



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

November 12, 2019

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a meeting on November 12, 2019 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, Room 2-13, 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; Dr. Carroll Blake; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; and Sherman Zemler Wu.

Task Force Members Absent: Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Liliana Mickle; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Kimberly Williams.

BPS Staff Present: Superintendent Brenda Cassellius; 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.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: October 8, 2019

SY2020 Boston Public Schools Organizational Chart: October 15, 2019

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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 to Superintendent Cassellius, who joined the meeting for the first hour.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Mr. Acevedo said that the OAG Co-Chairs recently met with Superintendent Cassellius and School Committee Chair Michael Loconto to emphasize the importance of embedding the OAG policy in the Superintendent's developing strategic plan. They also asked that Dr. Rose be given the support to lead. The Superintendent reaffirmed her commitment to equity. Ms. Shakur said that she was impressed with the Superintendent's understanding of the OAG policy. The Superintendent appointed Al Taylor as Chief Human Capital Officer because of his deep experience as a school administrator and his understanding of nuances. He will be supported by staff with deep human capital experience. They also discussed the possibility of school leaders being evaluated on diversity hiring. Dr. Charles Grandson has been appointed Chief Equity and Strategy Officer and will work closely with Dr. Rose, whom he now oversees. The group suggested that the Superintendent review the new reporting structure in six months. Mr. Acevedo said that he is encouraged with the Superintendent's focus and her interweaving of the OAG policy with her developing strategic plan. Ms. Robinson said that closing gaps is a collective responsibility. She encouraged the Task Force members to review the School Year 2017-18 District Wellness Policy Report, which demonstrates that some policies and practices still need to be implemented at the school level. Ms. Sullivan agreed to share the executive summary of the report with the Task Force.

The Superintendent said that she is impressed with Dr. Rose's work around equity and said she consulted with Dr. Rose prior to her organizational restructuring. She explained that she elevated Dr. Grandson to his new position to help drive the strategic agenda in a manner aligned with equity and to improve implementation. She has committed to align her plan to the goals of the School Committee's strategic plan. She moved the Opportunity Gaps Office to 5th floor of the Bolling Building near the Superintendent's office as a symbolic gesture. She said that at a public retreat on November 13th, she will report back to the School Committee on the emerging themes of her community engagement tour and receive feedback from the Committee. In December, she will present the School Committee with her draft goals.

Dr. Jennings asked what types of measures would be included in the strategic plan. The Superintendent said that the School Committee will decide the measures, adding that she expects that a diverse workforce will be a priority. The Superintendent said that BPS must be intentional and deliberate in recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. She discussed the importance of close racial gaps and having high standards for all students. Ms. Robinson talked about the need for adults to do what's best for students. Dr. Grandson discussed reciprocal accountability. The Superintendent said that she will address the systemic barriers impacting students. She plans to publicly present her strategic plan to the School Committee in January,

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then hold four town hall meetings to receive feedback from the community. She expects to bring the final plan to the Committee for a vote in February.

Ms. Shakur suggested that the Superintendent convene a budget equity working group to assist with the FY21 budget development process. The Superintendent welcomed the suggestion.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: OCTOBER 8, 2019

Approved – The OAG Task Force approved by unanimous consent the meeting minutes of October 8, 2019.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Rose provided a brief update on the work of the OG Office. For the first time, this year BPS offered the ISEE to students in schools during the school day; no major problems were reported. The district is working to increase diversity in exam schools by expanding the Exam School Initiative.

Ms. Shakur expressed concern about BPS student performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which demonstrate persistent, and, in some cases, widening gaps. Dr. Rose said that the district needs to implement existing policies, clearly define accountability, and be intentional. Dr. Grandson said that BPS schools must provide instruction that is aligned to state standards. Ms. Robinson called for a sense of urgency. Dr. Rose said that he felt a sense of momentum when the School Committee determined that the Superintendent would be evaluated on the work of closing gaps. Dr. Coleman explained that the School Committee will set goals with measurable outcomes and that it will be a public process. Dr. Rose said that the development of the OAG implementation plan 2.0 is paused while the Supt develops her strategic plan to ensure that they are aligned. He said that BPS must provide students with a whole child, culturally responsive education, and referenced the district's partnership with the Rennie Center. Mr. Acevedo asked about priorities that will require funding. Dr. Rose said that scaling up Excellence for All (EFA) is a top priority that will require funding.

Ms. Aponte discussed the disconnect between policy and practice at the school level, adding that school leaders are not the only touch point for families. Dr. Blake talked about the importance of standards, accountability, and measurement. He said that a plan must be bigger than the people involved and withstand changes in personnel at all levels. Dr. Noam said that holistic student assessments show that many students have a high level of interest in learning but a low level of motivation, saying that education leaders need to bridge that gap. He said that EFA should serve as the North Star. Rev. Bodrick said that School Committee needs to hold the Superintendent accountable for closing gaps. He encouraged the OAG Task Force and the School Committee to be more vocal and put more pressure on the district to close gaps. Dr. Coleman said that the Task Force must be clear when articulating what it is holding the School Committee and Mayor accountable for. He asked for feedback on the lagging indicators for which the Committee will

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be held accountable. Ms. Shakur said that teachers need to feel personally accountable for student achievement. She also discussed the importance of student voice. Ms. Robinson noted that OAG Task Force needs to add a student representative. Ms. Shakur discussed the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning pilot program, giving individual schools and entire districts the opportunity to apply to rethink classroom instruction around deeper learning.

Dr. Noam asked about the district's strategies to close gaps. Dr. Grandson said that the district need more capacity and must invest in strategies that work. He said that the district has an opportunity to reset and recalibrate. He discussed the importance of training instructional coaches, providing teachers with coaching on Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP), and offering blended professional development. Mr. Zemler Wu expressed frustration with the instability of the district's partnership funding and changing curriculum. Ms. Pignato said that district's probable org process presents an opportunity to set a framework. Dr. Rose explained that EFA bridges learning from early childhood to high school.

NEXT STEPS

Ms. Robinson announced that Dr. Cassellius will present an update on her strategic planning work at the December 17th OAG Task Force meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, urged the OAG Task Force to better define its role.

Leidy Quiceno, former BPS student and urban teacher, discussed the importance of valuing different types of learners.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:05 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary