



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

**December 19, 2023**

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a virtual meeting on Zoom on December 19, 2023 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 [esullivan3@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:esullivan3@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. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. Gil Noam; Dr. Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Dr. Kimberley Williams; Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Task Force Members Absent: Rev. Willie Bodrick; and Dr. James Jennings.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: Senior Advisor, Organizational Development & Equity Dr. Mariel Novas; Chief of Teaching and Learning Lesley Miller; Assistant Superintendent of Achievement Gaps Dr. Yozmin Gay; Executive Director of Equitable Literacy for K0 to Grade 2 Brooke Childs; Executive Director of Equitable Literacy for Grades 3-6 Keisha Valdez; Executive Director of Equitable Literacy for Grades 7-12 Danielle Ali; Chittick Elementary School Principal Michelle Burnett; and East Boston Early Education Center Principal Joy Ramnarine.

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

[OAG Task Force Meeting Agenda: December 19, 2023](#)

[OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: November 28, 2023](#)

[Office of Opportunity Gaps Update, December 19, 2023](#)

[Update: BPS' Equitable Literacy Initiative, December 19, 2023](#)

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## CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. A quorum was present.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Approved** - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, by roll call, the minutes of the November 28, 2023 meeting.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson announced that last week the Superintendent presented a recommendation to the School Committee to make an adjustment to the exam schools admissions policy. The recommendation would adjust the number of bonus points from 10 to the point differential by Tier. The Superintendent's memo and PowerPoint are posted on the Committee's webpage [bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](https://bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) under the [December 13, 2023 meeting link](#). Because this topic was not listed on our agenda, the co-chairs did not open it up for discussion. Ms. Robinson invited members to review the materials posted online. The Committee expects to take action on the Superintendent's recommendation in January.

Mr. Acevedo, who has co-chaired the Task Force since its inception in 2015, announced that he is stepping down from the Task Force and that this will be his last meeting. He pastor for social transformation for Lion of Judah remains optimistic that we can close gaps.

**Update from the Office of Opportunity Gaps** - Dr. Yozmin Gay, Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps, presented an update that included the following topics:

- New Manager, Equity & Strategy - Erica Castro
- OOG support with the System-wide Inclusion Planning Teams (IPTs)
- Targeted Regional/School Support Updates - School Fall Reviews
- Partnership with Academics to scale Culturally, Linguistically, Sustaining Practices, and Sense of Belonging across regions
- 2016 OAG Policy Gap Analysis - completed by end of January 2024

Dr. Gay and Ms. Shakur will hold virtual working sessions to update the OAG policy on January 8, January 9 and January 11 from 4-6 p.m.

**District Presentation: Equitable Literacy Initiative** - Chief of Teaching and Learning Lesley Miller presented an update on the district's equitable literacy initiative. She was joined by Brooke Childs, executive director of Equitable Literacy for K0 to Grade 2, Keisha Valdez, executive director of Equitable Literacy for Grades 3-6, Danielle Ali, executive director of equitable literacy for Grades 7-12, Michelle Burnett, principal of the Chittick Elementary School and Joy Ramnarine, principal of the East Boston Early Education Center.

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Dr. Miller described equitable literacy as the intersection of research-based best practices across academic content areas that intersect with culturally affirming and relevant instruction. The district's equitable literacy initiative starts with Tier One implementation of high quality instructional materials. Equitable literacy uses the following outcome metrics: MAP achievement and growth (Fluency, Reading, Math); MCAS data; EL Proficiency (ACCESS for ELs); and course performance. K0-Grade 2, Grades 3-6, and Grades 7-12 each have their own focus areas for equitable literacy. School leaders Burnett and Ramnarine shared their MAP fluency data, which has shown improvement.

Ms. Shakur asked about the drop in student literary performance between kindergarten and third grade. Principal Burnett said that her team at the Chittick is always looking at the data and making adjustments to try to improve outcomes for all students. Principal Ramnarine spoke about the coaching and collaboration that her team engages in at the East Boston EEC.

Dr. Gonsalves, who serves as Department Chair, Curriculum and Instruction and Associate Professor, College of Education and Human Development at UMass Boston, said she plans to bring her reading faculty together to discuss how they can shift what they're teaching to aspiring teachers.

Dr. Coleman commended the work. He requested both process and outcome data by region as well as a description of what would be needed to bring the successful work to scale. Dr. Miller said she would follow up with the information.

Ms. Shakur asked what it will take to get all students reading at grade level. Dr. Pignato said that equitable literacy provides students with a strong foundation to build from. She explained that by third grade, MCAS is looking for students to be able to read and comprehend complex texts. Dr. Miller said that the district does not currently have strong processes and guidance around writing, so her team is starting to examine the writing curriculum. She added that the curriculum needs to be better adapted to fit the needs of all learners. Mr. Aceveo said that the critical unit of change is the school leader. Ms. Burnett spoke about the importance of the regional network support model, which is putting schools on a better trajectory for success. Dr. Gay said that the district needs to accelerate learning for grades 3-12 and that doing so must include providing support for students outside of the school day. Ms. Shakur invited the team back to present just on equitable literacy in Grades 3-12. She noted that the 2016 Opportunity and Achievement Gaps policy does not mention literacy or reading. She asked members to consider how to incorporate language about literacy in the updated policy. Dr. Coleman said the levers of change are regional superintendent accountability, school leader accountability, and data collection. Ms. Robinson said there needs to be a sense of urgency around this work. Dr. Pignato said that she begins each school year with a goal of getting all students to 100 percent literacy proficiency. Dr. Noam said that 100 percent proficiency is unrealistic. He spoke about the importance of supporting students with attention issues and hyperactivity issues. Dr. Gonsalves agreed with Ms. Shakur that the revised OAG policy should include more focus on literacy. She also agreed with Dr. Coleman about the critical role of regional superintendents.

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

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**Task Force Business** - Ms Shakur said that the January OAG Task Force meeting will focus on English Learners (ELs). She suggested that the Task Force consider inviting regional superintendents. Dr. Gonsalves suggested waiting to invite the regional superintendents until a later meeting. plan that for the future. She said that the data subgroup, which she chairs, will discuss the matter. Dr. Coleman suggested inviting regional superintendents to present two at a time, reporting out on region-specific data. Ms. Shakur said that the January meeting will focus on ELs and the notion of getting students to 100 percent proficiency. She suggested asking the data subgroup to prepare preliminary questions for the regional superintendent presentations. Ms. Shakur reminded members that the Task Force will hold three virtual working sessions in January to refresh the 2016 OAG policy.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

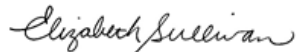
John Mudd, advocate, said that the equitable literary presentation didn't focus on performance data by subgroups. He urged the Task Force to focus on subgroup data.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Members thanked Mr. Acevedo for his contributions and dedication to the Task Force and wished him well.

**Approved** - On roll call, the Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary