

Offered by City Councilor Julia Mejia



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN SERVICE PROVISION AND SPENDING FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

- WHEREAS,** Boston Public Schools enrolls more than 17,000 English Learners, representing approximately 31 percent of the District's total student population, with an additional 7,000 students identified as former English Learners; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Approximately 4,000 English Learners in Boston also have disabilities and often face systemic barriers to receiving integrated, legally required supports that address both language acquisition and special education needs; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Federal and state law, including the LOOK Act, affirms the right of English Learners to meaningful access to instruction, including native language instruction where appropriate, yet Boston Public Schools has not publicly articulated a comprehensive, districtwide operational plan to implement native language access for English Learners or English Learners with disabilities; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice found that Boston Public Schools violated the civil rights of English Learners by failing to provide appropriate services, leading to more than a decade of federal monitoring that concluded in 2024, raising concerns about the adequacy of current self-monitoring and public accountability mechanisms; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Academic outcome data continue to show severe disparities for English Learners, including persistently low MCAS proficiency rates in English Language Arts, math, and science, and higher dropout rates compared to non-English Learner peers; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools has received substantial local, state, and federal funding in recent years to expand multilingual and bilingual programming, including federal relief funds and a significant annual operating budget allocation for multilingual education, yet access to high-quality bilingual and dual-language programs remains limited to a small fraction of eligible students; *and*

WHEREAS, Only a small percentage of English Learners are currently enrolled in dual-language programs, despite research demonstrating that bilingual and dual-language models improve academic outcomes, long-term English proficiency, and student well-being; *and*

WHEREAS, Data is routinely collected and reported on educator racial diversity, yet limited public information exists regarding educator language diversity, bilingual certification pipelines, staffing capacity, and long-term workforce planning to meet the needs of a multilingual student population; *and*

WHEREAS, Recent resignations from the Boston Public Schools English Learners Task Force and continued concerns raised by families, educators, advocates, and community organizations reflect unresolved questions about program design, placement practices, transparency, and the return on investment of current service models; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council has a responsibility to provide oversight of public education systems and ensure transparency, accountability, and equitable use of public funds, particularly where large-scale investments have not resulted in improved outcomes for historically underserved students; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine government transparency, accountability, and accessibility in the provision of services and the use of public funds for English Learners and English Learners with disabilities in the City of Boston, including but not limited to a review of spending levels, funding sources, and return on investment; compliance with state and federal legal requirements, including the LOOK Act; program placement models, access to native language instruction, and enrollment patterns; staffing capacity, educator language diversity, and workforce development pipelines; and academic outcomes, service delivery for English Learners with disabilities, and post-Department of Justice monitoring practices. Representatives from Boston Public Schools, the Boston School Committee, the Office of Multicultural and Multilingual Education, the English Learners Task Force, educators, advocates, families, individuals with lived experience, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

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