



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S OPPORTUNITY AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS TASK FORCE**

**January 26, 2016**

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on January 26, 2016 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, School Committee Chamber, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts. 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: Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Jennifer Aponte; Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Kim Janey; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Lilianna Mickle; Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filberto Santiago-Lizardi; Ron Walker; and Sherman Zemler Wu. Superintendent Tommy Chang and Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, were also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Kenny Feng; Dr. Gil Noam; and Alexandra Oliver-Dávila.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: January 5, 2016

Update: Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps

Dr. Colin Rose: Draft Logic Model 1:15

AWC Expansion

MassCore: Current Status and Next Steps

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## CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

## ACTION ITEM

The Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 5, 2016 meeting.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Superintendent Chang invited everyone to tomorrow's School Committee meeting at which time he will make comments about recent incidents involving race at Boston Latin School. He will also present updates on his 100-Day Plan projects. Yesterday, he and Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, met with the leaders of Black at BPS and were very impressed.

The Superintendent explained that he wanted to clarify his intent with AWC initiative. He explained that AWC is an option for some families in the system and he wants to expand rigor in grade 4, starting at strategically selected schools. This February break, the district is making a significant investment in professional development. The Superintendent is also planning a "fifth quarter" of summer enrichment for 4<sup>th</sup> graders next year. His goal is to create rigor for all, making AWC irrelevant.

The Task Force then engaged in a brief question and answer session with the Superintendent regarding AWC expansion. Some Task Force members expressed concern about the implementation of the plan and the possibility of creating another tiered system. The Superintendent said that teacher training, parent engagement and school culture are all key to successful implementation.

After Superintendent Chang departed the meeting, the Task Force engaged in a lengthy, dynamic discussion about AWC expansion, raising the following questions and concerns:

Does AWC run contrary to the BPS inclusion model?

The lowest performing schools should be chosen for AWC expansion pilot program.

Students with greatest needs should get the best teachers.

What is the model of assignment, evaluation, replication, and scale?

Need focus on closing gaps, not just raising achievement across the board.

Need to be explicit about what AWC means for some families, separating their children from less desirable students.

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Criteria for choosing pilot schools should be Level 3 and Level 4 schools.

Need more dialogue around race issues.

Need clarity around the timing of AWC expansion and be explicit about what is the goal.

AWC is not a curriculum per se but a social construction of enthused teachers and high expectations for kids. Is AWC an example of institutional racism?

Should the AWC entrance criteria change?

Concern that some AWC teachers don't have mindset to teach students most in need.

All students should be taught executive function study skills. Need to discuss branding problem when the curriculum is almost identical to general but it moves at a quicker pace.

AWC in its current form is inequitable and contributing to gaps, according to Annenberg Report.

Need to remove AWC as contributing factor in achievement gaps.

Will district continue to admit students to AWC if it is going to be transitioned out?

Need to explicitly say how the AWC initiative will help close opportunity and achievement gaps.

How many students who are accepted to AWC choose not to enroll? How do they then perform academically down the road?

Concern as to whether AWC should continue to exist. The Task Force needs more time to analyze the concept of AWC.

The Task Force collectively drafted the attached statement about AWC expansion, which was finalized by the co-chairs the following day, and presented by co-chair Jeri Robinson at the January 27 School Committee meeting.

Acknowledging that time was running short, the co-chairs announced that Dr. Rose's presentation and the FY17 budget discussion would be tabled until the February 23 meeting.

Asked about resources available to him, Dr. Rose said he will have the resources of more than 140 teachers that he will train, adding that he is hoping to hire an assistant coordinator. He explained that he is already making changes at central office and said he needs support to make changes at the school level. He said that there is currently no line item in the FY17 budget for the Office of the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, which concerned many Task Force members.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Mudd, advocate, expressed support for the AWC statement drafted by the Task Force and questioned how Black and Latino students will improve faster under these AWC expansion proposal. He also expressed concern about the structure and role of the Office of the Opportunity and Achievement Gap.

Mary Driscoll, principal leader and AWC expansion project leader, thanked the Task Force for the spirit of the conversation and encouraged the members to keep pushing the district.

Jessica Tang, Boston Teachers Union, spoke regarding the BPS facilities master plan.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 6:20 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary