



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS TASK FORCE**

**March 10, 2021**

The Boston School Committee's Exam Schools Admissions Task Force held a remote meeting on March 10, 2021 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/esataskforce>, email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Exam Schools Admissions Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Michael Contompasis; Co-Chair Tanisha Sullivan; Samuel Acevedo; Acacia Aguirre; Matt Cregor; Tanya Freeman-Wisdom; Katherine Grassa; Zena Lum; Zoe Nagasawa; Rachel Skerritt; Rosann Tung; and Tamara Waite.

Exam Schools Admissions Task Force Members Absent: None.

BPS Staff Present: Monica Roberts, Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement; and Monica Hogan, Senior Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes: February 23, 2021](#)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Contompasis called the meeting to order. He announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Somali, Arabic, and American Sign Language (ASL); the interpreters

**Exam Schools Admissions Task Force Remote Meeting  
Zoom  
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introduced themselves and gave instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel.

Ms. Parvex called the roll. All members were present.

Mr. Contompasis asked the members who were absent at the February 23, 2021 meeting to introduce themselves to the public.

- Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom, Head of School, John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science
- Samuel Acevedo, Executive Director at Boston Higher Education Resource Center, Co-Chair for the Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force, and on staff at the Congregación León de Judá
- Acacia Aguirra, parent, John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, and a BPS teacher
- Tamara Waite, parent of two BPS students, and employee of Health Benefits Office at the City of Boston

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: FEBRUARY 23, 2021

***Approved*** – The Task Force unanimously approved the minutes of the February 23, 2021 Exam Schools Task Force Organizational meeting.

#### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Mr. Contompasis said that BPS student Danyaël Morales had resigned from the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) and the Exam Schools Admissions Task Force. The district will work with BSAC to identify another student representative to be part of the Task Force.

Mr. Contompasis asked Ms. Sullivan to give an update on *Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence Corp. v. School Committee of the City of Boston, et al.* Ms. Sullivan explained there was a federal lawsuit filed in court challenging the SY21-22 admissions process approved by the Boston School Committee. A remote hearing is scheduled for next week at which time the judge will decide whether or not to go to trial. She encouraged people to attend the remote hearings, which are open to the public. She said she wanted to let the community, parents, and students know that despite the suit, the admission process was still moving forward this year, however the invitations would not be sent out until after the middle of April. She concluded that the Task Force's work would continue as they had been charged by the School Committee to make recommendations regarding a more permanent admission process. Mr. Contompasis added instructions on how to sign up to listen to the court hearing.

Mr. Acevedo asked about community amicus briefs filed supporting the decision of the Boston School Committee. Ms. Sullivan clarified that no amici briefs had been filed but that there had been public statements made by different organizations in support of BPS.

Mr. Contompassis reviewed the Task Force meeting schedule for the spring. He reminded the public of the remote listening session scheduled for March 13th at 10.00 a.m. on Zoom. He also announced that at the March 16th meeting, Sean Corcoran, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education at Vanderbilt University, will give a presentation on the Chicago admissions model. The co-chairs are expecting to hear from other districts that have successfully implemented admissions processes that might prove beneficial to the Task Force.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Louis Lui, student, Josiah Quincy Upper School and Dorchester resident, testified regarding his experience studying to get into an Exam School.
- Alan Tian, West Roxbury resident and 5th grade parent, testified against the zip code and in favor of the MAP test.
- Rachel Miselman, member, Boston Parents Coalition for Academic Excellence, and exam school alumna, testified regarding the quality of education at all BPS schools.
- Tom Song, Roxbury resident, testified in favor of the MAP test.
- Eric Shi, West Roxbury resident and parent, testified against the Zip Code and in favor of the MAP test.
- Emma Yang, Dorchester resident and parent, testified against the zip code.
- Lauren Thompson testified regarding the quality of education in all BPS schools and in favor of the temporary changes for SY21-22.

## CLOSING COMMENTS

As the co-chairs prepared to close the meeting, Ms. Sullivan emphasized how important it is for the Task Force members to listen to opinions, suggestions, and recommendations from the residents of the City of Boston before beginning the work.

Ms. Sullivan invited members to offer final comments or questions. Mr. Cregor thanked those who testified and the interpreters. Ms. Skerrit recognized the two Boston Latin School student groups that provide free tutoring, which were mentioned by the student from the Quincy School. Ms. Grassa mentioned an exam high school in Grand Rapids, Michigan that changed its admissions policy and diversified their student population, which would be interesting to look into. Ms. Tung mentioned two documentaries about selective admissions high schools, one in New York City and the other in San Francisco, which would be interesting to watch.

## ADJOURN

At approximately 6:10 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lena Parvex". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lena" and last name "Parvex" clearly distinguishable.

Lena Parvex  
Administrative Assistant