



Boston City Council

TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON
Councilor – District 7

August 7, 2024
Alex Geourntas
City Clerk
1 City Hall Square, Room 601
BOSTON, MA 02201

RE: Communication in regards to Docket 0353

Mr. Clerk,

I submit to you this communication regarding Docket 0353: a hearing to discuss the feasibility of BPS providing ESOL classes for parents in order to create a public document detailing the developments on this subject since the docket's original filing. We originally filed this docket back in February of 2024 in collaboration with community stakeholders and local nonprofits to address what we feel are gaps in programmatic services made available to English learners and their families.

As you know, 17,000 Boston Public Schools students, which comprise nearly a third of all BPS students (32%), are described as English Learners, meaning they are native of a language other than English and that they are not yet proficient enough in English to perform in the pedagogical settings in which English is the primary language. With 1/3 of the student population being English learners, one can surmise that the parents of said population also identify as limited English proficient. In fact, the BPDA found that “Boston alone is home to 100,000 limited-English speaking adults – 11 percent of all adults in Boston.” Parents of English learners who do not speak English themselves can benefit from English language classes not only to support their own children in their academic careers, but also to support their own careers here in the city.

Since filing the hearing, however, our office partnered with English for New Bostonians to identify a pathway through which the Council could use its budgetary powers to create a line item to provide either a programmatic or administrative fund through which ESOL classes for parents could be offered. Thanks to the efforts of English for New Bostonians and my Council colleagues, we successfully passed an override to the Mayor’s amended budget, identified as Override 1P. The override stated the following:

Docket #0990 Partially Overridden, as moved, shall be partially overridden as follows:

[Chair of Ways and Means] recommend that we override the following increases:

- Increase Office of Immigrant Advancement Contractual Services, \$300,000 to support ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) parent classes across the city (adding \$300,000 to the line on the tax order).

Our office was proud and honored to be able to help secure this reallocation to help support the parents of English learners in BPS. This funding is not just about learning English; it is a tool through which we can create economic empowerment, establish means through which parents can play a more active role in their child's education, and strengthen communication between different language communities. Given this historic and significant budgetary allocation, we feel the main issues addressed in Docket 0353 have been resolved, at least for the time being. We do not wish to pull this matter from the Green Sheets and place it on file, as we feel it is important to keep it in committee should a hearing be needed. Instead, we elected to submit this communication to state that the Council successfully addressed the urgent need identified in the docket, and that our office will be working closely with the administration to ensure that the money is expended expeditiously. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with my Council colleagues, community stakeholders, and members of the public to fight for language justice for all residents in the City of Boston.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Fernandes Anderson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tania Fernandes Anderson
City Councilor District 7