



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

December 14, 2021

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on December 14, 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 Sam Acevedo (arrived after roll call); Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur (arrived after roll call); Dr. Carroll Blake; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman (arrived after roll call); Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi (arrived after roll call) and Kimberley Williams.

Task Force Members Absent: Jennifer Aponte; and Marinell Rousmaniere. Dorian Levy and Carolyn DeJesus, Boston Student Advisory Council appointees to the OAG Task Force, were both absent.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; Yozmin Gay, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps, Corey Harris, Chief of Schools; Geoff Rose, Division of Schools, and Elena Luna, doctoral resident.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

[OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: November 30, 2021](#)

[Division of Schools OAG Policy Goals 2021-2026 PowerPoint](#)

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[Division of Schools Organizational Chart 2022](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. A quorum was not present so the chair delayed the approval of meeting minutes for a few moments until additional Task Force members logged into the meeting,

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the November 30, 2021 OAG Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Grandson provided a brief update from the Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps. He said that the Defining Anti-Racism and Defining Gaps Working Groups have each met once and plan to meet with one another. The Working Groups include representation from BPS families, education experts, and others. The Working Groups will make recommendations to the Task Force about an OAG policy revision in 2022.

Dr. Jennings expressed frustration with the direction of the Task Force and suggested revisiting the original mission and purpose of the Task Force. He expressed concern about state data on chronic absenteeism, the dropout rate, and the percentage of black and brown students not meeting expectations on state assessments. He called on the Task Force to be more strategic and suggested that any presentation to the Task Force should include a theory of change, utilize the rubric designed by the Task Force, and reflect the current crisis facing students.

Rev. Bodrick spoke about the importance of holding the district accountable for closing gaps. Dr. Blake suggested that the Task Force set goals for the next six months. Rev. Acevedo said that while changes in leadership at all levels have been difficult, the Task Force will be judged by the closing of gaps. Dr. Gonsalves encouraged the Task Force to drive the agenda. Dr. Grandson reaffirmed his commitment to this work and pledged to partner with the Task Force to drive change. Ms. Williams agreed that a sense of urgency is needed. Dr. Noam suggested prioritizing three goals for 2022. Dr. Pignato spoke about the importance of fully funding the Office of Opportunity Gaps (OG). Ms. Shakur spoke about the challenges of district leadership changes and the departure of former Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps Dr. Colin Rose. She expressed concerns about adequate funding and support for the OG Office. She praised Ms. Gay's new leadership and commitment to the work, saying it will take a collective effort to push the district and move the needle.

Ms. Gay said that she shares the frustrations of members and spoke about thinking about the work in terms of macro-and micro-level outcomes. She said that the district is providing targeted support for nine open enrollment schools with chronic absenteeism, low achievement, and a high percentage of black and brown boys in special education. Dr. Gonsalves said that the Task Force

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cannot let funding challenges slow the work. Dr. Grandson encouraged members to reach out to him or Ms. Gay individually to discuss strategies. Ms. Williams suggested more collaboration with stakeholders. Ms. Robinson agreed. Dr. Blake suggested scheduling a planning meeting for the Task Force to regroup and retool. Mr. Acevedo suggested setting two or three goals for the Task Force. Ms. Shakur suggested forming subcommittees to push the work forward. She asked members to reflect on how much time they can devote to this work. Dr. Noam said that more time on task is not enough. He said that the Task Force first needs to clarify its role and coalesce around a theory of change. He suggested that the Task Force agree upon a list of priorities upon which subcommittees can be based. Dr. Jennings suggested that at the next meeting, the Task Force should set short-and long-term goals associated with a theory of change. He said that the Task Force should meet with stakeholders and conduct a review of the educational status of black and brown children in BPS, including churn, discipline, MCAS results, etc. Dr. Grandson offered to partner the Office of Data and Accountability to prepare the data. Dr. Pignato noted that the Task Force has three powerful tools at its disposal: the OAG policy, the district's Racial Equity Planning Tool, and the OAG Task Force's rubric. Dr. Blake questioned whether the OAG Task Force and the OG Office have the district's full support, citing the importance of staffing, funding, and clarity around organization. Dr. Pignato suggested that the Task Force consider holding a retreat.

Chief of Schools Corey Harris presented an [update from the Division of Schools](#). He was joined by Geoff Rose, Division of Schools, and Elena Luna, doctoral resident. Mr. Harris presented a problem of practice stating that the main responsibility of the school district must be ensuring excellent teaching and learning.

Mr. Harris outlined the following three goals for the Division of Schools and discussed how they relate to the OAG Policy as well as plans for progress monitoring and accountability:

1. Role Clarity - clarify roles and shift operational and compliance responsibilities previously held by School Superintendents to other district office staff to increase their focus on instructional leadership.
2. Develop the capacity of the Division of Schools staff and School Leaders - support the Division of Schools staff and School Leaders with the development of individual learning plans aimed at improving their capacity to support and strengthen their capacity as anti-racist leaders and instructional leaders.
3. Strengthen District Office Supports - support improved coordination among district office departments to create a cultural shift and drive structural reorganization to support School Leaders and School Superintendents' increased focus on instructional leadership.

Mr. Harris said that he plans to add a deputy chief of schools position to improve coordination between the Division of Schools and the Division of Academics. ESSER funding is being used to hire regional academic directors to focus solely on instruction.

Dr. Coleman said that the function of the Task Force moving forward should be monitoring school-by-school performance and gaps. Ms. Williams expressed concern about the

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presentation's focus on the central office, saying that schools are facing operational challenges and need support. She encouraged the Division of Schools to include school leaders in its planning and decision-making. Mr. Harris agreed. Dr. Noam suggested conducting an evaluation of process and outcomes. He spoke about the importance of elevating and measuring student voice. asked for an update on Hub Community Schools. Mr. Harris said that Ilyitch Tábora, Assistant Superintendent of Student & Community Impact, is leading that work. Mr. Acevedo expressed concern about chronic absenteeism. He encouraged members to closely review the data in the presentation. Ms. Robinson asked how the Task Force should move forward. Dr. Jennings suggested that the Task Force review state data, set short-and long-term goals, and discuss how to engage stakeholders. Ms. Robinson suggested that members send priorities to the co-chairs in advance of the next meeting. Rev. Bodrick asked if there will be any changes in the direction of the district. Dr. Grandson said that the Superintendent has asked the Office of Opportunity Gaps to review all district policies with an equity lens, adding the collective power must be leveraged in order to take this work to the next level. Rev. Bodrick called upon the Task Force to be more bold. Ms. Gay invited the Task Force interrogate the work and serve as partners. She also invited the Task Force to participate in school quality reviews.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, supported the idea of the OAG Task Force asserting control. He encouraged the Task Force to follow through on its priorities and hold people accountable for change.

Barbara Fields, advocate, encouraged the Task Force to hold the School Committee accountable for its policies and school closures. She emphasized the need to focus on all of the OAG policy goals, as well as the importance of monitoring the district's implementation of goals. She requested an update on the expansion of Excellence for All.

ADJOURN

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary