



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

May 21, 2019

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a meeting on May 21, 2019 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, Room 2-12, Roxbury, Massachusetts. 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

OAG Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Samuel Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Marinell Rousmaniere; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Carline Pignato; Dr. Gil Noam; Kimberly Williams; and Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi.

OAG Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Jennifer Aponte; Liliana Mickle; Carroll Blake; Sherman Zemler Wu; and Rev. Willie Bodrick.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Harold Miller, senior director, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Ilyitch Tabora, Office of Opportunity Gaps; Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Academic Officer.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAF Task Force Meeting Minutes: April 9, 2019

OAG Task Force Subgroups

Proposed Process to Build the 2019 OAG Policy Implementation Plan

Office of Opportunity Gaps PowerPoint, May 21, 2019

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CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She announced that the co-chairs would defer the approval of meeting minutes until a quorum was present.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson introduced Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent-Designate Dr. Brenda Cassellius. Task Force members briefly introduced themselves to the incoming superintendent. Dr. Cassellius thanked the OAG Task Force for its work and offered her support moving forward. She discussed her commitment to equity taking an “all hands on deck” approach. She said that she wants to build a positive school and community culture that puts children and families first. She also said that she is looking to elevate the Office of Equity.

Mr. Acevedo provided Dr. Cassellius with some background information on the OAG Task Force, which was established in 2015. The Task Force spent a year revising the OAG policy, which was approved by the School Committee in 2016, and is comprised of six major goals, each with corresponding objectives. The Office of Opportunity Gaps then created an implementation plan. The Task Force now serves as a monitoring body, working closely with the Office of Opportunity Gaps.

Dr. Cassellius affirmed her commitment to addressing poverty and other socio-economic barriers to education. She then departed the meeting.

Dr. Rose presented a PowerPoint presentation updating the work of the Office of Opportunity Gaps. He explained that the Office’s work is centered on capacity building, systemic oversight, and managing innovative programming/practices. He discussed his team’s work on early warning indicators and tiered interventions. He said that the Office is working to build the district’s capacity to do this work across all schools and build coherent student support. Approximately half the Office’s budget is dedicated to funding Excellence for All (EFA). Under the district’s current reporting structure, Academic Response Teams, comprised of content experts, currently sit under OG Office, but will likely move to Academics. He also discussed the importance of Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP), noting that his team is conducting a teacher survey on implicit bias. Task Force members requested data on Advanced Work Class (AWC) enrollment over the past three years, which Dr. Rose agreed to provide. He discussed changes to the Opportunity Index and invited Task Force members to explore the tool further by visiting www.bostonpublicschools.org/oi. He also discussed the Building Assets, Reducing Risk (BARR) initiative, a strengths-based model that provides schools with a comprehensive approach to meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students.

The Task Force engaged in a discussion about the need for more teacher diversity and wrap-around services for students. Dr. Rose explained that his goal as leader of the Office of Opportunity Gaps is to focus primarily on capacity building and accountability.

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Dr. Rose proposed the following process to build the 2019 OAG Policy Implementation Plan:

1. Initial meetings between BPS department leaders and the Office of Opportunity Gaps staff
2. Department leaders will participate in feedback sessions with the OAG Task Force (possibly the full Task Force or subgroups)
3. Editing and finalizing

Dr. Rose will then finalize the updated implementation plan for presentation to the Superintendent and the School Committee.

Ms. Williams suggested having senior district officials participate in the meetings to craft implementation goals in an effort to increase accountability.

Dr. Grandson said that the district needs to clearly articulate its goals in strategic plan with funding tied to it.

The co-chairs then shifted the discussion to the five subgroups of the OAG Task Force: Cultural Proficiency and Human Capital; Dismantling Structures; Students, Families, Communities; Opportunity Gaps; and Academics and Data. Mr. Acevedo asked Dr. Rose for feedback on subgroup structure. Dr. Rose explained that his implementation plan can be broken down into three main areas: Cultural proficiency; dismantling structural barriers; and ecological supports. Several members expressed support for aligning the subgroups with Dr. Rose's focus areas.

The members discussed the best way to move the work forward. Ms. Rousmaniere suggested scheduling two or three workshop dates during the summer where Task Force members, department leaders, and staff from the Office of Opportunity Gaps can work together to review and draft goals, then reconvening the full Task Force in the fall to review the work. Members expressed support for this approach.

Ms. Williams suggested that the district conduct exit interviews with school leaders of color who leave the district.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 9, 2019

Approved – With a quorum now present, the Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the April 9, 2019 OAG Task Force meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, asked the OAG Task Force to communicate to the incoming Superintendent that the Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps position should be elevated to a cabinet-level position and ask her to make the Office of Opportunity Gaps less

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program-centric. He also urged the OAG Task Force to hold the district more accountable, putting more focus on function and less on departments.

Ann Eldridge Malone, member, Citywide Parent Council (CPC), discussed the need to dismantle structural racism and offered the support of the CPC.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, discussed the role of school site councils and expressed support for scaling up the Excellence for All initiative.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:15 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary