



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

**March 15, 2016**

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on March 15, 2016 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/gaps](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto: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; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Kim Janey; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Liliana Mickle; Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Sherman Zemler Wu. Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Kenny Feng; Dr. Gil Noam; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; and Ron Walker.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: March 1, 2016

Proposed Timeline for Completion of Draft Revised OAGTF Policy

Non-negotiables – updated March 15, 2016 (draft)

Policy revision worksheet

A list of combined goals pairing the 2006 Achievement Gap policy goals with Annenberg Report recommendations according to theme

The 2006 Achievement Gap Policy

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Minutes of the November 17, 2015 OAG Task Force meeting (containing notes from earlier subgroup work)

Promising Practices and Unfinished Business: Fostering Equity and Excellence for Black and Latino Males (Executive Summary)

Opportunity and Equality: Enrollment and Outcomes of Black and Latino Males in Boston Public Schools (Executive Summary)

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ACTION ITEM**

The Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the March 1, 2016 meeting.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Mr. Acevedo explained that the Task Force would break up into the following three subgroups in order to begin revising and updating the district's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps policy:

**Group 1 - District Goals, Policy, & Operations**

Pastor Sam Acevedo  
Marinelle Rousmaniere  
Adrienne Level  
Kenny Feng  
Kim Janey  
Heshan Berents-Weeramuni  
Sherman Zemler Wu

**Group 2 - Leadership and School Culture:**

Jeri Robinson  
Dr. Carroll Blake  
Ron Walker  
Jennifer Aponte  
Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado  
Keondre McClay  
Alexandra Oliver-Davila  
Suzanne Lee

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**Group 3 - Teaching and Learning**

Ayele Shakur  
Liliana Mickle  
Dr. Gil Noam  
Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi  
Dr. Hardin Coleman  
Carline Pignato

The following members of the Superintendent's cabinet joined the subgroups to lend their expertise and provide guidance:

- Dr. Donna Muncey, Deputy Superintendent of Strategy
- Michele Shannon, Assistant Superintendent of Leadership Development
- Mary Driscoll, Principal Leader and AWC Expansion Project Leader
- Jason Sachs, Director of Early Childhood

Each Task Force member received a packet containing the following information:

- A list of combined goals pairing the 2006 Achievement Gap policy goals with Annenberg Report recommendations according to theme
- Policy revision worksheet
- The 2006 Achievement Gap Policy
- Notes from earlier subgroup work from fall 2015
- A draft list of "non-negotiables" that Task Force members would like included in the final policy
- Timeline for completion of work

Group 1 Notes:

Human Capital:

Recruit, place, develop, support and retain a cadre of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse and effective principals, teachers, and staff members (who represent the different cultural and linguistic experiences of the student body and who value authentic, caring relationships with other adults and students) in the schools with the greatest opportunity and achievement gaps.

- as evidenced by measurable progress each year
- strategies for teacher prep pathway programs

Human Capital should have the lens of academics and be everyone's responsibility for hiring a cadre of racially, culturally and linguistically diverse staff

- principal leaders, principals, School Site Councils, and central office are all responsible
- there shall be benchmarks set

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Evaluation system should include professional development opportunities in real time that match both the self-assessment of staff and the assessment by their supervisors

Raise the profile of culture in the teacher evaluation system so that staff meets the cultural proficiency standards to be considered a proficient teacher

### Group 1 Questions for BPS Operations:

- How do you measure equity of operations?
- Is there data on the equity of access to quality education opportunities based on grade configuration of schools?
- Is there an analysis on the cost differential for all students to have M7 T pass vs. how many students currently receive them? What would be the analysis if it was income based/based on some kind of sliding scale?
- Where is the equity analysis of the new student assignment system? What do we know about change in racial makeup of the schools etc. as a result of the new system? How is MIT dealing with the conflict of interest of having a hand in creating the system as well as evaluating it?
- How will you ensure that the class under-enrollment and school closing analysis does not produce an inequitable result in closing schools?
- How do we ensure that our students have access to good healthy food given the link between nutrition and learning?
- Transportation and afterschool opportunities for kids –how much it would cost to run another shift of busses for afterschool?

### Group 1 Questions for BPS Office of Human Capital:

- What is the data on retention of provisional teachers of color through the two years of open hiring?
- How could we look at the culturally proficient element of the teacher evaluation system to weight it more heavily/make it a requirement for being rated a proficient teacher overall?

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Group 2 Notes:

➤ Cultural Proficiency

- There is no shared definition (potential to be superficial rhetoric), more importantly shared vision (beliefs and values) around cultural proficiency in BPS.
  - How does or how can BPS's focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) fit into cultural proficiency?
  - Suggested that OAGTF should define cultural proficiency in update of policy.
    - An objection was made of the OAGTF doing that work. The haste would marginalize the importance and significance of the work and the implications of that work on the district.
- Once definition/vision adopted, what does it look like in practice? Across all levels.
- How can we most effectively develop and share this vision across the district? Professional development (PD)? Is this the only way?
- This foundational work is important; adequate funding is necessary.
- How and to what extent is cultural proficiency included in an administrator's evaluation?
  - How are administrators held accountable to this element?
  - What supports are administrators provided around cultural proficiency? Specifically around developing a culturally responsive school environment.

*Joined by Michele Shannon, Assistant Superintendent of Leadership Development*

- Question posed to Michele about administrators and cultural proficiency support and accountability.
  - Administrative PD around cultural proficiency is sporadic.
  - Considering recent events at BLS, we obviously need a shared vision.
  - There is a need for culturally sustaining practices to support schools, students and families.
  - Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, is working on developing PDs around cultural proficiency.
  - Cultural proficiency is a focal element of the administrator's evaluation. Michele shared the BPS administrators' evaluation rubric.

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- School-level supports for cultural proficiency are available but are school/administrator dependent and optional.
- *(General conversation)* In determining updated policy, it's important to consider policy v. implementation. Challenge: make broad and comprehensive policies that address specific issues in anticipation of implementation (especially considering BPS past gaps/failures with implementation) – i.e. SMART goals, indicators, citing specific gaps and their connection to updated policy.
- Question posed to Michele: What does she feel is needed in BPS around cultural proficiency?
  - Specific definition, and what does it look like in practice, including indicators and “look-fors.”
  - A district-wide needs assessment – gather specific data around deficits and skills across the district, this data would allow for individualized PD plans, would allow for administrators to more effectively build capacity and utilize school-based structures (i.e. School Site Councils, Instructional Leadership Teams, Common Planning Times, Lead Teachers).
  - Adequate funding to develop/buy a comprehensive cultural proficiency curriculum
  - Strategic partnerships with equity organizations.
- *(General conversation)* Suggested to look at Quality School Plans (QSPs) of successful schools and identify what role cultural proficiency plays in their plans.
- Question posed to Michele, how are school leaders chosen?
  - 1<sup>st</sup> round: Applicants respond to general administrator application put out by Central Office. Central Office performs an internal screening. Invites selected applicants in for a performance day. From the results of that day, create a pool of potential candidates.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> round: School-based hiring committees (usually includes teachers and parents) interview candidates who apply from candidate pool.
  - Superintendent has the final say on placements/hiring of administrators. Superintendent can/will place interim administrators.
- *(General conversation)* The 2<sup>nd</sup> round hiring process is not consistent among schools across the district. Examples of administrators being placed without input from school community.
- Goal 2 (2006 Policy)
  - The wording from the Annenberg Report recommendation around School Leadership and Organizational Policies would make for strong wording in updated policy (see Combined Opportunity and Achievement Gap Goal/Recommendations).
    - Broaden language to consider diversity in BPS Central Office as well.

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- Question posed to Michele: In light of BPS initiative to recruit teachers of color, are there any similar initiatives specifically around the recruitment of administrators of color?
  - Michele not sure, will follow up for next meeting.
- Necessary to analyze bias across all levels and all decisions in BPS. Suggested, bi-annual checkpoint conversation of BPS leaders around equity and opportunity, specifically implementation.
- (General conversation around Dr. Ferguson's presentation on Disproportionality and Gaps) A student perspective on student disruptions: teachers do not identify with students, do not establish an environment/community for students to be successful – one strategy for success is small group learning.

Group 3 Notes:

Goal #5 rigorous, culturally relevant & culturally accurate

- Teaching and Learning opportunities for principals in collaboration with the district guided by a set of mutually agreed upon principles
- High expectations and metrics used to evaluate
- Process district will ensure specific instructional strategies
- Prepare educators to employ the variety of sensitive and cultural strategies embedded in all aspects of curriculum
- Revise deficit model vs. strength-based or inclusive

Task Force members then reconvened. As homework, Ms. Shakur asked members to draft goals individually and send them to Elizabeth Sullivan, executive secretary, who will share them with the group.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

### ADJOURN

At approximately 7:00 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary