

You know but the public may not be fully aware that nine members of the ELL Task Force resigned yesterday. We resigned because we believe that the Inclusive Education and OMME plans you submitted to the state (DESE) will hurt children.

The ELL Task Force has repeatedly argued that building on the foundation of native language is the best way to learn academic English and to learn core academic content. You have rejected our advice. BPS is doubling down on an English immersion strategy that your own reports show is failing over 90% of EL students. We can no longer appear to tacitly agree with what you are doing. Therefore, we resigned. But we resigned as members of the ELL Task Force. We did not resign as advocates.

You say you are data-driven and evidence-based. But where is the evidence that English immersion in general education with ESL is effective? We have repeatedly asked to receive this evidence. We have received nothing. In contrast we have presented evidence of the effectiveness of native language instruction. References to this evidence is in BPS's own Superintendent's Circular on EL and the DESE Guidance on Transitional Bilingual Education.

You say you are committed to CLSP, Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices.. But assigning students to GenEd makes a mockery of that commitment. It will undercut native language, the soul of culture.

You say you are driven by a DESE monitoring report that express concern about the isolation and segregation of students in SEI Language Specific programs. But DESE only monitored BPS's "chosen" program. BPS has never implemented the flexibility under the LOOK Act to expand access to native language beyond Dual Language. If BPS had chosen to implement TBE, the state monitoring report would have been very different. BPS is manipulating the use of the DESE report to further the agenda of pushing EL students into GenEd, which it has been doing for years.

You say you will expand bilingual education, but the detail of the plans show that is really only an expansion of Dual Language, with some students in Newcomer and SLIFE programs that may affect 10% or so of ELs. What about the other 90% that will not have instruction in academic content in native language.

BPS says it wants to expand bilingual staff. What does the hiring and diversity report later tonight show? How does it treat language as well as racial diversity

Implementing inclusion for Special Education students will be challenging enough. To add thousands of EL students into this inclusion mix is inappropriate and unwise. It is unfair to the teachers, and it is unfair to the students.

I could go on about the misleading use of Tom Hehir quotes. But there isn't time. I still don't understand why you as a committee have not required a full public discussion and debate about this inclusive education strategy. But you haven't. Why not?

BPS seems determined to go ahead against the advice we gave. I would plead with you to monitor implementation carefully on a quarterly basis and allow public comment.