



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

December 3, 2020

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on December 3, 2020 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; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Kim Williams (joined while meeting was in progress); and Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi.

Task Force Members Absent: Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; and Sherman Zemer 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.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Meeting Minutes: June 30, 2020

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force PowerPoint, December 3, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

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

December 3, 2020

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 30, 2020

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the June 30, 2020 OAG Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Chief Equity & Strategy Officer Grandson presented a PowerPoint. He explained that Superintendent Cassellius is making closing opportunity and achievement gaps the focus of the district's work. She created the Office of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps to better align this work.

Deputy Chief, Equity, Strategy, Opportunity Division Eva Mitchell said that equity is at the center of the Superintendent's Strategic Vision 2020-2025. The plan consists of six commitments: 1) Eliminate Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG), (2) Accelerate Learning, (3) Amplify All Voices, (4) Expand Opportunity, (5) Cultivate Trust; and (6) Activate Partnerships. The district uses a racial equity-planning tool to shape its decision-making. The district is holding equity roundtables to share data, strengthen community engagement and further close gaps. School leaders are also holding biweekly equity roundtables at the school level. The district is launching a transformative college, career, and life readiness program for middle grades.

Harold Miller, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps, spoke about the professional development sessions that the OG Office held for department heads regarding the OAG policy, CLSP and anti-racism. Forty-two departments are creating goals to implement the OAG policy. He asked how the Task Force would like to vet the goals.

Ms. Shakur recommended that multiple departments collaborate on common goals, such as academic achievement. Ms. Williams suggested that the Task Force take a look at departments that needed the most support in the past. Mr. Acevedo requested that the Task Force receive information from the district in advance of the meetings.

After some discussion, the Task Force concluded that it would like to receive an overview, proposed timeline, and schedule to vet. The group's would like to begin with presentations from the Office of Academics, Professional Learning, Social and Emotional Learning, and lessons learned during the COVID pandemic. Dr. Grandson suggested adding the Office of Data and Accountability. Dr. Coleman suggested that the Task Force do a deep dive into one-third of the district's schools per year.

Ms. Mitchell agreed to provide the Task Force with a schedule, plan, and summary document, as well as an org chart containing the names of district leaders or list of departments by division.

December 3, 2020

Mr. Miller spoke about the policy review process, which consists of two streams of work: reviewing and updating the 2016 OAG policy; and conducting a districtwide policy review.

Dr. Jennings spoke about outside factors impacting gaps. Ms. Robinson said there is a need for a liaison between BPS and City Hall. Rev. Bodrick suggested that the City's Chief Equity Officer and/or Chief Resiliency Officer attend OAG Task Force meetings. Dr. Grandson offered to make the connection.

Ms. Shakur said that the COVID pandemic and the last superintendent search process caused delays in the district's efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps, adding that now is not the right time to update the OAG policy. Mr. Robinson agreed.

Ms. Shakur thanked Mr. Acevedo for serving on the Exam Schools Admissions Criteria Working Group. In October, the School Committee approved the Working Group's recommendation not to use an exam for admission in SY 21-22 due to COVID. She said that MCAS performance data presented to the School Committee as part of that proposal was troubling. Dr. Coleman said that the district needs to rethink the concept of exam schools in its push for equity. Ms. Robinson said that the Exam Schools Admissions Criteria Working Group will be elevated to Task Force level, with additional members added to broaden stakeholder representation.

Dr. Coleman shared an article of interest: ["Closing Achievement Gaps in Diverse and Low-Poverty Schools: An Action Guide for District Leaders" By Public Impact.](#)

Mr. Acevedo said that the Asian and Asian American community needs to be brought into the conversation about exam schools admissions. He spoke about the Working Group having hard conversations and examining data to reach consensus.

Dr. Jennings shared an article of interest that he co-authored: ["Mapping Momentum for Boston's Youth: Programs & Opportunities for Black and Latino Young Men."](#)

Ms. Robinson said that any OAG recommendation should include community input. Dr. Coleman said that recommendations should also include an equity analysis.

Ceronne Daly, Managing Director, Office of Recruitment, Cultivation and Diversity Programs, presented a brief update on the district's search to fill the vacancy for the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps position. She said that a diverse search committee refreshed and reviewed the [job description](#). The candidate pool closed on Nov 30, 2020. The search yielded a strong pool of candidates with diverse experience. Finalists will meet with the Superintendent in January.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- John Mudd, advocate, expressed concern about what he called the lack of OAG measures in the Superintendent's performance goals. He said that teachers should reflect the diversity of the student body. He encouraged the Task Force to review more data.

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Remote Meeting
Zoom

December 3, 2020

- Barbara Fields, advocate, testified that closing the achievement gap should be a priority goal, not just an overarching goal. She said that she no longer sits on the screening committee for the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps position.
- Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, encouraged the Task Force to request from the district an organizational chart that shows lines of reporting.

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