



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

**March 28, 2023**

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on March 28, 2023 at 3:45 p.m. 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: Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Kimberley Williams; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Task Force Members Absent: Dr. Carroll Blake; and Co-Chair Sam Acevedo. Student Representative Khasim Saeed was also absent.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: Chief of Staff Rochelle Nwosu; Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement Ana Tavares, Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Charles Grandson; Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Yozmin Gay; Interim Chief Human Capital Officer Rae Catchings; Interim Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer Megan Reed; Acting Managing Director of Retention, Cultivation & Diversity Programs Rashaun Martin; and Sonya Dhanpat, Team Lead, Office of Retention, Cultivation & Diversity Programs.

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: March 21, 2023

District Organizational Update; Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps Organizational Update and Goals; and Office of Opportunity Gaps Update, March 28, 2023

Educator Diversity Recruitment & Retention Initiatives 2023 PowerPoint, March 28, 2023

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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 not present, therefore Mrs. Robinson stated that the Task Force would delay the approval of minutes until a quorum was present.

Ms. Robinson held a moment of silence for the victims of the recent school shooting in Nashville, TN.

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Ms. Shakur said that the agenda for the next OAG Task Force meeting will likely include a Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT) update, Office of Opportunity Gaps programmatic updates, and a continuation of data responses from the Office of Human Capital. Future meeting agendas will likely include updates on school-based equity roundtables and social-emotional learning. She said that a chair is needed for the Task Force's teacher diversity subgroup. Ms. Williams offered to chair the subgroup from May onward. Dr. Gonsalves chairs the data and accountability subgroup.

Ms. Robinson said that the Superintendent is feeling ill and will not be joining the meeting today as planned. Instead, Chief of Staff Rochelle Nwosu presented an update on the Superintendent's priorities and organizational structure.

She outlined the Superintendent's key priorities through an equity-centered lens:

- Prioritizing and accelerating academic performance
- Strengthening access to social-emotional learning; both access and working to rebuild student's social emotional skills
- Streamlining operations and ensuring student safety; physical and psychologically
- Developing authentic family and community engagement practices; listening.. Taking feedback
- Improving internal and external communication with families and staff
- Increasing accountability and elevating equitable practice for both central office and our schools

In an effort to bring more accountability, clarity and transparency to the district, the Superintendent has adopted a distributive leadership model and a regional network model to ensure that schools receive the support they need to serve students, particularly those who haven't been served well. Three deputies report directly to the Superintendent: Senior Deputy Superintendent of Academics Linda Chen; Deputy Superintendent of Operations Sam Depina;

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and Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement Ana Tavares. Dr. Tavares has spent many years in the community as a school leader, school superintendent, and advocate for culturally and linguistically affirming practices. She leads three divisions: Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps; Family Advancement; and Community Engagement.

Ms. Williams stated that she represents the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM). She praised the Superintendent's commitment to making equity a through line for the district. She asked for more information about the new Senior Advisor of Organizational Development and Equity position. Ms. Nwosu explained that senior advisors report to the Chief of Staff, with a through line to the Superintendent and work throughout the organization. Ms. Shakur asked for more information about the organizational aspects of the position and how they will liaise with the Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps (ESOG). Ms. Nwosu explained that the position will be responsible for aligning goals and building relationships across departments, adding that some aspects of the position are still to be determined.

Ms. Williams expressed concern that ESOG does not have a direct reporting line to the Superintendent. Dr. Tavares explained the distributed leadership structure, which provides clarification and unification.

Dr. Pignato asked how the Office of Family Engagement intersects with ESOG and Opportunity Gaps policy. Dr. Tavares explained that both she and Dr. Grandson support the work of the Task Force.

Dr. Jennings commented that he doesn't see how the new organizational structure supports the district's racial equity and social justice work. Ms. Nwosu and Dr. Tavares explained the cross-departmental work that is taking place. Ms. Shakur said Ms. Nwosu will make sure that the co-chairs have time to meet with the Superintendent in advance of the April Task Force meeting, at which time the members will discuss the job description for the Senior Advisor for Organizational Development and Equity.

Ms. Nwosu and Dr. Tavares departed at about 4:35 p.m.

Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Charles Grandson presented an update on ESOG organizational charts and goals. ESOG comprises four offices - Strategy and Innovation, Opportunity Gaps, Equity, and Retention, Cultivation, & Diversity - with the shared goal of neutralizing barriers of poverty and racism that persist despite court rulings, laws, and public policy efforts. He shared goals for each office for School Year 2022-23.

Dr. Gonsalves asked for more information about the Racial Equity Planning Impact Committee. Dr. Grandson said that the committee will convene to conduct an equity analysis that will be added to the REPT dashboard. He said that the Committee will be looking at specific programs that were already approved or need approval by the School Committee.

Dr. Grandson clarified for Ms. Rousmaniere that two ESOG positions are funded by ESSER.

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Dr. Noam requested an update on the data scientist position. Dr. Grandson said that the district is currently in conversation with finalists for the position, which will report to the Office of Opportunity Gaps and the Office of Data and Accountability.. He said he envisions that the data scientist will support the work of the OAG Task Force’s data subcommittee. Ms. Shakur questioned the effectiveness of the reporting structure.

Ms. Shakur said that in the interest of time, the co-chairs will defer Dr. Gay’s presentation until the April 25th meeting.

Ms. Williams suggested deepening the work of the Task Force to review all district policies through an equity lens.

Interim Chief Human Capital Officer Rae Catchings, Interim Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer Megan Reed, and Acting Managing Director of Retention, Cultivation & Diversity Programs Rashaun Martin presented responses to OAG Task Force data requests regarding Educator Diversity Recruitment & Retention Initiatives from the March 21, 2023 OAG Task Force meeting. The team committed to responding to all outstanding requests, noting that some responses will take additional time to prepare. Ms. Shakur requested that diversity data include linguistic diversity.

Dr. Gonsalves spoke about licensing challenges that some of the students in her teacher pipeline program at UMass Boston have encountered. Ms. Catchings said she would work with her team to resolve the issue offline.

Ms. Shakur requested data showing gaps between the racial and linguistic demographics of students and teachers broken down by school. Ms. Reed agreed to follow up. Ms. Catchings noted that staff linguistic fluency is currently self-reported, adding that the district is working to validate the fluency. Ms. Catchings clarified for Ms. Williams that RCD, which formerly stood for recruitment, cultivation, and diversity, now stands for retention, cultivation and diversity. Dr. Grandson has elevated the retention work.

Ms. Shakur asked about advertising. Ms. Reed said that BPS has a strong social media presence and continues to use traditional media.

Ms. Shakur summarized next steps:

At the April 25th OAG Task Force meeting, Dr. Gay will present an update on the Office of Opportunity Gaps, including goals and the Office of Human Capital will share responses to outstanding data requests. Ms. Shakur suggested adding the Black student achievement agenda and the Latino student achievement agenda to the May meeting. Dr. Gonsalves requested that the Task Force receive an update on the Exam Schools Initiative.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Approved** - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, by roll call, the minutes of the March 21, 2023 meeting.

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## PUBLIC COMMENT

- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the organizational chart and the importance of data collection and action plans. He encouraged the Task Force to review reports about MCAS achievement gaps, chronic absenteeism, and graduation rates.
- Harold Miller encouraged the Task Force to focus on special education, teacher diversity, academic outcomes, and transformation schools.
- Karen Maund, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, noted that the Garrity Order specifically identified black staff and not just educators of color.

## CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

*Approved* - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary