



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

**November 29, 2022**

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on November 29, 2022 at 4 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: Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. James Jennings; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Kimberley Williams (arrived after roll call); Co-Chair Sam Acevedo (departed early); Co-Chair Jeri Robinson (arrived after roll call); and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Task Force Members Absent: Carroll Blake; Rev. Willie Bodrick, Dr. Hardin Coleman; Marinelle Rousmaniere; and Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi. Student Representative Khasim Saeed was also absent.

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: June 6, 2022; June 27, 2022; September 27, 2022; and October 25, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Shakur called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Because a quorum was not present at that time, Ms. Shakur announced that the co-chairs would defer the approval of minutes until later in the meeting.

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Ms. Shakur announced that Jennifer Aponte has stepped down from the Task Force due to time constraints and competing obligations. Ms. Aponte has served on the Task Force since its inception in 2015. Ms. Shakur thanked her for her service and for sharing her valuable perspective as a BPS teacher.

Ms. Shakur said that Superintendent Mary Skipper would not be joining today's meeting as members had hoped due to a scheduling conflict, but that the Superintendent has confirmed her attendance for the following OAG Task Force meeting on Tuesday, December 20th from 4:30-5 p.m.

Mr. Acevedo said that he is stepping down as executive director of Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC) after 23 years.

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Ms. Shakur reviewed the working groups and membership that were agreed upon at the previous meeting:

### **Data and Accountability Working Group:**

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

### **Teacher Diversity Working Group (*Chair TBD*)**

- Dr. Blake
- Ms. Williams
- Dr. Gonsalves
- Ms. Shakur
- Ms. Robinson

Dr. Pignato spoke about the importance of reviewing data on early literacy and graduation rates. Ms. Williams spoke about challenges related to hiring and retaining teachers of color. Dr. Gonsalves talked about various teacher pipeline programs. She and Ms. Williams expressed concern about staffing changes in the Office of Recruitment, Cultivation and Diversity (RCD) Programs.

Ms. Shakur said that in addition to the issues already discussed, the Task Force must also focus on transformation schools and revising the OG policy, which is due to be refreshed this school year. She recommended that the OAG Task Force collaborate with the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force and the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC). She suggested creating a subgroup to examine new BPS policies. Dr. Noam requested staffing support for the data working group. Ms. Shakur offered to reach out to Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Yozmin Gay to secure support. Ms. Williams urged the Task Force to monitor data on transformation schools and hold the district accountable for their performance.

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Ms. Shakur announced that members would spend the next 20 minutes in virtual breakout rooms according to working groups (data and accountability and teacher diversity) to allow for a deeper discussion that includes goal setting and calendar setting. Executive Secretary Liz Sullivan monitored the main channel and placed members of the public in the breakout session of their choice.

Approximately 20 minutes later, Task Force members reconvened in the same virtual Zoom channel and debriefed. Dr. Gonsalves summarized the data and accountability working group's discussion, saying that the group had set a meeting schedule through May. The first meeting will take place on January 3, 2023. The group plans to meet every six weeks thereafter. She said that members discussed the importance of having BPS departments respond to the data to interrupt the cycle. She said that further discussion is needed to determine how the Task Force will monitor the data. Dr. Noam recommended looking for bright spots and replicating success. Dr. Pignato said the challenge will be to narrow the focus of the data and accountability working group.

Ms. Williams summarized the discussion by the teacher diversity working group. The group raised questions about why the Superintendent moved the reporting line of the Office of Recruitment, Cultivation and Diversity (RCD) Programs from the Division of Equity, Strategy, and Opportunity Gaps to the Office of Human Capital. She said that the group discussed the importance of teacher diversity and asked how the Task Force can support diversity recruitment and hiring.

Dr. Pignato requested clarification on whether teachers in suitable professional capacity are counted as part of staff diversity or if they are considered additional supports.

Ms. Shakur suggested that the Task Force hold additional breakout room sessions at the December 20th meeting. She suggested that the Task Force post the following questions to the Superintendent:

- What was the rationale for moving the Office of Recruitment, Cultivation and Diversity?
- What is her commitment to diversity hiring and how will it be stated?

Dr. Gonsalves echoed Dr. Noam's earlier comments that the working groups will require additional staff support. She agreed to follow up with additional questions for the Superintendent.

Dr. Noam suggested asking the Superintendent about her agenda for data use and how the district is making data-driven decisions.

Ms. Shakur shifted the discussion to the next agenda item: discussion of membership and term limits. She suggested that the Task Force establish rules related to minimum attendance and term limits. Members agreed that attendance has been uneven among members and that rules related to expectations would be beneficial. Ms. Shakur proposed a two-year term limit with unlimited

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renewals. She said that the Task Force will continue the discussion about membership, expectations and term limits at the next meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Approved* - With a quorum of the OAG Task Force now present, the Task Force unanimously approved, on roll call, the minutes of the June 6, 2022; June 27, 2022; September 27, 2022; and October 25, 2022 meetings.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the importance of using data to drive improvement and accountability.

Barbara Fields, advocate, testified regarding the importance of making closing gaps a priority of the district. She expressed concern about the culture of the district in which some educators of color have expressed feeling unwelcome.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the value of community engagement meetings like the ones hosted by the late George Cox, a retired BPS educator and advocate.

**CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT**

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

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary