



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

December 17, 2019

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a meeting on December 17, 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 Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Jennifer Aponte; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Kimberly Williams.

Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Samuel Acevedo; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Liliana Mickle; and Sherman Zemler Wu.

BPS Staff Present: Superintendent Brenda Cassellius; Dr. 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: November 12, 2019

Synthesizing School Performance Data PowerPoint

Boston School Committee Update: Strategic Planning 2019 PowerPoint

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Building
2300 Washington Street
Room 2-13
Roxbury, MA 02119

December 17, 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 and members of the public introduced themselves.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson explained that the co-chairs were sharing with the Task Force a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Synthesizing School Performance Data* that the Superintendent had presented to the School Committee on December 11, 2019. She said that the presentation offered valuable insights into student performance. The co-chairs will invite Chief of Accountability Corey Harris to present to the OAG Task Force in early 2020.

Dr. Rose provided an update on the work of the Office of Opportunity Gaps. The district will soon release an RFP for an exam school admissions test, put in place stronger guardrails around its racial equity tool, and will strengthen the equity impact statements that accompany presentations to the Boston School Committee. Mr. Miller said that the OG Office is currently reviewing all BPS policies for possible updates. The first phase of review includes the district's attendance, athletics, summer school, and graduation policies.

Dr. Rose reviewed with the Task Force the *Synthesizing School Performance Data* PowerPoint, which demonstrates persistent achievement gaps. Science performance is still an area of concern. Thirty-eight BPS schools are in the bottom 10% of schools statewide. The district is working to bring coherence to its professional development system, provide engaging curriculum, set clear expectations, align resources, and strengthen accountability as part of its efforts to improve quality.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: NOVEMBER 12, 2019

Approved – The OAG Task Force approved by unanimous consent the meeting minutes of November 12, 2019.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Jennings spoke about the Superintendent's strategic plan serving as a roadmap for the district. The members engaged in a discussion about the importance of integrating the strategic plan with the existing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) policy and OAG implementation plan. Ms. Robinson emphasized the importance of accountability. Dr. Grandson explained that every department will have its own implementation plan that is aligned with the strategic vision, using a "both/and" approach. Dr. Coleman talked about the role of the OAG Task Force as a monitoring body. He said that the Superintendent will create an operational plan

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Building
2300 Washington Street
Room 2-13
Roxbury, MA 02119

December 17, 2019

to execute her vision. The Task Force should then monitor the leading and lagging indicators. Dr. Grandson reviewed the timeline for the strategic planning process, which will include a 30-day public comment period and further revision prior to submission to the School Committee for approval. Ms. Robinson suggested that the Task Force schedule its next meeting in January or February at which time members will review and discuss the Superintendent's draft strategic plan. Ms. Shakur expressed frustration at the pace of the district's development of the next iteration of the OAG implementation plan, saying the policy should outlive any superintendent. Dr. Grandson invited the Task Force to be partners in building the plan. Dr. Coleman spoke about the important role that the OAG Task Force plays in terms of pushing the district to strengthen professional learning, diversify its teaching core, and improve performance among the lowest performing schools. Ms. Rousmaniere said that the School Committee's role is to maintain the district's strategy through leadership changes.

Superintendent Cassellius joined the meeting and reviewed with the Task Force the Strategic Planning PowerPoint. She summarized the themes that have emerged from the Superintendent's community engagement tour, then presented a theory of action, mission, vision, and values.

The Superintendent is proposing five commitments:

- 1. Elevate Equity**
Equitable and excellent student outcomes
- 2. Accelerate Learning**
High quality schools and joyful classrooms in all parts of the district
- 3. Expand Opportunity**
Fair and equitable funding
- 4. Cultivate Trust**
Caring and competent staff that reflects the students we serve
- 5. Amplify All Voices**
Shared decision-making and mutual accountability

The Superintendent said that she may add language strengthening the district's commitment to closing opportunity and achievement gaps in response to feedback she received from the School Committee.

Dr. Jennings suggested that the Superintendent focus on obstacles to past success in the context of segregation in Boston. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi discussed inequities in technology access. Ms. Williams spoke about the need for the district to follow through on its commitments. Dr. Pignato suggested adjusting the language in the plan to elevate the sense of urgency. Dr. Noam said that he sees a paradigm shift in BPS and is hopeful for the future. He spoke about the importance of partnerships, making connections, and showing evidence. Rev. Bodrick suggested adjusting the

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Building
2300 Washington Street
Room 2-13
Roxbury, MA 02119

December 17, 2019

language in commitment 5 to clearly state how the district will hold itself accountable. He suggested that the Superintendent extend the timeline for public comment on the strategic plan. Ms. Rousmaniere said that it would be powerful to acknowledge barriers to closing gaps. Dr. Jennings talked about homelessness and other factors that impact family engagement. Ms. Aponte suggested that the Task Force include more parents and teachers. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi discussed scheduling challenges at the Timilty Middle School where he is a teacher. Ms. Robinson encouraged the sharing of the school performance data. The Superintendent said that her plan will include accountability and support. Dr. Coleman discussed outside factors that impact gaps in student achievement, such as housing and healthcare. Members asked the Superintendent about her relationship with Mayor Walsh and his cabinet. She responded that the Mayor has been a terrific partner who is committed to making strategic investments. As a member of the Mayor's cabinet, the Superintendent is collaborating with other city agencies on issues that impact children and leveraging valuable partnerships. She briefly discussed the expansion of the Hub School model which provides students with wraparound services. She discussed the impact of childhood poverty and the need to address the wealth gap. She said that she will be bringing policy recommendations to the School Committee that will increase equity.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, expressed a sense of urgency for closing gaps and called for action.

Ann Malone, BPS parent, and member, Citywide Parents Council, talked about the importance of accountability measures and conveyed a sense of urgency.

Barbara Fields, member, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM), spoke about the role of the OG Office. She requested that data presented to the School Committee be further disaggregated.

ADJOURN

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

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary