



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

December 8, 2015

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on December 8, 2015 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, School Committee Chamber, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Jennifer Aponte; Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Kim Janey; Keondre McClay; Liliana Mickle; Dr. Gil Noam; Alex Oliver-Davila; Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filberto Santiago-Lizardi; Ron Walker; Sherman Zemler Wu.

Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Kenny Feng; and Adrienne Level. Suzanne Lee and Dr. Miren Uriarte, English Language Learners Task Force liaisons to the OAG Task Force, were not present.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: November 24, 2015

2006 BPS Achievement Gap Policy

Biographies of Key District Leaders

Charge and Goals of Task Force

Promising Practices and Unfinished Business: Fostering Equity and Excellence for Black and Latino Males

December 8, 2015

Memo from Dr. Hardin Coleman to Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Re: Apologia, Dated December 8, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She then introduced Dr. Colin Rose, the newly appointed Assistant Superintendent for the Opportunity and Achievement Gap. Dr. Rose, a former BPS teacher, said he looks forward to working closely with the Task Force.

ACTION ITEM

The Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 24, 2015 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson announced that the December 15th Task Force meeting would feature presentations from the Superintendent's working groups on Advanced Work Class (AWC) and MassCore. The co-chairs will present an update on the work of the Task Force to the School Committee on January 13th.

The Task Force then continued its discussion on cultural proficiency and cultural relevancy initiated by Dr. Coleman at the November 17th meeting.

Dr. Coleman said that the district's current Achievement Gap policy contains molecular items but no coherency. He stated that a testable model is needed to prove that certain actions are leading to closing the gap. He argued that in order to change academic outcomes, we must change the economic status of our students. Dr. Coleman closed by saying that the revised policy should be a testable model, not a list, explaining that he advocates more for creating a standard than for telling people how to do something.

Several Task Force members agreed that a holistic, comprehensive approach is needed. Members suggested the following tools to help close the gap: significant, stable and equitable funding; culturally responsive practice; a welcoming school environment; small class size; and teacher training. Members said that the district needs a consistent definition of cultural competency that can be measured. Mr. Acevedo noted that many Task Force members served as advisers on the Annenberg study. Ms. Oliver-Davila said the Policy and School Leadership subgroup looks forward to discussing these issues with Dr. Doannie Tran, Assistant Superintendent for Professional Learning.

The Task Force spent the next few minutes debriefing their small group discussions from the November 24th meeting (*see minutes of November 24th*).

Ms. Rousmaniere encouraged the co-chairs to present the School Committee with a meaningful report that shares the deep analysis the Task Force has done to date.

December 8, 2015

Mr. Acevedo explained that the Task Force would now break up into three groups to compile questions related to the achievement and opportunity gaps as well as AWC and MassCore. These questions will be then be presented to district leaders for follow up and future discussion.

Group 1: District Operations:

- What role does union contract and tenure play in teacher retention?
- Is there a measure of differentiated support for teachers in professional development?
- What's the connection between evaluation professional development/support for teachers and retention?
- Re: teacher diversity, what progress have we made and what is the plan to make progress going forward? To what extent do we have to develop alternative pathways/pipelines need to achieve our goals on teacher diversity?
- What percentage of teachers has alternative certifications?
- What's the success rate of the programs: ACTT? What are the barriers? E.g. timeline for ACTT not aligned with the hiring process; once concrete, want to make sure aligned with timeline of hiring.
- To what extent does BPS have strong relationships with local schools of education?
- Assignment of K-5 vs. K-8 school populations, pathway systems, who has access, who is transferring out? Who are the students and what are their demographics? What does that mean for equitable access to quality schools?
- Transportation: equity of access to late buses, does it inhibit access to after school opportunities?
- Where is the analysis of the home-based assignment system on equity? When will it be completed?
- Are we changing the number of special education students because of WSF?
- 501c3s in different schools – what is the equity there?
- How are we less enrollment system sensitive as a district?

Group 2: Teaching and Learning:

- Dr. Estrada: What are BPS strategies for closing the gap using social emotional learning, current practices and future plans?

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

December 8, 2015

- How will we make it consistent across the district?
- How will we know the strategies are working?
- Where are bright spots?
- What tools are being used or tested? (Pre and post school year.)
- How are district leaders sharing best practices and replicating success among schools?
Taking to scale.
- Amalio Nieves should come with Dr. Estrada.
- Doannie Tran & Nicole Wagner to link social emotion side with academics. Link data between school and community partners.
- Monica Roberts, engagement. Principals' skills managing partners dictate how well they work. Bright spot: how Orchard Gardens manages its partnerships.
- MassCore: What are we doing to make sure that all BPS students have equitable access to MassCore? Nicole Wagner and Rebecca Shuster to talk about how they track data and use it to get students back on track for graduation?
- Dr. Judy Berkowitz could provide a good background on AWC. Schools need after school partnerships/programs to eat and do homework. BPS guidance counseling in middle school to guide students to college? K-12 developmental guidance. Guidance counseling is missing from current policy. Reintroduce guidance without reducing mental health.

Group 3: Policy and School Leadership:

- General Questions for All Presenters
- What is your entry plan? Your first steps?
- What's in your plan to address the achievement gap? How does cultural responsiveness/proficiency fit into this plan?
- How do you use data to define the achievement gap? What data are you using to inform your work around the achievement gap? How do you use that data?
- How do you plan to collaborate?
- What are your short term plans and long term plans?

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

December 8, 2015

- How does your work apply to teacher preparation?
- What questions do you ask your staff as they do/push their work? How do you model/train your thinking/strategies/thinking for your staff? How will you build professional learning community?
- What experiences do you bring to this work?

AWC & MASSCORE:

- Why isn't AWC made available to all students?
- How is AWC not considered tracking?
- How do we widen the access to AWC for children of color (students most affected by the achievement and opportunity gap)? How do we counteract the biased testing needed to access AWC?
- Since it further separates children and separates opportunity, how does AWC decrease the achievement gap?
- Should our goal be to widen access/increase seats in AWC or to increase academic expectations for all students?
- What is the purpose of having selective ("invitation only") AWC?
- How do we share AWC information with families? Particularly how do we justify/explain severe academic separation of children to their families?
- Is AWC a politically or instructionally sound practice?
- Do you envision by broadening AWC, you are teaching study skills for all students?
- Are AWC classes going to be eliminated as they currently exist in this new AWC model? Will the social segregation be eliminated?
- What's the data on students who qualify for AWC but chose not to attend – what were the outcomes e.g. exam school entrance success, etc.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

December 8, 2015

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:02 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary