chi2 Test  $P=.000$ ). (3) Differences between LEPs in EL programs and NES students in Math pass rates are statistically significant each year (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ); in AY2004 (Chi2 Test  $P=.017$ ). Differences between LEPs in EL programs and NES students in ELA and Math pass rates are statistically significant each year (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ); in AY2004 (Chi2 Test  $P=.017$ ).







# II.

## **English Learners in Boston Public Schools:** Enrollment, Engagement and Academic Outcomes of Native Speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese Dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese

*Miren Uriarte, Nicole Lavan, Nicole Agusti, Mandira Kala, Faye Karp,  
Peter Kiang, Lusa Lo, Rosann Tung, and Cassandra Villari*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study focuses on the academic experience of English Learners (ELs) in Boston's public schools in the year before and in the three years following the implementation of Referendum Question 2. In 2002, this referendum spelled an end to Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) as the primary program available for children requiring language support in Massachusetts public schools, replacing it with Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). Specifically, this report focuses on the enrollment and academic outcomes of the five largest groups of native speakers of languages other than English in the Boston Public Schools: speakers of Spanish, Chinese dialects, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and Cape Verdean Creole and explores the different effects of the implementation of Question 2 on each of the groups. It does so by analyzing data on identification, program participation, engagement and achievement for each group and comparing the outcomes for students in programs for ELs with native speakers of these languages enrolled in General Education programs. In this report we list the findings for each group separately and conclude with discussion which compares the outcomes for the groups.

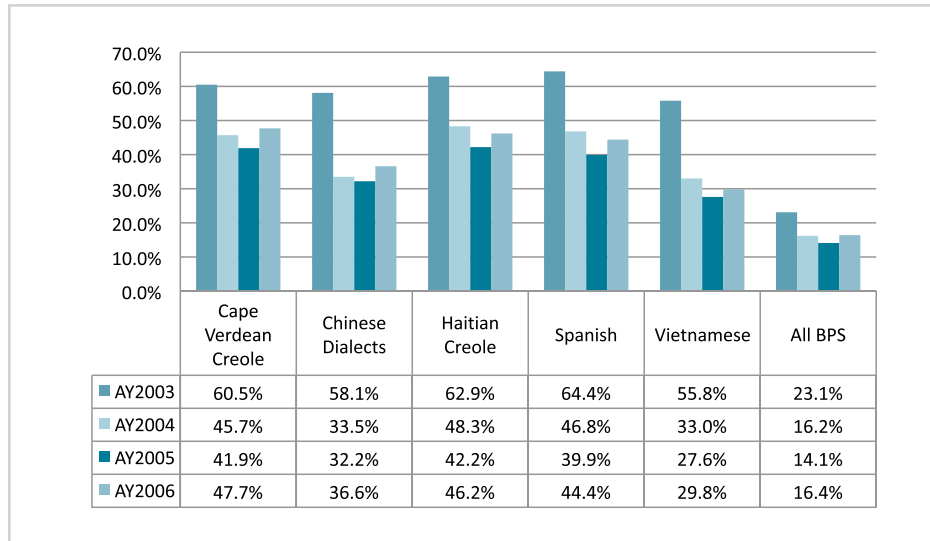
For Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian, and Cape Verdean students and families, this is one of the first looks at the performance of students from these groups in Boston schools. Usually reported as part of aggregates defined by race (e.g., "Asian" or "Black"), information specific to these ethnic groups is seldom reported separately. We present here a limited view, since the available data do not allow us to ascertain the outcomes of all students from these groups but only of those students within these groups who are designated native speakers of their particular language.

The study is a collaboration among the Boston Public Schools (BPS), the Mauricio Gastón Institute at UMass Boston, and the Center for Collaborative Education. Utilizing four years (AY 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006) of BPS student-level data, we analyzed changes in the identification of students with limited English proficiency (LEPs) in Boston Public Schools, their enrollment in programs for English Learners or in General Education programs, their engagement in schooling, and their academic outcomes. Findings include:

## Enrollment in Programs for English Learners

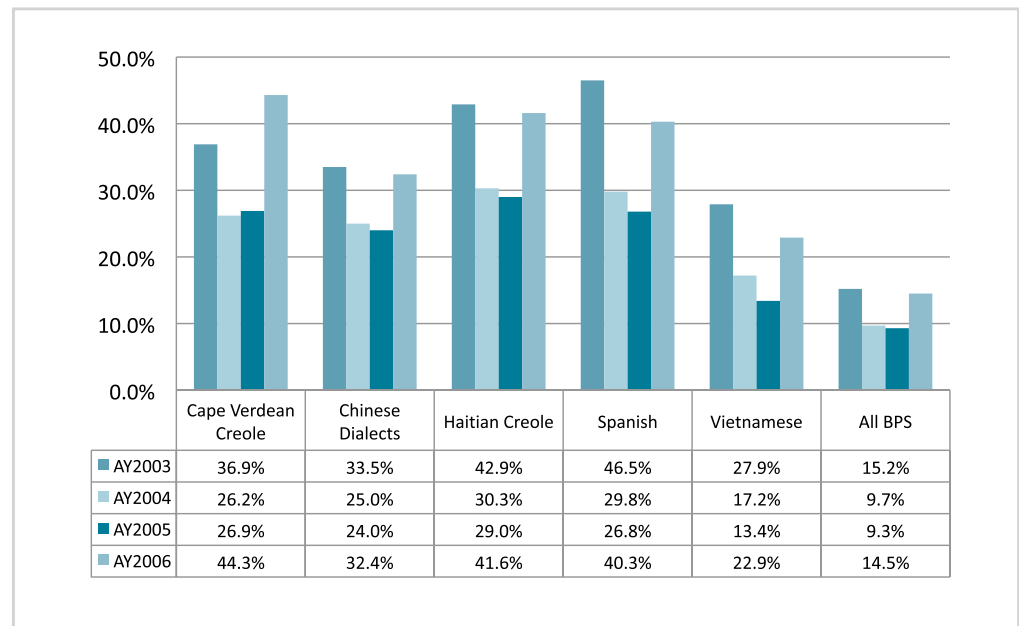
- There was a decline in the number of students identified as students of Limited English Proficiency which affected all five of the groups likely indicating that there were pervasive district-wide initiatives or problems affecting all LEP and EL students. Interviews suggest that mis-identification and mis-assessment of students affecting all the groups were factors in this decline.

FIGURE 1. DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. SELECTED LANGUAGE GROUPS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



- Similarly, the increase in enrollment of EL students in Special Education programs, especially in substantially separate programs, also affected all the groups. The effect on ELs took place in the context of relatively stable enrollments in Special Education by other BPS subgroups, indicating again a district-wide effect focused on all ELs. Interviewees signaled that referrals to Special Education programs became the means to obtaining services for EL students in the absence of structured bilingual education programs.
- An initial decline in enrollments in EL programs affected all language groups as BPS transitioned into General Education all students in TBE levels 3, 4 and 5. Although all language groups recover enrollments in the subsequent two years, the outcome at the end of the observation varied for the groups. Enrollments returned to the levels during TBE among speakers of Chinese dialects and Haitian Creole, increased among Cape Verdean Creole speakers and decreased among Spanish and Vietnamese speakers. These outcomes appear to be related to the process of assessment and program placement undergone by the different groups.

FIGURE 2. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. PERCENT OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF SELECTED LANGUAGE GROUPS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



### Engagement of English Learners

There were substantial differences among the groups in both the engagement indicators and the incidence of dropping out of high school. For example, among speakers of Chinese dialects all indicators were favorable and the group experienced a decrease in their drop-out rates. In another (Vietnamese speakers), all indicators trended unfavorably and were accompanied by a sharp increase in the drop-out rate. In others (Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole and Spanish speakers), there was some difference in the behavior of the engagement indicators but all experienced very sharp increases in the drop-out rate. The sharpest increase among all groups examined here took place among speakers of Haitian Creole.

Student engagement is affected by factors related to the student, to their families, and to the programs in which they are immersed. Since the comparison here is not among groups but rather of each group across time, institutional factors are an important focus. Interviews suggest differential effects on the programs for each of the groups may have an effect on the drop-out behavior. The effects of the structure of the programs on student engagement require further investigation.

TABLE 1. HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES FOR STUDENTS PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS. SELECTED LANGUAGE GROUPS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
Cape Verdean Creole	7.5%	7.8%	8.1%	10.7%
Chinese	3.8%	7.3%	0.9%	2.8%
Haitian Creole	3.6%	7.5%	8.6%	10.6%
Spanish	7.3%	4.4%	10.3%	14.0%
Vietnamese	4.0%	6.7%	11.3%	10.3%
Total in Programs for ELs	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%

## Achievement of English Learners (Spanish Speakers only)

Available data does not allow for the assessment of MCAS pass rates of language groups other than Spanish speakers when we disaggregate students in EL programs by language groups. We report on the outcomes of native Spanish speakers in General Education and in EL programs and find:

- For Spanish speakers in EL programs, there were improvements in Math in 4th grade and in ELA in 10th grade, but substantial declines in all other grades.
- There was a growing gap between native Spanish speaking ELs and their counterparts in General Education as well as between native Spanish speaking ELs and English speakers in General Education.
- Varied program quality related to the lack of training of Boston teachers in SEI strategies and ESL was pointed out as critical in terms of the achievement of EL in BPS.

## Achievement of Native Speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese Dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese in General Education

Because of limitations of the data we cannot disaggregate the outcomes of these groups by program participation, so these results reflect the language group as a whole (that is native speakers of languages other than English who are proficient in English and those who are of limited English proficiency). Overall, native speakers of languages other than English (NSOLs) tended to outscore other BPS sub-populations and those improvements are reflected in the scores of the speakers of other languages other than English reviewed here. Findings include:

- Fourth graders from the four groups experienced improvements in Math; all except Cape Verdean Creole experienced improvements in ELA.
- Speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese in 8th grade experienced improvements in Math
- All groups except speakers of Chinese dialects experienced improvements in 10th grade ELA pass rates. Pass rates in math improved substantially among Vietnamese speakers and more modestly among speakers of Spanish and of Chinese dialects while decreasing among the other two groups.

## Recommendations to the Boston Public Schools

We suggest that the implementation of SEI in Boston would be enhanced by:

- a well informed institutional culture knowledgeable about the best, most recent information about the requirements for the best implementation of SEI, as well as the best practices for educating English Learners.
- a stronger capacity to accurately identify students of limited English proficiency, assess their language skills, assign them to appropriate programs and monitor their progress.
- parents from all language groups who have information and education about the BPS programs available for ELs and about their right to waive the participation of their children in SEI programs.
- increased programmatic flexibility allowed districts through the waiver provisions

of the law. This will allow the district to improve its responsiveness to the specific needs of individual and groups of students.

The tenuous engagement of ELs, their lackluster academic performance and the widening gap between ELs and other BPS students in this period is evidence that there were serious problems in the implementation of current programs in Boston's schools. There needs to be:

- improved guidance and support to schools in relation to the implementation of SEI instruction
- comprehensive professional development programs for BPS teachers focused on cultural competence and the strategies and skills necessary for effective instruction of ELs.

Research indicates that for English Learners to be successful there needs to be respect for their backgrounds and effective teaching about their new world and its requirements. The district, the principals and the teacher corps need to know and understand their role in the process of integration of immigrant children as well as the proven instructional approaches that make these children successful learners.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Defined as those who are receiving free or reduced price lunch.
- <sup>2</sup> (1) Differences in dropout rates between LEPs in EL programs and LEPs in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.03$ ) in middle school in AY2003. (2) For this analysis enrolled students who did not attend any days were not excluded.
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- <sup>4</sup> (1) MCAS pass rates in AY2005 for students in EL programs (Row E) and in AY2006 for LEPs in General Education (Row D) are not reliable because of low numbers of test-takers and restrictions in reporting scores for small groups of students in a school or grade. (2) Differences in Grade 4 MCAS ELA scores for students designated as LEP in EL programs and those designated as LEP in General Education are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P>.000$ ) in AY2003 and AY2004; (3) All differences between LEPs in EL programs and English proficient NSOLs are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for all years. (4) All differences between LEPs in EL programs and Native English Speakers are statistically significant (Chi2 Test  $P<.000$ ) for all years for ELA pass rates.
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**The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy**

was established in 1989 at the University of Massachusetts-Boston by the Massachusetts State Legislature at the behest of Latino community leaders and scholars in response to a need for improved understanding of the Latino experience in the Commonwealth. The mission of the Institute is to inform policy makers about issues vital to the state's growing Latino community and to provide this community with information and analysis necessary for effective participation in public policy development.

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## EVENTS CALENDAR

June 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	<a href="#">1</a>	<a href="#">2</a>	<a href="#">3</a>	<a href="#">4</a>	<a href="#">5</a>	6
7	<a href="#">8</a>	<a href="#">9</a>	<a href="#">10</a>	<a href="#">11</a>	<a href="#">12</a>	13
14	<a href="#">15</a>	<a href="#">16</a>	<a href="#">17</a>	<a href="#">18</a>	<a href="#">19</a>	20
21	<a href="#">22</a>	<a href="#">23</a>	<a href="#">24</a>	<a href="#">25</a>	26	27
28	<a href="#">29</a>	<a href="#">30</a>	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11



## Conference Directions

### Chelmsford - Chelmsford High School

200 Richardson Road  
North Chelmsford, MA 01863  
9:00 a.m.

#### From Greater Boston

Take I-93 North to I-95 S / Rte. 128 S (Exit 37 B)  
Take 95 South to Route 3 North (Exit 32B-32A)  
Take Route 3 North to Exit 32.  
Continue straight off the ramp.  
Turn left at the traffic light toward the sign for Rte. 3 / 4 - Chelmsford / Boston.  
Move into the right lanes and continue straight.  
Turn right onto Graniteville Road. You'll pass Sully's Ice Cream on the right.  
Turn right and right again into Chelmsford High School.  
Please enter the building using the front entrance, where you will sign in and be escorted to the Learning Commons on the 2nd floor.

#### From Worcester and Springfield

From Springfield, take the Mass Pike to I-495 North; from Worcester, take Route 290 East to I-495 North.  
Take I-495 North to Route 3 North.  
Take Route 3 North to Exit 32.  
Continue straight off the ramp.  
Turn left at the traffic light toward the sign for Rte. 3 / 4 - Chelmsford / Boston.  
Move into the right lanes and continue straight.  
Turn right onto Graniteville Road. You'll pass Sully's Ice Cream on the right.  
Turn right and right again into Chelmsford High School.  
Please enter the building using the front entrance, where you will sign in and be escorted to the Learning Commons on the 2nd floor.

#### Parking:

**For Board members *ONLY*:** There will be reserved spaces in the lot immediately outside the front entrance to Chelmsford High School.

**For all other attendees:** Parking will be available in the upper school lot.