



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS TASK FORCE MEETING

October 8, 2019

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on October 8, 2019 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, Room 4-43, Roxbury, Massachusetts. 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 Samuel Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Jennifer Aponte; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; and Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi.

Task Force Members Absent: Dr. Carroll Blake; Liliana Mickle; Kimberly Williams; and Sherman Zemler Wu.

BPS Staff Present: 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.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: May 21, 2019 and June 25, 2019

OAG Task Force Meeting PowerPoint, October 8, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She announced that she would defer the approval of minutes until a quorum was present. Task Force members introduced themselves.

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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson provided a brief update on Superintendent Cassellius' Community Engagement Tour. The Superintendent has held numerous meetings with stakeholders and is gathering community feedback to incorporate into her strategic plan. She plans to visit all of the district's 125 schools by early December. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Acevedo described their positive observations after attending the Superintendent's recent meetings with the Somali community and Boston-area clergy. Ms. Robinson encouraged Task Force members to attend the Superintendent's community conversations. The schedule is posted online at <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/communitytour>. Mr. Acevedo praised the BPS Office of Engagement for organizing the robust engagement tour.

Dr. Rose provided an update on the work of the Office of Opportunity Gaps and its close collaboration with the OAG Task Force. The Superintendent is committed to achieving the district's goals of:

- Improved student outcomes
- Improved school quality
- Strong district leadership/high quality, action-oriented teachers and staff
- Effective resource allocation
- Greater community investment

Dr. Rose said that he now reports directly to the Superintendent. He has set the following goals:

1. By June 2020, analysis of BPS student assignment data will indicate a reduction of 30% of the assignment of Black and Latino boys to the special education self-contained learning classrooms.
2. By 2020, all staff members working with BPS students will have professional learning for Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP) that is quality and continual.
3. By 2020, Early Warning Indicator Systems (EWI) will be centrally supported by Illuminate platform and will be in use in at least 1/5 of our high schools. Those school will have demographics that meet or exceed the district average of students from marginalized populations.
4. By 2020, central office departments in the bottom quartile of diversity in relation to the BPS student population that have openings will hire at least 1/2 of those openings with candidates of color.
5. By August 2020, all high schools have graduation requirements that provide access to rigorous and diverse course work aligned to college and career readiness.
6. By SY 2019-2020, access to increased rigorous educational programming in elementary school through Excellence for All schools will mirror or surpass the demographics of BPS in terms of students from marginalized subgroups (Black, Latino, ELL, SWD, Economically disadvantaged).

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7. By SY 2019-2020, increase the percentage of Black and Hispanic/Latino students entering exam schools by at least 10% as admissions policy currently stands.
8. By 2020, expand K1 by 1300 seats to create Universal Pre-Kindergarten via a mixed-delivery system.

The Superintendent is ending Terra Nova testing for 4th and 5th grades to place more focus on instruction. Last year, BPS tested around 8,000 students in 4th and 5th grade for only 58 open Advanced Work Class (AWC) seats.

The Office of Opportunity Gaps is continuing work of OAG policy 2017 implementation plan Current reforms and updates.

Since taking responsibility for the Exam School Initiative (ESI), the Office of Opportunity Gaps has been able to maintain diversity in the program while increasing enrollment. In 2019, ESI's enrollment grew by almost 30% from 2018, the largest student body in the program's history. Almost half of these students were Black and Latinx students. Of the 775 students, 94% attended 7 or more days. New to ESI, at least 65 students were English Learners through a partnership with OEL. Another 50 students were 8th graders. New this year, the ISEE will be offered to BPS students during the school day at their home school. Dr. Rose said that last year, 800 students of color who were considered strong candidates and who were pre-registered for the ISEE did not take the test when it was offered on a Saturday. This change will remove barriers.

The OAG Task Force has identified the following main priority areas:

- Cultural proficiency
- Structural barriers
- Ecological supports

Ms. Gonsalves expressed concern about the district's recruitment and hiring efforts around teacher diversity. The Task Force engaged in a discussion about the importance of recruiting, hiring and retaining teachers of color. Ms. Shakur suggested that the district create a "report card" that would provide transparency and accountability related to teacher hiring.

Ms. Robinson said in his remarks to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce earlier today, Mayor Walsh discussed his commitment to closing opportunity and achievement gaps. She said that Dr. Cassellius is focused on addressing childhood poverty.

Dr. Coleman suggested reexamining the student assignment system. Members discussed the idea of badging or endorsing staff who have participated in professional learning. Dr. Gonsalves said that district leaders should examine the low number of bi-lingual school counselors in BPS. Ms. Robinson expressed concern and frustration that a handful of BPS schools have among the lowest performing for nearly 10 years and said she wants to see movement. Rev. Bodrick asked about the district's family engagement efforts. He said that BPS must foster strong partnerships with families, community partners and the faith-based community. Dr. Jennings noted that BPS

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is undergoing a comprehensive review by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: MAY 21, 2019; AND JUNE 25, 2019

Approved – The OAG Task Force approved by unanimous consent the meeting minutes of May 21, 2019 and June 25, 2019.

NEXT STEPS

Dr. Rose said that because the Superintendent is currently developing her strategic plan, he is hesitant to create granular goals. Task Force members expressed a sense of urgency about moving the work forward. Ms. Shakur said that the Superintendent’s strategic plan should be grounded in and aligned with the existing OAG policy. Dr. Noam suggested doing a cross-walk exercise for the Superintendent using with the School Committee’s strategic plan and the goals of the OAG policy. Task Force members encouraged the co-chairs to meet with Superintendent to continue the discussion. Ms. Shakur suggested that Chairperson Loconto join the meeting. The Co-Chairs agreed to schedule the meeting with the Superintendent and report back at the next Task Force meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, questioned if Dr. Rose has adequate staffing to hold departments accountable for implementing their OAG goals. He expressed concern about gaps demonstrated in the 2019 state assessment and accountability results and called for substantial reforms.

Barbara Fields, advocate, and member, Black Educators of Massachusetts (BEAM), suggested that the Superintendent meet with the full OAG Task Force.

ADJOURN

Ms. Shakur suggested inviting the Superintendent to the November or December OAG Task Force meetings. Dr. Rose suggested increasing accountability to drive improvement among the lowest performing schools.

At approximately 6:10 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary