



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

May 10, 2016

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on April 12, 2016 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, Room 6-66/6-67, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps, email 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; Dr. Carroll Blake; Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Kim Janey; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Marinelle Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; and Sherman Zemler Wu. Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAG Task Force, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Kenny Feng; Liliana Mickle; Dr. Gil Noam; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Carline Pignato; and Ron Walker.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Draft Preamble

Draft Goals and Objectives: 2016 Revised Opportunity & Achievement Gaps Policy

Draft Appendix: 2016 Equity with Excellence Policy for Eliminating Opportunity and Achievement Gaps in the Boston Public Schools

CALL TO ORDER

The co-chairs called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

May 10, 2016

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi, a member of the Superintendent's advisory group that's exploring ways to bring more diversity to the exam schools, presented a brief update on the group's work to date. He said the group looked at data which shows that fewer students of color apply to Boston Latin School than to Boston Latin Academy or the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science.

Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Dr. Colin Rose spoke briefly about the district's recent announcement that it will add 300 seats to the Exam School Initiative.

Ms. Shakur discussed the proposed revised timeline with a goal of presenting recommendations to the School Committee on June 8th.

Since the last Task Force meeting, the co-chairs edited the draft document into a draft policy proposal consisting of three parts: a preamble, goals and metrics, and an appendix containing specific implementation strategies.

The current theory of change revolves around:

- Removing structural barriers
- The preparedness of adults
- Student and family engagement
- Expanding opportunities
- Removing societal barriers

Dr. Coleman expressed support for the proposed three-part structure of the policy. He added that the Task Force should focus on drafting the goals and that the district should not be constrained by specific strategy recommendations, which fall under the purview of the Superintendent.

Ms. Shakur then led a collective review of the goals.

Goal 1.3

The Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps and the OAG Task Force shall report annually to the School Committee.

Goal 1.2

The group discussed the term authority and revised the sentence to read: "The Superintendent and his or her designee shall monitor and facilitate the implementation of this policy."

Dr. Coleman encouraged the Task Force to focus on the "what" as opposed to the "how" which is the purview of the Superintendent. He also suggested reordering the goals.

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
Room 6-66/6-67

May 10, 2016

Ms. Janey expressed concern that the cultural proficiency goal could dominate the other goals, which could then receive less attention.

The group discussed how to reorder the goals, agreeing upon the following revised order:

Goal 1

Goal 2 (add language from Goal 6.4)

Goal 5

Goal 4

Goal 6

Goal 3

The Task Force then discussed what it means by the term “all students,” agreeing that the term includes students of color, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. One member suggested using the term "historically disadvantaged" with a footnote that defines the term. The group did not come to an agreement at the meeting.

The Task Force then discussed ways to measure student and family engagement. Ms. Shakur advocated for the policy to include language about student agency.

The members then engaged in a discussion on the amount of testing that takes place in the district. Members agreed that the district needs useful assessments that drive learning.

Ms. Janey advocated for bilingualism, STEAM, and a decolonized curriculum.

Ms. Lee advocated for more student enrichment.

Several members emphasized the importance of teacher quality and effectiveness.

The members discussed the importance of maximizing quality learning time.

Dr. Coleman said that it is vital that the district systemically monitor its process and publicly present its progress. He also cautioned that the metrics proposed by the Task Force should be indicators, not tactics.

The members discussed holding the next Task Force meeting on May 24th and possibly adding a meeting in June.

MINUTES

The Task Force voted by unanimous consent to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2016 Task Force meeting and the working sessions of April 11, 2016 and March 31, 2016.

May 10, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, said that district leaders at all levels must commit to closing opportunity and achievement gaps, calling it a top priority. He encouraged the district to adapt to the needs of targeted groups.

Stanley Onuoha, Roxbury native and financial analyst, testified regarding barriers to students taking Advanced Placement courses and the value of community partners who share the district's agenda.

ADJOURN

At approximately 7 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary