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## Identifying Success in Schools and Programs for English Language Learners in Boston Public Schools

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# Identifying Success in Schools and Programs for English Language Learners in Boston Public Schools

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Boston Public Schools: Eileen de los Reyes and Antonieta Bolomey

## Summary

The Gastón Institute collaborates with government agencies, community organizations and foundations in applied research aimed at evaluating the impact of policies, programs and practices.

This poster describes a three-way collaboration among researchers and practitioners from Boston Public Schools (BPS), the Gastón Institute and the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) which yielded two comprehensive studies:

1. The enrollment and outcomes of English language learners in BPS.
2. Best ELL practices in four schools that were consistently high performing or steadily improving with respect to ELL student outcomes.

## Goals and Objectives

This project built off of a 2009 study of ELL students that the Gastón Institute and CCE conducted in partnership with BPS. The 2011 study, conducted at the request of the BPS Office for English Language Learners (OELL), had the following objectives:

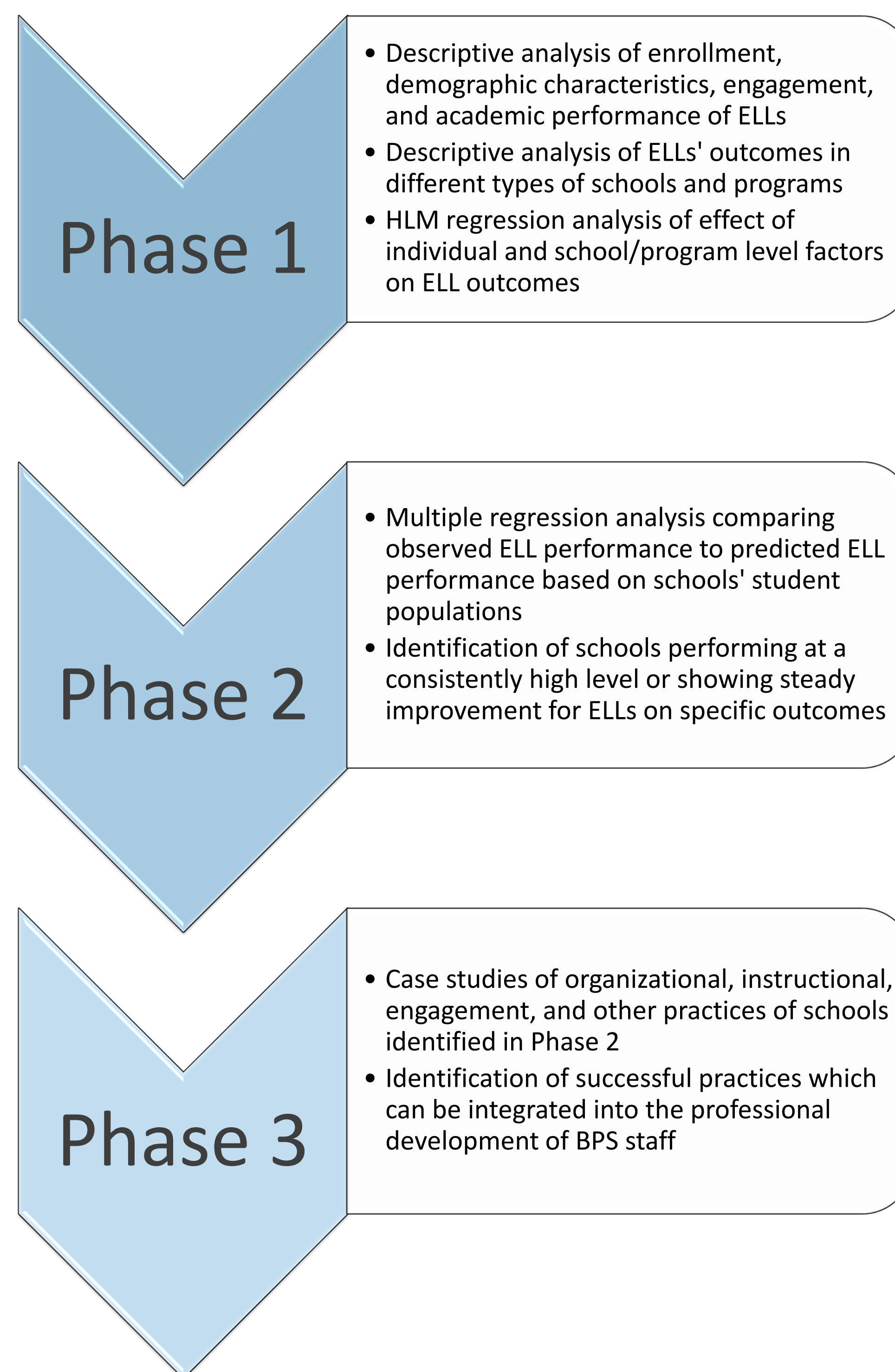
1. Understand the enrollment patterns, demographic characteristics, and academic outcomes of Boston's ELLs from 2006-2009
2. Identify schools in which the engagement and academic performance of ELLs exceeds predicted performance
3. Identify and document the practices that contribute to those schools' success in educating ELLs

## Approaches and Methods

The researchers worked collaboratively with BPS OELL staff to:

- define the research questions
- determine the research framework and methods
- obtain data
- analyze interim data findings
- select the case study schools
- produce recommendations based on final data findings

The study itself utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods.



## Impact

The study corresponds to one of the Gastón Institute's core research areas, applied research, and also underscores the University's urban commitment.



The researchers discussed the key findings from this project with the BPS Superintendent and her Executive Team. Key findings were also presented to the Boston School Committee and the ELL Task Force. An academic presentation of the findings held at UMB involved not only the researchers but also the Superintendent and OELL Director.

The collaborative research process proved to be as valuable as the data findings themselves. We were able to provide OELL with some baseline data that will enable OELL staff to assess the impact of new policies and programs. The collaboration has also built OELL capacity by co-constructing a methodology that can be used for future analysis. This will help inform and improve ELL instruction in BPS.

## Conclusion/Next Steps

The three-way partnership has been successful in providing data for assessing existing policies and suggesting new strategies for programs and practice.

The success of this project was due to the trust built between the researchers and the district partners, and the partners' willingness to devote a substantial amount of time throughout the entire research process.

We hope to replicate this form of collaborative, data-based inquiry in other areas of the state where there are large concentrations of Latino ELLs.

## References

Tung, R., Diez, V., Gagnon, L., Uriarte, M., Stazesky, P., de los Reyes, E., & Bolomey, A. (2011). *Learning from Consistently High Performing and Improving Schools for English Language Learners in Boston Public Schools*. Boston, MA: Gastón Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston. Available: [http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs/155](http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/155).

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