

Update from the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force



Presented to the Boston School Committee
January 13, 2016

Overview

- Part 1: Task Force Charge, Goals, and Composition
- Part 2: What the Task Force has Accomplished to Date
- Part 3: Next Steps for the Task Force



Why the Task Force Was Formed

The Achievement Gap is the Underutilization of Human Potential



Part 1: Task Force Charge, Goals, and Composition

The Charge: The Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force is charged with investigating and recommending to the Boston School Committee (BSC) and the Superintendent of Boston Public Schools (BPS) system-wide policies, programs and practices designed to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps for Boston Public Schools (BPS) students, including potential adjustments, improvements and additions to the existing BPS Achievement Gap Policy and Goals. Thereafter, this Task Force will provide on-going leadership and monitoring, including direction, metrics and support, for the implementation of said policy by the District, with regular reporting to the BSC on actual results.

Convening the Task Force

- Three Co-Chairs
 - Jeri Robinson, School Committee Member; Boston Children's Museum
 - Pastor Samuel Acevedo, Boston HERC
 - Ayele Shakur, BUILD and Boston NAACP

19 Member Task Force

- **Jennifer Aponte**, Kindergarten 1 SEI Teacher, David A. Ellis Elementary School
- **Heshan Berents-Weeramuni**, Co-Chair, City-wide Parents Council; BPS Parent
- **Dr. Carroll Blake**, Retired Administrator, Boston Public Schools
- **Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado**, Chief Executive Officer, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
- **Dr. Hardin Coleman**, Vice-Chair, Boston School Committee; Dean, Boston University School of Education
- **Kenny Feng**, Student, Josiah Quincy Upper School; Boston Student Advisory Council (alternate, a non-voting position)
- **Kim Janey**, Senior Project Director, Massachusetts Advocates for Children
- **Adrianne Level**, Vice-President, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM)
- **Keondre McClay**, Student, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers; Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) representative

19 Member Task Force (cont'd)

- **Lilianna Mickle**, Special Assistant, Vice President for Academic Support Services, University of Massachusetts-Boston
- **Dr. Gil Noam**, PEAR Institute, Harvard University
- **Alexandra Oliver-Dávila**, Executive Director, Sociedad Latina
- **Carline Pignato**, Principal, William E. Channing Elementary School
- **Marinell Rousmaniere**, Senior Vice-President of Strategic Initiatives, EdVestors; BPS Parent
- **Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi**, Teacher, James P. Timilty Middle School; Boston Teachers Union representative
- **Ron Walker**, Executive Director, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color
- **Sherman Zemler Wu**, School Site Council, Mather Elementary School, BPS Parent

District and City Involvement

- **Participants from BPS Central Office**

- Makeeba McCreary, Chief of Staff
- Dr. Colin Rose, newly appointed Assistant Superintendent for the Opportunity and Achievement Gap
- Nicole Wagner, Executive Director, Office of Data and Accountability

- **Participant from the Mayor's Office**

- Rahn Dorsey, Chief of Education

Task Force Liaisons

- English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force
 - Dr. Miren Uriarte, Co-Chair, ELL Task Force
 - Alternate - Suzanne Lee, Member, ELL Task Force
- Inclusion Task Force
 - TBD

Overview

- Part 1: Task Force Charge, Goals, and Composition
- **Part 2: What the Task Force has Accomplished to Date**
- Part 3: Next Steps for the Task Force



Thorough Review of the 2006 Achievement Gap Policy

Guiding Principles for our Review

- **Do not attempt a 2016 Revision without a thorough understanding of the 2006 Policy.** This includes an understanding of goals we should keep, change, and/or consolidate as well as an examination of barriers to implementation and the root causes of the gaps.
- **Do not limit our 2016 Revision within the confines of the 2006 Policy.** In 10 years much has changed, including a deeper understanding of the impact of the “Opportunity Gap” and shifts in the demographics of BPS and the neighborhoods our schools serve.

Method of Review

- 1. Took the 12 goals from the 2006 policy and grouped them into 3 Categories.**
 - Leadership and School Culture
 - Teaching and Learning
 - District Strategy (i.e. Human Resources, Operations, Evaluation, & Funding)
- 2. Met in 3 subgroups to review each goal, word for word. Assembled notes and questions, and then reported back to the larger Task Force.** In some cases, groups also drafted new language for specific goals.
- 3. Invited the authors and participants of the 2006 Policy to share and discuss their process, successes, and perceived barriers to implementation.** Presenters included George Cox, Suzanna Lee, and Dr. Carroll Blake.

