



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

April 27, 2021

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on April 27, 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; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Dr. Carroll Blake; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. Gil Noam (joined after roll call); Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi (joined after roll call); and Kimberley Williams. Dorian Levy, Boston Student Advisory Council appointee to the OAF Task Force, was also in attendance.

Task Force Members Absent: Jennfier Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. James Jennings; Marinell Rousmaniere; and Sherman Zemler Wu.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; Harold Miller, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Nate Kuder, Chief Finance Officer; David Bloom, and Deputy Chief Financial Officer.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: March 30, 2021

Proposed Rubric Tool for OAG Task Force

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Boston School Committee Goals and Values, April 20, 2021

Stakeholder groups providing feedback to on the BSC's Goals & Values OR Boston Community

Finance Division PowerPoint, April 27, 2021

Campus Without Walls Powerpoint, April 27, 2021

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: MARCH 30, 2021

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the March 30, 2021 OAG Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson welcomed Dorian Levy as new student representative from the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC). Mr. Levy and Carolyn De Jesus Martinez will be joining the OAG task force as student representatives pending a confirmation vote by the Boston School Committee. Ms. Robinson asked non-Task Force members to turn their cameras off and wait until the public comment period to speak.

Deputy Chief Finance Officer David Bloom presented a report from the Division of Finance. The Division consists of six offices: Business Services; Budget; Capital Planning; Planning & Analysis; Grants & External Funds; and Financial Planning & Analysis. The Division of Finance ensures that the \$1.4 billion Boston Public Schools (BPS) operating budget is equitably allocated and managed to yield the best results for our students. The mission of Finance is to accurately provide financial and strategic support to schools, the community and central offices. The Finance Division aims to maximize, distribute, and safeguard the resources available to carry out the educational and support activities of the district. The Division supports all aspects of day-to-day operations to support the district's educational and financial goals.

Goal 1: Improve equitable allocation of resources across the district

- Ensure equity remains the focus of major Finance initiatives: the City's \$100M commitment to education, additional revenue from the Federal government, BuildBPS capital spending, and equitable procurement

Goal 2: Partner with schools, families and the community in all major initiatives

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- Create new and innovative approaches to working with our key stakeholders in the decision making process

Goal 3: Increase transparency and accountability of resource use and decision making

- Make BPS financial proposals and decisions available to the public in ways that are easily understandable in order to enable public accountability for the use of district resources; build on internal accountability structures to maintain faith in BPS as good financial stewards

Dr. Coleman asked about the district's model of foundation for quality. Mr. Bloom spoke about the district's investment in nursing and social worker positions and family liaison standards. He said that BPS still needs to determine the full suite of foundation for quality standards district-wide and how it relates to school enrollment. Dr. Coleman suggested that the district model out the standards over the years to track inequities.

Dr. Pignato asked about the use of the Opportunity Index (OI) as well as the baseline or criteria for providing support for high need schools. Mr. Bloom said that the OI is still core to the work of the Division of Finance.

Ms. Shakur asked about the status of partnership dollars. Mr. Bloom said the partnership dollars are being distributed consistently and are built into Weighted Student Funding. She asked about the City's diversity procurement efforts. Mr. Bloom said that efforts to expand diversity in the City's procurement process have been underway for the past year. Vendors of color should be included in every group of quotes. Ms. Shakur suggested that BPS develop diversity targets for procurement.

Mr. Levy asked how students can support the Finance Division's engagement efforts. Mr. Bloom suggested that the Division partner with BSAC to hold student town halls in the fall leading up to budget season to help inform the budget development. Mr. Kuder spoke about the impressive work of the Student Chief Financial Officer Marcus McNeill, a student at Fenway High School

Ms. Williams suggested editing some of the language in goals such as changing "improve" to "ensure." She also suggested that students be given the opportunity to direct how some of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are allocated.

Dr. Noam praised the presentation as encouraging. He spoke about the importance of objective data and expressed excitement about the potential impact of ESSER funding.

Dr. Grandson provided an update from the Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps. BPS is restarting its search for the next Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps and will be working on an aggressive timeline with the aim of filling the position this summer. Superintendent Cassellius plans to attend the next OAG Task Force meeting at which time she will present an update on the district's Opportunity Gaps work.

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Ms. Shakur asked about plans for the distribution of ESSER funding. Dr. Grandson said that the district's anti-racism work will require a significant investment. District leaders are considering using some ESSER funding but also exploring how to sustain the investments, noting that ESSER funds are one-time funding.

Dr. Pignato presented a draft rubric for the Group's consideration. The rubric was developed by a subset of members in response to the Task Force's collective desire to develop a framework for district presentations to the Task Force. She suggested testing out the rubric on a future presentation. Mr. Acevedo suggested that the Task Force start using the rubric and share it with department heads. Mr. Miller spoke about the importance of focusing on student outcomes. He clarified that the rubric should guide the presentation not limit them. Ms. Williams applauded the rubric format. She suggested adjusting some of the language to tailor it to presenters such as the student experience Ms. Robinson encouraged members to share questions or suggestions for strengthening the rubric. Ms. Shakur suggested that department heads use the rubric as guardrails. Mr. Miller said that Operations, Human Capital, Engagement are slated to present to the OAF Task Force in the near future. Ms. Shakur suggested that the Superintendent follow the rubric in her next update to the Task Force.

Ms. Shakur provided a brief overview of Campus Without Walls, the Open Opportunity – Massachusetts (OOMA) initiative to create space to connect, coordinate and align existing efforts across the education field. Through a network approach, OOMA connects grassroots with grassroots organizations while placing community expertise and leadership at the center of improvement efforts. By 2021, OOMA aims to invest in demonstration sites across the Commonwealth to remove barriers to effective partnership, identify innovative approaches to advance racial equity and prepare underserved youth for work and life as well as inform local and state policy for systems-wide change. A pilot of the initiative has started involving 10 BPS schools, some non-BPS schools, and 13 community partners serving over 1,500 students. Opportunities vary across schools. Ms. Shakur will present a full report at the May 25th OAG Task Force meeting.

Ms. Robinson provided an update on the School Committee's goals and value which has been updated with feedback from various stakeholders, including the OAG Task Force. Dr. Grandson said that targets have been added for specific student groups. He said that Ms. Shakur had suggested adding a column to show the gap in each area. He asked the Task Force to consider how best to demonstrate the gaps (e.g. against white students? all students? statewide average? etc.). Mr. Miller spoke about targeted universalism and the need for universal goals. Dr. Coleman suggested establishing a criteria for all students, then developing staggered strategies to close those gaps. Ms. Williams said that showing White and Asian data would re-emphasize the need for equitable resources, supports and pedagogical shifts. She advocated for using an inclusive and differentiated model which in turns eliminates opportunity gaps. Dr. Pignato noted that Asians are missing an urgent imperative. Mr. Levy said that BPS needs to provide equitable resources and break stereotypes. Rev. Bodrick suggested that the district look at other measures that are not captured by test scores.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

- John Mudd, advocate, spoke about the need to measure a proficiency gap in addition to achievement gap when comparing groups to ensure that all students reach proficiency. He emphasized the importance of disaggregating the data.

ADJOURN

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary