

**Boston School Committee
Inclusion Task Force**

**January 9, 2014
Mary Lyon Pilot High School
Novack Library, Rm 202
95 Beechcroft Street, Brighton, MA**

Present:

Richard Robison, Zach Rossetti, Jerry Mogul, Regina Robinson, Carolyn Kain, Eileen Nash, Patricia Lampron, Elaine Ng, Marty Mitchell, Jean-Dominique Hervé Anoh, Dianne Lescinskas, Bill Henderson (Co-Chair), Karen Zerby Buzzelle (Facilitator).

Absent:

Janet Palmer-Owens, Maria Paiewonsky, Natalie Ake, Raul Garcia, Lindsa McIntyre, Edward Powell, Maria de Lourdes Serpa.

Others Present:

Kevin Jervis, Tee Thac-Hassan

- Bill announced that Mary Tamer has not been re-appointed to the School Committee and will therefore not longer be serving as co-chair of the Task Force. Bill emphasized that Mary played a key role in the creation of the Task Force and will be missed.

Approval of Inclusion Task Force Meeting Minutes: 12/12/13

- Jerry motioned to accept minutes, Eileen seconded and minutes were approved, with one abstention.

Inclusion Task Force Updates & Announcements

- The Inclusion Task Force now has a page on the BPS Website. All public documents, meeting information and minutes will be posted there. The direct link is: <http://bostonpublicschools.org/.domain249> or go to bostonpublicschools.org, click on School Committee and there is a drop down page for Inclusion Task Force.

- Bill reminded everyone that Task Force members have identified their goals, ideas and priorities for the group and that the items have been categorized into 5 topics: BPS Data, Determining Quality Inclusion, Professional Development, IEP Process and Expanding Inclusive Options.
- Janet Palmer Owens has agreed to help facilitate discussion on professional development. Tom Hehir has agreed to share his recommendations with implications for IEP and placement process.

Task Force Committee Updates

- Karen reminded everyone that every other month the Task Force will meet in two committees: Quality Committee and Expansion Committee.
 - o Ensuring Quality Inclusion Committee updates from last meeting –
 - Zach gave brief summary of his document “Evaluating inclusive Education”. This was used as a starting point for the Quality Committee discussion at the December meeting. The Committee agreed that good inclusion depends on good general education. Since the School Committee has established a School Quality Task Force, the Inclusion Task Force has agreed to use its identified domains and to build on its recommendations. We also agreed to focus our next month’s discussion on inclusive strategies for teaching and learning.
 - o The Expanding Quality Inclusion Committee had a broad and open discussion. Bill hopes that there will be a new facilitator for that committee soon.
- There was a discussion regarding what materials should be posted on the new Web page and what format they should take. People were concerned that people might feel hesitant to have honest conversations if all documents are public. In particular, it is important to clarify on Committee Notes and other documents that they are working notes, not School Committee documents.
 - o **ACTION STEP:**
 - Bill and Karen will clarify what needs to be posted publicly and continue to identify best means to share materials electronically.

Inclusion in BPS Today

- Eileen Nash gave a power point presentation focusing on BPS's priority to create more inclusion opportunities. She shared data on inclusion and on the various staffing models. She announced BPS commitment to fund and hire new inclusion specialists/coaches. She presented and led a discussion about proposal to open new inclusion classrooms with the following baseline guidelines: K0 –K1 ratio of 9/6 1 teacher, 1 Para: or 10/5 with 1 teacher, 1 Para, K2 to grade 5 ratio of 15/5 with 1 Teacher, 1 Para. Students represented here would be of moderate disabilities .There were questions raised about how students with mild, moderate, and significant disabilities were being counted in the proposed student ratios. Some task force members were concerned that the baseline resources could be insufficient. Eileen emphasized that, using weighted student formulas, there would be additional staffing supports according to the intensity of students' needs and that principals would continue to have discretion around providing additional staffing supports.
- Task force members expressed that principals should be supported and held accountable and evaluated on how they support inclusion in their buildings as well as on the school's test scores.
- There were suggestions made about the importance of focusing on behavior management and that response to trauma must be built into the curriculum to supports students with and without disabilities.
- Eileen expressed the hope that the Task Force could play a key role in addressing the challenges identified in her presentation.
 - **ACTION STEPS:**
 - Publicly post Eileen Nash's presentation and create a version in larger print to distribute to Task Force members who request it.
 - Discuss, understand and possibly make recommendations regarding the disability area of the students when looking at ratios.
 - Ask Lindsa, Herve and Marty to help us understand behavior management strategies that they use in their schools to promote the inclusion of students with emotional impairments.
 - Get information about weighted student formula and how students are categorized.

Update on Site Visits & Recommended Protocol

- Eileen passed out a schedule of school visits and a protocol for the visitors. Karen will keep track of members who are attending visits.

Public Comments

- Kenny Jervis from the Clap Innovation School explained school's interest in promoting inclusion and expressed his concern that building is not physically accessible.

New Business

- Address lack of inclusive summer programs.
- Look at high school dropout rate for SWD.
- Rich Robison announced that the Federation for Children with Special Needs' annual statewide conference "*Visions of Community*, a Conference for Parents of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them" will be held on Saturday, March 8 at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston. Registration is \$75 per person if you register before February 7th; fee is \$90 per person after February 7th. Last day to register is March 1st, if space remains available (No refunds after February 28th). Continental Breakfast and Lunch included. **Limited scholarships are available upon request; please call [617-236-7210, ext 198](tel:617-236-7210) or email to voc2014@fcsn.org and leave your name, telephone number, and times you can be reached. A conference staff person will respond to your message.** Follow the link below to register:
<http://fcsn.org/voc2014/>

Next Meeting:

- **February 13th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Henderson School**

Mtg. Adjourned