



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

October 25, 2022

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on October 25, 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; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Carline Pignato; Kimberley Williams (joined the meeting in progress).

Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Jennifer Aponte; Rev. Willie Brodrick; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Gil Noam; Marinelle Rousmaniere; and Filiberto Santiago Lizardi. Student representative Khasim Saeed, a senior at Boston Community Leadership Academy, was also absent.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

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

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.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Shakur reviewed the agenda:

**Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Virtual Meeting
Zoom**

October 25, 2022

- I. Recentring the work of the OAG Task Force
- II. Establishing Task Force working norms
- III. Finalizing Goals and Priorities for the Task Force for School Year 2022-2023
- IV. OAG Policy Implementation - Establishing Working Groups aligned with OAG Policy Goals and the Strategic Improvement Plan

Members reviewed aloud the original charge and priority goals of the 2016 OAG Task Force policy, noting that gaps have widened since the policy was written. Members discussed the importance of BPS hiring teachers of color and expressed a desire to receive updated data pertaining to the gaps. Dr. Gonsalves encouraged the Task Force to re-center its work.

Ms. Robinson summarized the focus areas proposed by members at the last meeting:

- academic outcomes for marginalized groups
- achievement gaps: reporting, action, and accountability
- transportation
- recruitment of diverse staff and professional development
- pandemic recovery and social and emotional health and wellness

Ms. Robinson, who also serves as chair of the Boston School Committee, explained that the Committee will adjust its meeting structure to place more focus on student outcomes. She described the district's recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results as a clarion call for change.

Ms. Pignato spoke about the importance of setting measurable goals. Ms. Robinson agreed, adding that the district also needs to set interim goals. Dr. Jennings said it's critical to add measures to performance criteria. He suggested focusing on schools with higher churn rates (students who switch schools during the school year). Dr. Gonsalves agreed and suggested that the Task Force review data on key trends such as graduation rates and churn rates. Dr. Pignato and Ms. Williams suggested examining MAP and MCAS scores.

Ms. Williams expressed concern about Task Force member attendance, noting that often the group fails to reach a quorum. Ms. Shakur agreed that attendance is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Dr. Gonsalves suggested that the Task Force examine the following data:

1. Achievement measures between student groups, such as MCAS scores in math and reading.
2. Attendance data
3. Discipline data e.g. suspensions by groups
4. Graduation data

**Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Virtual Meeting
Zoom**

October 25, 2022

Dr. Blake spoke about the importance of receiving accurate and reader-friendly data. Ms. Robinson recommended that the Task Force partner with Assistant Superintendent of Data Strategy and Implementation Monica Hogan, who is leading the district's [Systemic Improvement Plan \(SIP\)](#) work with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Dr. Pignato expressed concerns about school safety and suggested that the Task Force examine data on transportation, safety, and reading.

Dr. Jennings shared [data](#) from his research on MCAS performance among marginalized students.

Ms Williams suggested that the Task Force create a data subcommittee. Dr. Blake suggested using a data template to ensure consistency. Dr. Gonsalves suggested using a “data dump.”

Ms. Shakur recommended that the Task Force consider forming working groups on teacher diversity, data and accountability, and literacy.

Ms. Robinson recommended that the OAG Task Force collaborate with other groups doing similar work, such as the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force and Boston Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPAC).

Ms. Shakur explained to the members how the Task Force previously operated with subgroups, holding monthly meetings with department heads. Working group members would then report out at the monthly meetings of the full Task Force. She estimated that working groups require members to attend an additional 10 meetings per year and asked members to consider if they are willing to commit to this structure. Members discussed whether the full Task Force would then meet on a quarterly basis or every other month. Members agreed that every other month would be preferable, while the working groups could set their own meeting cadence. Ms. Shakur recommended that subgroups meet at least monthly in order to move the work forward.

Ms. Shakur asked how the subgroup structure would operate under MA Open Meeting Law. School Committee Executive Secretary Liz Sullivan said BPS Legal Advisor Lisa Maki has provided updated guidance that a subcommittee consisting of less than the quorum would not have to follow Open Meeting Law.

Ms. Shakur invited members to volunteer to join the following subgroups:

Data and Accountability:

- Dr. Gonsalves, Chair
- Dr. Jennings
- Dr. Pignato

Teacher Diversity:

- Dr. Blake
- Ms. Williams
- Dr. Gonsalves

**Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Virtual Meeting
Zoom**

October 25, 2022

Members agreed that the chair of the teacher diversity subgroup will be determined at a later time. Dr. Blake agreed to coordinate the first subgroup meeting. Members discussed the benefits of having an OAG Task Force member attend ELL Task Force meetings and report back to the OAG Task Force.

As a next step, Ms. Robinson agreed to investigate transformation school monitoring and coordination with the ELL Task Force. Ms. Shakur reminded members that the Task Force must also refresh the OAG policy, which is set to be updated every six years.

Ms. Robinson and Ms. Shakur spoke about the need for members to recommit to the Task Force with regular attendance and full participation. Ms. Shakur suggested putting in writing the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for Task Force members. She recommended that members be required to serve on a subgroup and attend 90 percent of meetings.

Ms. Shakur said that the Task Force still needs to establish working norms, identify an area of focus for a third subcommittee, and determine what the monitoring process will be.

Dr. Pignato said that departments need to be held accountable for closing gaps and suggested that the Superintendent's designee should present SMART goals. She asked for an update on the exam school policy. Ms. Robinson said that the Committee will receive its annual update on exam school data in June.

Ms. Robinson spoke about the value of the district vetting presentations with the community through community equity round tables and soliciting feedback before formally presenting to a larger body.

The co-chairs agreed to continue the discussion at the next OAG Task Force meeting, which will again not feature any reports from district leaders to allow more time for discussion.

Ms. Shakur recommended inviting Superintendent Skipper to the next Task Force meeting to hear and weigh in on the direction of the Task Force moving forward. Ms. Robinson agreed to invite the Superintendent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, expressed concerns that the SIP does not specifically address achievement gaps, staff diversity, or black achievement.

Barbara Fields, advocate, testified regarding teacher and staff diversity.

Edith Bazile, advocate, encouraged the Task Force to focus less on data and more on equity for black students and racism.

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

**Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Virtual Meeting
Zoom**

October 25, 2022

Approved - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Sullivan".

Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary