



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

September 27, 2022

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a remote meeting on Zoom on September 27, 2022 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 Ayele Shakur; Dr. Carroll Blake; Rev. Willie Brodrick (joined meeting in progress); Dr. Lisa Gonslves; Dr. Gilm Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Filiberto Santiago Lizardi (joined meeting in progress); and Kimberley Williams (joined meeting in progress). Student representative Khasim Saeed, a senior at Boston Community Leadership Academy, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. James Jennings; and Marinelle Rousmaniere.

BPS Staff Present: Dr. Charles Grandson, Chief Equity & Strategy Officer; Yozmin Gay, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps; and Farah Assiraj, Deputy Chief Academic Officer and Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME).

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: June 6, 2022; and June 27, 2022

Office of Opportunity Gaps Update PowerPoint, September 27, 2022

Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME) Strategic Plan - Draft

OMME Strategic Plan PowerPoint

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CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Because a quorum of the Task Force was not present, the co-chairs postponed the approval of meeting minutes.

REPORTS

Office of Opportunity Gaps Update - Yozmin Gay, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Opportunity Gaps (OG); presented an update on the work of the OG Office. She reviewed the OG policy charge, OG staff, OAG policy implementation, OAG Policy Goal Implementation, regional implementation of supports; and data analysis and accountability.

Dr. Blake requested that the Task Force receive an organizational chart of the OG Office with staff names and titles.

Dr. Piganto asked how the OG Office goals are connected to other BPS goals. Ms. Gay said that the OG goals are aligned with DESE Systemic Improvement Plan (SIP) and OG policy goals. She spoke about the importance of creating greater accountability for school-based equity roundtables. She said that she is looking forward to conversations with new Superintendent Mary Skipper about her vision for equity and closing gaps. Dr. Pignato requested greater clarity regarding the role of the Task Force.

Dr. Grandson said that changes are coming to the Office of Recruitment, Cultivation & Diversity Programs and he will provide the Task Force with a written update by the next meeting.

Deputy Chief Academic Officer and Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME) Farah Assiraj, presented a draft three-year strategic plan for OMME (formerly the Office of English Learners). The BPS/DESE Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) requires BPS to create a Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learners and present it to the School Committee by mid-October.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Bilingual Education as the primary goal for the strategic plan
- An overview for English Learner Education bilingual program implementation
- Five strategic priorities with metrics, action areas, impact and next steps
 1. Expand bilingual programs that support students and enable their achievement of the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy;
 2. Ensure that all Multilingual Learners with Disabilities (MLWD) receive appropriate services and support, including native language;
 3. Improve instruction and outcomes across multilingual learner programming;
 4. Develop student-centered systems with an equity lens that ensures Multilingual Learners have required services and access to opportunities; and

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5. Partner with youth, families, communities, CBOs, and education partners to increase opportunities for program options towards college and career readiness.

Ms. Assiraj said that OMME is soliciting feedback from a variety of stakeholders prior to its October 12th presentation to the School Committee. Shared an online [feedback form](#) and gave a deadline of Friday, September 30, 2022. She also invited members to join an OMME Strategic Plan workgroup.

Ms. Williams spoke about the importance of the Task Force having time to devote to the OG policy and less time reacting to district presentations.

Update on Superintendent Skipper - Ms. Shakur informed the Task Force that the OAG Task Force co-chairs recently held an introductory meeting with Superintendent Skipper about the work of the OAG Task Force. She said the co-chairs and Superintendent have a shared goal of creating better alignment between the OAG and ELL Task Forces and the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac). She said that she would like the OAG Task Force to see ELL Task Force's feedback to the draft OMME Strategic Plan. She emphasized the importance of the OAG Task Force receiving presentations for review in advance of meetings.

OAG Task Force Goal Setting for School Year (SY) 2022-23 - Ms. Shakur asked members to share the top three items they would like to see the Task Force focus on this school year.

Ms. Pignato:

1. Improving academic outcomes for ELL, special education, and high risk students
2. Reducing special education referrals
3. Transportation

Dr. Blake:

1. Raising achievement for black and brown students/targeted programming
2. Data on student achievement
3. Improved reporting

Dr. Gonsalves:

1. Closing the achievement gap
2. Office of Human Capital
3. Less time receiving reports; more time taking action

Dr. Noam:

1. Improving mechanisms to act on data and develop priorities; create/improve infrastructure of support to use data
2. Professional Development
3. Student Mental Health

Rev. Bodrick:

1. Increasing accountability
2. Covid recovery e.g. social-emotional health and attendance

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3. Data reporting

Ms. Williams:

1. Diversity recruitment and retention
2. Chronically underperforming schools
3. OAG working groups

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi:

1. Equity in school staffing e.g. guidance counselors
2. Parent, student and teacher feedback surveys
3. Professional development
4. High school graduation rates
5. After school programs/targeted interventions

Ms. Robinson suggested that the Task Force narrow down all of the suggestions to three priority areas for this school year. Members discussed the importance of regularly reviewing data related to gaps.

Ms Shakur suggested that the Task Force establish working groups focused on data and accountability, human capital, transportation, and academics. She expressed a need for a clear process for district presentations to the Task Force. She spoke about the need to add new Task force members, explaining that current members are welcome to either cycle off, or stay on with a commitment to participate in subgroups. Noting that an update of OG policy is required, she suggested that the Task Force establish a working group to begin the policy revision process.

Dr. Blake cautioned that the Task Force needs to be clear on its mission and goals before adding new members. Ms. Shakur agreed and recommended that the agenda for the next Task Force meeting focus exclusively on Task Force resetting and goal setting. She asked district staff to email the OG Division Update to the Task Force in advance of the meeting. Ms. Robinson said that Superintendent Skipper wants to examine the role of Task Forces. Members agreed that the next meeting should be devoted to Task Force business with no district presentations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding a variety of education-related issues.

Edith Bazile, advocate, testified regarding healing-centered engagement and called for a focus black students.

Barbara Fields, advocate, testified regarding the need to focus on black students, review of policy goals and implementation, the Green New Deal, and utilization of the racial equity planning tools.

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CLOSING AND 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