

University of Massachusetts Boston

## ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

---

Gastón Institute Publications

Gastón Institute for Latino Community  
Development and Public Policy Publications

---

4-2009

# 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

*University of Massachusetts Boston*, [miren.uriarte@umb.edu](mailto:miren.uriarte@umb.edu)

Nicole Lavan

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

Nicole Agusti

Mandira Kala

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

Faye Karp

*University of Massachusetts Boston*, [faye.karp@gmail.com](mailto:faye.karp@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs)



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Education Law Commons](#), [Education Policy Commons](#), and the [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#)

*See next page for additional authors*

---

### Recommended Citation

Uriarte, Miren; Lavan, Nicole; Agusti, Nicole; Kala, Mandira; Karp, Faye; Kiang, Peter Nien-chu; Lo, Lusa; Tung, Rosann; and Villari, Cassandra, "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" (2009). *Gastón Institute Publications*. 130.  
[https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs/130](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/130)

This Research Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy Publications at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gastón Institute Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@umb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@umb.edu).

---

## **Authors**

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



The Mauricio Gastón Institute for  
Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy

## 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*

April 2009



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.

## Research Team

### Principal Investigators

Miren Uriarte, *Senior Research Associate, Gastón Institute;*  
*Associate Professor, College of Public and Community Service, UMass Boston*  
Rosann Tung, *Director of Research, Center for Collaborative Education*

Nicole Agusti, *Research Assistant*  
Virginia Diez, *Research Assistant*  
Mandira Kala, *Research Assistant*  
Faye Karp, *Research Assistant*  
Peter Kiang, *Professor, Graduate College of Education, UMass Boston*  
Nicole Lavan, *Research Assistant*  
Lusa Lo, *Assistant Professor, Graduate College of Education, UMass Boston*  
Tatjana Meschede, *Research Consultant*  
Monique Ouimette, *Senior Research Associate, Center for Collaborative Education*  
Cassandra Villari, *Independent Consultant*

## Production

Melissa Colón, *Associate Director, Gastón Institute*  
Diana Castañeda, *Education Policy Intern, Gastón Institute*  
Meena Mehta, *TwoM's Design*  
Jim O'Brien, *Editor*

## The Gastón Institute gratefully acknowledges the funding support for this project from the following organizations:

The Barr Foundation  
The Boston Foundation  
The Schott Foundation for Education  
The William Monroe Trotter for the Study of Black Culture, UMass Boston  
The Institute for Asian American Studies, UMass Boston

## Table of Contents

Preface	2
Acknowledgements	3
Explanation of Terms	4
<hr/>	
<b>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.</b>	
<i>M Uriarte and N Lavan, N Agusti, M Kala, F Karp, P Kiang, L Lo, R Tung, and C Villari</i>	
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	11
Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers	13
Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects	25
Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Haitian Creole Speakers	35
Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Spanish Speakers	45
Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Vietnamese Speakers	59
Discussion	70
<hr/>	
Appendix: Data and Methods	78
References	80

## Preface

---

It is with great anticipation and high expectations for policy changes aimed at eliminating achievement disparities that I introduce *English Learners in Boston Public Schools in the Aftermath of Policy Change*. This report is the fruits of a multisectorial collaboration led by the University of Massachusetts-Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy that includes the Center for Collaborative Education, other sister institutes at UMASS-Boston, local foundations and community organizations. Consistent with the mission of the Gastón Institute, the main objective of this report is to inform local and state policy makers, educators and advocates, as well as the families and the communities of the children affected by English learning policies.

This report is based on a study of the academic experience of Boston English Learners (ELs) after 2002, when the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) was replaced with Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) in response to the passing of Question 2. ELs represent about 14.5% of the student population in the Boston school district, the largest and more diverse school district in Massachusetts. The research team documented the impact of the policy change on the academic experience of ELs using existing local statistics, public records and staff accounts obtained through interviews. Salient results for both students and their teachers are disheartening and highlight the urgency for rigorous monitoring of student outcomes, teacher competencies and transparency of results. This report also calls for local policy makers to make a solid commitment to teacher training that focuses on evidence-based instructional practices and positive outcomes.

This report is released in the wake of statistics showing that English Learners are the fastest-growing segment of the K-12 student population in the United States, and that their educational outcomes are the biggest failure of the *No Child Left Behind* policies. Results from this study resemble those from other schools districts in California. Addressing the needs of English Learners is a critical element of improving schools' capacity to eliminate achievement disparities. This is clearly acknowledged in the Obama-Biden Education Agenda with the commitment to increase accountability of school for the educational success of students in transitional bilingual education and other supportive structures for students with limited proficiency in English.

We, at the Gastón Institute, look forward to seeing the same commitment by the Readiness Project, the central piece of the Massachusetts' education policy agenda, in alignment with new federal efforts to eliminate existing disparities. We believe that the experience of Boston points to the need for a state wide assessment of the effects of the policy created after the passing of Question 2, and a state wide comparison of outcomes of different types of instructional models for ELs. Indeed, we are willing and ready to help create a system to monitor progress in the educational achievement of English learners.

Maria Idali Torres, MSPH, PhD.

*Director*

*Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy*

## Acknowledgements

We wish to thank, first of all, Nydia Méndez and Chris Coxon of the Boston Public Schools for their support of this research. Their initiative made it possible for the Boston Public Schools to release the data that forms the basis of this research. Superintendent Carol Johnson and Barbara Adams, BPS' Chief Academic Officer, have been most supportive of our work, opening the door for staff interviews and discussing findings throughout the process of analysis. Although this report does not represent "good news" for the Boston Public Schools, the collaboration between the researchers and the leadership of the district has been excellent and very helpful in gaining a common understanding of the implications of these findings. We thank them for their openness and for their support. Staff members of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Boston Public Schools participated in our study through interviews; their perspective filled the gaps left by the quantitative data, and we thank them for their insights.

We thank most especially The Barr Foundation, The Schott Foundation for Education, and The Boston Foundation for the funding to conduct this research; their support made this work possible. We thank also the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture and the Institute for Asian American Studies, both at UMass Boston, for their financial support, which made possible the early stages of this project, as well as for their ongoing support.

The research itself relied on a wonderful group of researchers and graduate students. We thank Rosann Tung, Director of Research at the the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston, who led the work of cleaning and analyzing the quantitative data supplied by the Boston Public Schools. Her experience in handling this specific type of administrative data was invaluable. We thank Peter Kiang of the Graduate College of Education at UMass Boston for his overall guidance and support and most particularly for his early work on the project and for his work in the community-based dissemination. Lusa Lo (also of the Graduate College of Education at UMass Boston), Tatjana Meschede (now at Brandeis University's Heller School), Nicole Lavan (PhD Candidate in Public Policy at the McCormack Graduate School), Virginia Diez (a doctoral student at the Tufts University's Elliot-Pearson Department of Child Development) and Monique Ouimette (of the Center for Collaborative Education) scoured the literature, conducted interviews, prepared the data for analysis and produced the initial analyses; we thank them.

The two reports in this publication owe a great debt to the work of Nicole Agusti and Faye Karp, both PhD students in the Public Policy PhD Program at the McCormack Graduate School in UMass Boston and research assistants at the Gastón Institute; they produced the analyses and obsessively checked the data. Finally, thanks go also to María Torres and Miguel Colón for transcribing interviews.

The release of the findings began with presentations at the Civil Rights Project / Proyecto de Derechos Civiles at UCLA and the University of California's Language Minority Research Institute in April and May 2008. We thank Patricia Gándara and Gary Orfield for their invitation to participate in the discussions on the impact of restrictive language policies on the education of language minority students, and we thank the many colleagues who provided feedback on our work as part of that process. Closer to home, we are grateful to Jorge Capetillo-Ponce, Ramón Borges-Méndez, Billie Gastic, Tom Hidalgo, Dan French, María Idali Torres, Peter Kiang and Elizabeth Pauley for feedback on the work emanating from this study, including its final report. Thanks to Jim O'Brien for editing the manuscripts and Meena Mehta for her design work in this publication.

Members of organizations in the Cape Verdean, Chinese, Haitian, Latino, and Vietnamese communities who have attended two rounds of presentations on the outcomes of students from these groups have provided invaluable feedback and affirmation; we list them in the inside back cover of this report and thank them very much. John Mudd and Samuel Hurtado from the Massachusetts Advocacy Center (MAC), Jane López from the Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META), and Myriam Ortiz from Boston Parents Organizing Network (BPON) have provided feedback and support throughout. We thank them all and hope that our small contribution to their strong and continuous work on behalf of Boston's school children will bear fruit.

But we cannot end our acknowledgements without thanking Diana Castañeda (Boston College Graduate School of Social Work) and, most especially, Melissa Colón, Associate Director of the Gastón Institute, for their work in organizing the dissemination of this research to policy makers and to the public, and for making sure that the work of researchers reaches parents in a way that will make a difference to the education of their children.

## 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."





# 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.

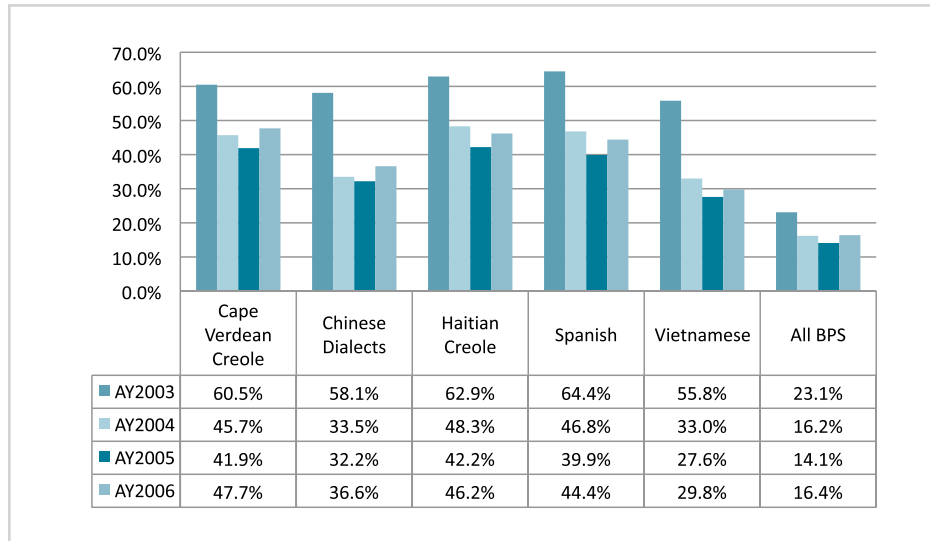
For Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian, and Cape Verdean students and families, this is one of the first looks at the performance of students from these groups in Boston schools. Usually reported as part of aggregates defined by race (e.g., "Asian" or "Black"), information specific to these ethnic groups is 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

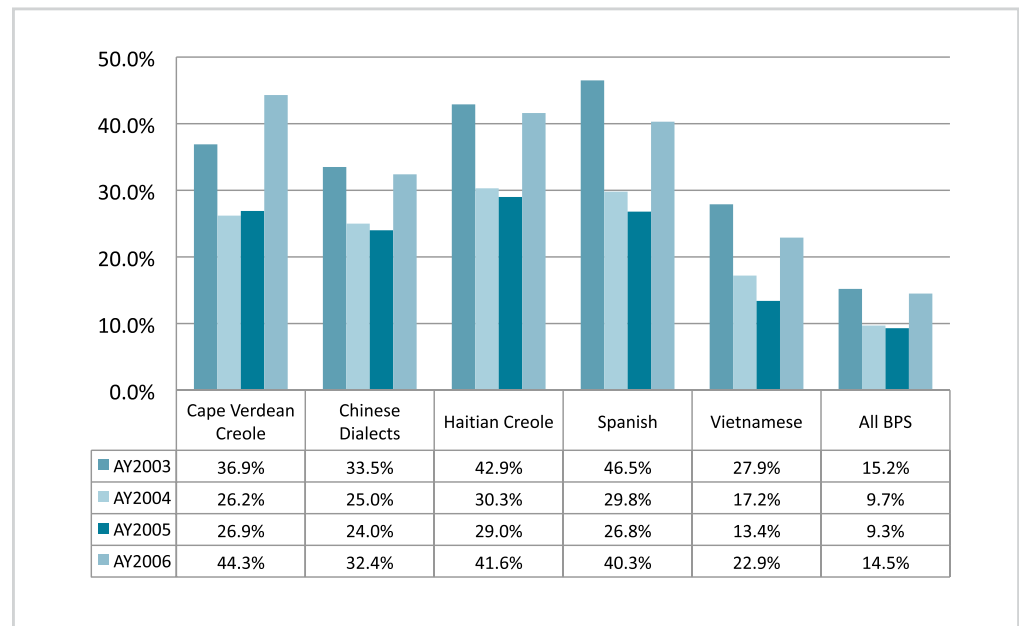
- There was a decline in the number of students identified as students of Limited English Proficiency which affected all five of the groups likely indicating that there were pervasive district-wide initiatives or problems affecting all LEP and EL students. Interviews suggest that mis-identification and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

# 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**

### **Introduction**

---

In November 2002, the voters of Massachusetts approved Referendum Question 2. This referendum spelled an end to Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) as the primary program available for children requiring language support in Massachusetts. In its place came a radically different policy called Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). Unlike TBE, which relies on the English Learners' own language to facilitate the learning of academic subjects as they master English, SEI programs rely on the use of simple English in the classroom to impart academic content; teachers use students' native language only to assist them in completing tasks or to answer a question. This change represented a dramatic shift in the philosophy and practice of teaching English to populations of English Learners.

Five years after the start of the implementation of SEI in Massachusetts, there is still scant information about the impact of this change. There is evidence that models of implementation have varied across the state (DeJong, Gort, & Cobb, 2005; Rennie Center, 2007), but there has been no analysis of the outcomes for students under SEI at the state level or in the city of Boston, where the largest number of English Learners in Massachusetts live and attend school.

*English Learners in Boston Public Schools* in the aftermath of Policy change begins to address this gap. It presents information on the outcomes for English Learners (ELs) in Boston's public schools in the year before and in the three years following the implementation of Question 2. 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 analyze 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.

The implementation in Boston Public Schools of the changes demanded by the passage of the new law had a profound effect on the programs offered to students of limited English proficiency, as well as on the academic outcomes of these students. Our overall study finds that both the identification of LEPs and their enrollment in programs for English Learners declined significantly after the implementation of the program changes demanded by

Question 2. Both identification and enrollment had increased somewhat by the end of the observation period, but neither had reached the levels of AY2003, the last year of Transitional Bilingual Education in Boston. The study also finds that annual drop-out rates have increased among students in EL programs. Under TBE, students in programs for ELs had lower rates than those in General Education programs; that situation has been reversed under SEI. Finally, the study finds that the gap in achievement between students in EL programs and those in General Education programs has increased over the four-year period.

Aside from providing an account of the performance of English Learners in Boston between academic years 2003 and 2006, this study has allowed for a unique look at the performance of groups of students defined by language. This report focuses on the enrollment and academic outcomes of the five largest groups of native speakers of languages other than English: speakers of Spanish, Chinese dialects, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and Cape Verdean Creole. It seeks to show the differential effect of the implementation of the programmatic changes demanded by Question 2 on the different language groups in EL programs in BPS. 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 purpose of focusing on the outcomes of specific language groups is to inform community organizations, parents, and students of the impact of this policy on the education of children from these groups. In fact, the commitment to inform parents and community leaders emerged from their role in making this research possible. The absence of information about the impact of Question 2 confused and angered immigrant parents and communities. Working through local education advocacy organizations, they demanded information and analysis on the status of English Learners. That demand, together with the schools’ own need and willingness to “know,” led to the collaboration that made possible this study of the outcomes of English Learners in the Boston Public Schools.



# **Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers**



# Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers

COLOR KEY	
	All BPS
	NES
	NSOL
	EP
	LEP
	In General Ed
	In EL Programs

In AY2003, the year of the passage of Question 2, there were 1,718 native Cape Verdean Creole speakers enrolled in Boston Public Schools, the fifth largest non-English language group. In this report we trace the identification of limited English proficiency among native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole from AY2003 to AY2006 and find that their numbers declined. We analyze their enrollment in programs for English Learners, finding that after experiencing a decline for two years, the percentage of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers enrolling in such programs increased by AY2006, surpassing the AY2003 level. We compare engagement indicators for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in EL and General Education programs, including attendance, suspensions, and high school drop-out rates, and we find that native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in programs for ELs experienced an increase in their drop-out rate. We examine MCAS results in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs and find both improvements and declines in pass rates during this period.

## 1. Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in the Boston Public Schools

Among Boston’s students, native Cape Verdean Creole speakers<sup>1</sup> are part of the trend of declining enrollments: in the four years of observation the enrollment of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers declined from 1,718 in AY2003 to 1,407 in AY2006 (Table 1). Their proportion within BPS enrollments has also declined, from 2.7% in AY2003 to 2.4% in AY2006, the last year of our observation.

Genders are pretty evenly distributed among native Cape Verdean speakers (Table 2); just over 51.1% are male, a similar proportion as among the overall BPS population. Within the group of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers those attending programs for English Learners show a larger proportion of male students than those in General Education. Among native Cape Verdean speakers, three out of four are receiving free or reduced price lunch, a proxy for poverty status since income at this level is a criterion for acceptance into this school program<sup>2</sup>. Of all native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, those attending programs for English Learners also show a larger proportion in poverty than their counterparts in General Education programs. Finally, native Cape Verdean Creole speakers are over-represented in the older cohorts of students: a full 49.2% of native Cape Verdean Creole speaking students are in high school compared to 34% among the general BPS enrollment (Table 3).

TABLE 1. ENROLLMENT OF NATIVE CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	63,777	61,652	59,608	59,211
Total Enrollment of Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers	1,718	1,546	1,437	1,407
Native Speakers of Cape Verdean Creole as a Percentage of Total BPS Enrollment	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.4%

Note: Total enrollments in this table do not match the BPS official enrollments because of exclusions. See Appendix 1.

TABLE 2. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

Selected Characteristics	All BPS	Students in Programs for ELs	Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers	Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs	Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in General Education
Enrollment	59,211	8,847	1,407 <sup>1</sup>	623	736
LEP Designation	16.4%	100%	47.7%	100%	0%
Gender: % male	51.2%	53.4%	51.1%	52.2%	50.3%
Poverty Status: % receiving free or reduced price lunch	74.9%	84.8%	75.1%	75.6%	73.8%

Note: (1) Includes 48 native speakers who opted out of programs for ELs.

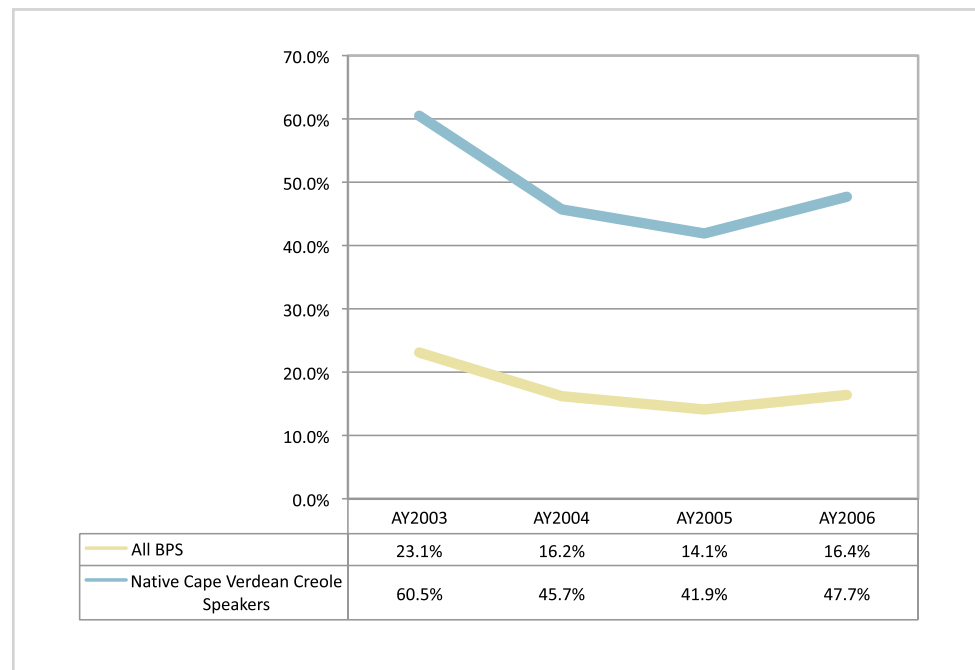
TABLE 3. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

	Elementary	Middle	High
All BPS	43.1%	22.9%	34.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	58.5%	13.6%	27.9%
Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers	31.1%	19.7%	49.2%

## 2. The Identification of Limited English Proficiency among Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers

In AY2006 just under half of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers (47.7%) were identified as having limited English proficiency; this was a much larger percentage than was found among the overall BPS population (Table 2). Still, it represented a sharp decline from AY2003, before the implementation of Question 2. The decline in the numbers of students identified as of limited English proficiency after the implementation of the changes required by Question 2 is one the main findings of this study of English Learners in Boston, where the total number of students designated as LEPs moved from a high of 14,737 students in AY2003 to a low of 8,458 in the subsequent two years, then underwent a modest recovery to 9,989 students in AY2006. The percentage of the BPS enrollment that these students represented also declined, from a high of 23.1% in AY2003 to a low of 14.1% in AY2005 and a partial recovery to 16.4% by AY2006 (Figure 1). This pattern repeats itself even more sharply among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers. In AY2003, 60.5% of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers were identified as of limited English proficiency. This percentage declined to a low of 41.9% by AY2005, then recovered partially to 47.7% in AY2006.

FIGURE 1. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP STUDENTS. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BPS AND OF NATIVE CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



In order to better describe the decline in identification of students of limited English proficiency through time, we calculated the rate of change in identification between AY2003 and each successive year. Table 4 shows the rate of change in identification of all LEPs in BPS and among native Cape Verdean Creole speaking LEPs. The identification of LEPs in the general BPS population decreased by 31.8% in the first year after the implementation of Question 2; by AY2005, BPS showed 42.6% fewer students of limited English proficiency than in the baseline year. Even after the small recovery in AY2006, the whole period still showed a decrease of 32.2% from the baseline of AY2003. The decrease in identification experienced by native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in AY2004 and AY2005 was slightly greater than that experienced by the overall district, but the recovery for this group of students was not as strong. It is important to note that this change took place in a context of substantial decreases numbers of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in BPS during this period; the decrease in the numbers of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers amounted to 22.1% over the four-year period.

TABLE 4. RATE OF CHANGE IN THE DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students Designated as LEP</b>	-31.8%	-42.6%	-32.2%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers Designated as LEP</b>	-32.0%	-42.1%	-35.4%

### 3. Program Participation by Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers

This section presents findings on the participation of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in programs for English Learners and in Special Education programs. The data indicates that across time, participation in programs for ELs decreased, although it recuperated in the last year of observation. Meanwhile, the participation in Special Education, especially in substantially separate programs, increased.

**3A. Participation in Programs for English Learners.** The general pattern following the implementation of the changes required by Question 2 was a decline in the participation in programs for ELs followed by only a partial recovery in the last year of observation. Of all the groups examined in this study, native Cape Verdean Creole speakers were the only group that showed a different pattern. Among all native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, whose enrollments were declining<sup>3</sup>, the proportion of students in programs for ELs increased from 36.9% in AY2003 to 44.3% in AY2006. Among native Cape Verdean speakers who were designated as of limited English proficiency, the increase in enrollments was even larger, from 60.2% in AY2003 to 92.8% in AY2006.

This pattern is similar to the one observed in the identification of LEPs: a swift decline in the first two years after the implementation of SEI with a slight recovery in the last year of observation. In this case, the difference between the starting and the ending rate of participation was smaller. Table 5 shows the percentage change over time in the participation in EL programs for BPS students and for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers. At the end of the period, after experiencing the fourth-year recovery, there was a decline of 10.7% in the proportion of BPS students in programs for ELs in comparison to those present in AY2003. Among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, the decline was much more modest: the percentage of these students enrolled in programs for ELs was only 1.7% lower in AY2006 than in AY2003.

FIGURE 2. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

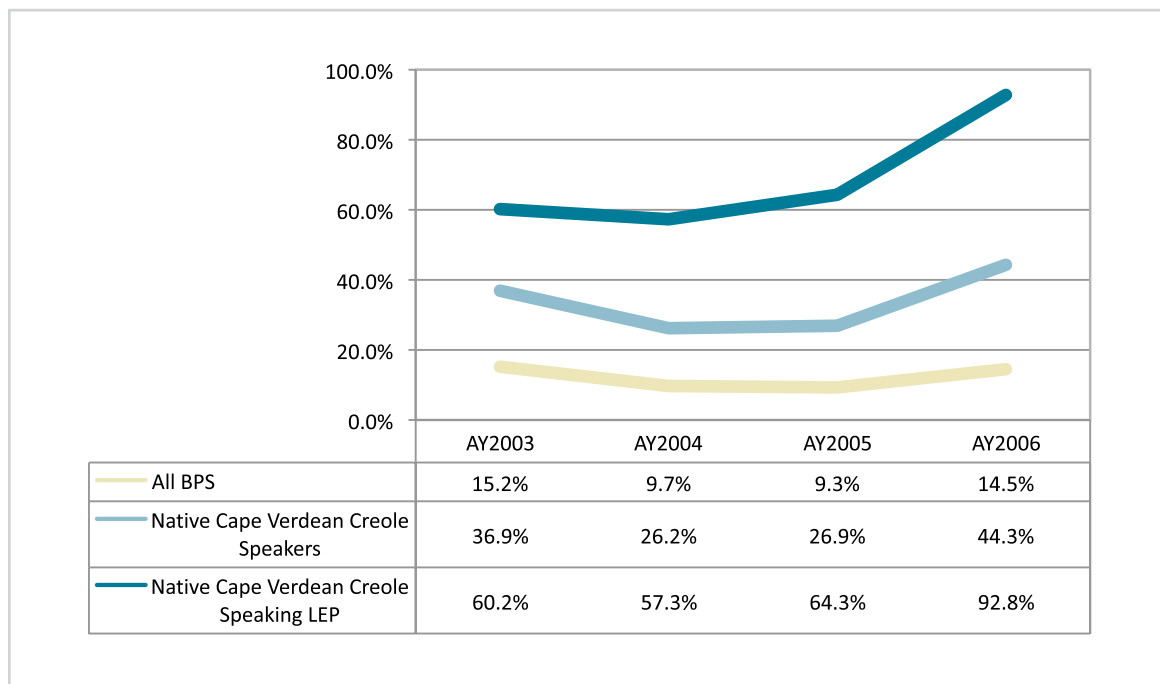


TABLE 5. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students in Programs for ELs</b>	-39.3%	-43.9%	-10.7%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>	-36.1%	-40.0%	-1.7%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speaking LEPs in Programs for ELs</b>	-33.1%	-36.0%	3.0%

**3B. Participation in Special Education Programs.** For BPS students overall, the period between AY2003 and AY2006 was relatively stable in terms of enrollments in Special Education programs. There were slight changes in the enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion programs (a decrease) and in enrollments in substantially separate programs (an increase) during that period (Table 6). For students in EL programs, the pattern was different: this period showed a rise from 6.6% to 9.2% in enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs and an even sharper rise – from 4.8% to 10.9% – in enrollments in substantially separate programs.

Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs (non-EL) showed a slight increase in enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs and a decrease in enrollments in substantially separate programs, the opposite of what was observed among BPS students overall. Among native Cape Verdean speakers in programs for ELs, enrollments in both types of Special Education programs increased in the period, almost quadrupling in the case of substantially separate Special Education enrollment.

TABLE 6. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	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>Students 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%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in General Education Programs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	9.2%	9.1%	9.9%	9.6%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	4.2%	7.7%	7.6%	2.9%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	3.5%	3.0%	4.1%	5.5%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	2.2%	2.0%	2.1%	8.7%

#### 4. The Engagement of Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in Schooling

Maintaining students' attachment to schools and schooling is one of the key challenges of educators, parents, and communities. We explore in this section four key indicators of attachment: attendance, out-of-school suspensions, grade retention, and the annual high school drop-out rate. These variables are key risk factors of dropping out, one of the main challenges facing BPS. Higher drop-out rates and younger dropouts are two of the key findings of this study of the impact of Question 2 on student outcomes.

**4A. Attendance.** The attendance rate of BPS students was unchanged during the period under study: across the four years, the attendance rate for BPS students was 95%. Students in programs for ELs showed a decline in the rate of attendance across the period – from 96.2% to 95.6%. Still, the rates for EL students were slightly higher than those of the general BPS population (Table 7).

Among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, the attendance rate throughout the period was higher among EL students than among those enrolled in General Education programs. Cape Verdean EL students also had a higher rate of attendance than did EL students overall. The rate among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in EL programs was sustained during the four years of observation; the rate for students in General Education programs declined slightly during the same period.

TABLE 7. MEDIAN ATTENDANCE RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	96.2%	96.1%	95.8%	95.6%
Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	96.7%	96.7%	96.6%	96.7%
In General Education Programs	96.1%	96.1%	95.6%	95.0%

**4B. Out-of-School Suspensions.** The rate of out-of-school suspensions for all BPS students declined during the period of observation. That was true also for students in the EL programs, including the native Cape Verdean Creole speakers (Table 8). The same pattern was true for Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs.

The rates of out-of-school suspension were substantially higher among Cape Verdean students in General Education programs than among Cape Verdean students in EL programs: in AY2005, for example, Native Cape Verdean students in General Education programs had a suspension rate of 9.2% while their counterparts in programs for ELs experienced only a 3.6% rate of suspensions. Over the four-year period, both groups of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers experienced a decline in their rates of suspensions. The out-of-school suspension rates for native Cape Verdean speakers in programs for ELs were the second highest out of the five native language groups (Haitian Creole had the highest). Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs also had some of the highest out-of-school suspension rates as compared to the other native language groups considered here.

TABLE 8. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS.  
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
Students in Programs for ELs	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%
Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	4.6%	4.9%	3.6%	4.5%
In General Education Programs	8.0%	11.1%	9.2%	7.3%

**4C. Grade Retention.** The rate of grade retention for BPS students increased slightly during the four years under study (Table 9). This rate, though relatively stable, was more than three times that of the state as whole, where grade retention through these years averaged 2.6% (MDOE, 2006). Grade retention among students in programs for ELs was even higher, and it increased notably over the period, from 8.6% retained in AY2004 (same grade as in AY2003) to 13.1% in 2006 (same grade as in AY2005).

In this indicator, native Cape Verdean Creole speakers also showed the highest rates when compared to the overall BPS population (Table 9) and students from the other language groups considered here. The rate of retention for native Cape Verdean speakers, both in General Education programs and in programs for ELs, increased during this period. This was particularly salient among students in programs for ELs, whose grade retention rate increased from 14.3% in AY2004 to 20.1% in AY2006.

TABLE 9. GRADE RETENTION. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
Students in Programs for ELs	8.6%	10.2%	13.1%
Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers			
In Programs for ELs	14.3%	17.0%	20.1%
In General Education Programs	8.3%	9.9%	9.4%

**4D. Annual High School Drop-Out Rates.** Some of the most salient findings of this study of English Learners in Boston concern the impact of the programmatic changes on the drop-out rate of students in programs for ELs and on the grades in which this school desertion is taking place. With the data available we are able to explore the increase in the drop-out rate across the four years of observation and across BPS sub-groups. But we are able to present drop-out data only for high school students from the native language groups.



TABLE 10. ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
Students in General Education Programs	8.4%	5.2%	8.1%	10.7%
Students in Programs for ELs	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%
Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	7.5%	7.8%	8.1%	10.7%
In General Education Programs	9.1%	7.2%	7.9%	9.2%

Table 10 presents the annual high school drop-out rate for several BPS sub-groups. In all cases, the drop-out rate was higher in AY2006 than in AY2003. The sharpest rise took place among students in programs for English Learners, where the rate nearly doubled in the four years. Students in programs for ELs in the baseline year (AY2003) showed drop-out rates that were lower than for the overall BPS population and also lower than for students in the BPS General Education programs. This was reversed in the first year of implementing Question 2, and the new pattern generally held through the end of the observation period (AY2006).

Comparing the annual high school drop-out rates of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs and programs for ELs shows a rise in the rate for both, but a much stronger increase (from 7.5% to 10.7%) among students in EL programs. Cape Verdean students in EL programs showed an improvement in relation to the drop-out rate of other students in EL. In AY2003 their drop-out rates were higher than those of the overall EL program enrollment; this reversed by AY2006. The same pattern was evident in the comparison between native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs and the overall enrollment in these programs.

## 5. MCAS Outcomes for Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers in General Education

Below we present the MCAS outcomes for Boston’s 4th, 8th, and 10th graders, for all students in General Education programs, for all native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, and for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education. The MCAS results for language subgroups (other than Spanish speakers) in programs for ELs are not reliable because of the small number of test-takers during the period of observation.

**5A. Fourth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** Among all BPS students, fourth grade MCAS pass rates in ELA remained relatively stable through the period, rising slightly in the middle years and declining to close to the baseline value by AY2006. Pass rates among students in General Education programs followed a similar trend. By contrast, pass rates in MCAS Math improved for both groups, rising over 10 percentage points among BPS students and students in General Education programs.

The pass rates for all native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education programs declined in ELA in the years following the passage of Question 2, with partial recovery in AY2006 (Table 11). In Math, native Cape Verdean Creole speakers also improved their pass rates and although they experienced some decline, their pass rates in AY2006 surpassed those of AY2003, the baseline year.

TABLE 11. 4TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	79.3%	76.3%	77.8%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers</b>	67.8%	67.1%	74.2%	53.5%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	83.9%	72.7%	81.0%	78.9%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	65.0%	71.3%	70.0%	76.6%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers</b>	62.2%	67.1%	71.2%	69.0%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	75.8%	63.6%	72.4%	89.5%

**5B. Eighth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in Math.** MCAS Math pass rates improved slightly for BPS 8th graders and BPS students in General Education programs. Throughout the period, pass rates for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers were substantially lower than for BPS 8th grade students overall. Among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education, scores declined in the first two years of the implementation of the new programs but recovered by AY2006 (Table 12).

TABLE 12. 8TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	50.9%	55.1%	53.2%	55.8%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers</b>	36.6%	43.3%	34.0%	36.0%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	44.7%	42.5%	38.4%	46.6%

**5C. Tenth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** MCAS ELA pass rates improved significantly among BPS students overall, rising from 66.8% in AY2003 to 77.4% in AY2006. Similarly, the pass rates improved among BPS students in General Education programs, with a pass rate of 85.2% in AY2006. In comparison to the ELA scores, improvements in Math were much more subdued for BPS students overall and for those in General Education programs. Among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers, ELA pass rates declined after the implementation of Question 2 but then recovered by AY2006, improving slightly over AY2003 baseline values. In Math, however, these students experienced a sharp decline in pass rates over the four years of observation. Similar patterns show in the results for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education.

TABLE 13. 10TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS.  
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	66.8%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	72.7%	72.3%	73.3%	85.2%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers</b>	57.1%	40.0%	48.7%	57.9%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	68.6%	55.5%	59.0%	80.6%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	65.5%	68.7%	61.0%	67.8%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	63.5%	69.5%	62.6%	71.7%
<b>Native Cape Verdean Creole Speakers</b>	66.7%	60.7%	54.4%	48.0%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	62.2%	62.3%	56.4%	58.1%

## 6. Summary

The shift from Transitional Bilingual Education to Sheltered English Immersion, part of the implementation of Question 2 in Boston, affected native Cape Verdean Creole speakers. For example, a larger percentage of native Cape Verdean Creole speakers are now enrolled in Special Education programs, and grade retentions increased among students both in EL and in General Education programs. The annual drop-out rate also increased most significantly among native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in programs for ELs.



## **Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects**



## Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects

COLOR KEY	
	All BPS
	NES
	NSOL
	EP
	LEP
	In General Ed
	In EL Programs

Native speakers of Chinese dialects are the third largest cohort of native speakers of a language other than English in BPS<sup>4</sup>. In the midst of a decline of overall student enrollment in BPS (Table 14), the proportion of native speakers of Chinese dialects continues to increase. In AY2003, native speakers of Chinese dialects comprised 3.3% of all BPS students; this percentage rose slightly to 3.5% by AY2006, the last year of our observation.

### 1. Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in the Boston Public Schools

Among all the native speakers of Chinese dialects, 36.6% are students who were designated as LEPs as of AY2006. This is a much larger percentage than was found among the overall BPS student population (see Table 15). For the ones who were enrolled in EL programs, a majority (91.9%) received free or reduced price lunch, a proxy for poverty status since income at this level is a criterion for acceptance into this school program<sup>5</sup>. As compared to native speakers of Chinese dialects who were enrolled in General Education classrooms, there were more males and poor students in EL programs. Additionally, native speakers of Chinese dialects were overrepresented in EL programs at the elementary level but not the middle and high school levels (see Table 16). Middle school native speakers of Chinese dialects were much less likely to be in EL programs than their counterparts in elementary and high schools (7.5% as compared with 65% and 27.4%, respectively).

TABLE 14. ENROLLMENT OF NATIVE SPEAKERS OF CHINESE DIALECTS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	63,777	61,652	59,608	59,211
<b>Total Enrollment of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	2,094	2,044	2,025	2,061
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects as a Percentage of Total BPS Enrollment</b>	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%

Note: Total enrollments in this table do not match the BPS official enrollments because of exclusions. See Appendix 1.

TABLE 15. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS OF CHINESE DIALECTS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

Selected Characteristics	All BPS	Students in Programs for ELs	Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects	Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in Programs for ELs	Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in General Education
Enrollment	59,211	8,847	2,061 <sup>1</sup>	668	1,306
LEP Designation	16.4%	100%	36.6%	100%	0%
Gender: % male	51.2%	53.4%	53.7%	56.4%	52.1%
Poverty Status: % receiving free or reduced price lunch	74.9%	84.8%	86.7%	91.9%	83.9%

Note: (1) Includes 87 native speakers who opted out of programs for ELs.

TABLE 16. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

	Elementary	Middle	High
All BPS	43.1%	22.9%	34.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	58.5%	13.6%	27.9%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects	36.6%	24.4%	39.0%

## 2. The Identification of Limited English Proficiency among Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects

The results of this study indicated that there was an overall decline in the number of students identified as LEPs after AY2003 (see Figure 3). The total number of BPS students designated as LEPs moved from a high of 14,737 students (23.1%) in AY2003 to a low of 8,458 students (14.1%) in AY2005, then increased again to 9,989 students (16.4%) in AY2006. This pattern repeats itself sharply among the native speakers of Chinese dialects. In AY2003, 1,217 native speakers of Chinese dialects (58.1%) were identified as LEPs. The number dropped dramatically for the next two years, reaching 652 native speakers of Chinese dialects (32.2%) in AY2005, a decline by almost half in the number of native speakers of Chinese dialects who were designated as LEPs.

FIGURE 3. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP STUDENTS. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BPS AND OF NATIVE SPEAKERS OF CHINESE DIALECTS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

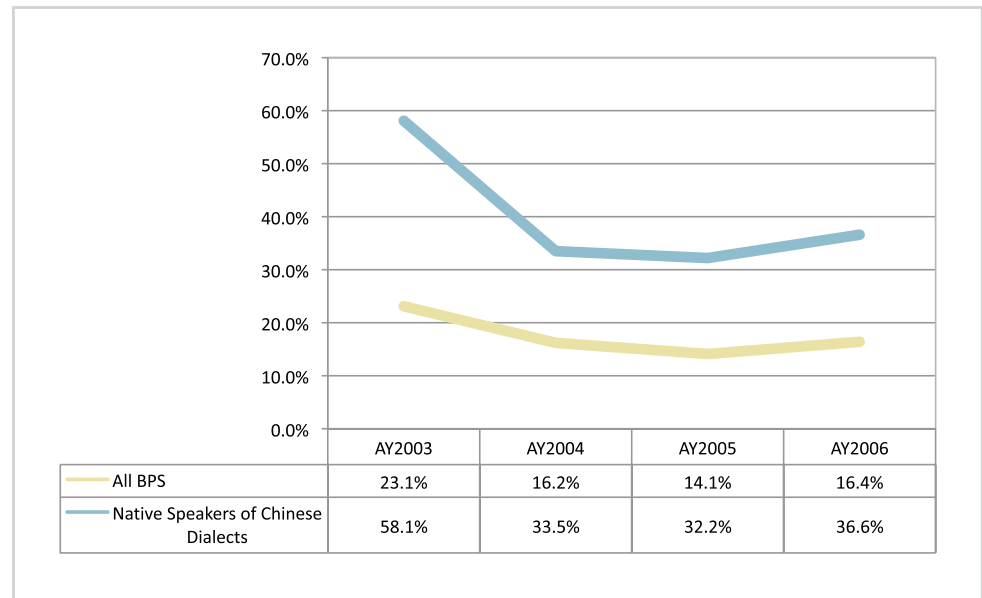


TABLE 17. RATE OF CHANGE IN THE DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students Designated as LEP</b>	-31.8%	-42.6%	-32.2%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects Designated as LEP</b>	-43.8%	-46.4%	-38.0%

In order to better understand the decline of LEP students through time, we calculated the rate of change in identification of all LEPs in BPS and among native speakers of Chinese dialects who were designated as LEPs between AY2003 and each successive year (see Table 17). After the first year of implementation of Question 2, the identification of LEPs in the general BPS population decreased by 31.8%. By 2005, BPS showed 42.6% fewer students of LEP status.

There was a small increase in AY2006, but the rate of change over the whole period still represented a decrease of 32.2% from the baseline of AY2003. The decrease in identification experienced by native speakers of Chinese dialects in AY2004 and AY2005 was much steeper than for BPS students overall.

### 3. Program Participation by Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects

This section presents findings on the participation of native speakers of Chinese dialects in EL and in Special Education (SPED) programs. The data indicate that across time, participation in EL programs decreased for two years but recuperated in the last year of observation. Meanwhile, participation in Special Education, especially in substantially separate programs, increased.



**3A. Participation in Programs for English Learners.** Throughout the study period, native speakers of Chinese dialects comprised the fourth largest cohort of students enrolled in EL programs (see Appendix 2A). In AY2003, 33.5% of the native speakers of Chinese dialects participated in EL programs (see Figure 4). This number dropped almost 30% the first year after the implementation of SEI and continued to drop in AY2005. Then the number of native speakers of Chinese dialects in EL programs suddenly increased from 24% in AY2005 to 32.4% in AY2006. This pattern is similar to the one observed in the identification of LEPs: a swift decline in the first two years after the implementation of SEI with a slight recovery in the last year of observation. At the end of the observation period, there was a decline of 10.7% in the overall proportion of BPS students in EL programs in comparison to AY2003 and a decline of 4.7% in the proportion of native speakers of Chinese dialects enrolled in these programs over the same period (see Table 18). However, as Figure 4 shows, there was a sharp increase in the percentage of Chinese dialect LEPs enrolling in programs for ELs.

FIGURE 4. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

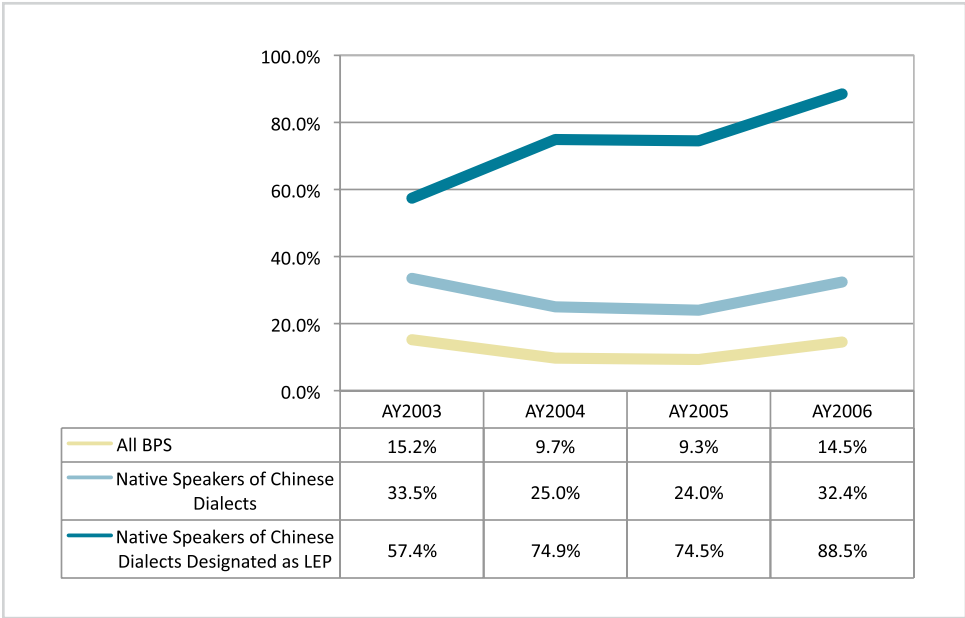


TABLE 18. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
Students in Programs for ELs	-39.3%	-43.9%	-10.7%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in Programs for ELs	-27.0%	-30.7%	-4.7%
LEP Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in Programs for ELs	-26.8%	-30.5%	-4.4%

**3B. Participation in Special Education Programs.** For all BPS students, the period between AY2003 and AY2006 was relatively stable in terms of enrollments in Special Education (SPED) programs. The proportion of students enrolled in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education classrooms remained steady, although with a slight drop in AY2004. The proportion of all

BPS students placed in substantially separate Special Education classrooms increased over the four-year period. However, the percentage of students in EL programs showed larger increases in Special Education assignment and this group of students was more likely to be placed in substantially separate programs. The proportion of EL students in substantially separate classrooms more than doubled from AY2003 to AY2006.

*TABLE 19. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006*

	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>Students 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%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in General Education Programs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	3.2%	3.5%	3.8%	2.7%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	0.6%	1.4%	1.8%	1.0%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in Programs for ELs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	4.7%	4.5%	4.7%	6.4%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	4.1%	6.6%	6.6%	8.5%

Among the native speakers of Chinese dialects who were in EL programs, the enrollment in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs increased after the initiation of policy changes due to Question 2. But the increase was much steeper in substantially separate Special Education classes: the percentage of these students more than doubled during this same three-year period. In addition, native speakers of Chinese dialects in EL programs were more likely to be receiving Special Education services (both Full or Partial Inclusion and substantially separate) than Chinese dialect speakers in General Education programs.

#### 4. The Engagement of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in Schooling

Maintaining students' attachment to schools and schooling is one of the key challenges of educators, parents, and communities. We explore in this section the key indicators of attachment: (a) attendance, (b) out-of-school suspensions, (c) grade retention, and (d) drop-out rate.

**4A. Attendance.** The attendance rate of BPS students remained the same during the observation period, AY2003–2006, about 95%. There was a decline in the rate of attendance among the students enrolled in EL programs, from 96.2% in AY2003 to 95.6% in AY2006 (see Table 20). The attendance rate of native speakers of Chinese dialects in both EL and General Education programs remained steady at about 99%.

TABLE 20. MEDIAN ATTENDANCE RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	96.2%	96.1%	95.8%	95.6%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects				
In Programs for ELs	98.9%	98.9%	98.9%	98.9%
In General Education Programs	98.9%	98.9%	98.3%	98.9%

**4B. Out-of-School Suspensions.** The rate of out-of-school suspensions for all BPS students declined during the period of observation. That was true as well for students in the EL program. However, for native speakers of Chinese dialects, the rate of out-of-school suspensions actually increased (see Table 21): a 100% increase for those who were in EL programs and a 29% increase for those who were in General Education programs.

TABLE 21. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
Students in Programs for ELs	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects				
In Programs for ELs	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%
In General Education Programs	1.4%	0.9%	1.5%	1.8%

**4C. Grade retention.** In addition to attendance and out-of-school retention, our study also examined the proportion of students being retained in the academic school years. The rate of grade retention for BPS students increased slightly during the observation period (see Table 22). This rate, though relatively stable, was higher than the overall rate of grade retention for BPS students (see Table 22). The overall BPS rate, in turn, was more than three times that of the state as a whole, where grade retention through these years averaged 2.6% (MDOE, 2006). The grade retention rate among native speakers of Chinese dialects in EL programs (8.8%) was higher than for any other sub-group in AY2003, but in AY2006 it declined to 6.7%, below that of all BPS students and of all BPS students in EL programs. On the other hand, the rates for native speakers of Chinese dialects who were in General Education programs fluctuated, climbing dramatically from AY2004 (1.9%) to AY2005 (3.3%) and then decreasing in AY2006 (2.0%).

TABLE 22. GRADE RETENTION. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
Students in Programs for ELs	8.6%	10.2%	13.1%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects			
In Programs for ELs	8.8%	6.9%	6.7%
In General Education Programs	1.9%	3.3%	2.0%

**4D. Annual High School Drop-Out Rates.** Some of the most salient findings of this study are the impact of the programmatic changes on the drop-out rate of students in EL programs and on the grades in which this school desertion is taking place. Table 23 presents the high school drop-out rate for several subgroups during the period of observation. The high school drop-out rate, both of BPS students who were in EL programs and of those who were not, increased substantially during the period of observation. The overall drop-out rate increased from 7.7% in AY2003 to 10.9% in AY2006, and the drop-out rate for students in EL programs doubled in the same period, from 6.3% in AY2003 to 12.0% in AY2006.

TABLE 23. ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
Students in General Education Programs	8.4%	5.2%	8.1%	10.7%
Students in Programs for ELs	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%
Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects				
In Programs for ELs	3.8%	7.3%	0.9%	2.8%
In General Education Programs	3.6%	1.4%	2.4%	1.3%

Generally speaking, the drop-out rates for native speakers of Chinese dialects do not appear to be negatively impacted by the Question 2. The high school drop-out rates of native speakers of Chinese dialects in General Education programs showed a 64% decrease from AY2003 to AY2006. For native speakers of Chinese dialects in EL programs, their drop-out rates fluctuated throughout the four years: it jumped to 7.3% in AY2004, fell to 0.9% in AY2005, and then increased again to 2.8% in AY2006<sup>6</sup>. Still, these fluctuations amounted to an overall decrease from the baseline rate by AY2006.

## 5. MCAS Outcomes of Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects in General Education

Below we present the MCAS outcomes for the BPS 4th, 8th, and 10th graders, for students in EL programs, and for native speakers of Chinese dialects in General Education during the period of observation. It is important to note that we do not present results in AY2005 for students in EL programs because the small number of test-takers in that year makes the results unreliable.

**5A. Fourth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** Among all BPS students, fourth grade MCAS pass rates in ELA remained relatively stable through the period, rising slightly in the middle years and declining to close to the baseline value by AY2006. Pass rates among students in General Education programs followed a similar trend. By contrast, pass rates in MCAS Math improved for both groups, rising over 10 percentage points among BPS students and students in General Education programs. The MCAS pass rates for all native speakers of Chinese dialects and for those in the General Education programs were steady in ELA and increased in Math (see Table 24) and were much higher than the overall student population in BPS and BPS students in General Education programs.

TABLE 24. 4TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	79.3%	76.3%	77.8%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	86.1%	88.8%	86.9%	87.5%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	94.6%	94.1%	92.8%	94.6%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
<b>Students in General Education</b>	65.0%	71.3%	70.0%	76.6%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	89.8%	94.8%	93.4%	93.3%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	93.7%	96.1%	96.0%	94.6%

**5B. Eighth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in Math.** MCAS Math pass rates improved slightly for BPS 8th graders and BPS students in General Education programs (see Table 25). Similar to the 4th grade native speakers of Chinese dialects, their 8th grade peers' MCAS Math pass rates were much higher than the overall student population in BPS and BPS students in General Education programs. In AY2003, the 8th grade MCAS Math pass rates for native speakers of Chinese dialects were 91.3%, while the pass rate for the general student population in BPS was only 48.1%. Although the Math pass rate for 8th grade native speakers of Chinese dialects decreased after AY2004, it was still higher than for other students in BPS, whether or not in EL programs.

TABLE 25. 8TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	50.9%	55.1%	53.2%	55.8%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	91.3%	92.0%	91.2%	88.8%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	94.5%	93.3%	91.7%	93.4%

**5C. Tenth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** MCAS ELA pass rates improved significantly among BPS students overall, rising from 66.8% in AY2003 to 77.4% in AY2006. Similarly, the pass rates improved among BPS students in General Education programs, with a pass rate of 85.2% in AY2006. In comparison to the ELA scores, improvements in Math were much more subdued for BPS students overall and for those in General Education programs. Tenth grade native speakers of Chinese dialects, however, continued to perform way above the overall BPS students (and BPS students in General Education programs) throughout the four years. Their ELA pass rates increased while Math remained about the same, except for dips in both pass rates in AY2004.

TABLE 26. 10TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	66.8%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	72.7%	72.3%	73.3%	85.2%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	88.2%	87.2%	91.8%	94.3%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	92.0%	91.7%	94.8%	98.7%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	65.5%	68.7%	61.0%	67.8%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	63.5%	69.5%	62.6%	71.7%
<b>Native Speakers of Chinese Dialects</b>	97.1%	92.1%	96.5%	97.0%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	95.0%	92.7%	96.4%	97.5%

## 6. Summary

In the years of the transition from Transitional Bilingual Education to Sheltered English Immersion in Boston, the numbers of native speakers of Chinese dialects participating in programs for ELs decreased. In contrast, their numbers increased in Special Education programs, particularly among those students in EL programs. In terms of both the engagement indicators and academic outcomes, native speakers of Chinese languages in General Education programs experienced either stability or improvements.

# **Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Haitian Creole Speakers**



## Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Haitian Creole Speakers

COLOR KEY	
	All BPS
	NES
	NSOL
	EP
	LEP
	In General Ed
	In EL Programs

In AY2003, the year of the passage of Question 2, native speakers of Haitian Creole were the second largest group of speakers of a language other than English in the Boston Public Schools. With an enrollment of 2,475, native Haitian Creole made up 3.9% of the total enrollment of the district and 10.7% of the students enrolled in programs for English Learners<sup>7</sup>. In this report we trace the identification of limited English proficiency among native speakers of Haitian Creole from AY2003 to AY2006 and find that their numbers declined. We examine their presence in EL programs in this period and observe that it too declined while the enrollment in Special Education programs rose sharply among this group's English Learners. We compare engagement indicators for native Haitian Creole speakers in EL and General Education programs, including attendance, suspensions, and high school drop-out rates, and we find that native Haitian Creole speakers in EL programs experienced a sharp rise in out-of-school suspensions and grade retentions, leading to the sharpest increase in the drop-out rate of any of the language groups examined in this report. Finally, we examine MCAS pass rates in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades for native Haitian Creole speakers in General Education programs and find improvements in 4th grade Math and 4th and 10th grade ELA pass rates and declines in 8th grade and 10th grade Math pass rates during this period.

### 1. Native Haitian Creole Speakers in the Boston Public Schools

Among Boston's students, native Haitian Creole speakers are part of the trend in declining enrollments; in the four years of observation the enrollment of native Haitian Creole speakers declined by an average of 100 students each year, from 2,475 in AY2003 to 2,139 in AY2006, likely reflecting a slow-down in the pace of Haitian immigration. In the four years observed here, the proportion of native speakers of Haitian Creole declined from 3.9% of BPS enrollments to 3.6%.

TABLE 27. ENROLLMENT OF NATIVE HAITIAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	63,777	61,652	59,608	59,211
<b>Total Enrollment of Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	2,475	2,350	2,225	2,139
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers as a Percentage of Total BPS Enrollment</b>	3.9%	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%

Note: Total enrollments in this table do not match the BPS official enrollments because of exclusions. See Appendix 1.



TABLE 28. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE HAITIAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. AY2006

Selected Characteristics	All BPS	Students in Programs for ELs	Native Haitian Creole Speakers	Native Haitian Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs	Native Haitian Creole Speakers in General Education
Enrollment	59,211	8,847	2,139 <sup>1</sup>	890	1,151
LEP Designation	16.4%	100%	46.2%	100%	0%
Gender: % male	51.2%	53.4%	49.8%	52.9%	47.7%
Poverty Status: % receiving free or reduced price lunch	74.9%	84.8%	76.6%	76.3%	76.5%

Note: (1) Includes 98 native speakers who opted out of programs for ELs.

TABLE 29. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

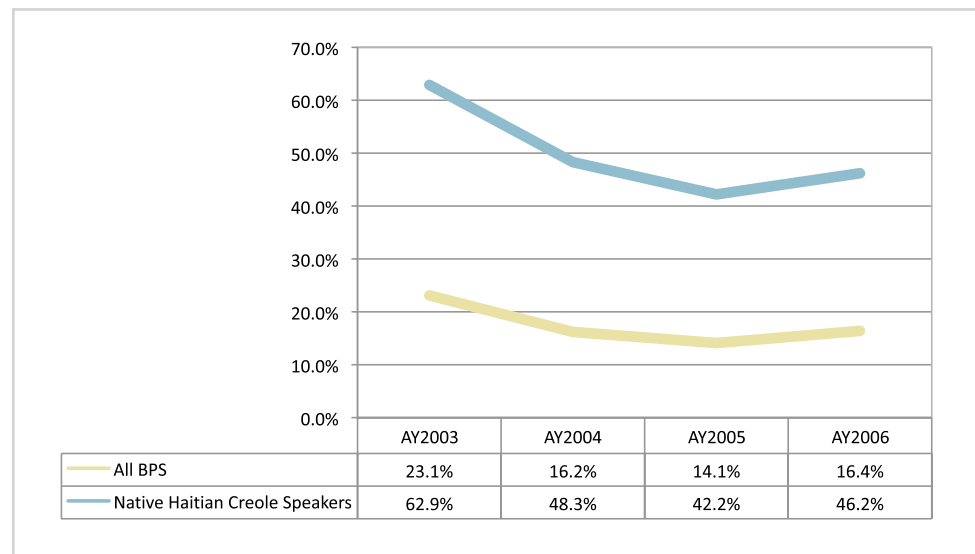
	Elementary	Middle	High
All BPS	43.1%	22.9%	34.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	58.5%	13.6%	27.9%
Native Haitian Creole Speakers	30.4%	20.2%	49.5%

Among all students who are native speakers of Haitian Creole, females slightly outnumbered males. This changes when one focuses on those students in programs for ELs, where males outnumbered females, a pattern similar to what we find among the overall BPS enrollment and among all ELs. Among native Haitian Creole speakers, 76.6% were receiving free or reduced price lunch, which is a proxy for poverty status since income at this level is a criterion for acceptance into this school program<sup>8</sup>. The proportion of students fitting this description was higher among Haitian Creole speakers in General Education than those in programs for ELs – a reversal of the pattern observed among the overall BPS population, where students in EL programs showed a higher rate of participation in this program. Finally, examining enrollment by grade level (Table 29), the highest number of native Haitian Creole speakers (49.5%) were found at the higher grades; this too is a reversal from the BPS pattern, where only 34.0% of all BPS enrollments were in the high school grades.

## 2. Identification of Limited English Proficiency among Native Haitian Creole Speakers

Nearly two-thirds of all native Haitian Creole speakers (62.9%) were designated as students of limited English proficiency in AY2003, a decline of 36.6% from AY2006 (Tables 28 and 30). One of the findings of this study of English Learners in Boston is that there was an overall decline in the number of students identified as of limited English proficiency after the implementation of the changes required by Question 2. Figure 5 shows the decline in the proportion of students designated as LEPs among all BPS students and the much sharper decline observed among native speakers of Haitian Creole. Both groups experienced a recovery in the last year of our observation (AY2006), but neither group reached the high number of designations observed in the baseline year (AY2003).

FIGURE 5. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP STUDENTS. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BPS AND OF NATIVE HAITIAN CREOLE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



The identification of LEPs in the general BPS population decreased in the first two years after the implementation of Question 2, with a small recovery in the final year of the study. Even after the small recovery in AY2006, the whole period still showed a decrease of 32.2% from the baseline of AY2003. The percentage decrease in identification experienced by native Haitian Creole speakers in AY2004 and AY2005 was slightly lower than that experienced by the overall district, but the recovery for this group of students, a decrease of 36.6%, was not as strong (Table 30).

TABLE 30. RATE OF CHANGE IN THE DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students Designated as LEP</b>	-31.8%	-42.6%	-32.2%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers Designated as LEP</b>	-27.2%	-39.8%	-36.6%

### 3. Program Participation by Native Haitian Creole Speakers

This section presents findings on the participation of native Haitian Creole speakers in programs for English Learners and Special Education (SPED) programs. The data indicate that across time, participation in both programs increased sharply.

**3A. Participation in Programs for English Learners.** The participation in EL programs by native speakers of Haitian Creole decreased in the first two years of the implementation of Question 2 (AY2004 and AY2005) and then increased sharply in the last year of observation. Overall, native speakers of Haitian Creole experienced a 16.1% decrease in their enrollment in EL programs over this period (Table 31). This trend is similar to that observed among the overall BPS population. In contrast, among native speakers of Haitian Creole whose proficiency in English is limited (LEPs) there was a slight decline in AY2004 followed by subsequent increases. The enrollment of Haitian Creole speaking LEPs reached 90.1% in AY2006, far above the baseline 66.9% found in AY2003.

FIGURE 6. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

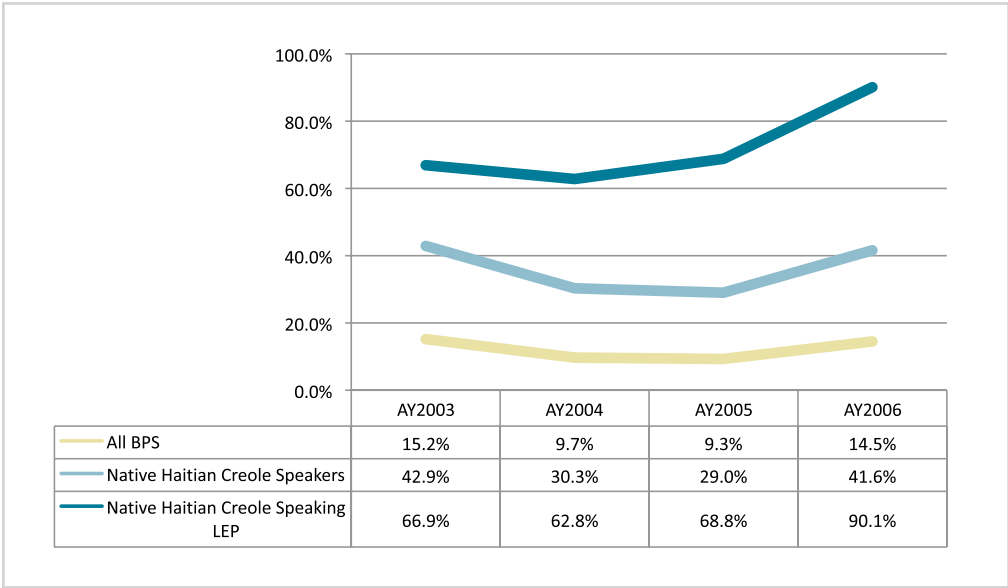


TABLE 31. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
Students in Programs for ELs	-39.3%	-43.9%	-10.7%
Native Haitian Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs	-32.9%	-39.2%	-16.1%
Native Haitian Creole Speaking LEPs in Programs for ELs	-31.7%	-38.2%	-14.7%

**3B. Participation in Special Education Programs.** For all BPS students, the period between AY2003 and AY2006 was relatively stable in terms of enrollments in Special Education (SPED) programs (Table 32). There were slight changes in the enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion programs (a decrease) and in substantially separate programs (an increase) during that period (Table 32). For students in EL programs, the pattern was different: this period showed a rise from 6.6% to 9.2% in enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs and an even sharper rise – from 4.8% to 10.9% – in substantially separate Special Education programs.

Among Haitian native speakers in General Education programs, we see a modest fluctuation in the enrollment in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs. Enrollment in the substantially separate Special Education programs, by contrast, experienced much greater mobility: a sharp rise in AY2004 and AY2005 and an equally sharp decline in AY2006, leaving the rate of participation close to what it was in the baseline year.

We observe a different behavior in the enrollments of native speakers of Haitian Creole in programs for ELs. In this case, enrollments in substantially separate programs are larger than those in Full or Partial Inclusion programs across all years, the opposite of the pattern for all other sub-groups of BPS students observed here. Enrollments of native speakers of Haitian Creole increased in both Full or Partial Inclusion and substantially separate programs across the time observed, and this increase was particularly salient in substantially separate programs, where the rate more than quadrupled between AY2003 and AY2006.

TABLE 32. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	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>Students 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%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers in General Education Programs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	7.6%	6.4%	6.6%	6.3%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	4.4%	7.2%	7.3%	4.4%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	1.5%	1.1%	1.7%	4.7%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	2.0%	2.2%	2.9%	8.7%

#### 4. The Engagement of Native Haitian Creole Speakers in Schooling

Maintaining students' attachment to schools and schooling is one of the key challenges of educators, parents, and communities. We explore in this section key indicators of attachment: attendance, out-of-school suspensions, grade retention, and the annual drop-out rate.

**4A. Attendance.** The attendance rate of BPS students was unchanged during the period under study; across the 4 years, the attendance rate for BPS students was 95%. Students in EL programs showed a decline in the rate of attendance across the period – from 96.2% to 95.6% – but their attendance rate was still higher than those of the general BPS population (Table 33).

TABLE 33. MEDIAN ATTENDANCE RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	96.2%	96.1%	95.8%	95.6%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	97.8%	97.8%	97.5%	97.8%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	96.7%	96.7%	96.7%	96.7%

Among both groups of native Haitian Creole speakers – those in General Education and those in programs for ELs – the attendance rate was higher than among all BPS students and among students in EL programs. The rates among native Haitian Creole speakers in EL programs and General Education programs were sustained during the four-year observation period (Table 7).

**4B. Out-of-School Suspensions.** The rate of out-of-school suspensions for all BPS students and for students in EL programs declined during the period of observation. However, suspensions of native Haitian Creole speakers in EL programs increased for two consecutive years, from 4.3% in AY2003 to 6.2% in AY2005. Although there was an improvement in AY2006, the rate of out-of-school suspensions stayed well above the AY2003 baseline. Suspension rates also increased for native speakers of Haitian Creole in General Education, from 6.7% in AY2003 to 8.4% in AY2006. Among this group, in AY2006, suspension rates were found to be higher than for the overall BPS population.

TABLE 34. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
Students in Programs for ELs	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%
Native Haitian Creole Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	4.3%	4.6%	6.2%	5.2%
In General Education Programs	6.7%	6.4%	6.5%	8.4%

**4C. Grade Retention.** The rate of grade retention for BPS students increased slightly during the four years under study (Table 35). This rate, though relatively stable, was more than three times that of the state as whole, where grade retention through these years averaged 2.6% (MDOE, 2006). Grade retention among students in EL programs was even higher, across all the years. Their rate increased over the period, from 8.6% retained in AY2004 (same grade as in AY2003) to 13.1% in 2006 (same grade as in AY2005).

In this indicator, native Haitian Creole speakers in programs for ELs show higher rates than their counterparts in General Education programs as well as the overall rates for BPS students and for students enrolled in EL programs. Native speakers of Haitian Creole also show among the top rates of retention when compared to students from other language groups considered here (Appendix 4, Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The rate of retention for native Haitian Creole speakers declined very slightly among students in General Education but almost doubled among students in EL programs.

TABLE 35. GRADE RETENTION. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
Students in Programs for ELs	8.6%	10.2%	13.1%
Native Haitian Creole Speakers			
In Programs for ELs	10.6%	12.3%	20.3%
In General Education Programs	7.3%	7.6%	7.2%

**4D. Annual High School Drop-Out Rates.** Among the most salient findings of this study of English Learners in Boston is the impact of post-Question 2 changes on the drop-out rate of students in EL programs and on the grades in which school desertion is taking place. With the data available, we are able to trace an increase in the drop-out rate across the four years of study for BPS language groups.

Table 36 presents the annual high school drop-out rate for several BPS sub-groups. All groups experienced increases, particularly in the first year after the implementation of the program changes demanded by Question 2; in all cases there was a recovery in the third year and another increase at the end of the period. In all cases, the drop-out rate in AY2006 was higher than that of AY2003. The sharpest rise takes place among Native Haitian Creole speakers in programs for English Learners, where the rate tripled in the four years from 3.6% to 10.6%.

In the baseline AY2003, native speakers of Haitian Creole showed drop-out rates that were relatively quite low. Immediately following the implementation of Question 2, the drop-out rate doubled among Haitian students in EL programs; then it rose again in the following year: in AY2004, Haitian students in EL programs had the highest drop-out rate of all subgroups noted in Table 36 as well as of all language groups noted here. In AY2005, the drop-out rate of Haitian students in EL programs continued to rise, but by then the rate was also rising rapidly among other groups (Table 36). By the end of the observation period (AY2006) drop-out rates for Haitian students in EL programs stood at 10.6%, almost triple their numbers in AY2003.

*TABLE 36. ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006*

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	8.4%	5.2%	8.1%	10.7%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	3.6%	7.5%	8.6%	10.6%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	4.4%	2.9%	5.6%	7.6%

## 5. MCAS Outcomes of Native Haitian Creole Speakers in General Education

Below we present the MCAS outcomes for Boston’s 4th, 8th, and 10th graders, for all students in EL programs, and for native Cape Verdean Creole speakers in General Education. The MCAS results for language subgroups (other than Spanish speakers) in EL programs are not reliable because of the small number of test-takers during the period of observation. We present scores for students of different language groups in General Education since this information is usually not available. The “All Native Haitian Creole Speakers” category includes students both in General Education and in programs for ELs.

**5A. Fourth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** Among all BPS students, fourth grade MCAS pass rates in ELA remained relatively stable through the period, rising slightly in the middle years and declining to close to the baseline value by AY2006. Pass rates among students in General Education programs followed a similar trend. By contrast, pass rates in MCAS Math improved for both groups, rising over 10 percentage points among BPS students and students in General Education programs.

The pass rates for 4th graders who are native speakers of Haitian Creole improved in both ELA and Math in the years following the implementation of Question 2. Those in General Education improved by more than 10.3 percentage points in ELA and 22.6 percentage points in Math between AY2003 and AY2006.

TABLE 37. 4TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	79.3%	76.3%	77.8%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	72.6%	78.8%	72.5%	76.7%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	82.4%	80.0%	77.0%	92.7%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	65.0%	71.3%	70.0%	76.6%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	60.7%	71.8%	61.8%	69.2%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	60.3%	70.9%	66.7%	82.9%

**5B. Eighth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in Math.** MCAS Math pass rates improved slightly for BPS 8th graders and BPS students in General Education programs. Throughout the period, pass rates for native Haitian Creole speakers were substantially lower than for BPS 8th grade students overall. Among native Haitian Creole speakers in General Education, scores declined in the first two years of the implementation of the new programs; they recovered by AY2006, but still remained slightly below the baseline value (Table 38). Also noteworthy is the fact that in AY2003, the Math pass rate among native speakers of Haitian Creole in General Education was higher than that of the overall BPS population; that pattern reversed in AY2004, the first year of implementation of Question 2, and the negative trend continued for the rest of the observation period.

TABLE 38. 8TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	50.9%	55.1%	53.2%	55.8%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	39.7%	44.2%	43.6%	41.1%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	50.0%	50.7%	47.2%	48.7%

**5C. Tenth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** MCAS ELA pass rates improved significantly among BPS students overall, rising from 66.8% in AY2003 to 77.4% in AY2006. Similarly, the pass rates improved among BPS students in General Education programs, with a pass rate of 85.2% in AY2006. In comparison to the ELA scores, improvements in Math were much more subdued for BPS students overall and for those in General Education programs.

Among all native Haitian Creole speakers, ELA pass rates declined after the implementation of Question 2, but these recovered by AY2006, improving slightly over AY2003 baseline values. The improvement in ELA pass rates is larger for native Haitian Creole speakers in General Education programs (9.7 percentage points between AY2003 and AY2006) than for all native speakers of Haitian Creole (3.1 percentage points in the same period). In Math, both groups of native speakers of Haitian Creole experienced a sharp decline in pass rates over the four years of observation. Pass rates declined more than 20 percentage points among all native Haitian Creole speakers and 15 percentage points among those in General Education.

TABLE 39. 10TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	66.8%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	72.7%	72.3%	73.3%	85.2%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	56.3%	47.3%	49.0%	59.4%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	64.8%	66.8%	87.2%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	65.5%	68.7%	61.0%	67.8%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	63.5%	69.5%	62.6%	71.7%
<b>Native Haitian Creole Speakers</b>	77.5%	72.4%	47.9%	54.4%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	83.0%	75.0%	59.5%	67.9%

## 6. Summary

The programmatic shift that accompanied the implementation of Question 2 in Boston had several effects on the experience of Native Haitian Creole speakers, especially those in programs for ELs. For example, there were declines in the identification of students with limited English proficiency and therefore declining enrollments in programs for ELs. These recovered, but never reached the values found in the baseline year of AY2003. There was a worrisome increase in the participation of EL students from this group in Special Education programs, particularly the substantially separate ones. Suspensions and grade retention increased and, with them, the drop-out rate – which rose rather dramatically among this group of students. And although we observed improvements in MCAS pass rates, particularly in the 4th grade, there were serious declines in Math pass rates in both 8th and 10th grade.



## **Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Spanish Speakers**



## Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Spanish Speakers

COLOR KEY	
	All BPS
	NES
	NSOL
	EP
	LEP
	In General Ed
	In EL Programs

This particular report focuses on English Learners whose native language is Spanish. In AY2003, the year of the passage of Question 2, native Spanish speakers in the Boston Public Schools were a majority, both of students with limited English proficiency (56.7%) and students in programs for English Learners (60.8%). The impact of the changes imposed by Question 2 on this language group was profound. Because native Spanish speakers made up 20.3% of all students in BPS, the changes in this group also affected the overall outcomes for the district during this period.

In this report we highlight the identification of limited English proficiency among native speakers of Spanish and their enrollment in programs for English Learners (ELs) and find that both suffered substantial declines. Throughout the report, we compare native Spanish speakers in EL and General Education programs. We analyze the changes in key engagement and outcome variables, including attendance, suspensions, and drop-out rates, and we find that native Spanish speakers, particularly those in programs for ELs, experienced a very significant increase in their drop-out rate. In examining MCAS results in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades, we find some improvements in outcomes; but when we compare native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs with their counterparts in the General Education program and with English speakers in general programs, we find a widening gap.

### 1. Native Spanish Speaking Students in the Boston Public Schools

Enrollment in Boston Public Schools declined by 7.2% during the period covered by this report. The decrease in native Spanish speaking students was much smaller, with the result that their proportion of the total enrollment climbed from 20.3% to 21.7%. Native Spanish speakers comprise the largest cohort of native speakers of a language other than English in BPS. Native Spanish speakers were the largest cohort, both of students of limited English proficiency (LEP) and of students in programs for English Learners (ELs), throughout the period of observation. By 2006, they accounted for 55.9% of all BPS students designated as having limited English proficiency in BPS and for 57.2% of all students enrolled in programs for ELs.

TABLE 40. ENROLLMENT OF NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	63,777	61,652	59,608	59,211
<b>Total Enrollment of Native Spanish Speakers</b>	12,974	12,696	12,490	12,575
<b>Native Spanish Speakers as a Percentage of Total BPS Enrollment</b>	20.3%	20.6%	20.9%	21.7%

Note: Total enrollments in this table do not match the BPS official enrollments because of exclusions. See Appendix 1.

TABLE 41. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS, AY2006

Selected Characteristics	All BPS	Students in Programs for ELs	Native Spanish Speakers	Native Spanish Speakers in Programs for ELs	Native Spanish Speakers in General Education
Enrollment	59,211	8,847	12,575 <sup>1</sup>	5,068	6,984
LEP Designation	16.4%	100%	44.4%	100%	0%
Gender: % male	51.2%	53.4%	51.1%	53.0%	49.5%
Poverty Status: % receiving free or reduced price lunch	74.9%	84.8%	86.4%	87.7%	85.4%

Note: (1) Includes 523 native speakers who opted out of programs for ELs.

TABLE 42. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

	Elementary	Middle	High
All BPS	43.1%	22.9%	34.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	58.5%	13.6%	27.9%
Native Spanish Speakers	41.8%	24.3%	33.9%

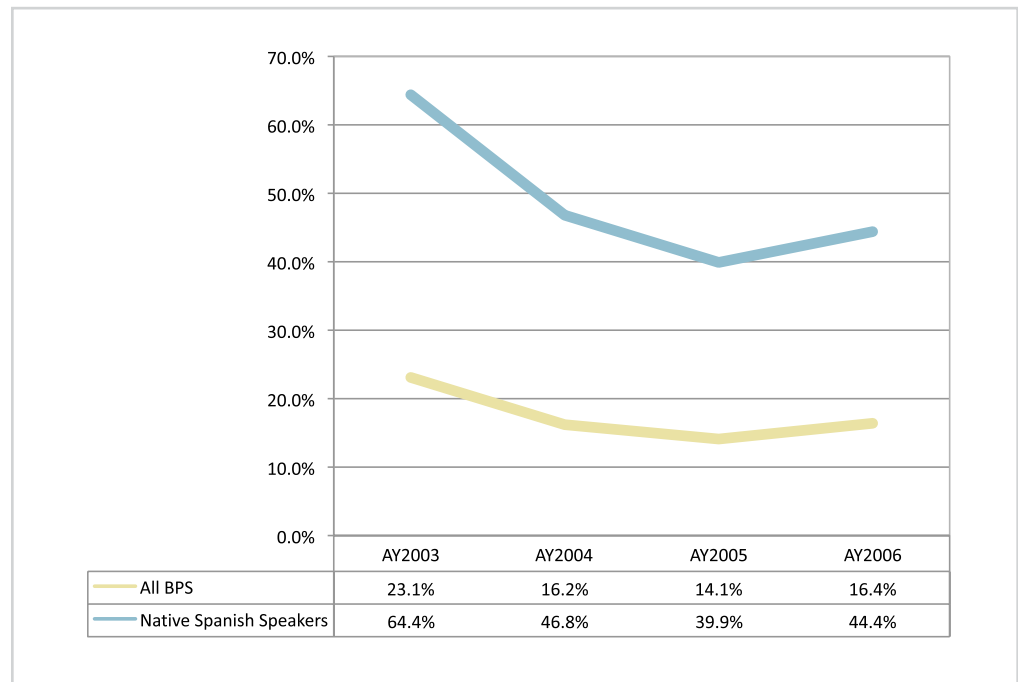
Native Spanish speakers also accounted for the bulk of those children in BPS who defined themselves as “Latino” in terms of race/ethnicity in 2006: 63.9% of all Latino students in the General Education program and 92.4% of those enrolled in programs for ELs were native Spanish speakers. In 2006, there were 12,575 native Spanish speakers enrolled in Boston Public Schools. Of these, 5,588 (or 44.4%) were designated as students of limited English proficiency and 40.3% were enrolled in a program for English Learners in BPS (Table 41).

Demographically, native Spanish speakers as a group showed both similarities and differences with the overall BPS population (Table 41). They were similar in terms of gender distribution, with just over 51% of both groups being males. In contrast, they were a much higher proportion of students receiving free or reduced price lunch, a proxy for poverty status since income at this level is a criterion for acceptance into this school program<sup>9</sup>. Within the group of native Spanish speakers, those attending programs for English Learners show both a larger proportion of male students (as was the case among all enrolled in programs for ELs) and a higher proportion of poor students than the group of Spanish speakers attending General Education programs. Finally, native Spanish speakers mirror the grade distribution of the overall BPS population, with slight differences: they show smaller proportions of students in elementary and high schools and a slightly higher proportion in middle schools (Table 42).

## 2. Identification of Limited English Proficiency among Native Spanish Speakers

One of the findings of this study of English Learners in Boston is that there was an overall decline in the numbers of students identified as of limited English proficiency after the implementation of the changes required by Question 2. The total number of BPS students designated as LEPs moved from a high of 14,720 students in AY2003 to a low of 8,413 in AY2005, then underwent a modest recovery to 9,726 students in AY2006. The percentage of total BPS enrollment that these students represented also declined, from a high of 23.1% to a low of 14.1% by AY2005 and a recovery 16.4% in AY2006 (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP STUDENTS. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BPS AND OF NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



This pattern repeats itself more clearly among native Spanish speakers, 64.4% of whom (8,350 students) were identified as LEPs in AY2003. Both numbers and percentages tumbled in the next two years, reaching 4,980 in AY2005 when only 39.9% of the native Spanish speakers were identified as LEPs. As happened in the previous example, there was a small recovery in AY2006.

TABLE 43. RATE OF CHANGE IN THE DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students Designated as LEP</b>	-31.8%	-42.6%	-32.2%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers Designated as LEP</b>	-28.8%	-40.4%	-33.1%

In order to better describe the decline in identification of students of limited English proficiency through time, we calculated the rate of change in identification between AY2003 and each successive year. Table 43 shows the rates of change in identification, both of all LEPs and of native Spanish speaking LEPs. The identification of LEPs in the general BPS population decreased by 31.8% in the first year after the implementation of Question 2; by 2005, BPS showed 42.6% fewer students of limited English proficiency than in the baseline year. Even after a small recovery in AY2006, the whole period still showed a decrease of 33.2% from the baseline of AY2003. Among native Spanish speakers, the decrease in identification in AY2004 and 2005 was slightly less than that experienced by the overall district, but the recovery for this group of students was not as strong, so that the net decrease from the baseline year was 33.1%. It is important to note that during this same period the number of native Spanish speakers in BPS decreased by only 3.1%.

### 3. Program Participation by Native Spanish Speakers

This section presents findings on the participation of native Spanish speakers in programs for English Learners and in Special Education programs. The data indicate that across time, participation in programs for ELs decreased, although it recuperated partially in the last year of observation. Meanwhile, the participation in Special Education, especially in substantially separate programs, increased.

**3A. Participation in Programs for English Learners.** Throughout the period under study, native Spanish speakers comprised the largest cohort of students enrolled in programs for English Learners; about 60% of all the students in EL programs were from this group<sup>10</sup>. Analysis conducted for this study shows that in spite of the apparent stability of this proportion over time, there were declines in the percentage of native Spanish speakers and native Spanish speaking LEPs who were referred to and enrolled in these programs.

FIGURE 8. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

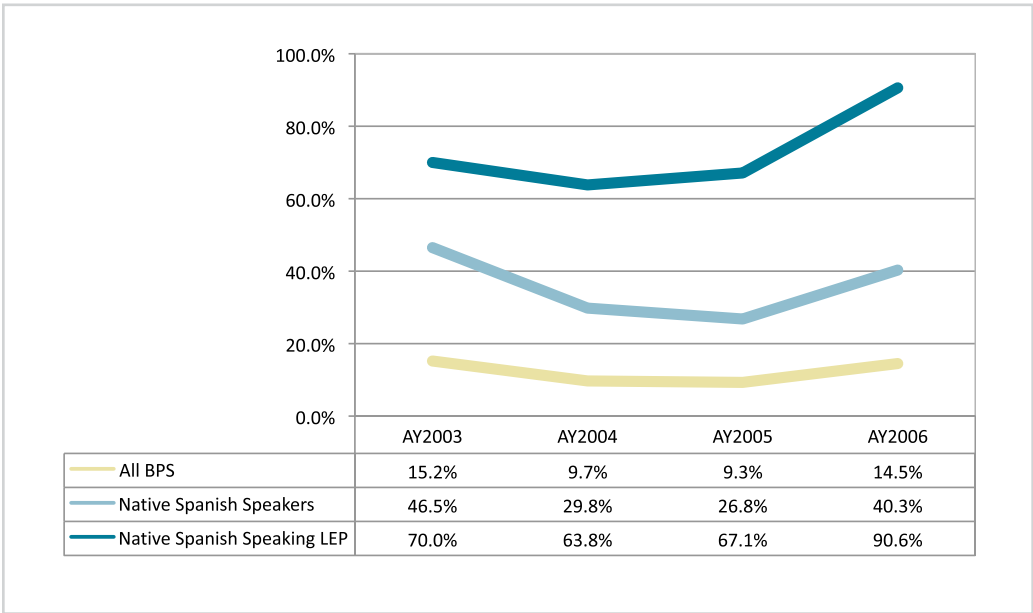


TABLE 44. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	-39.3%	-43.9%	-10.7%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>	-37.1%	-44.5%	-15.9%
<b>Native Spanish Speaking LEPs in Programs for ELs</b>	-35.25	-42.8%	-13.4%

In AY2003, almost ten thousand BPS students (9,912, or 15.2% of the total enrollment) participated in programs for English Learners in BPS (Figure 8). This number was reduced by almost 40% (to 6,013) in the first year after the implementation of SEI, dropping lower in AY2005 and increasing to almost its original size in AY2006. Native Spanish speakers and native Spanish speaking LEPs also experienced a strong decline in enrollments in programs for ELs in the two years following the implementation of program changes due to Question 2. By AY2006 all had experienced some recovery. In the case of the native Spanish speaking LEPs, the proportion enrolled in programs for ELs in AY2006 surpassed the pre-Question 2 values and stood at 90.6%.

This pattern is similar to the one observed in the identification of LEPs: a swift decline in the first two years after the implementation of SEI with a slight recovery in the last year of observation. In this case, the difference between the starting and the ending rate of participation was smaller. Table 44 shows the percentage change over time for the participation in EL programs for BPS students overall and for native Spanish speakers. At the end of the period, after experiencing the fourth-year recovery, there was a decline of 10.7% in the proportion of BPS students in programs for ELs in comparison to AY2003. There was a greater decline of 15.9% in the proportion of native Spanish speakers enrolled in these programs in comparison to those enrolled in AY2003 (Table 44).

**3B. Participation in Special Education Programs.** For BPS students overall, the period from AY2003 to AY2006 was relatively stable in terms of enrollments in Special Education (SPED) programs. However, there was a decrease in those enrolled in Full or Partial Inclusion programs and a higher enrollment in substantially separate programs in that period (Table 45). The same was true among native Spanish speakers in General Education programs, where there was a slight decline in their presence in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs. But for students in programs for ELs – both the overall EL student population and those who are native Spanish speakers – the patterns were very different. For all BPS students in programs for ELs, this period showed a rise from 6.6% to 9.2% of enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs and an even sharper rise – from 4.8% to 10.9% – in the enrollments in substantially separate programs. A strikingly similar pattern and spread showed in the analysis of Special Education participation among native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs between AY2003 and AY2006.

TABLE 45. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>				
Full or Partial Inclusion	10.5%	9.8%	10.4%	10.4%
Substantially Separate	7.9%	8.6%	8.7%	8.8%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>				
Full or Partial Inclusion	6.6%	5.8%	6.2%	9.2%
Substantially Separate	4.8%	6.7%	6.8%	10.9%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers in General Education Programs</b>				
Full or Partial Inclusion	11.7%	11.0%	11.1%	9.7%
Substantially Separate	5.2%	8.2%	8.4%	5.4%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>				
Full or Partial Inclusion	8.4%	7.3%	7.7%	10.8%
Substantially Separate	6.4%	8.6%	8.9%	12.7%

#### 4. The Engagement of Native Spanish Speakers in Schooling

Maintaining students' attachment to schools and schooling is one of the key challenges of educators, parents, and communities. We explore in this section four key indicators of attachment: attendance, out-of-school suspensions, grade retention, and the annual drop-out rate. These variables are key risk factors of dropping out, one of the main challenges facing BPS. Higher drop-out rates and younger dropouts are two of the key findings of this study of the effects of the implementation of Question 2 on student outcomes.

**4A. Attendance.** The attendance rate of BPS students was unchanged during the period under study: across the four years, the attendance rate for BPS students was 95%. Students in programs for ELs showed a decline in the rate of attendance across the period – from 96.2% to 95.6%. Still, the rates for EL students were slightly higher than those of the general BPS population (Table 46).

TABLE 46. MEDIAN ATTENDANCE RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	96.2%	96.1%	95.8%	95.6%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
In Programs for ELs	95.6%	95.0%	95.0%	94.4%
In General Education Programs	94.4%	94.4%	93.9%	93.3%

Among native Spanish speakers, the attendance rate was lower than those of the BPS and EL program populations. This is particularly the case among native Spanish speakers in General Education programs. During the study period, attendance rates declined for both groups of native Spanish speakers, though the decline was slightly higher for those in programs for ELs.

**4B. Out-of-School Suspensions.** The rate of out-of-school suspensions for BPS students overall declined during the period of observation. That was true as well for students in the programs for ELs, including the native Spanish speakers (Table 47). Among native Spanish speakers, the out-of-school suspension rates of those students in General Education programs showed more change, rising from 6.4% to 7.2% in the period under study. By the end of the period, native Spanish speakers in General Education programs had an out-of-school suspension rate that was double the rate for students in programs for ELs.

TABLE 47. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.6%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	6.4%	7.2%	6.9%	7.2%

**4C. Grade Retention.** The rate of grade retention for BPS students increased slightly during the four years under study (Table 48). This rate, though relatively stable, was more than three times that of the state as whole, where grade retention through these years averaged 2.6% students in the General Education program and for those in programs for ELs, increased during this (MDOE, 2006). Grade retention among students in programs for ELs was even higher, and it increased notably over the period: from 8.6% percent retained in 2004 (same grade as in 2003) to 13.1% in 2006 (same grade as in 2005). Among native Spanish speakers, the rate of retention, both for period. Rates for students in EL programs were lower than for those in General Education programs in the baseline year, but the reverse was true in the latter two years.

TABLE 48. GRADE RETENTION. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	8.6%	10.2%	13.1%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>			
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	8.0%	10.0%	12.2%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	8.2%	9.7%	9.3%



**4D. Annual Drop-Out Rates.** Some of the most salient findings of this study of English Learners in Boston concern the impact of the programmatic changes on the drop-out rate of students in programs for ELs, and especially on the grades in which this school desertion takes place. Table 10 presents the dimensions of the increase in the high school and middle school drop-out rates across the four years of observation and across all BPS sub-groups included in this report. Focusing first on the high school drop-out rates, we observe that the overall rate declined in the year of the initiation of changes mandated by Question 2 (AY2004), then rose again. By AY2006, all groups experienced higher drop-out rates than in the baseline year of AY2003. In the case of students in programs for English Learners, these increases were substantial: the rate for students in programs for ELs nearly doubled in the four-year period. The comparison of the high school drop-out rates of native Spanish speakers in General Education programs and programs for ELs shows a rise in the rate for both, but a much stronger increase among students in EL programs. These students experienced the highest drop-out rate (14%) of any sub-group during the study period. It is also noteworthy that in the baseline year, the rates for students in EL programs were lower than those in General Education (both the overall population and Spanish speakers). This was reversed in the years following the implementation of SEI and has been sustained ever since.

In addition to the increase in the high school drop-out rate, this period was also marked by the increased incidence of dropping out among younger students. Table 49 also presents the drop-out rates for different groups of students in middle school. Among all BPS students in middle school, the annual drop-out rate rose sharply in AY2005, declining by the end of the period. Still, the dropout rate for BPS middle schoolers more than doubled in the period. Among students in programs for ELs, the rise in the drop-out rate was much sharper: it more than tripled in the period, from a negligible 0.8% in AY2003 to 2.6% in AY2006. For native Spanish speakers in middle school EL programs the rate nearly tripled and for native Spanish speakers in middle school General Education programs it quadrupled.

TABLE 49. ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATES. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>High School</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	8.4%	5.2%	8.1%	10.7%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	7.3%	4.4%	10.3%	14.0%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	9.5%	5.2%	8.4%	11.4%
<b>Middle School</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	1.1%	0.4%	4.0%	2.6%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	1.1%	0.4%	4.0%	2.6%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	0.8%	0.3%	2.7%	2.6%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	1.2%	0.5%	3.5%	3.4%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	0.7%	0.6%	4.4%	2.8%

## 5. MCAS Outcomes of Native Spanish Speakers in General Education and in Programs for English Learners

Below we present the MCAS outcomes for Boston's 4th, 8th, and 10th graders, for students in EL programs, and for native Spanish speakers in General Education and in programs for ELs during the period of observation. We do not present results in AY2005 for students in EL programs because the small number of test-takers in that year makes the results unreliable.

**5A. Fourth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** Fourth grade MCAS pass rates in ELA for BPS students remained relatively stable through the period, rising in AY2004 and declining to close to the baseline value by AY2006. The same was true of the pass rate for BPS students in programs for ELs. By contrast, pass rates in MCAS Math improved for both groups, rising over 10 percentage points among BPS students and over 5 percentage points among students in EL programs.

The comparison of pass rates for native Spanish speakers in the General Education programs and in programs for ELs shows that native Spanish speakers in general programs performed substantially better across all years, including the baseline, in both ELA and Math. Observing pass rates across time, native Spanish speakers in General Education substantially improved their scores in both Math and in ELA from AY2003 to AY2006. Among native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs, there was a slight improvement in Math and a slight decline in ELA scores across time (Table 50).

TABLE 50. 4TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005 <sup>1</sup>	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	79.3%	76.3%	77.8%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	56.8%	57.1%	NA	56.9%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	54.9%	55.7%	NA	52.1%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	82.0%	79.0%	73.7%	86.6%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	65.0%	71.3%	70.0%	76.6%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	57.3%	57.6%	NA	63.0%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	53.0%	50.8%	NA	55.8%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	67.4%	73.5%	70.5%	86.6%

Note: (1) In AY2005, MCAS tests results for language groups are not reliable because a small number of LEP students took the test. Fewer test-takers together with reporting restrictions make this data unreliable.

**5B. Eighth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in Math.** MCAS Math pass rates improved for BPS 8th graders and remained about the same for students in EL programs. Throughout the period, pass rates for EL students were substantially lower than for the all BPS 8th grade students. As was the case among 4th graders, the comparison of rates for native Spanish speakers in the general program and in programs for ELs shows that native Spanish speakers in

general programs performed substantially better across all years, including the baseline, in 8th grade Math. The observation of pass rates across time shows that native Spanish speakers in General Education improved their scores in Math from AY2003 to AY2006; among native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs, there was a sharp decline in Math scores during this same period (Table 51).

TABLE 51. 8TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005 <sup>1</sup>	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	50.9%	55.1%	53.2%	55.8%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	33.1%	31.7%	NA	33.4%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	27.4%	23.8%	NA	16.5%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	48.7%	50.8%	46.7%	54.5%

Note: (1) In AY2005, MCAS tests results for language groups are not reliable because a small number of LEP students took the test. Fewer test-takers together with reporting restrictions make this data unreliable.

**5C. Tenth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** MCAS ELA pass rates improved significantly among BPS students, rising from 66.8% in AY2003 to 77.4% in AY2006. This was not the case among students in EL programs, among whom scores declined sharply in the first year of the implementation of new programs, rising again in the last year but remaining below the baseline values.

TABLE 52. 10TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005 <sup>1</sup>	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	66.8%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	72.7%	72.3%	73.3%	85.2%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	45.1%	26.2%	34.8%	43.2%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	39.0%	24.5%	NA	40.9%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	70.2%	66.2%	66.8%	85.3%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	65.5%	68.7%	61.0%	67.8%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	63.5%	69.5%	62.6%	71.7%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	69.2%	63.3%	46.8%	45.5%
<b>Native Spanish Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	57.1%	58.0%	NA	39.4%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	67.1%	63.1%	59.9%	71.2%

Note: (1) In AY2005, MCAS tests results for language groups are not reliable because a small number of LEP students took the test. Fewer test-takers together with reporting restrictions make the results unreliable.

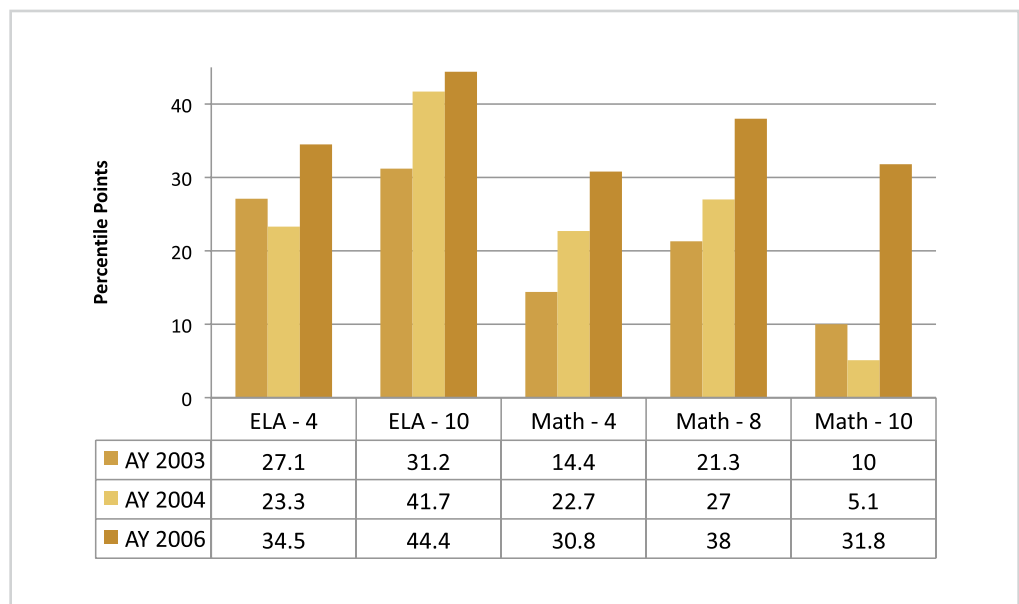
Both patterns are replicated in the results for native Spanish speakers: those in General Education programs show a sharp improvement but those in EL programs suffer a sharp decline in the second year and show a weak improvement over baseline values in the fourth year.

In comparison to the ELA scores, improvements in Math are much more subdued, both for all BPS students and for native Spanish speakers in General Education programs. Among ELs, the decline in MCAS pass rates is substantial: a decline of about 24 percentage points in the Math pass rate among the overall EL population and a decline of about 18 percentage points among native Spanish speakers in EL programs.

**5D. Gaps in MCAS Pass Rates.** In this last section of the report we assess the gaps in MCAS pass rates between native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs and two other groups: native Spanish speakers in General Education programs and English speakers in General Education programs. The latter comparison is the most frequent comparison group used to measure the “gap” in achievement of English Learners. In this analysis, the comparison for FY2005 is excluded because of the unreliability of the MCAS test result data among English Learners for that year.

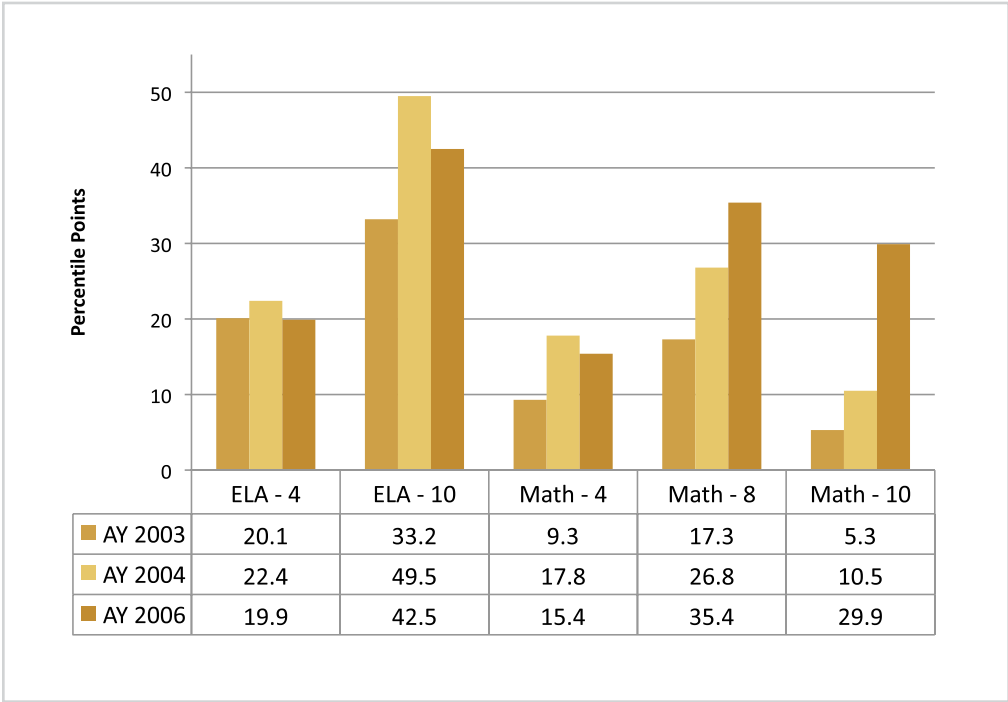
Gaps in MCAS pass rates between native Spanish speakers in the two programs generally hovered between 20 and 40 points across grades in both Math and ELA and increased during the years of observation. The largest gaps appear on 8th grade Math and 10th grade ELA tests. But the most significant increase in the gap in these four years took place among 10th grade Math test-takers; in this case, the gap tripled from 10 points to 31.8 points in the four years.

*FIGURE 9. GAP IN PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH BETWEEN NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS IN EL AND IN GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006*



The gaps in pass rates between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and English speakers in general programs were similarly polarized. They too show a tendency to increase across years, except that the 4th grade ELA gap narrowed in the period. As was the case in the previous comparison, the largest increase in the gap took place among 10th grade Math test-takers. In this case the gap increased from 5.3 points in AY2003 to 29.9 points in AY2006. Measuring the gap in pass rates for 4th, 8th, and 10th grade MCAS test-takers reveals that native Spanish speakers in programs for ELs fared substantially worse than their Spanish- and English-speaking counterparts in General Education programs.

FIGURE 10. GAP IN PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH BETWEEN NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS IN EL PROGRAMS AND ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006



### 6. Summary

The shift from Transitional Bilingual Education to Sheltered English Immersion in Boston does not appear to have benefited native Spanish speaking students in programs for English Learners. Among native Spanish speakers, the most salient effect of the changes in policy and programs following Question 2 can be seen in the worsening of the engagement indicators. The impact on the high school drop-out rate was higher for native Spanish speakers in programs for English Learners than for either their counterparts in General Education programs or the students in programs for ELs from most other language groups. They have also experienced decreased MCAS pass rates, and a wider gap in achievement in relation to both native Spanish speakers and English speakers in General Education programs.



## **Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Vietnamese Speakers**



## Enrollment and Educational Outcomes of Native Vietnamese Speakers

COLOR KEY	
	All BPS
	NES
	NSOL
	EP
	LEP
	In General Ed
	In EL Programs

The following report addresses Vietnamese community leaders and organizations that specifically serve Vietnamese children and families in Boston. More broadly, it addresses educational policy makers, practitioners, and civic leaders who are concerned with the impact of changes demanded by passage of Referendum Question 2 on native Vietnamese speakers and other non-English native language speakers in the Boston Public Schools. The report focuses on students whose native language was reported as Vietnamese during the four-year period from AY2003 through AY2006.

In AY2003 – the year when Question 2 was passed by voters statewide, but before programmatic changes were implemented – there were 1,834 native Vietnamese speakers enrolled in BPS. They comprised the district’s fourth largest non-English language group in BPS. In this report, we provide demographic background information about enrollments of native Vietnamese speakers in General Education as well as in EL programs and in Special Education programs during the four years of available data. We trace the identification of limited English proficiency among native speakers of Vietnamese and analyze their enrollment in programs for English Learners. We compare engagement indicators for native Vietnamese speakers in EL and General Education programs, including attendance, suspensions, and high school drop-out rates. Finally, we examine MCAS pass rates for Math and English Language Arts in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grade for native Vietnamese speakers in general programs during this period.

### 1. Native Vietnamese Speakers in the Boston Public Schools

Among Boston students, native Vietnamese speakers are part of an overall trend of declining enrollments: the number of native Vietnamese speakers declined from 1,834 in AY2003 to 1,478 in AY2006 (Table 53)<sup>11</sup>. Their proportion within BPS enrollments overall also declined, from 2.9% in AY2003 to 2.5% in AY2006.

TABLE 53. ENROLLMENT OF NATIVE VIETNAMESE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	63,777	61,652	59,608	59,211
<b>Total Enrollment of Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	1,834	1,665	1,573	1,478
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers as a Percentage of Total BPS Enrollment</b>	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%

Note: Total enrollments in this table do not match the BPS official enrollments because of exclusions. See Appendix 1.



TABLE 54. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIVE VIETNAMESE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

Selected Characteristics	All BPS	Students in Programs for ELs	Native Vietnamese Speakers	Native Vietnamese Speakers in Programs for ELs	Native Vietnamese Speakers in General Education
Enrollment	59,211	8,847	1,478 <sup>1</sup>	338	1,638
LEP Designation	16.4%	100%	29.8%	100%	0%
Gender: % male	51.2%	53.4%	49.5%	56.9%	46.6%
Poverty Status: % receiving free or reduced price lunch	74.9%	84.8%	84.8%	82.3%	86.3%

Note: (1) Includes 102 native speakers who opted out of programs for ELs.

Demographically, native Vietnamese speakers overall in BPS have a relatively even gender distribution that is 49.5% male and 50.5% female; however, their enrollment in EL or General Education programs differs significantly. In AY2006, for example, native Vietnamese speakers enrolled in EL programs were 56.9% male and only 43.1% female, while native Vietnamese speakers enrolled in general programs were 53.4% female and only 46.6% male (Table 2). Nearly one out of three native Vietnamese speakers (29.8%) were designated as students with limited English proficiency (LEP); this was close to double the percentage of students with limited English proficiency in the overall BPS population (16.9%) (Table 54). Among native Vietnamese speakers, more than four out of five students were receiving free or reduced price lunch, a proxy for poverty status since income at this level is a criterion for acceptance into this school program<sup>12</sup>. This is an even higher percentage of poverty than the rate for BPS students overall (74.9%). Finally, similar to the pattern of BPS student enrollment overall, the percentage of native Vietnamese speakers is highest in elementary school (38.8%), followed by high school (35.2%) and middle school (26%) (Table 55).

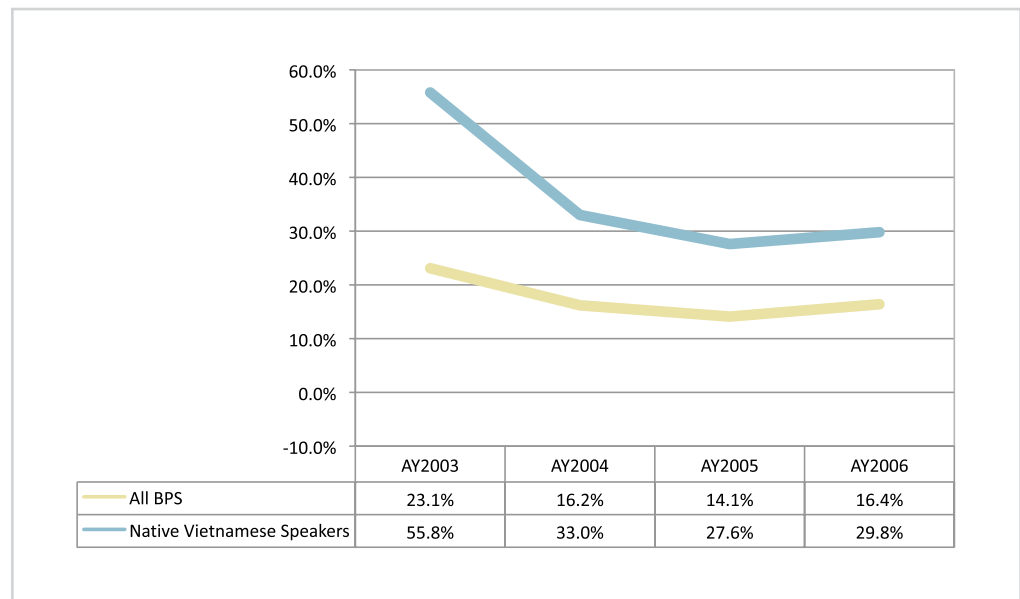
TABLE 55. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2006

	Elementary	Middle	High
All BPS	43.1%	22.9%	34.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	58.5%	13.6%	27.9%
Native Vietnamese Speakers	38.8%	26.0%	35.2%

## 2. Identification of Limited English Proficiency among Native Vietnamese Speakers

One of the key findings from our larger study of English Learners in Boston is that there was an overall decline in the numbers of students for all language groups who were designated as having limited English proficiency (LEP) after the implementation of changes mandated by Question 2. The total number of BPS students designated as LEPs decreased from a high of 14,720 students in AY2003 – the baseline year prior to changes mandated by Question 2 – to a low of 8,413 in AY2005. This number then increased modestly to reach 9,726 students in AY2006, still far below the level prior to Question 2 implementation.

**FIGURE 11. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP STUDENTS. PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BPS AND OF NATIVE VIETNAMESE SPEAKERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006**



**TABLE 56. RATE OF CHANGE IN THE DESIGNATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006**

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>BPS Students Designated as LEP</b>	-31.8%	-42.6%	-32.2%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers Designated as LEP</b>	-46.3%	-57.6%	-56.9%

The percentage share of BPS enrollment that these students represent also declined from a high of 23.1% in AY2003 to a low of 14.1% in AY2005, followed by a slight increase to 16.4% by AY2006 (Figure 11). For native Vietnamese speakers, this pattern is even sharper: 55.8% of native Vietnamese speakers were identified with limited English proficiency in AY2003. This percentage declined to 27.6% by AY2005 and increased only slightly to 29.8% by AY2006.

### 3. Program Participation by Native Vietnamese Speakers

This section presents findings on the participation of native Vietnamese speakers in programs for English Learners and Special Education programs. The data indicate that across time, participation in EL programs mainly decreased during the first two years following changes mandated by Question 2, and with only slight recovery during the third year. At the same time, enrollment of native Vietnamese speakers in Special Education increased, particularly within substantially separate settings.

**3A. Participation in Programs for English Learners.** The general pattern following implementation of changes mandated by Question 2 was a decline in student participation in programs for ELs during AY2004 and AY2005, followed by an increase in AY2006 that was not large enough to surpass the percentage of student participation in EL programs in AY2003 prior to Question 2 implementation.

FIGURE 12. ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

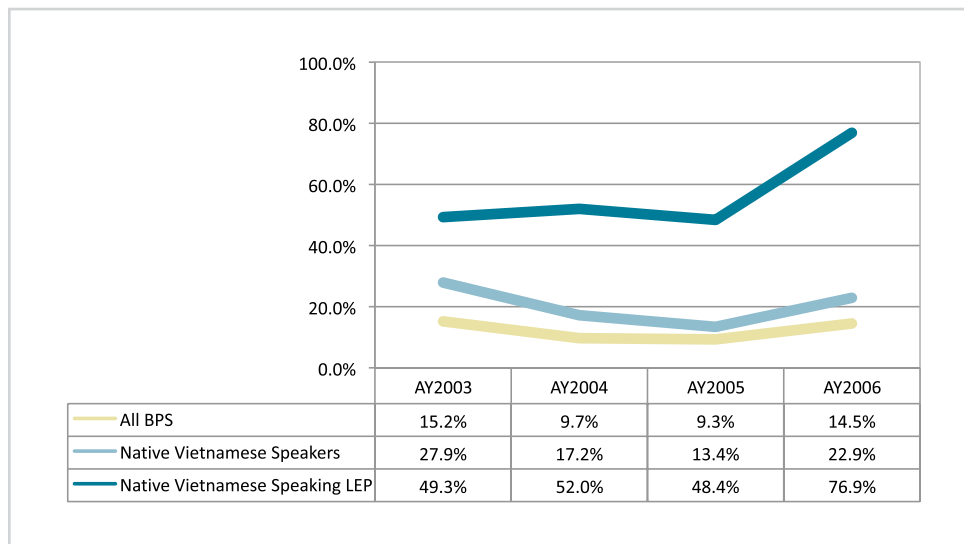


TABLE 57. RATE OF CHANGE IN ENROLLMENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003–2004	AY2003–2005	AY2003–2006
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	-39.3%	-43.9%	-10.7%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>	-44.0%	-58.9%	-33.7%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speaking LEPs in Programs for ELs</b>	-43.4%	-58.4%	-32.9%

For native Vietnamese speakers, while their enrollments were declining overall<sup>13</sup>, the proportion of students in EL programs decreased from 27.9% in AY2003 to 22.9% in AY2006. However, for native Vietnamese speakers designated as having limited English proficiency, there was a sharp increase in enrollment, from 49.3% in AY2003 to 76.9% in AY2006.

**3B. Participation in Special Education Programs.** For BPS students overall, the period between AY2003 and AY2006 was relatively stable in terms of enrollments in Special Education (SPED) programs. There were slight changes in the enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs (a decrease) and in enrollments in substantially separate programs (an increase) during that period (Table 58). For BPS students in EL programs, the pattern was strikingly different: enrollments in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs increased from 6.6% in AY2003 to 9.2% in AY2006, and enrollments in substantially separate programs rose even more sharply, from 4.8% in AY2003 to 10.9% in AY2006 (Table 58).

The percentage of General Education native Vietnamese speakers who were enrolled in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs decreased from 4.4% in AY2003 to 3.1% in AY2006, while those in substantially separate Special Education programs initially increased from 1.7% in AY2003 to 3.3% in AY2005, and then fell to only 1.0% in AY2006. These trends for native Vietnamese speakers were contrary to the trends for BPS students overall (Table 58). For native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs, however, enrollments in both types of Special Education programs increased during the same period. Specifically, the percentage of native Vietnamese speaking EL students enrolled in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education programs nearly doubled from 5.7% in AY2003 to 10.3% in AY2006, while the percentage of those enrolled in substantially separate Special Education programs expanded by nearly ten times from 1.2% in AY2003 to 11.5% in AY2006.

*TABLE 58. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006*

	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>Students in EL Programs</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%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers in General Education Programs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	3.1%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	1.7%	3.6%	3.3%	1.0%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers in Programs for ELs</b>				
<b>Full or Partial Inclusion</b>	5.7%	5.2%	6.2%	10.3%
<b>Substantially Separate</b>	1.2%	2.1%	2.4%	11.5%

#### 4. The Engagement of Native Vietnamese Speakers in Schooling

Maintaining students' attachment to schools and schooling is one of the key challenges of educators, parents, and communities. In this section we explore key indicators of attachment: attendance, out-of-school suspensions, grade retention, and the annual drop-out rate. A lack of consistent attendance and high levels of retention or suspensions are key risk factors for dropping out – a critical challenge that faces BPS. Therefore, the increase in drop-out rates and the emergence of younger dropouts among EL students overall following implementation of Question 2 are important findings from this study.

**4A. Attendance.** The attendance rate of 95% for BPS students overall remained constant across the four years from AY2003 to AY2006 (Table 59). BPS students in EL programs showed a decline in attendance rates during this period, from 96.2% in AY2003 to 95.6% in AY2006, but their attendance rate remained higher than the BPS overall rate (Table 7). For native Vietnamese speakers, the attendance rate throughout the period was marginally higher among students in General Education programs than for those enrolled in EL programs, and both groups had higher rates of attendance than BPS students overall. The attendance rate among native Vietnamese speakers in General Education programs remained nearly constant at over 97% over the four-year period, while the attendance rate for native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs declined slightly from 97.8% in AY2003 to 96.7% in AY2006 (Table 59).

TABLE 59. MEDIAN ATTENDANCE RATE. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Students in Programs for ELs	96.2%	96.1%	95.8%	95.6%
Native Vietnamese Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	97.8%	97.2%	96.6%	96.7%
In General Education Programs	97.8%	97.8%	97.2%	97.2%

**4B. Out-of-School Suspensions.** The rates of out-of-school suspensions for BPS students overall and for students in EL programs declined during the period of observation. In contrast, out-of-school suspension rates increased for native Vietnamese speakers enrolled in EL programs as well as General Education programs (Table 60). However, the out-of-school suspension rates for native Vietnamese speakers are still consistently lower than those for either the total BPS student population or for BPS students overall in EL programs. For example, while the overall out-of-school suspension rate for BPS students in EL programs decreased to 3.4% in AY2006, the out-of-school suspension rate for native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs was 2.4% in AY2006 (Table 60).

TABLE 60. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	7.6%	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>				
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	0.8%	3.1%	2.9%	2.4%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	2.0%	2.7%	2.8%	2.5%

**4C. Grade Retention.** This section reports on the proportion of students retained in the same grade for an additional school year. The rate of grade retention for BPS students increased slightly during the four years of study (Table 61). In AY2006, this rate of 8.9% was more than three times than that of 2.6% for the state of Massachusetts as a whole (MDOE, 2006). Grade retention rates among students in EL programs were higher across all the years – increasing from 8.6% in AY2004 (students enrolled in the same grade as in 2003) to 13.1% in AY2006 (students enrolled in the same grade as in 2005).

The rate of grade retention for native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs increased sharply from 5.7% in AY2004 to 8.5% in AY2006, but it remained well below the overall rate for BPS students in EL programs. Meanwhile, the grade retention rate for native Vietnamese speakers in General Education programs increased only slightly, from 3.8% in AY2004 to 4.8% in AY2006 (Table 61).

TABLE 61. GRADE RETENTION, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	8.4%	8.6%	8.9%
<b>Students in Programs for ELs</b>	8.6%	10.2%	13.1%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>			
<b>In Programs for ELs</b>	5.7%	8.6%	8.5%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	3.8%	4.5%	4.8%

**4D. Annual High School Drop-Out Rates.** Among the most salient findings of this study of English Learners in Boston is the impact of post-Question 2 changes on the drop-out rate of students in EL programs and on the grades in which school desertion is taking place. With the data available, we are able to trace an increase in the drop-out rate across the four years of study and for high school students across the various native language groups.

Table 62 presents the annual high school drop-out rate for several BPS sub-groups. Though a decrease in the drop-out rate occurred in the first year after the implementation of program changes mandated by Question 2, all groups except native Vietnamese speakers in General Education programs experienced increases in high school drop-out rates. A sharp rise in high school drop-out rates occurred for BPS students overall in EL programs where the rates doubled over four years from 6.3% in AY2003 to 12.0% in AY2006 (Table 62). Although native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs had a lower baseline high school drop-out rate compared to the BPS students in EL programs overall, the drop-out rate for native Vietnamese speakers in EL programs more than doubled during the same period: from 4.0% in AY2003 to 10.3% in AY2006 (Table 62). Native Vietnamese speakers enrolled in EL programs in the baseline year (AY2003) initially showed drop-out rates below those of native

Vietnamese speakers in General Education programs and those of the overall BPS population. However, from the first year of Question 2 implementation through AY2006, native Vietnamese speakers in programs for ELs had dramatically higher drop-out rates as compared to native Vietnamese speakers in General Education.

TABLE 62. ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE, SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006.

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
All BPS	7.7%	5.3%	8.2%	10.9%
Students in General Education Programs	8.4%	5.2%	8.1%	10.7%
Students in Programs for ELs	6.3%	6.1%	9.1%	12.0%
Native Vietnamese Speakers				
In Programs for ELs	4.0%	6.7%	11.3%	10.3%
In General Education Programs	6.9%	2.5%	4.6%	5.3%

## 5. MCAS Outcomes for Native Vietnamese Speakers in General Education

Below we present MCAS outcomes for Boston’s 4th, 8th, and 10th graders, for all students in EL programs, and for native Vietnamese speakers in General Education. The MCAS results for language subgroups (other than Spanish speakers) in EL programs are not reportable or reliable because of the small number of those test-takers during the time period of our data.

### 5A. Fourth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.

Among all BPS students, fourth grade MCAS pass rates in ELA remained relatively stable through the period, rising slightly in the middle years and declining to close to the baseline value by AY2006. Pass rates among students in General Education programs followed a similar trend. By contrast, pass rates in MCAS Math improved for both groups, rising over 10 percentage points among BPS students and students in General Education programs. ELA pass rates for all native Vietnamese speakers increased in the years following the implementation of Question 2 but dropped below the baseline value in AY2006 to 82.8% (Table 63). Fourth grade MCAS pass rates in Math also increased for native Vietnamese speakers.

The 4th grade pass rates for native Vietnamese speakers specifically in the General Education programs show small improvements in ELA and Math during the years following the implementation of Question 2. From AY2003 to AY2006, 4th grade MCAS pass rates increased from 94.6% to 95.8% in ELA and from 92.4% to 95.8% in Math. Fourth grade MCAS pass rates were highest among native Vietnamese speakers in General Education programs, with the overall native Vietnamese speaking population also experiencing pass rates that exceeded the general BPS population.

TABLE 63. 4TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	73.3%	77.5%	74.1%	73.2%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	77.5%	79.3%	76.3%	77.8%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	85.6%	87.0%	87.6%	82.8%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	94.6%	88.5%	89.9%	95.8%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	63.2%	70.1%	68.5%	73.7%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	65.0%	71.3%	70.0%	76.6%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	89.7%	91.7%	92.7%	90.2%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	92.4%	92.6%	94.6%	95.8%

**5B. Eighth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in Math.** MCAS Math pass rates improved slightly for BPS 8th graders and BPS students in General Education programs. For native Vietnamese speakers in 8th grade in General Education, their MCAS Math pass rates increased substantially from 79.5% in AY2003 to 93.5% in AY2006, though with a dip in AY2005 (Table 64). MCAS Math pass rates for all native Vietnamese speaking 8th graders, as well as those in General Education programs, were about 40 percentage points higher than those for BPS students overall in AY2006.

TABLE 64. 8TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS. BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>All BPS</b>	48.1%	54.0%	51.6%	53.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	50.9%	55.1%	53.2%	55.8%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	80.4%	83.6%	79.2%	93.3%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	79.5%	81.4%	79.6%	93.5%

**5C. Tenth Grade MCAS Pass Rates in ELA and Math.** MCAS ELA pass rates improved significantly among BPS students overall, rising from 66.8% in AY2003 to 77.4% in AY2006. Similarly, the pass rates improved among BPS students in General Education programs, with a pass rate of 85.2% in AY2006. In comparison to the ELA scores, improvements in Math were much more subdued for BPS students overall and for those in General Education programs (Table 65).

For 10th grade native Vietnamese speakers, ELA pass rates declined initially after the implementation of Question 2, from 74.6% in AY2003 to 72.8% in AY2004; but they recovered by AY2005 and showed significant improvement by AY2006 with a pass rate of 92.2%. MCAS Math pass rates for 10th grade native Vietnamese speakers increased from 89.7% in AY2003 to 94.1% in AY2006. Results for 10th grade native Vietnamese speakers specifically in General Education programs show similar patterns of improvement in both MCAS ELA and MCAS Math pass rates over the same four-year period and represent the highest pass rates in AY2006 of the groups studied. The 10th grade pass rate of native Vietnamese speakers was nearly 15 percentage points higher for MCAS ELA and almost 27 percentage points higher for MCAS Math than those for BPS students overall.



TABLE 65. 10TH GRADE MCAS PASS RATES IN ELA AND MATH. SELECTED SUB-POPULATIONS.  
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AY2003–2006

	AY2003	AY2004	AY2005	AY2006
<b>ELA</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	66.8%	65.9%	67.8%	77.4%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	72.7%	72.3%	73.3%	85.2%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	74.6%	72.8%	83.8%	92.2%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	85.2%	82.5%	85.2%	96.7%
<b>Math</b>				
<b>All BPS</b>	65.5%	68.7%	61.0%	67.8%
<b>Students in General Education Programs</b>	63.5%	69.5%	62.6%	71.7%
<b>Native Vietnamese Speakers</b>	89.7%	94.2%	89.6%	94.1%
<b>In General Education Programs</b>	80.0%	94.7%	91.1%	95.1%

## 6. Summary

The shift from Transitional Bilingual Education to Sheltered English Immersion in Boston appears to have had a mixed effect on the outcomes of native Vietnamese speaking students. For those in programs for English Learners the drop-out rate increased. On the other hand, native Vietnamese speakers generally experienced an increase in MCAS pass rates. ELA and Math pass rates for all native Vietnamese speakers and those in General Education programs, across all grade levels, tended to increase and were always well above the pass rates for the total BPS student population and BPS students in programs for English Learners.

## Discussion

---

The implementation of Question 2 in the Boston Public Schools had an uneven effect among English Learners from different language groups. Below we review the findings in three groupings: identification and program enrollment, engagement indicators and achievement indicators (for students in General Education who are native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese). In determining the nature of the effects, we compare outcomes in AY2003 with those in AY2006 and distribute effects into three categories: neutral, positive, and negative effects according to the following criteria:

- Neutral were those effects that show stability over time.
- Positive are those effects that
  - o suggest appropriate access to services (such as the increase over time in LEP identification and enrollment in EL programs in a context of stable or increasing enrollments of native speakers of languages other than English in BPS)
  - o denote improvement in student engagement (including the increase in the attendance rate or the decrease in suspension, transfer, grade level retention and drop-out rates)
  - o denote improvement in academic achievement (such as the increase in the MCAS pass rates and the decline in gaps in pass rates between ELs and other groups).
- Negative are those effects that
  - o suggest decreasing access to services (such as the decline over time in LEP identification and enrollment in EL programs, in a context of stable or increasing enrollments of native speakers of languages other than English in BPS)
  - o denote a deterioration in either student engagement (including the decrease in attendance rate, the increase in the suspension, transfer, grade level retention and drop-out rates)
  - o denote deterioration in academic achievement such as the decrease in MCAS pass rates and the increase in gaps in pass rates between ELs and other groups.

In some cases, there is not enough information to determine whether an observed change is positive or negative and the findings are shows straddling both categories. This is the case of the behavior over time of enrollments in Special Education where there is not enough information to determine whether changes denote increased/decreased access to services or issues related to the placement of LEP students in those programs.

The implementation of Question 2 in the Boston Public Schools had an uneven effect among English Learners from different language groups. Below we review the findings in three groupings: identification and program enrollment, engagement indicators and achievement indicators (for students in General Education who are native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese). In determining the nature of the effects, we compare outcomes in AY2003 with those in AY2006 and distribute effects into three categories: neutral, positive, and negative effects according to the following criteria:

- Neutral were those effects that show stability over time.
- Positive are those effects that
  - o suggest appropriate access to services (such as the increase over time in LEP identification and enrollment in EL programs in a context of stable or increasing enrollments of native speakers of languages other than English in BPS)
  - o denote improvement in student engagement (including the increase in the attendance rate or the decrease in suspension, transfer, grade level retention and drop-out rates)
  - o denote improvement in academic achievement (such as the increase in the MCAS pass rates and the decline in gaps in pass rates between ELs and other groups).
- Negative are those effects that
  - o suggest decreasing access to services (such as the decline over time in LEP identification and enrollment in EL programs, in a context of stable or increasing enrollments of native speakers of languages other than English in BPS)
  - o denote a deterioration in either student engagement (including the decrease in attendance rate, the increase in the suspension, transfer, grade level retention and drop-out rates)
  - o denote deterioration in academic achievement such as the decrease in MCAS pass rates and the increase in gaps in pass rates between ELs and other groups.

In some cases, there is not enough information to determine whether an observed change is positive or negative and the findings are shows straddling both categories. This is the case of the behavior over time of enrollments in Special Education where there is not enough information to determine whether changes denote increased/decreased access to services or issues related to the placement of LEP students in those programs.

## Identification and Program Enrollment

The decline in the number of students identified as students of Limited English Proficiency and the increase in enrollment in Special Education programs were the only effects which affected all groups in the same way, likely indicating that these were pervasive district-wide initiatives affecting all LEP and ELL students. In the case of the former, interviews conducted for this study and reported in the main report for this study, suggest that mis-identification took place both because of mis-assessment of students at the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and because parents withheld information on language use at home: both these situations would lead to under-identification of LEP students. In regards to the increased enrollments in Special Education observed across all groups, increases may be due to a better identification of Special Education needs in the EL population as well as a means to obtain additional resources for needy students. Interviewees most often referred to the later, observing that, in the absence of structured bilingual education programs, teachers and principals referred students to Special Education in order to obtain services. The finding of such substantive increase in Special Education enrollments by EL students in the face of stable enrollments across other subgroups observed here tends to also favor an explanation that focuses on the particular experience of students in EL programs.

Enrollment Indicators	Neutral Effects	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
LEP Identification			Declines across all groups. Sharpest declines among native speakers of Vietnamese, Chinese Dialects and Spanish.
Enrollment in Programs for ELs	Relatively stable participation among speakers of Chinese dialects and Haitian Creole	Increases among native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole;	Declines among speakers of Spanish and of Vietnamese
Enrollment in Special Education Programs		Sharp increases across all groups. Most salient increases in Full or Partial Inclusion Special Education participation among Vietnamese and Haitian Creole speakers. Most salient increase in substantially separate Special Education among speakers of Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole and Spanish.	

In terms of the enrollments in EL programs, interviews and documents about the implementation indicate that in the first year, enrollments declined as over 4500 TBE students in levels 3, 4 and 5 were transitioned into General Education in the Fall of 2003. All groups increased their enrollment levels over the subsequent two years but the outcome at the end of the observation varied for the groups; enrollments returned to the levels during TBE in two of the groups, increased in one and decreased in the remaining two. These outcomes appear to be related to the process of assessment and program placement undergone by the different groups.

## Engagement of English Language Learners

Engagement Indicators	Neutral Effects	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Attendance	Stable rates among speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole and Chinese dialects.		Salient decline in the attendance rates of Spanish speakers and more modestly among Vietnamese speakers
Out-of-School Suspensions		Declines among Cape Verdean Creole and Spanish Speakers	Salient increase among Vietnamese and more modestly among Haitian Creole speakers and speakers of Chinese dialects
Grade Retention		Decline among speakers of Chinese dialects	Sharp increases among speakers of Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean Creole speakers with more modest increases among Spanish and Vietnamese speakers
Drop-Out Rate		Decline in rates among speakers of Chinese dialects	Sharp increases in the rates of speakers of Haitian Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese and a more modest increase among Cape Verdean Creole speakers.

There were substantial differences among the groups in terms of the engagement indicators as well as in the drop-out rate. For example, among speakers of Chinese dialects all indicators were favorable and the group experienced a decrease in their drop-out rates, even as that of the overall population of BPS and of all the groups considered here moved in a different direction. In contrast, among Vietnamese speakers, all indicators trended unfavorably and were accompanied by a sharp increase in the drop-out rate. Similar cases can be made of Haitian Creole speakers, among whom suspensions and retentions increased and were accompanied by a very sharp increase in the drop-out rate, the sharpest among all groups examined here and of Spanish speakers, among whom attendance and retentions increased, also accompanied by a large increase in the drop-out rate.

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 important differences in the effect on programs for these groups which may have affected drop-out behavior. One such difference is the outcome of the transition from TBE to SEI, with some groups maintaining most of its students in the same schools (for example the Chinese programs) while others were dispersed either because they are too numerous to be concentrated in a few schools under SEI (as is the case of the Spanish speakers) or because of the dispersion experienced as large high schools were broken up into smaller ones (as was the case of the Haitian students). The effects of the structure of the programs on student engagement require further investigation.

## Achievement among English Learners (native speakers of Spanish 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. For native 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. With the exception of 4th grade ELA gaps between native Spanish speakers in EL and General Education programs, the gaps in both ELA and Math pass rates increased substantially between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and both, native Spanish speakers and English speakers in General Education programs. Varied program quality related to the lack of training of Boston teachers in SEI strategies and ESL were pointed out as critical in terms of the achievement of EL in BPS. In many ways, Spanish speakers, the largest and the least concentrated of all EL language groups are most exposed to differences in program quality.

Achievement Indicators (Spanish speakers in EL programs only)	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
4th Grade MCAS Pass Rate	Slight improvement in Math pass rate Slight decline in the gap in ELA pass rates between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and English speakers in General Education	Slight decline in ELA pass rate. Substantial increases in gaps in pass rates for both Math and ELA between native Spanish speakers in EL and in General Education programs. Increased gap in Math pass rates between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and English speakers in General Education.
8th Grade MCAS Pass Rate		Decline in Math pass rate. Substantial increases in the gap in math pass rate between native Spanish speakers in EL and in General Education programs. Substantial decline in the gap in Math pass rates between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and English speakers in General Education.
10th Grade MCAS Pass Rate	Slight improvement in ELA pass rates	Decline in Math pass rate. Substantial increases in the gaps in pass rate in both Math and ELA between native Spanish speakers in EL and in General Education programs. Substantial increases in the gaps in both Math and ELA pass rates between native Spanish speakers in EL programs and English speakers in General Education.

## Achievement among native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese Dialects, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese in General Education

Achievement Indicators (in General Education programs)	Neutral Effects	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
4th Grade MCAS Pass Rates	Stable ELA pass rates among speakers of Chinese dialects	Improvements in ELA for Haitian Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese Speakers; Improvement in Math pass rates across all groups	Decline in ELA pass rates among Cape Verdean Creole speakers
8th Grade MCAS Pass Rates		Improvement in Math pass rates among Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese speakers	Declining pass rates among Haitian Creole speakers and speakers of Chinese dialects
10th Grade MCAS Pass Rates		Improvement in ELA pass rates among Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese Speakers. Substantial improvement in Math pass rates among Vietnamese speakers and more modest improvements among speakers of Chinese dialects and of Spanish.	Decline in ELA pass rates among speakers of Chinese dialects Declining pass rates in Math among Cape Verdean Creole and Haitian Creole Speakers

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. Here we reported on the outcomes for native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese Dialects, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese in General Education and for Spanish speakers in both types of programs. As the table above shows, there have been improvements in ELA and Math pass rates across groups with the exceptions listed.

For Spanish speakers in EL programs, the situation was different. There were improvements in Math in 4th grade and in ELA in 10th grade, but we documented substantial declines in all other grades as well as growing gap between native Spanish speaking ELs and their counterparts in General Education.

Varied program quality related to the lack of training of Boston teachers in SEI strategies and ESL were pointed out as critical in terms of the achievement of EL in BPS. In many ways, Spanish speakers, the largest and the least concentrated of all EL language groups are most exposed to differences in program quality.

## Recommendations

We suggest that the engagement and academic outcomes for ELs in Boston would be enhanced by:

- a well informed institutional culture knowledgeable about the best, most recent information about the process of learning for ELs and about the requirements for the best implementation of SEI. ELs need to be viewed not as a compliance issue or as rivals for resources, but as a professional challenge: a growing group of students with specific learning requirements that needed to be met if they were to be successful learners.
- a stronger capacity to accurately identify, assess, assign ELs to appropriate programs and monitor their progress. Family Resource Center staffs must be trained to more accurately identify LEP students. The assessment of all potential LEPs should take place by trained professionals at the Newcomer Center, as happens now with middle school and high school students. There needs to be investment in the development of a state of the art student tracking system that will guarantee that the progress of all LEPs is accurately monitored in order for Boston to begin to comply with the requirements of both federal and state law.
- Parents from all language groups need information and education for ELs and about their right to waive the participation of their children in SEI programs.
- Work to increase programmatic flexibility allowed districts through the waiver provisions of the law. This will allow the district to be more responsive 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 SEI in the schools. There needs to be
  - o improved guidance and support to schools in relation to the implementation of SEI instruction
  - o comprehensive professional development programs for BPS teachers focused on cultural competence and the strategies and skills necessary for effective instruction of ELs.

The Boston Public Schools are on a path to a diversity driven largely by the influx of immigrant students from Latin America, Asia and Africa. Research indicates that for these children 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> Due to limitations of the data, we are not able to report on how many, if any, students of Cape Verdean background are enrolled in BPS and coded as native English speakers rather than native speakers of Cape Verdean Creole. Cape Verdean students and students of Cape Verdean background are usually aggregated into a general “Black” racial category which includes other Black ethnic groups and, thus, their exact numbers are difficult to determine.

<sup>2</sup> The dataset provided “receiving free or reduced price lunch” rather than “eligible for free or reduced price lunch.” The former underestimates the level of poverty in the group, since many poor students who are eligible by status may not actually receive the service.

<sup>3</sup> 1,718 students in AY2003; 1,546 in AY2004; 1,437 in AY2005; 1,407 in AY2006.

<sup>4</sup> Due to limitations of the data, we are not able to report on how many, if any, Chinese American students are enrolled in BPS and who are coded as native English speakers rather than native speakers of Chinese dialects. Chinese students and students of Chinese background are usually aggregated into a general “Asian” racial category which includes other Asian ethnic groups and thus their exact numbers are difficult to determine.

<sup>5</sup> The dataset provided “receiving free or reduced price lunch” rather than “eligible for free or reduced price lunch.” The former underestimates the level of poverty in the group since many poor students who are eligible by status may not actually receive the service.

<sup>6</sup> Though the change in dropout rate from AY2003 to AY2004 constitutes a sudden 200% increase, the 7.3% in AY2004 only represents eight students who dropped out.

<sup>7</sup> Due to limitations with the data, we are not able to report on how many, if any, Haitian students are enrolled in BPS who are coded as native English speakers rather than native speakers of Haitian Creole. Haitian students and students of Haitian background are usually aggregated into a general “Black” racial category which includes other Black ethnic groups and, thus, their exact numbers are difficult to determine.

<sup>8</sup> The dataset provided “receiving free or reduced price lunch” rather than “eligible for free or reduced price lunch.” The former underestimates the level of poverty in the group since many poor students who are eligible by status may not actually receive the service.

<sup>9</sup> The dataset provided “receiving free or reduced price lunch” rather than “eligible for free or reduced price lunch.” The former underestimates the level of poverty in the group since many poor students who are eligible by status may not actually receive the service.

<sup>10</sup> 61% in AY2003, 63% in AY2004, 60% in AY2005, and 57% in AY2006.

<sup>11</sup> The dataset provided “receiving free or reduced price lunch” rather than “eligible for free or reduced price lunch.” The former underestimates the level of poverty in the group since many poor students and students from non-English literate families who are eligible by status may not actually receive the service.

<sup>12</sup> 1,834 students in AY2003, 1,665 in AY2004, 1,573 in AY2005, and 1,478 in AY2006.

## Appendix: Data and Methods

---

The information presented in the language group reports comes from a four-year, student-level administrative dataset provided by the Boston Public Schools (BPS). It includes demographic and enrollment information from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) on each BPS student enrolled in AYs 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. Using a unique identifier for each student, results from the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests have been merged with the SIMS, allowing for the analysis of outcomes. Although the dataset includes students' outcomes on Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA), these data were not merged because it was not present in a consistent enough form across years to provide appropriate analyses.

For the analysis, students were grouped in two categories: (a) students enrolled in programs for ELs and (b) students in general education. The analysis uses June data and excludes students who were enrolled in the district for only one day and who attended zero days; these students are included in the dropout analysis. Students attending schools serving special populations – the Carter Center, Community Academy, Expulsion Alternative Program, Horace Mann, McKinley Schools, Middle School Academy, and Young Adult Center – were also excluded. For the analysis presented in the language group reports, the students who “opted out” of programs for ELs are not included in general education programs but are part of the total analysis of BPS students. In most tables for the language group reports, we compare the outcomes of EL students from these groups with all students in general education, all students in EL programs, and native speakers of the specific language in general education. (Students who are native speakers of a language other than English but who are in general programs include former students of programs for ELs as well as students who may be native speakers of a language other than English but who were never enrolled in a program for ELs.) In the case of MCAS outcomes, the comparison with ELs from all language groups except Spanish-speakers is not possible because the number of test-takers reported is too small.

Throughout, we examine the differences between these groups along enrollment, engagement, and academic outcome variables, including attendance rate, out-of-school suspension rate, grade retention rate, annual drop-out rate, and MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) and Math pass rates. The definitions of the outcome indicators examined are as follows:

- **Attendance rate:** Median percentage of days that students in each program type attended school in a given year.
- **Out-of-School suspension rate:** the ratio of suspensions to the total enrollment during the school year. The suspension rate as discussed here counts each suspension as a discrete event, counting separately each suspension even in cases when they happen to the same student.
- **Grade retention rate:** The proportion of students in a given school year who were not promoted to the next grade.
- **Annual drop-out rate:** The proportion of students in a given school year who dropped out.
- **MCAS ELA and Math pass rates:** The sum of the proportions of students scoring in the Advanced, Proficient, and Needs Improvement performance categories on the English Language Arts and the Math MCAS exams in a given grade in a given year.

Basic statistical analyses were conducted to examine the significance of the differences we observed between groups and within the same group over time.

In addition to analyzing the dataset received from BPS, researchers collected documentary data pertinent to the process of implementing the changes required by the passage of Question 2. They also interviewed personnel of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (one) and the Boston Public Schools (nine) to assess the reasons for the changes observed in the quantitative data. Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2008 and focused on the identification and assessment of LEPs, the enrollment in programs for ELs, the guidance received by the district and the schools regarding the implementation of SEI, and teacher training. Interviews were handled in a manner appropriate to this type of data.

## References

---

- Ali, T., & Dufresne, A. (2008). Missing out: Suspending students from Connecticut schools. CT: *Connecticut Voices for Children*. Available: [www.ctkidslink.org/publications/edu08missingout.pdf](http://www.ctkidslink.org/publications/edu08missingout.pdf).
- DeJong, E., Gort, M., & Cobb, C. (2005). Bilingual education within the context of English-only policies: Three districts' responses to Question 2 in Massachusetts. *Educational Policy*, 19(4), 595–620.
- Kelly, K. (1999). Retention vs. social promotion: Schools search for alternatives. *Harvard Education Letter*. Available: <http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/1999-jf/retention.shtml>.
- MDESE [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education]. (2006). *Grade retention in Massachusetts public schools 2005–06*. Available: [www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/retention/0506/report.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/retention/0506/report.pdf).
- MDESE [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education]. (2007a). *Annual dropout rate vs. cohort graduation rate*. Available: [www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/dropoutvsgrad.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/dropoutvsgrad.html).
- MDESE [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education]. (2007b). *High school dropouts 2006–07, Massachusetts public schools*. Available: [www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/0607/summary.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/0607/summary.pdf).
- MDESE [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education]. (2008). *SIMS Version 2.1 Data Handbook*. Available: [www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/DataHandbook.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/DataHandbook.pdf).
- NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress]. (n.d.). *State comparisons*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/statecomp/>
- Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy. (2007). *Seeking effective policies and practices for English Language Learners*. Available: [http://renniecenter.org/research\\_docs/ELLReport-final.pdf](http://renniecenter.org/research_docs/ELLReport-final.pdf).

**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.

Copyright 2009 by the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy.  
All rights reserved.

Published in 2009 by the Mauricio Gastón Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston,  
100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393.

Design by Meena Mehta | [www.twoms.com](http://www.twoms.com)



The Mauricio Gastón Institute for  
Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy

**BARR FOUNDATION**  
Using KNOWLEDGE, NETWORKS and FUNDING  
to Build a Better Boston for All

**tBf** The Boston  
Foundation  
INNOVATION. INFORMATION. IMPACT.

**Schott** | FOUNDATION for PUBLIC EDUCATION  
*Fairness Across Opportunity*



THE WILLIAM MONROE TROTTER  
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF  
BLACK CULTURE

INSTITUTE  
for  
A S I A N  
A M E R I C A N  
S T U D I E S

**UMASS  
BOSTON**

**The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy**  
University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393  
Telephone: 617-287-5790 | Fax: 617-287-5788  
E-mail: [Gaston.feedback@umb.edu](mailto:Gaston.feedback@umb.edu) | Website: [www.gaston.umb.edu](http://www.gaston.umb.edu)