



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

October 29, 2015

The Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting on October 29, 2015 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Meeting Chamber, 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; Co-Chair Samuel Acevedo; Heshan Berents-Weeramuni; Dr. Vanessa Calderon-Rosado; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Kenny Feng; Adrienne Level; Keondre McClay; Dr. Gil Noam; Alexandra Oliver-Davila; Carline Pignato; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filberto Santiago-Lizardi; Ron Walker; and Sherman Zemler Wu. Dr. Miren Uriarte, English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force liaison to the OAGTF, was also present.

Task Force Members Absent: Jennifer Aponte; Dr. Carroll Blake; and Kim Janey. Suzanne Lee, English Language Learners Task Force liaison to the OAGTF, was not in attendance.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Task Force Meeting Minutes: October 13, 2015

Guiding Questions Worksheets (analysis of goals from Oct. 14th meeting)

Boston Public Schools Achievement Gap Policy (2006)

"Opportunity and Equity: Enrollment and Outcomes of Black and Latino Males in Boston Public Schools" (executive summary)

Timeline of Early Work Related to BPS Achievement Gap

October 29, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order.

The Task Force approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 13, 2015 meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

School Committee Chair Michael O'Neill offered greetings on behalf of the School Committee. He said that they recently released results of the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam show persistent achievement gaps in BPS. Mr. O'Neill reminded the Task Force of their charge (to review the current policy and research, make new policy recommendations to the Committee, then continue as monitoring body to support the Superintendent's implementation). Mr. O'Neill closed by thanking the Task Force members for their critical work.

Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang also talked about the 2015 NAEP results, which show no closing of achievement gaps for BPS students. He said by late December, he will present the Task Force with his Advanced Work Class (AWC) and Mass Core proposals for feedback. The Superintendent said he believes that Boston has the resources to close the gap but must be courageous enough to make bold decisions.

The Task Force engaged in a very brief question and answer period with Mr. O'Neill and the Superintendent. All agreed that the policy recommendation put forth by the Task Force should be actionable and measurable to ensure proper implementation.

Task Force members then spent a few minutes reviewing notes from the last meeting's breakout sessions when they analyzed the goals of the District's 2006 Achievement Gap policy. Members discussed the possibility of scheduling a half-day retreat.

Members raised the following questions:

What is job description for new achievement gap leadership position?

To what extent can we correlate with 100-day plan?

How are we defining the gap?

How are we narrowing our priorities?

Need a performance meter/district dashboard? What should be on it?

How do we define cultural proficiency? What does it look like in the classroom? In the community?

October 29, 2015

How do we stay mindful of the School Quality Framework so that we are not operating in a vacuum?

How do we map to other initiatives such as the SQF and the Superintendent's 100-Day Plan so that we don't create more silos?

Mr. Acevedo asked members to submit reading suggestions to create a bibliography of helpful research for the benefit of the group.

George Cox, retired Boston Public Schools administrator, and member of the Superintendent Payzant's Achievement Gap Committee, which authored the 2006 achievement gap policy, provided background on how the current policy was developed. Mr. Cox cited leadership changes as one of the barriers to policy's full implementation. Task Force members suggested that other barriers closing the achievement gap may include lack of resources, persistent poverty and racism.

The co-chairs asked the members to read the Annenberg report in preparation for the next meeting, when the group will do a deeper analysis.

Members encouraged the group to focus on achievement gap issues that are unique to girls. They also suggested analyzing MCAS and PARCC data as well as research provided by EdVestors as potentially very valuable. A common definition for education policy would also be helpful, members suggested.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, education advocate, encouraged the District to keep a sustained focus on achievement and opportunity gaps issue, embedding it in the Superintendent's "Culture of We." He added that staff diversity is important.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:02 p.m., the co-chairs adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary