



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

**March 1, 2016**

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on March 1, 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. Hardin Coleman; Kim Janey; Liliana Mickle; Dr. Gil Noam; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Ron Walker; and Sherman Zemler Wu. Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Kenny Feng; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Carline Pignato; and Marinelle Rousmaniere.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: February 23, 2016

Proposed Timeline for Completion of Draft Revised OAGTF Policy

Non-negotiables (draft)

Brief report on initial conversations with OAGTF national advisors: Dr. Pedro Noguera and Dr. John Jackson by Jeri Robinson, co-chair, OAGTF

The Essential Supports

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Promising Practices and Unfinished Business: Fostering Equity and Excellence for Black and Latino Males (Executive Summary)

Opportunity and Equality: Enrollment and Outcomes of Black and Latino Males in Boston Public Schools (Executive Summary)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She introduced Dr. Ronald Ferguson, Harvard University professor, and one of three national advisors to the Task Force.

Dr. Ferguson presented an overview of his work in the area of closing opportunity and achievement gaps. Dr. Ferguson discussed the relationship between gaps in school readiness, race/gender stereotypes and cultural mismatches, and teacher skill and resources, all of which play a role in creating opportunity and achievement gaps. He also explained the “Seven C’s of Effective Teaching”: Care, confer, captivate, clarify, consolidate, challenge, and classroom management.

Dr. Ferguson then engaged in a question and answer period with the Task Force members. He recommended that the district find bright spots to replicate best practices, citing Brockton High School as a model where teachers actively engage with their students.

Dr. Ferguson recommended that the district focus on the following areas:

- Instructional quality and teacher dynamics
- Non exam schools that are successful - look at best practices, break down data by race, gender, and skill level
- Measure gaps by state average, not within district

He also discussed the need for peer support among students of color and the importance of a growth mindset where struggle is temporary. He also suggested that professional learning communities can help reduce teacher burnout and said that schools need a healthy mix of students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

### **ACTION ITEM**

The Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the February 23, 2016 meeting.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Ms. Shakur presented a draft list of “non-negotiables” – items that the Task Force would like to see included in the final policy recommendations. The members suggested adding the following items to the list:

Determine baseline amount to fully fund the Office of the Opportunity and Achievement Gap

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Assistant Superintendent, Office of the Opportunity and Achievement Gap should be member of the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet

Emphasize the importance of having professional learning community at schools

Professional development on anti-racism training

High level accountability measures and school based plans about response from schools (teaching and learning)

SMART goals

Data on school climate and culture

Look at current principal evaluation and whole school improvement plans

Why aren't current structures closing gaps? Cause of implementation?

Need to be more effective, not just creating policy

Investments in transition grades

Focus on family and community engagement

Clear metrics for superintendent in the areas district policy and operations

Rigorous review of district policies and practices

Go deep, not broad

Explicit statement where every budget statement needs to be made through equity lens

Special needs

Opportunity gaps – be specific

The School Committee and/or Task Force should revisit the policy every three years

Conduct survey of bright spots, learn from best practices (review EdVestors data).

Mr. Acevedo then reviewed the proposed timeline moving forward. Department heads will be invited to participate in next two Task Force meetings while subgroups draft the revised policy goals. On March 31, the Task Force will hold a half day drafting session. The April 12 meeting

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will be devoted to editing. On April 26, the Task Force will vote on a final list of recommendations to submit to the School Committee.

The co-chairs asked the Task Force members to review the 2006 Achievement Gap policy goals that correspond with the work of their subgroup prior to the next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Mudd, advocate, asked how rigor for all will close gaps. He also called for more diversity among teachers and principals. He asked the district to present regular reports to the School Committee on achievement gaps that are explicit and contain disaggregated data.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 6:17 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary