Official Statement from the School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force to the Boston School Committee Regarding the Superintendent's Proposal to Expand Access to Advanced Work Class

January 27, 2016

The Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force would like to make the following statement regarding the proposed Advanced Work Class (AWC) Expansion. After a presentation by the AWC Expansion team (on December 15, 2015) and a conversation with Superintendent Chang (on January 26, 2016), the OAGTF has the following observations, concerns, and recommendations:

- The November 2014 Center for Collaborative Education (CCE)/Annenberg Institute Study identifies BPS's current AWC practices as a contributing factor to the perpetuation of the opportunity and achievement gaps among Black and Latino youth in BPS (*Opportunity & Equity: Enrollment and Outcomes of Black & Latino Males in BPS*, CCE/Annenberg, November 2014, pp 96-106, 212-213). Whatever practices BPS implements, in this regard, should remove AWC as a contributing factor to the opportunity and achievement gap that BPS is committed to eliminating.
- The AWC Expansion will create a three-tiered system whereby the current AWC students will be tier one, students enrolled in the AWC Expansion will be considered tier two, and the remaining students will be considered tier three.
- The proposed plan does not adequately address AWC's "elephant," i.e., the often unspoken concerns of parents who currently have their children enrolled in BPS AWC classrooms who want their children to be in a separate classroom with students "like them who want to learn" (in essence, social and racial root causes that have led to the current segregated system).
- It is unclear how the proposed AWC Expansion will be implemented, or how pilot schools will be selected. To ensure equity, the Task Force recommends pilot school selection should benefit the demographic of students who need it most, such as students who are currently enrolled in Level 3 and Level 4 schools.
- The Task Force recommends that any implementation plan include a clearly delineated model describing how pilots are Assigned, Evaluated, Replicated and Brought to Scale across the district.
- The Task Force recommends the district should commit to a clear and explicit intent to transition away from the current segregated AWC model in

order to neutralize it as a factor contributing to the opportunity and achievement gap afflicting BPS' Black and Latino youth.

The Task Force is still studying the Superintendent's proposal to expand MassCore and plans to provide feedback and recommendations in the near future.

Additionally, the Task Force would be concerned about any proposed budget that does not support the elimination of the opportunity and achievement gap. We ask that the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Office be funded in an appropriate manner to support BPS' commitment to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.