



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS TASK FORCE VIRTUAL MEETING**

May 23, 2023

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on May 23, 2023 at 4 p.m. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Task Force Members Present: Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Kimberley Williams; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Task Force Members Absent: Rev. Willie Bodrick; and Marinell Rousmaniere. Student Representative Khasim Saeed was also absent.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement Dr. Ana Tavares; Senior Advisor, Organizational Development & Equity Dr. Mariel Novas; Chief of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps Dr. Charles Grandson; Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Dr. Yozmin Gay; Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky Shuster; Senior Executive Director, Office of Data and Accountability Apryl Clarkson Executive Director of Immigrant and Targeted Populations Velecia Saunders; and Data Scientist Emerson Lopes Moniz.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[May 23, 2023 Meeting Agenda](#)

[OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: April 25, 2023](#)

[Data and Accountability Subcommittee Update](#)

[Racial Equity Planning Tool PowerPoint](#)

[BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool \(Version February 2021\)](#)

[Racial Equity Planning Tool Scoring Rubric](#)

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CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, by roll call, the minutes of the April 25, 2023 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Senior Advisor for Organizational Development & Equity Dr. Mariel Novas introduced herself and discussed new role.

Dr. Gonsalves shared an update from the Data and Accountability Subcommittee, which she chairs. She highlighted gaps in literacy, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, ELA achievement, and COVID cases in the city of Boston.

Dr. Pignato expressed concern about the gaps, particularly among multilingual learners and students with disabilities. Dr. Gonsalves hypothesized that 10th grade students might be more motivated to perform well on the MCAS exam because of the state's MCAS graduation requirement. Dr. Noam expressed concern about the COVID data. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi reminded the Task Force that BPS has shifted away from middle schools. He praised New Mission High School for its MCAS performance and staff diversity. Ms. Williams encouraged the Task Force to always examine data from multiple lenses and to go deeper with its interrogation of the data. Ms. Robinson shared her frustration with the district's presentation of data. She requested data showing the relationship between staff diversity and student performance by school.

Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Dr. Yozmin Gay introduced new Data Scientist Emerson Moniz and Senior Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability (ODA) Apryl Clarkson. Mr. Moniz introduced himself as a BPS graduate. Ms. Clarkson explained that the data scientist position is co-supervised by the Office of Opportunity Gaps and ODA. She said that ODA is hiring additional analysts to better understand the student experience.

Chief of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps Dr. Charles Grandson presented an overview of the district's Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT). Executive Director of Immigrant and Targeted Populations Velecia Saunders explained that the tool is a six-step process designed to operationalize the district's commitment to ensuring that all the decisions that are being made with the aim of closing opportunity gaps and advancing racial equity. She said that community engagement is a key part of the REPT. Dr. Gay spoke about using targeted universalism's two-pronged approach to close gaps. Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky Shuster reviewed the six components of the REPT which she said is both a process and a product that includes strategies to mitigate unintended consequences. Dr. Gay said that the district used the REPT when developing the regional organizational structure, equitable literacy, and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP).

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Zoom**

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Dr. Grandson provided a brief overview of the Racial Equity Planning Impact Committee, which was launched this year. He said that 27 members have been trained on the rubric. They will be looking at the quality of the equity analysis that district leaders produce and providing them with detailed feedback in addition to ensuring implementation. He said that final scores will be posted on a dashboard.

Ms. Shakur asked how the REPT is being used with school mergers. Ms. Saunders explained that the use of the REPT for mergers is an iterative process that includes engagement, looking at desired outcomes, and programming. Dr. Gay said that there has been a shift in how BPS engages families, with BPS more often going out into the community rather than inviting families to schools.

Dr. Jennings questioned the design of the Opportunity Index (OI) and expressed concern that it may have a deficit approach. Ms. Shuster explained the rationale behind the variables used in the OI. She clarified that 311 calls are used as an indication of agency. Dr. Jennings cautioned that language is an important part of the narrative.

Ms. Williams expressed her appreciation for the evolution of the REPT from a “check the box” approach to one that is research-based and has the opportunity to shift policies. She agreed with Dr. Jennings about the importance of language and said she wants to see layers of accountability within the district.

Summarizing next steps, Ms. Shakur said that the June Task Force meeting will feature school leaders doing exceptional work at closing gaps and areas for replication. The focus will be on literacy and early childhood education. She proposed inviting Karla Jenkins, principal of the Henry L. Higginson Inclusion School (K0-2), and/or Walter Henderson, principal of the Mattahunt Elementary School, as well as Director of Early Literacy Brooke Childs.

Ms. Shakur recommended that the Task Force continue its conversation about the REPT at the next meeting, specifically how it is being applied to equitable literacy. Ms. Williams suggested that the Committee hold a half-day retreat to plan the agendas for next school year and discuss adding new members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Edith Bazile, advocate, expressed concern about the structure of the meeting. She encouraged the Task Force to examine best practices for closing gaps.

John Mudd, advocate, spoke about implementation challenges.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary