



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

November 24, 2015

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on November 24, 2015 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, Roxbury Innovation Center, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Jennifer Aponte; Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Dr. Carroll Blake; Kenny Feng; Kim Janey; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Liliana Mickle; Dr. Gil Noam; Alex Oliver-Davila; Carline Pignato; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Ron Walker; Sherman Zemler Wu. Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Co-Chair Sam Acevedo; Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Dr. Hardin Coleman; and Filberto Santiago-Lizardi. Dr. Miren Uriarte, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, was not present.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: November 17, 2015

2006 BPS Achievement Gap Policy

Updated Timeline

BPS Organizational Chart

Bios of Key District Leaders

Charge and Goals of Task Force

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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 November 17, 2015 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Robinson announced that Superintendent Chang has appointed Rebecca Shuster as Assistant Superintendent of Office of Equity and Dr. Colin Rose as Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gap. Dr. Rose is a former BPS teacher. Ms. Shuster, who formerly served as director of training at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, introduced herself and said she is excited to support the work of the Task Force.

Ms. Robinson noted that Boston has a new mayor, a new superintendent, new voices and new energy, saying that BPS is poised to make great strides. She explained that key district staff will participate in the next two Task Force meetings to assist with the revision of the goals. The co-chairs plan to meet with national advisors Dr. John Jackson and Dr. Pedro Noguera over holidays.

Ms. Shakur reviewed aloud the revised meeting timeline: December 8th from 4-6 p.m., December 11th from 2-6 p.m. and December 15th from 4-6 p.m. (AWC discussion with district leaders). The co-chairs are scheduled to present an update to the School Committee on January 13.

The following district leaders will be invited to participate:

- Dr. Colin Rose, Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gap
- Rebecca Shuster as Assistant Superintendent of Office of Equity
- Dr. Karla Estrada, Deputy Superintendent of Student Support Services
- Dr. Doannie Tran, Assistant Superintendent of Professional Learning
- Dr. Emily Qazilbash, Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital
- Kim Rice, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
- Monica Roberts, Assistant Superintendent of Engagement
- Dr. Jason Sachs, Executive Director, Department of Early Childhood
- Nicole Wagner Lam, Executive Director, Office of Data and Accountability
- Dr. Makeeba McCreary, Chief of Staff

Task Force members suggested inviting principal leaders to and seasoned teachers to speak about academics and classroom experience.

At today's meeting, Task Force members will break into small groups to generate questions for district staff using the following guiding questions:

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- What is your vision?
- What are the barriers to executing your vision?
- Who in the district is achieving success and how can we replicate those bright spots?
- Who else in your department will be central in implementing this work (perhaps someone with institutional history)?

Ms. Oliver-Davila suggested that the Task Force continues its discussion of importance of cultural relevancy from the last meeting.

Ms. Janey suggested that the Task Force discuss testimony given during public comment.

Task Force members discussed the importance of looking at culturally responsive best practices.

Members discussed communicating with national advisors, perhaps using Skype.

Ms. Mickle inquired about the distribution of readings to the members of the Task Force. Ms. Rousmaniere suggested that Ms. Janey, Ms. Mickle and Ms. Oliver-Davila gather readings for the group to be added to the shared Google Drive.

Ms. Shakur stated that each group should assign a recorder to take notes.

The following is a summary of each group's notes:

Group 1: District Operations

- **Ms. Rousmaniere (recorder)**
- **Mr. Berents-Weeramuni**
- **Ms. Janey**
- **Ms. Level**
- **Mr. Zemler Wu**

Goal 9 Questions:

What are the strategies around retention, use of evaluation and implicit bias of evaluators, role of principals and principal leaders? Questions related to unveil some of the barriers.

There is movement towards the path but not enough and not fast enough to stem the tide,

Bright spots: early hiring, go deeper, do more and be more aggressive
Know what court order is, know what School Committee is, but what is the measurable goal: e.g. in the next five years, it is X and here's how we are going to get there.

What's the goal and how do we work together to get there?

Hesitant to put out specific numeric goals because of lawsuits but you have to have measurable goal.

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What percentage of teachers: what's the impact success rate of the programs: ACTT,
What progress have we made and what is the plan to make progress going forward
What are the barriers? e.g. timeline for ACTT not aligned with the hiring process; one concrete way to make sure aligned with timeline of hiring.

Nothing in current document regarding accountability. What accountability does district currently have around hiring for principals/headmasters, all members of personnel subcommittee, office of Equity?

Emphasis on Schools of Ed only. What about other schools?

GOAL 10: Equity in Operations

Transportation equity analysis – still needs to be done WE SHOULD BE ASKING TO

Assignment K-8 vs. K-5 populations, pathway systems, who has access, who is transferring out what does that mean for equitable access to quality schools

Connection to the facilities 10-year master plan. Conversation with clear conversation – include the equity analysis around facilities; what does that look like?

Transportation

Boston Day and Evening Academy – students can't afford to come to school – 7 day a week.

Deeper issue around class.

Disconnect between transportation and academics.

SPED and ELL overlays in the assignment system.

Data points to assess inequity: whatever we ask for now are they things we should measure going forward

Food:

School discipline, where does it fall

GOAL 11

Additional student measures, staff evaluation visibility around subgroup performance

What other measures are they using?

Too much testing overall: figure out what the tool is going to be and how we will use to inform instruction

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Rightsizing testing so that it is connected to instruction: using it better and more judiciously

GOAL 12:

Weighted Student Funding (WSF) progress on this front

Are we changing the number of special education students because of WSF?

What do people think about a WSF for black and brown boys?

Examining WSF additional weights – poverty, ELL - around changing the weights

501c3 different in different schools - what is the equity there?

How are we less enrollment system sensitive?

Is there a way to assess whether or not we are closing the gap?

Opportunity Gap is missing

Arts

Afterschool

We need to be able to measure opportunities for students: access/outcomes and how it plays out.

Group 2: Teaching and Learning

- **Dr. Noam (recorder)**
- **Ms. Mickle**

5. Equip educators with the variety of instructional strategies and cultural competencies required to address the broad range of student achievement levels, learning and behavioral styles and backgrounds. In the process, there is a need to ensure that the curriculum and instruction in all subjects at all levels are rigorous and differentiate instruction to meet the strengths as well as the needs of our students and build relationship which students through which instruction can be effected. This includes the incorporation of student voice and student engagement in the process of learning. Also essential is the embedding of principles of cultural relevance in teaching, learning and service delivery into the overall operations of schools and departments. This requires human and material resources to make sure that everyone working in school has the background and skills, continuously updated through professional development, to meet students in cultural sensitive ways.

6. SEL: Students need to develop socio-emotional/21st century skills to increase their academic achievement and to develop personal resilience in the face of adversity. These skills are also important for career and life success and have become a strong focus nationally and internationally, often called socio-emotional learning (SEL). It is essential for teachers to know how to create classrooms that allow students to focus on the acquisition of these skills and to

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reduce the discrepancy of exposure and practice. Large numbers of students need extra support in creating perseverance, complex problem solving, team work/empathy and self management, etc. This work often goes beyond the classroom teacher alone and requires the availability of trained student support staff. These social workers, counselors, school psychologists, etc. need to know about the new asset-based and SEL approaches and need to be part of SST teams that create systems and can introduce programs, such as Open Circle, Restorative Justice, Second Step and many more. The teams need to include teachers and school leadership to assure a whole school approach to reducing problems and increasing skills and to organize early detection assessment systems to become proactive rather than crisis oriented. The development of socio-emotional skills also involves OST programs collaborating with schools given their important in the development of these skills (through mentoring, group work, student engagement, etc.).
ADD: Trauma sensitivity.

7. Ensure human and material resources and approaches reflect the socio-cultural characteristics and needs of the populations served. Provide professional development that allows staff at all levels to develop cultural competence; ensure that all academic professional development promotes cultural competence.

Group 3: Policy and School Leadership

- **Ms. Aponte (recorder)**
- **Dr. Blake**
- **Ms. Oliver-Davila**
- **Ms. Pignato**
- **Ms. Wagner**
- **Mr. Walker**

- Culturally proficiency is deeply rooted in responsiveness around the needs of all students and families
- Schools cannot be effective without being culturally responsive
- Cultural proficiency takes into accounts issues around race, social economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- How do we move toward a district mindset/systemic definition of cultural proficiency more so than a series of professional development?
- How do we have all members of BPS (from classroom to office buildings) internalize this definition/understanding? This is our work, moving from policy towards implementation.
- Look towards health care system as model of system wide implementation of cultural proficiency strategies (i.e. public health care audit)
- BPS & college prep programs & what we can do/ are doing to make sure prospective teachers are culturally proficient before they enter the classroom?
- As we solidify the meaning of culturally proficient as a district, should we reconsider how we define and structure school leadership with this definition in mind?
- We need a specific policy to address the suspension rate of students of color. How does restorative justice play out in the district now? As we consider policy to lower suspension rates and increase students time in school, we need to increase supports for students schools (both in

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terms of quantities and types, academic and social emotional learning) to ensure that children's time in school is productive and successful.

ACTION IDEA (SEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION): Members of OAGTF to meet with Dr. Doannie Tran around his professional development model on cultural responsiveness. The following questions are for Dr. Tran:

1. Can you provide an update on your retreat/work in PD around cultural proficiency?
2. How do you evaluate your PD and its progress/success?
3. Who currently participates in your PD?
4. Any plans on scaling across the district? How can/should it be further rolled out? Who do you think should participate in further implementation?
5. Any bright spots in your work and barriers to implementations?

The above groups meet for approximately 45 minutes.

Ms. Shakur reconvened the meeting and explained that the group would not debrief the conversations now, but the recorders should e-mail their notes to Ms. Sullivan, and cc: both Ms. Robinson and herself.

Ms. Shakur also updated the Task Force with suggestions from Superintendent Chang, who briefly stopped by the meeting. The Superintendent suggested that the Task Force meet with the BPS senior leadership team after the New Year instead of December 8th and 11th, as previously discussed. The delay would provide Task Force members with more time to prepare their questions for the senior leadership team.

Ms. Robinson announced that the co-chairs are looking to recruit a facilitator, similar to the model utilized by the English Language Learners Task Force.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

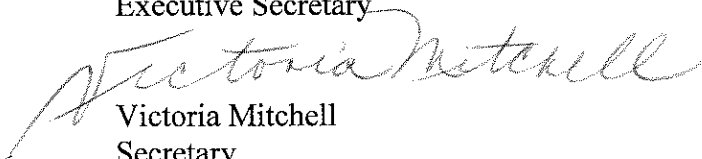
ADJOURN

At approximately 5:55 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary



Victoria Mitchell
Secretary