Opportunity Gaps

The Task Force has also begun to examine Opportunity Gaps

1. Examined the 2014 and 2015 Reports on Opportunity and Equity developed by the Center for Collaborative Education and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform. (Note: Several Task Force Members also served on the Advisory Committee for these reports.)
2. Held a conversation with BPS Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang, to gain his perspective on the District's Opportunity and Achievement Gap (OAG) agenda, especially as it relates to his Superintendent's 100 Day Plan, which makes specific mention of the OAG Task Force.

Our Preliminary Findings

The OAG Task Force has identified 5 Preliminary Findings which will guide are work:

- **Focus on Implementation**
- **Set SMART Goals**
- **Address Underlying Root Causes**
- **Go Beyond Academics**
- **Share a Clear and Cohesive Vision**

Our Preliminary Findings (cont'd)

Focus on Implementation

Although most goals from the 2006 policy still remain relevant, the policy was never fully implemented. We are developing the 2016 Revision with our eyes set on implementation. This requires careful coordination with district department heads.



Our Preliminary Findings (cont'd)

Set “SMART Goals”

Each goal in the policy needs to be written as a S.M.A.R.T. Goal so that we can measure and determine progress, and ensure accountability.



Our Preliminary Findings (cont'd)

Address Underlying Root Causes

Even the best-written policy will be undermined if we do not explicitly address cultural and structural factors involved in eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.

Cultural Factors
Structural Factors

Cultural Factors

- **Acknowledge the impact of entrenched and institutional racism and poverty, and explicitly address it**
- **Fully understand cultural proficiency and cultural relevance vs just cultural competence**



Structural Factors

- **Examine policies, practices and procedures at Central Office**
How are BPS departments actively involved in eliminating (or widening) opportunity and achievement gaps?
- **Avoid the trap of bureaucracy and dysfunction**
How does a shift in policy flow from Central Office to School Leaders to Classroom Teachers on the front line
- **Break down silos by focusing on a Culture of We**
- **Identify Resources needed for sustainability**



Our Preliminary Findings (cont'd)

Go Beyond Academics

School Based Efforts

Social and Emotional Learning

Trauma-Informed Approaches

K-12 Strand on Race, Culture, Language and Identity

School Discipline Policies and Classroom Management

Student and Family Engagement

School Culture and Climate

Also City-Wide Efforts



Our Preliminary Findings (cont'd)

Share a Clear, Consistent, and Cohesive Vision

- It's time for a district-wide change in beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors at all levels in the Boston Public Schools
- Develop shared definitions
- Reframe the conversation – moving from “eliminating gaps” to “promoting Excellence with Equity”

Overview

- Part 1: Task Force Charge, Goals, and Composition
- Part 2: What the Task Force has Accomplished to Date
- **Part 3: Next Steps for the Task Force**

Draft Revised 2016 Policy in Tandem with BPS Personnel Responsible for Implementation

- Working closely with Dr. Colin Rose, the Task Force will meet with individual Department Heads in January/February, receiving their continuous input and feedback as we craft the revised policy
- Importance of Ownership versus Buy-In

Dr. Colin Rose: Role in the Work

Address structural and cultural barriers and promote culturally sustaining policies and practices for traditionally marginalized students in BPS to help eliminate achievement gaps and prepare students for a democratic, pluralistic society.

- **District Level: Collaborating with all departments in the theory of targeted universalism.**
 - Involvement of other leadership bodies (e.g. city government, universities, etc.)
 - Use UDL framework- explicitly pushed to areas of race, culture, and language.
- **School Level: Sustainable practices of cultural proficiency**
 - Both classroom and school structures/practices
 - Instruments/measurement for feedback and accountability

Meet with National Advisors

- **Dr. John Jackson**, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Schott Foundation for Public Education
- **Dr. Pedro Noguera**, Distinguished Professor of Education, UCLA



Still to Do

- **Draft Revised Policy After Vetting with Department Heads**

The revised policy will reflect the buy-in of all those who are expected to implement it, and will include actionable SMART goals

- **Boston School Committee Votes on Revised Policy (Spring 2016)**

- **OAG Task Force Continues as a Monitoring Body**

School Committee Implementation

- According to the 2006 Achievement Gap Policy Implementation Plan, “Every educational policy creation or review will happen with a lens of closing the Achievement Gap and providing Equity and Access to all students and families.”
- Fully utilize list of “Key Questions to Address in all School Committee Presentations”

Resources Still Needed

- Hire Task Force Facilitator
- Identify rep from the Inclusion Task Force to serve as a liaison and participate in future OAG Task Force Meetings



Learn More

www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps

Weigh In

feedback@bostonpublicschools.org

Q&A

