



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

February 23, 2021

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on February 23, 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 Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Coleman; Dr. Gonsalves; Dr. Jennings; Dr. Noam; Dr. Pignato; Ms. Rousmaniere; Mr. Santiago-Lizardi (joined meeting after roll call); Ms. Williams (joined meeting after roll call); and Mr. Zemler Wu.

Task Force Member Absent: Jennifer Aponte; Rev. Willie Bodrick; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; and Harold Miller, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: January 26, 2021

[Boston School Committee Priority Setting: Goals and Guardrails](#)

[Boston Public Schools OAG Task Force PowerPoint, January 26, 2021](#)

[2016 OAG Policy](#)

Student Outcomes Front and Center PowerPoint

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CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JANUARY 26, 2021

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the January 26, 2021 OAG Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Charles Grandson provided a brief district update from the Division of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps. He said that he expects to have an update on the hiring of a new Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps soon. He thanked Mr. Miller for serving as Interim Superintendent since the departure of Dr. Colin Rose last year. As part of the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation, the Equity and Strategy division leadership is moving from their original budgeted location in the Opportunity Gaps budget into the Strategy department budget. This change does not reflect a reduction in either budget, but simply a move for improved internal budget management. The Excellence for All team is now part of the Academics department.

Mr. Miller presented a PowerPoint: *Student Outcomes Front and Center* in which he reviewed the OAG policy setting goal process timeline through June 2021. BPS is tracking qualitative and quantitative school and student level data using Panorama, the district's new data platform. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi spoke about the importance of teacher voice Mr. Miller said that Panorama includes teacher voice but agreed with the suggestion.

Ms. Robinson led a review of the Boston School Committee's draft goals and guardrails. In an effort to strengthen its focus on student outcomes, the Committee has selected two sets of measures taken directly from the Strategic Plan. Through a series of data and other information, the School Committee will closely monitor and evaluate its work related to the proposed goals. This new approach does not change the Strategic Plan or add new goals or guardrails to the district's work, rather, it will help the Committee reorganize and refocus its work. The Committee will use its meetings to continuously review progress with the Superintendent on the goals and to ensure that the guardrails are being followed. After approval of these goals and guardrails by the School Committee, the Superintendent will fund the priorities in the district's FY22 budget. The Committee is seeking community feedback on the draft set of goals and guardrails below.

Potential Goals - The community's vision for what students should know and be able to do:

- Early Literacy
- Achievement for English Learners
- Achievement for Students with Disabilities
- Critical Thinking in Math, Science and Literacy

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- College and Career Readiness

Potential Guardrails - Non-negotiable community values that must be honored while we pursue the goals.

- Student Voice & Family Engagement: BPS will leverage the cultural and linguistic wealth of students and families by increasing student voice and creating partnerships that recognize their value, assets, and needs.
- Community Partnerships: BPS will work with community partners to prepare students for unlimited global and local opportunities.
- Equity & Opportunity Gaps: BPS will implement, with fidelity, opportunity and achievement gap-closing practices that are research-based and data-driven at the district, school, and classroom levels.
- Diverse & Effective Staffing: BPS will recruit and retain a highly effective, racially and linguistically diverse, culturally proficient workforce that can provide rigorous culturally and linguistically affirming inclusive curriculum and experiences that celebrate the assets of our students and provide a joyous and positive school experience.
- Social, Emotional, & Physical Supports: BPS will deliver a universal Multi-Tiered System of Support that addresses the social, emotional, and physical well-being of all our students.

Task Force members offered constructive feedback on the goals and guardrails. Dr. Jennings said that achievement gaps must be addressed with intentionality. He suggested adding explicit language about Black students, racial equity, anti-racism, and teacher input. Dr. Pignato suggested making social, emotional, and physical supports a goal instead of a guardrail. She also suggested crafting more concrete goals and strategies for English Learners. She recommended adding a guardrail on professional development for teachers and school leaders. Both Dr. Jennings and Dr. Pignato said that they would share their feedback to the Committee in writing.

Ms. Rousmaniere praised the Committee's approach. She observed that there is a focus on opportunity-based measures and outcome measures but said that a sense of student access is missing.

Mr. Miller said that the Office of Opportunity Gaps was formerly known as the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, but changed its name because the term "achievement gap" is deficit-based language. Dr. Grandson said that this is the kind of language that can be addressed and intentionally explained in the OAG policy revision.

Dr. Blake said that the district must provide students with support as well as opportunities.

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Mr. Acevedo shifted the conversation to the Task Force meeting structure. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi spoke about the need for more focused presentations. He requested an update on Turnaround Schools and inclusion programs. Dr. Pignato spoke about the need for collective accountability. Dr. Jennings suggested that the Task Force be more strategic by coalescing around four or five questions that district staff should address in their presentations. Ms. Williams recommended that district staff presenting to the Task Force be specific with their plans for implementing the OAG policy and be held accountable. She apologized for joining the meeting late and said that the goals and guardrails should have more explicit language with regards to outcomes for Black and Latinx students.

Mr. Acevedo shifted the discussion to the structure of the Task Force. He asked whether members were interested in establishing subcommittees to move the work forward. Following much discussion about pros and cons, the Committee agreed not to establish subcommittees, but instead to develop a rubric with guiding questions to help focus district presentations to the Task Force. Members also requested that the Task Force receive the presentations a week in advance. Ms. Williams suggested connecting the presentations to the data dashboard. Mr. Acevedo suggested that a small subset of members work together to draft a rubric within the next 10 days. Ms. Williams, Dr. Pignato, Dr. Jennings, and Dr. Blake volunteered to assist.

Dr. Grandson spoke briefly about planning for the five-year review and update of the 2016 OAG policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Barbara Fields, advocate, expressed support for creating a rubric for presentations. She emphasized the importance of staying focused on goals and using explicit language about Black and Latinos. She advocated for robust funding of the OG Office in the FY22 budget.
- Mr. Mudd expressed concerns about the School Committee's goals and guardrails and said that historically marginalized groups should be explicitly named. He advocated for robust funding of the OG Office in the FY22 budget.

Ms. Robinson asked Dr. Grandson to provide the Task Force with information about the Office of Opportunity Gaps' proposed FY22 budget prior to the next budget hearing scheduled for March 9th.

ADJOURN

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary