



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

January 26, 2021

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on January 26, 2021 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: Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo (joined the meeting while in progress); Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake (joined the meeting while in progress); Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves (joined the meeting while in progress); Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere (joined the meeting while in progress); Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi (joined the meeting while in progress); and Kim Williams.

Task Force Member Absent: Sherman Zemler Wu.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; Eva Mitchell, Deputy Chief, Equity, Strategy, Opportunity Division; and Harold Miller, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Chief Academic Officer Andrea Zayas; Assistant Superintendent of Academics and Professional Learning Christine Landry; and Assistant Superintendent of Health and Wellness Jill Carter.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

[OAG Meeting Minutes: December 3, 2020](#)

[Boston Public Schools OAG Task Force PowerPoint, January 26, 2021](#)

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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 MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 3, 2020

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the December 3, 2020 OAG Task Force meeting.

ACADEMICS PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Chief Academics Officer Andrea Zayas, Assistant Superintendent of Academics and Professional Learning Christine Landry, and Assistant Superintendent of Health and Wellness Jill Carter presented a [PowerPoint](#) detailing the district's efforts to eliminate opportunity gaps and accelerate learning.

Division-wide goal include:

- Decrease variability in quality of instruction district-wide by implementing an articulated Academic Strategic Focus
- Build Teacher Capacity to Address Unfinished Teaching and Learning and Effectively Engage Students
- Address systemic issues through strategic policy change

Mr. Acevedo asked about the status of vacancies in the Office of Academics. Ms. Zayas said that the executive director of Expanded Learning Opportunities recently retired. Additionally, a few positions are currently vacant in the areas of instructional coaching and the Office of Special Education. Ms. Shakur asked about the status of MassCore. Ms. Zayas said that the district made a presentation to the School Committee in May 2020 but the proposal did not move forward.

Dr. Jennings encouraged the district to be more aggressive in involving parents as learning partners. He suggested setting bold goals in increasing graduation rates and reducing retention and mobility rates. Dr. Piganto requested data on student learning outcomes by zip code and by the DESE status of their home schools. Dr. Noam expressed concern about learning loss among students of color during remote learning. Ms. Williams asked about curriculum review. Ms. Landry spoke about offering targeted universalism at Turnaround Schools. She said that the district has adopted StudySync and Adaptations for middle and K-8 schools. Dual language schools have adopted the American Reading Company curriculum. Grades 3-5 use Expeditionary Learning. Ms. Aponte asked about building teacher capacity. She praised the district's use of flexibility scheduling.

Rev. Bodrick spoke about the importance of accountability. He requested that the Task Force review more data to track whether or not benchmarks are being met. Ms. Landry said that student achievement metrics will be different this year due to the COVID pandemic. Ms. Robinson asked

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about district support for low-performing schools. Ms. Williams asked about vacant positions in the area of history. Ms. Zayas said that the district is currently hiring positions for ethnic studies, history coach, and director of online and blended learning. Ms. Rousmaniere said that the Superintendent interviewed two finalists for the position of the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps. An update should be coming soon.

Dr. Jennings expressed concerns about the use of the term marginalized students, suggesting that the Task Force use more explicit language. Other members agreed. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi asked how the district will demonstrate progress with social emotional learning. Ms. Carter said that it will measure school climate and other metrics. A steering committee will determine what data to use. Dr. Coleman praised the work being done by the Office of Academics. He suggested that Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) should be coherent across the district. He requested a report on how MTSS is working across departments. Dr. Blake requested the Task Force receive a central office organizational chart.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, expressed concern that the goals and guardrails being drafted by the Boston School Committee do not contain explicit language about closing achievement gaps and do not explicitly address Black students. He encouraged the OAG Task Force to examine more data.

ADJOURN

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary