



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE’S
OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS TASK FORCE
REMOTE MEETING**

June 30, 2020

The Boston School Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on June 30, 2020 at 1 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: Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Kimberley Williams.

Task Force Members Absent: Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; and Sherman Zemler Wu.

BPS Staff Present: Superintendent Brenda Cassellius (joined a portion of the meeting); Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Harold Miller, senior director, Policy & District Transformation, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Ilyitch Tábora, executive director, Immigrant/Targeted Populations, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Joane Etienne, School-Based Testing Project Manager, Welcome Services.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Meeting Minutes: March 5, 2020

Office of the Superintendent: Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps PowerPoint

Office of Opportunity Youth PowerPoint

Office of Opportunity Youth SMARTIE Goals Narrative - *DRAFT*

Office of Opportunity Youth SMARTIE Goals - *DRAFT*

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CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She asked Ms. Sullivan to call the roll. Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Kimberley Williams were present. Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; and Sherman Zemler Wu were absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 5, 2020

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the March 5, 2020 OAG Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Harold Miller, senior director, Policy & District Transformation, Office of Opportunity Gaps spoke about the accomplishments of Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Opportunity Gaps, who is transitioning out of BPS. Dr. Rose oversaw the expansion of Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP) training, the development of the Essentials for Instructional Equity, and the design of a goal tracker for the implementation of the OAG policy. Dr. Rose thanked the late George Cox for being a valuable thought partner. The co-Chairs thanked Dr. Rose for his impactful work and praised him as an innovator, educator, and a mentor to young men.

Dr. Grandson said that BPS will hold a search that includes stakeholder input to identify the next Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Opportunity Gaps. Mr. Miller will serve as interim. He praised Ilyitch Tábora, executive director, Immigrant/Targeted Populations, Office of Opportunity Gaps, for her leadership. He said that OAG Task Force members will be invited to serve on the search committee. Reopening: Dr. Grandson said that Special Advisor Tammy Pust is leading the district's planning efforts to reopen schools. Equity and communications are the focus of the district's reopening plans. BPS will host community engagement sessions this summer.

Rev. Bodrick asked if BPS has done an equity analysis on how reopening will impact black and brown families. Dr. Grandson responded that department leaders are using the racial equity planning tool as part of their decision-making process and said that the Superintendent and schools leaders are holding equity roundtables at the central and school level, respectively. Ms. Williams spoke about the value of the family needs survey. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi spoke about the importance of tracking student engagement during remote learning. Ms. Williams expressed concern about gaps widening during the COVID pandemic. Dr. Pignato asked how BPS will address systemic racism and the traumas inflicted by COVID when schools reopen. Dr. Grandson said that the district has not implemented the OAG policy with fidelity. He spoke about the importance of decolonizing the curriculum, expanding CLSP, convening affinity groups, and supporting restorative justice practices. Superintendent Cassellius joined the remote

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meeting. She said that members of the OAG Task Force, English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force, and equity roundtables will have input in developing the district's reopening plans.

The presenters announced that Ms. Schuster would skip her portion of the update on the division of leadership due to time constraints

Joane Etienne, School-Based Testing Project Manager, Welcome Services, presented an update on the exam schools admissions process. The current admissions criteria for exam schools consists of fifty percent grades and fifty percent scores on the ISEE admissions exam. She said that the COVID pandemic has substantially impacted students' grades. The Superintendent convened a working group to examine the issue. An RFP process is currently underway to select a new entrance exam that is bias free. Ms. Shakur asked if COVID presents an opportunity for the district to think about shifting away from a test. Ms. Etienne said that more stakeholder engagement would be needed to make such a shift. Ms. Shakur suggested using COVID as an opportunity to move away from the test. Ms. Etienne said that the district is currently in an RFP process to identify a new test. Dr. Grandson said that the district will present an update to the OAG Task Force later this summer. Ms. Robinson agreed with Ms. Shakur about the need to examine the exam schools admissions process. Ms. Williams expressed concern about the fairness of the grading process. Dr. Coleman said that the OAG Task Force could make a recommendation to the School Committee to suspend the test for a year due to COVID. Ms. Shakur called for a motion; Ms. Robinson seconded the motion.

Approved - On roll call, the OAG Task Force unanimously approved the the following resolution: That with respect to exam school admissions, the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force recommends that the district suspends the adoption of a new testing agency and the administration of a new test for this coming year due to COVID-19, and urges the district to move forward with haste with creating more equitable admissions standards.

Dr. Grandson said that he will take the decision of the Task Force back to the Superintendent and School Committee.

Mr. Miller requested that the OAG Task Force schedule a series of meetings at which time 30 BPS department leaders would present their SMART goals. Members expressed a desire to hear from the offices of Academics, Human Capital, and Professional Learning. Dr. Noam encouraged the Task Force to use its time wisely. Ms. Shakur suggested developing themes for the presentations. Ms. Robinson asked about the most critical tasks facing the district. Dr. Grandson said the top priority is reopening joyful learning environments and giving students what they need. Dr. Noam suggested that the Task Force hold a few targeted discussions on key issues facing the district, including the opening of schools. Ms. Shakur suggested scheduling hours of sessions organized around central themes, adding that the Task Force would need to receive documents in advance for review.

The co-chairs and presenters agreed to postpone the Opportunity Youth presentation due to time constraints.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Fields, member, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM), said that she was encouraged by the conversation.

John Mudd, education advocate, expressed support for the formation of a search committee for the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps position. He encouraged the Task Force to focus on interdepartmental issues.

Ann Malone, BPS parent, thanked Dr. Rose for his leadership. She encouraged the district's community forums on reopening to be multilingual and translated. The Superintendent confirmed that the forums will be multilingual.

Rev. Bodrick suggested that the Task Force do something to honor the late George Cox, a former BPS leader and powerful advocate.

ADJOURN

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:06 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary