



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

December 18, 2018

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a meeting on December 18, 2018 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, Roxbury Innovation Center, 2300 Washington Street, Room 2-13, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps, email esullivan3@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

OAG Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Samuel Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Carline Pignato, Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Kimberly Williams; Dr. Gil Noam, and Sherman Zemler Wu.

OAG Task Force Members Absent: Marinell Rousmaniere; Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Carroll Blake; and Liliana Mickle.

BPS Staff Present: Interim Superintendent Laura Perille; Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Opportunity Gaps Dr. Colin Rose; Senior Director, Opportunity Gaps Policy & District Transformation Harold Miller; Chief Academic Officer Dr. Charles Grandson; Director of EL Programming and Staffing, Office of English Language Learners Daphne Germain; Program Manager, Office of Turnaround & Transformation; Marguerite Vichier-Guerre; and Academics and Professional Learning Teacher Leader for Reading Recovery Kelly McDermott.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting PowerPoint, December 18, 2018

2018-2019 BPS Priorities

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

BPS Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Dr. Charles Grandson introduced himself and explained his role as CAO and head of the BPS Academics and Student Support Services for Equity (ASSET) team. Dr. Grandson said that, while it's challenging, the district needs to make consistent progress to close gaps no matter what staff turnover it experiences.

Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Opportunity Gaps Dr. Colin Rose presented an update on the district's implementation of the OAG policy. The policy consists of 111 goals, of which 46 are not started. Of the goals started, 73% are On Target/Fully Achieved; and 26% are Past Due/No Progress. The Office of Opportunity Gaps has developed a goal tracker to show the district's progress in real time: <http://goal-tracker.us-east-2.elasticbeanstalk.com/>. Dr. Rose discussed departments that are behind on their goals (Academics and Professional Learning, Social Emotional Learning, Special Education, Office of Human Capital, New Teacher Development, Transportation, Early Childhood, Office of Instructional and Information Technology, Facilities, Innovation), as well as several departments to laud (Engagement, Federal & State Grants, Finance, Food & Nutrition Services, Superintendent's Office-Associate Superintendent of Elementary and Middle Schools, Office of English Learners, Opportunity Gaps).

Dr. Rose also reviewed adjustments that the district has made to the Opportunity Index (OI), a pioneering tool designed to measure and quantify schools that serve the highest concentrations of students in need. The OI incorporates a range of data representing factors that are outside of the schools' control but are also predictive of students' academic outcomes. The district has added and changed variables based on feedback from stakeholders.

In 2017, 45 percent of new teacher hires self-identified as people of color. The district continues its multi-pronged efforts to increase teacher diversity. BPS has developed a new metric, the Student/Teacher Parity Index, to measure how closely the teachers in a school represent the school's student population. Workforce diversity is now part of a school leader's performance evaluation.

Dr. Rose discussed challenges and concerns, including transitions, multi-department intersections, non-responses, new and old streams of work, and systems of accountability.

Ms. Pignato expressed concern about departments that are behind with their goals. Ms. Shakur said that many of the departments of concern were problematic previously.

The members discussed topics for Dr. Rose to include in his annual update to the School Committee later this winter. Suggestions included context and progress to date. Dr. Noam praised the work of the Office of Opportunity Gaps and advised Dr. Rose to be clear with the Committee regarding success, challenges, and assistance needed to move the work forward.

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Ms. Shakur suggested that the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps should report directly to the Superintendent. Ms. Williams suggested that the report include the district's progress on increasing teacher diversity.

Ms. Shakur invited Task Force members to submit nominations for new members by Friday, Dec. 21. The co-chairs will review the nominations with Dr. Rose and Chairperson Loconto before presenting final nomination to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

Interim Superintendent Laura Perille discussed her priorities for the district. Ms. Perille held an extensive round of listening sessions over the summer, including many with school leaders. Through these sessions, she identified three strategic priorities: improve opportunities for students; differentiate school supports; and plan for the future e.g. BuildBPS. She explained that BuildBPS, the district's 10-year educational and facilities master plan, will minimize transitions for families, simplifying pathway while preserving strong existing pathways. It will also address decades of deferred facilities maintenance and the significant decline in middle school enrollment. New builds will be targeted to neighborhoods with high student need and low historic access. Location of program placement is also an equity issue. Ms. Perille expressed her commitment to building a strong internal team to provide continuity for next superintendent.

Ms. Pignato asked about possible changes to the science curriculum. Dr. Grandson said that he is assessing the science curriculum and addressing disconnects.

Ms. Williams cautioned that the district should not let its focus on meeting and tracking OAG goals to take priority over other work. Dr. Rose said that he will conduct a crosswalk exercise to address that concern.

Mr. Acevedo asked Ms. Perille about plans for autonomous schools. She responded that selected enrollment schools are being asked to add specialized strands.

Dr. Noam asked Ms. Perille to discuss her strategy for bringing people together. Ms. Perille explained that the School Committee charged her with pushing forward the district's work with Social Emotional Learning and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices. She has been told by school leaders that some of these pieces still need to be operationalized. The district's reorganization of school support networks and focus on providing implementation support will help this effort.

Ms. Robinson raised the idea of the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps reporting directly to Superintendent. Ms. Perille said she will discuss the issue further with Dr. Grandson and Dr. Rose. Ms. Robinson also expressed the importance of families having transparency around school choice and the ability of schools to offer a full cadre of supports.

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi thanked Ms. Perille for addressing the decline in middle school enrollment. She said that while the traditional middle school model is being phased out, the district will continue supporting the unique needs of middle school students.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, reinforced the importance of having the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps report directly to the Superintendent in order to strengthen the position's authority.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:17 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary