



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

June 27, 2023

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on June 27, 2023 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. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; 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; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; and Dr. James Jennings. Student Representative Khasim Saeed was also absent.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: Senior Deputy Superintendent of Academics Dr. Linda Chen; Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement Dr. Ana Tavares; Senior Advisor for Organizational Development & Equity Dr. Mariel Novas; Chief of Teaching and Learning Lesley Miller; Chief of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps Dr. Charles Grandson; Chief of Capital Planning Delavern Stanislaus; Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Dr. Yozmin Gay; Director of Early Literacy Brooke Childs; Higginson Inclusion K0-2 School Principal Karla Jenkins; and Data Scientist Emerson Moniz.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

June 27, 2023 OAG Task Force Meeting Agenda

May 23, 2023 OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes

Draft OAG Task Force SY23-24 Meeting Calendar with Proposed Topics

Early Childhood Literacy PowerPoint

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. A quorum was not immediately present but soon after, a quorum was in attendance.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, by roll call, the minutes of the May 23, 2023 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi commended students at New Mission High School for their performance on the 2023 MCAS exam.

Chief of Capital Planning Delavern Stanislaus presented an update on the Green New Deal. In May of 2022, Mayor Wu and the Superintendent Cassellius laid out a \$2 billion plan to overhaul BPS facilities, including new construction and renovation projects, as well as district-wide upgrades. The plan will be kickstarted by a \$605 million investment in the FY23-27 Capital Plan to launch major new projects, with new staffing and planning tools to deliver urgent improvements for BPS communities. The Green New Deal for BPS will accelerate work to decarbonize the City's building sector, while delivering urgent improvements to environmental health, justice and safety for BPS students, families and educators. BPS facilities make up nearly half of City-owned building emissions. School construction, renovation, and retrofit projects will support citywide climate action while also building community resilience to extreme weather events.

The projects reflected in the FY23-27 Capital Plan include 14 new school construction or major renovation projects, as well as significant upgrades to athletic facilities at White Stadium. Also included in the plan are district-wide capital investments that will bring facilities improvements to nearly every BPS community, including energy and water efficiency upgrades, the installation of solar panels, renovations to bathrooms and kitchens, school yard improvements, and the installation of air conditioners and drinking water fountains. These projects represent a significant increase in City funds for school facilities projects and an acceleration of major new projects. Only nine new schools were built in Boston in the last 40 years, leaving decades of deferred maintenance to address urgently.

The Green New Deal includes plans to renovate and expand Madison Park Technical Vocational High School at its current location, expanding vocational and technical programming and adult education and creating community hubs within the complex. Mayor Wu and Superintendent Skipper have proposed relocating and expanding the John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science at a renovated West Roxbury Education Complex (WREC). Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the City held conversations with stakeholders, alumni, teachers, and staff and conducted a walkthrough of the site with the O'Bryant Family. The proposal was shared with school staff the day before the announcement was shared with students and families. The team has held its first of many community meetings and is working to respond to questions and concerns that have been raised about the proposal.

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The four principles of the high school vision are:

1. Academic rigor
2. Partnerships to support schools
3. College and career pathways for all
4. State-of-the-art facilities

BPS is currently conducting a K-12 design study and a facilities condition assessment, both of which will inform the district-wide facilities plan that will shape decisions around mergers, closures, and renovations moving forward. In April, the Capital Planning team conducted a survey of staff, community partners, families, and students that received more than 9,000 responses. The team will engage the community to solicit feedback on a decision-making rubric that is forthcoming.

Ms. Shakur asked if the district would change its roll out process moving forward. Ms. Stanislaus said that the team always needs to pause and reflect on its work. She said that engaging with small groups of stakeholders may have harmed the process and led to the creation of rumors. She said that the team will work to rebuild trust and work in partnership with the community. Ms. Shakur asked about the role of the Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps (ESOG). Chief of ESOG Dr. Charles Grandson said that his team has been involved in design team meetings and is working on an ongoing Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT) for Madison Park and the O'Bryant. The proposal will go before the School Committee for a vote. Ms. Shakur asked about the timeline for the master facilities plan. Ms. Stanislaus said that the facilities condition assessment will be finalized and posted publicly at the end of August and the district-wide facilities master plan will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Ms. Robinson said that many people in the community heard the news about the O'Bryant School as an announcement of a project that is happening rather than a proposal. She did not hear the word proposal. It felt like a project was being announced. She cautioned the district to be mindful of engaging the whole community for future facilities projects. She said she has asked the district to provide a playbook about decision making and communication to help clarify proposal or project announcements. She said that communication and sharing timelines are crucial so that people can manage expectations. Ms. Stanislaus said that the team is working to complete a decision making playbook by end of the year.

Mr. Acevedo said that some people in the community are proposing alternative sites for the O'Bryant School other than the WREC. He spoke about historical tension between West Roxbury and Roxbury.

Dr. Coleman asked for more information about root cause analysis. Ms. Stanislaus explained how the district has collected feedback from the community about what would help schools create better outcomes for students. The information will help inform a facilities decision-making rubric. Dr. Coleman said he would like to see data that demonstrated how these changes will improve equitable access to high quality learning. He expressed concern about transportation access to West Roxbury.

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Ms. Williams said that earlier today she defended her dissertation examining the community engagement process related to school closings in BPS in 2010. She expressed concern about the community not being part of the conversation. Ms. Stanislaus suggested that her team meet with Ms. Williams to learn more about her research. She discussed some of the district's engagement strategies to meet families where they are.

Dr. Pignato asked about the use of the racial equity planning tool and how the district plans to manage tension between the Roxbury and West Roxbury communities. Ms. Shakur made note of the time and asked staff to follow up. Mr. Santiago-Lizardi said that the WREC has many amenities that make it an excellent location for an exam school. Ms. Stanislaus thanked Task Force members for their questions and said she looks forward to working collaboratively to close achievement gaps.

Update from the Division of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps - Dr. Grandson reviewed the draft job description for the regional equity specialist positions. Their role is to create an equity infrastructure that brings support to schools. Dr. Coleman asked about the relationship between equity specialists and regional superintendents. Dr. Grandson explained that as part of the regional network strategy, all major central office departments have a liaison that is a consulting coach and the regional equity specialist will be added to that list.

Boston Public Schools Bright Spots: Early Childhood Literacy at Henry L. Higginson Inclusion School (K2) and How to Scale What's Working - Chief of Teaching and Learning Lesley Miller introduced Director of Early Literacy Brooke Childs who explained the science of reading, a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and writing that informs how best to teach reading and improve student outcomes. Higginson Inclusion K0-2 School Principal Karla Jenkins shared the school's demographics of mostly high-need, low income black and brown students. The Higginson's instruction focus states that if educators explicitly plan and implement strategic whole and small group instruction grounded in mastering foundational literacy skills tailored to Higginson student data, using grade level scope and sequence, then students will be able to use grade-level, standards aligned language and literacy skills to critically engage with complex text and tasks both orally and in writing. Ms. Jenkins explained how the BPS Comprehensive Literacy Framework and Instructional Leadership Strategy have helped improve student outcomes at the Higginson. Ms. Miller said that the district's universal expectations include providing students with access to grade level, standards aligned, culturally and linguistically affirming practices and high quality instructional materials.

Ms. Shakur asked what efforts are being made to standardize the reading instruction across the district. Ms. Childs and Ms. Jenkins said that schools are creating equitable literacy teams to deepen the work at the school level. Ms. Williams commended Ms. Jenkins and her team for their commitment to equity and cultural connection. Dr. Chen noted that the MCAS information that was shared at the beginning of the meeting is embargoed until the fall. Dr. Gay announced that with the support of Dr. Coleman and Ms. Rousmaniere, the Office of Opportunity Gaps received a \$600,000 grant to support School Based Equity Roundtables.

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

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Task Force Business: Setting the Agenda for School Year 2023-2024 Meetings - Ms. Shakur briefly reviewed the draft meeting calendar for School Year 2023-24, including proposed dates and agenda topics.

PUBLIC COMMENT


There were no speakers for public comment.

Dr. Blake said that people should be mindful of clearly defining the word community.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary