



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

December 20, 2022

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on December 20, 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: Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Kimberley Williams; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Task Force Members Absent: Rev. Willie Bodrick; Hardin Coleman; and Marinelle Rousmaniere. Student Representative Khasim Saeed was also absent.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: Superintendent Mary Skipper, Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement Ana Tavares, Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Charles Grandson, Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps Yozmin Gay; Disproportionality Specialist Velecia Saunders; and Manager of Equity & Strategy Donna Lashus.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: November 29, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Rev. Willie Bodrick, Dr. Hardin Coleman, Marinelle Rousmaniere, and student Representative Khasim Saeed were absent. Dr. James Jennings, Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Kimberley Williams were absent for roll call but later joined the meeting in progress. All other members were present.

December 20, 2022

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, on roll call, the minutes of the November 29, 2022 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Dr. Grandson presented an update on the Division of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps (ESOG). He explained that his team is reviewing the alignment among Superintendent's Skipper's priorities, the existing BPS Strategic Plan, and the Systemic Improvement Plan (SIP) between BPS and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Another priority is advancing the Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT). Dr. Grandson is working to develop a REPT dashboard to promote transparency. His team is also exploring an OAG Implementation Plan dashboard.

Dr. Grandson congratulated Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps Dr. Yozmin Gay for recently earning her PhD. Dr. Gay shared a brief update on the division's efforts to strengthen and expand School-Based Equity Roundtables. Disproportionality Specialist Velecia Saunders and Manager of Equity & Strategy Donna Lashus said that in addition to the roundtables, their team is also conducting school walkthroughs. Dr. Gay said that the district is in the process of hiring a new OAG policy director who will focus on inclusion, equitable literacy, data and accountability, and leading the REPT process with the Green New Deal.

Superintendent Mary Skipper joined the meeting and outlined the following 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 soc 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

The Superintendent affirmed her commitment to advancing racial equity and eliminating opportunity gaps. In an effort to bring more accountability, clarity and transparency to the district, the Superintendent adopted a distributive leadership model and a regional network model to ensure that schools receive the support they need to serve students, particularly those

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

December 20, 2022

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; 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.

The regional network model comprises nine regions. Each region is supported by a school superintendent and an operational leader who flags issues and concerns that school leaders may be experiencing for a group of 10 -12 schools. Each region has key liaisons serving to connect and support the region of schools in areas such as Human Capital, Finance, Special Education and Family Engagement. The Superintendent is committed to expanding liaisons from the Opportunity Gaps office to the nine regions to support the schools in this work as Equity and Strategy Managers.

Rashaun Martin is currently leading the Office of Recruitment, Cultivation and Diversity (RCD) Programs. RCD is still led by ESOG, however the Office of Human Capital will drive recruitment as an HR function, and work collaboratively with ESOG to ensure that BPS recruits the most diverse hires possible. The Superintendent affirmed her commitment to making data-informed decisions centered in equity.

Mr. Acevedo asked the Superintendent how the Task Force can be supportive. The Superintendent said that we must all hold ourselves accountable and be concrete in terms of metrics and outcomes. She said that she looks forward to receiving the Task Force's revisions to the OG policy.

Dr. Noam asked the Superintendent her thoughts on integrating social-emotional learning with academic learning. The Superintendent cited the mentoring and counseling programs Becoming a Man (BAM) and Working on Womanhood (WOW) as models of integrated learning. She spoke about the importance of providing rigorous, grade-level, linguistically and culturally affirming content and trauma-sensitive practices.

Dr. Blake spoke about the important role that community partners play in supporting students. The Superintendent agreed. He encouraged the district to invest in a diverse teaching and leadership core.

Ms. Shakur proposed that the Task Force collaborate with department heads to co-construct the revised policy.

The Superintendent thanked the Task Force for its partnership and departed the meeting at about 5:09 p.m.

Dr. Blake asked about ESOG org structure and how decisions are made. Dr. Grandson said that the ESOG org chart will be available after the Superintendent presents her district-wide org chart in the new year.

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

December 20, 2022

Dr. Gonsalves requested an update on the OG data scientist position. Dr. Grandson said that the position has been posted and his team is currently reviewing resumes. He invited members of the data subcommittee to be part of the hiring team.

Ms. Williams expressed concern about the shift in reporting lines, saying that symbolically, positionality represents power. She expressed concern that the district is shifting its language away from anti-racism. Dr. Pignato echoed Ms. Williams' comments. Dr. Tavares clarified her work and described her partnership with Dr. Grandson. Dr. Blake spoke about the perception of power and expressed eagerness to review the complete organizational chart. Dr. Grandson said that he is still part of the executive team and expressed optimism for the new structure, which he said will expedite responses and decision-making.

Ms. Shakur shifted the discussion to OAG Task Force membership and term limits. She suggested establishing two-year terms with unlimited options for renewal based on strong attendance and participation. She recommended that the Task Force finalize language in January to present to the School Committee for consideration. She said that she and Executive Secretary Liz Sullivan would reach out to Task Force members who have not been actively participating to affirm their commitment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people expressed serious concerns about reporting lines:

- Edith Bazile, Black Advocates for Educational Excellence
- Barbara Fields, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts
- John Mudd, advocate

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

Approved - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary