



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

April 10, 2025

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held a meeting on 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, email lpavex@bostonpublicschools.org, or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Task Force Members Present: Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Dr. Gil Noam; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi; Co-Chair Jeri Robinson; and Co-Chair Ayele Shakur.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Staff Present: OAG Policy Director Tamika Estwick Buckmire; Manager of Policy Stacy Guerrero; Senior Advisor for Strategy and Opportunity Gap Dr. Colin Rose.

Other attendees: Dr. Stephen Alkins, School Committee member.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

OAG Task Force Meeting Minutes: [June 25, 2024](#)

[Description of Responsibilities: Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force](#)

[Outline of Strategic Planning and Implementation Process](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - The OAG Task Force unanimously approved, the minutes of June 25, 2024.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Co-chairs introduced Dr. Alkins as the incoming Co-chair, who will succeed Dr. Robinson.

Presentation by Dr. Colin Rose, Senior Advisor for Strategy and Opportunity Gaps on plans for the work ahead - Dr. Rose presented strategic priorities focused on connecting district offices and schools to achieve equity-driven excellence. Key priorities were identified through an environmental scan, community input, and data sources. The next step is to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with long-term goals. Implementation goals involve guiding departments to create SMART goals, using data and fostering collaboration. Feedback from department leaders and the OAG Task Force will shape the final goals. Dr. Rose stressed the importance of tracking progress and continuous improvement using a KPI tracker, with support from the strategy team for monitoring, troubleshooting, and professional development. He emphasized the need for an improvement mindset in the central office and provided a timeline for the work.

Ms. Shakur asked Dr. Rose about the Task Force's role, and Dr. Rose explained it's crucial for feedback, accountability, and coordination on strategy, tracking progress and focusing on closing achievement gaps. When asked if goals align with the policy, Dr. Rose confirmed they do, but Ms. Robinson questioned what might be missing from the existing goals. Dr. Rose suggested the Task Force discuss potential changes, while Ms. Shakur emphasized the need to refresh the goals and clarify their connection to the policy.

Rev. Bodrick asked about closing the gap between schools and central offices. Dr. Rose acknowledged a gap in data and service models, stressing the need for clearer goals. Ms. Robinson questioned the effectiveness of the regional model, and Dr. Rose noted it works in theory but depends on people, not systems.

Dr. Alkins raised concerns about central office accountability and federal impacts on policy. Dr. Rose emphasized focusing on equity and clarity in subjects like history and civics.

Ms. Rousmaniere stressed the need for community engagement and asked about the pre-plan. Dr. Rose explained feedback would be gathered after the draft, with targeted outreach and transparency. She also suggested reviewing the Barr Foundation report for concrete examples of a high-quality student experience.

Dr. Gonsalves asked about partnerships with organizations and colleges for student achievement, suggesting early college programs. Dr. Rose agreed, noting opportunities for collaboration.

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi raised concerns about funding cuts to programs despite strong performance, questioning decision-making. Ms. Shakur noted cuts often follow improvements, while Dr. Gonsalves stressed the need for a long-term plan to ensure resource stability.

Rev. Bodrick questioned if the approach is addressing real barriers or just top-down decisions, urging a reimagining of how to address the issues from the ground up. Ms. Robinson raised concerns about teacher capacity. Ms. Shakur emphasized starting building the strategic plan from the school level. Dr. Rose highlighted principal feedback and support, while Mr. Santiago-Lizardi urged using teacher survey data.

Dr. Noam urged focusing on key "levers" for the plan, citing too many issues at once. Dr. Alkins suggested reviewing past Task Force achievements to assess impact. Ms. Shakur confirmed this would be included in the refresh.

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Ms. Shakur stressed equitable literacy as a citywide initiative. Dr. Gonsalves emphasized connecting teachers, students, and families, suggesting successful models like Holmes as case studies to replicate.

Rev. Bodrick expressed concerns about overstretching goals and the need for additional support, possibly from external partners, Dr. Rose emphasized that leadership should already have the capacity to handle the work, and that it should be everyone's responsibility to align with the OAG policy as the guiding framework.

Dr. Noam noted broad budget categories need clearer focus on learning issues, aiming to support student readiness. Ms. Rousmaniere urged starting with achievable goals and cultural proficiency.

Mr. Santiago-Lizardi raised concerns about school closures' impact on funding and achievement gaps. Ms. Robinson emphasized the district's commitment to supporting student transitions. Dr. Alkins highlighted that facilities assessments are now key in decisions. Ms. Shakur asked about student integration, and Ms. Robinson confirmed efforts to ensure a smooth transition.

Ms. Shakur summarized key points mentioned by the members: literacy, ecological models, look at successful case studies, adequate school funding, addressing learning challenges holistically, and starting with KPIs to build up instead of starting by larger goals.

Recommendations for new Task Force members to nominate to the Boston School Committee

Ms. Shakur said member recommendations are underway, with a slate by June and the May meeting will cover the updated policy draft. Task Force members expressed a preference for in-person meetings.

The Task Force set upcoming meetings for May 1 (hybrid) and June 5, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Sophia Azzano, Boston University student, asked if there was one main focus for improvement in the strategic plan. Dr. Rose responded that the priority is literacy.
- McKayla Labadie, Boston University student, asked if technology has negatively impacted learning. Dr. Rose said there's no specific research but believes it likely has, particularly due to increased device use and the pandemic.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved - The Task Force unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Attest:



Lena Parvex
Executive Secretary