



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

May 14, 2026

The Boston School Committee Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force held an in-person meeting on May 14, 2026 at 4 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Chamber, Roxbury. 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: Co-Chair Dr. Stephen Alkins; Co-Chair Ayele Shakur; Rev. Willie Bodrick; Dr. Lisa Gonsalves; Pamela Leins; Dr. Harold L. Miller Jr.; Devin Morris; Dr. Gil Noam; Marinell Rousmaniere; Filiberto Santiago-Lizardi.

Task Force Members Absent: Dr. Brandy Brooks; Dr. Ambrizeth Lima; Dr. Carline Pignato; Lea Serena; Student Representatives Nayla Hicks and Kevin Louis.

BPS Staff: Chief of Human Resources Francesse Canty; a Senior Deputy Superintendent of Operations Dr. Samuel DePina; Director of Policy Tamika Estwick Buckmire; Manager of Policy Stacy Guerrero; OAG Director of Finance; OAG Director of Finance and Operations Adetunji Onamade; Executive Director Office of Specialized Services Velecia Saunders; and OAG Policy Director Senior Advisor for Strategy and Opportunity Gap Dr. Colin Rose.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Meeting minutes: March 31, 2026

2026 BPS Opportunity & Achievement Gaps (OAG) Policy

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps PowerPoint

CALL TO ORDER

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

Ms. Shakur said the OAG policy presentation at the April 15 meeting was well received by the School Committee, and asked OAG Task Force members to attend the June 10 School Committee meeting to show support for the vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved - The Task Force approved, by roll call, the minutes of the March 31, 2026 Task Force meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Updates from Dr. Colin Rose, Senior Advisor for Strategy and Opportunity Gaps - Dr. Rose said he presented the strategic plan to the School Committee on April 15, which received strong engagement, particularly around aligning policy as a “North Star” for district work. He talked about ongoing collaboration with BPS staff to develop more detailed implementation steps, including SMART goals, actions, and metrics, with continued work expected through the spring.

Presentation by the Office of Human Resources in response to the Task Force Data Request on Educator Diversity -

Chief Canty explained that staffing data is still in flux due to ongoing hiring, transfers, and non-renewal decisions, with June 15 marking the release of non-renewal notices and October 1 serving as the district’s consistent snapshot date for finalized staffing data. She reviewed racial diversity data from the 2024–2025 school year and said that the district has intentionally worked to retain educators of color and has seen increased diversity in recent years, but that licensure waivers remain a major challenge. Chief Canty explained that educators without licenses must be non-renewed unless the district can show the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) it made a good-faith effort to hire licensed candidates. She also said BPS has restructured supports by assigning case managers to educators needing licensure assistance, resulting in 200 fewer waivers than at the same time last year, and also noted an increase in self-reported bilingual educators. Chief Canty added that the district is managing excess staff due to declining enrollment, school closures, and downsizing, and is actively working to place impacted permanent educators in positions as required under state law.

She said the district currently has 367 excess permanent educators whose positions or schools were eliminated, and that 71 had not yet been placed, though the district is actively working to find positions for all permanent educators who wish to remain in the district. She also said that DESE has provided additional licensure flexibility and that impacted educators are being contacted directly about available supports and waiver pathways.

Current Data Snapshot

- **Workforce Demographics:** The district's overall workforce diversity reached 58.8% as of October 2025.
- **Hiring Trends:** The percentage of teachers and school counselors of color hired for the 2025-2026 cycle increased to 53.5%.
- **Linguistic Diversity:** The number of educators reporting fluency has risen significantly, with 2,075 educators reporting fluency in the 2025 cycle.
- **Excessing:** For the upcoming school year, 367 permanent educators were excessed, with 76 remaining in permanent excess status at this time.

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- Licensure Support: To address licensure barriers, MTEL Case Managers have met with 436 educators at least once during the current cycle.

Dr. Gonsalves asked about teacher retention concerns, including losses of teachers of color at TechBoston, and what can be done. Chief Canty said staffing data is incomplete due to ongoing hiring and transfers, and explained that many educators receiving notices may still be rehired as positions open. She added that the district is actively working through placements for 367 permanent educators.

Barbara Fields, former BPS Office of Equity senior officer, asked why the race of the teachers isn't available, who is monitoring and responsible, and whose job it is to keep track. Chief Canty explained that a final number is unavailable because the data changes daily. Dr. DePina said that staff breakdowns are available, and they actively track real-time staffing adjustments, but bump and re-hire statuses are not yet determined. Chief Canty explained that a specialized task force within her office actively monitors and conducts direct, personal outreach to non-renewed educators of color after June 15 assist with job placement. She added that school leaders now must justify why they did not hire from this internal pool before hiring any outside candidates.

Dr. Morris questioned the self-reported MTEL waiver data. Chief Canty clarified that receiving a waiver requires some proof of exam attempts and coursework.

Dr. Morris acknowledged that staffing data fluctuates daily but emphasized that waiting until October for an update is too late for the Committee. Ms. Shakur requested that the district share a current baseline snapshot so they can monitor progress. Chief Canty said they could share monthly hiring data, as the district tracks progress month-by-month and is currently 53% ahead of last year's hiring pace.

Rev. Bodrick asked if the district tracks trends regarding non-renewals, if the district has to place educators by subject. Chief Canty explained that unless the educator chooses to, the district has to place by subject. She also said the district is addressing issues with chronic waivers by ensuring educators receive the proper tools to get certified. Dr. DePina added that DESE, not BPS, is the ultimate deciding authority on waivers. Ms. Shakur that what is missing is the demographic data for the educators with waivers among the non-renewals.

Ms. Rousmaniere clarified that the data request originated with the concern that the district might lose 400 educators, many of whom are educators of color. If this was indeed the case, what internal and external actions could be taken to address it.

Dr. Morris questioned BPS's specific strategy for supporting Black educators. He noted that out of a total pool of 700 educators, only 436 have had direct contact with case managers, and said that, at a bare minimum, these educators should participate in district certification programs, as a top strategic priority. Dr. DePina clarified that the district cannot compel individuals to participate in internal BPS programs, or mandate how they use those progress resources.

Dr. Gonsalves suggested tracking monthly staffing percentages from May to October to help the Task Force plan proactive interventions despite data fluctuations. Ms. Shakur emphasized the importance of monitoring Black and bilingual educators, and requested that future reports separate classroom teachers from guidance counselors to provide an accurate count of educators directly in front of students.

Rev. Bodrick asked why the district cannot compel participation. Chief Canty clarified that mandating it would require collective bargaining with the union. Dr. Gonsalves added that despite support from UMass, some educators still choose not to attend. Ms. Fields recommended exploring pre-hire requirements prior to union enrollment and requested an update on the status of the 2025 official compliance report. She criticized the past elimination of preparatory pipelines, urged the district to prioritize actionable, immediate retention strategies, specifically proposing the direct appointment of Black provisional teachers to permanent positions. Chief Canty clarified that BPS provides MTEL courses, testing support, and waiver assistance for educators and paraprofessionals. She also explained that the district transitioned from inefficient past programs to a successful one-on-one guidance model, which has yielded higher educator retention rates this year than over the past three years combined.

Dr. Colin asked if there was anything around advocacy that the Task Force could support. Dr. DePina said that the primary focus should be supporting educators of color, noting that DESE regulations limit flexibility.

Mr. Mudd asked if there was guidance given to school leaders to preserve diversity when the budget came out. He also requested a comprehensive report tracking external hires, internal transfers, and staff departures to monitor overall retention.

Dr. Alkins asked the administration's strategic interpretation of staffing trends rather than raw data, asking for disaggregated numbers on internal demographic shifts to improve the recommendations. He also asked if the district tracks varying proficiency degrees within self-reported MTEL data. Chief Canty clarified the distinction between certified bilingual educators, who must pass specific mastery exams to teach a language, and staff who self-report conversational fluency to assist families. She confirmed that the district can break down and share this data with the Task Force.

Dr. Alkins concluded by stating that tracking these metrics would help the Task Force formulate targeted recommendations. He emphasized that key priorities include strengthening MTEL preparation accountability and monitoring whether the percentage of educators of color within the non-renewed pool decreases over time. Ms. Shakur said that the Task Force is monitoring trends rather than daily numbers to see if the district is progressing.

TASK FORCE BUSINESS

Key Performance Indicators for the OAG Policy - Ms. Shakur introduced the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) discussion, explaining that the upcoming policy vote requires a data dashboard to track core metrics. She asked the members to review the distributed KPI handouts and decide on the top three metrics.

The members discussed determining the top priority categories. Dr. Alkins said that the Task Force's categories should mirror the School Committee's three working group priorities: Accelerating Academic Performance, Ensuring Access for All Students, and Consistency in High-Quality Learning Opportunities. Ms. Shakur agreed, recommending that the Task Force adopt these exact priorities to organize the KPI dashboard. Rev. Bodrick noted that the data was currently too disaggregated and urged that the different tracking versions be aligned so the Task

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Force can clearly understand which metrics fall under each strategic bucket. The members discussed narrowing the list down and agreed to reorganize, re-bucket, and align the categories with the School Committee's priorities.

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

- Co-Chair Alkins introduced self-nominations from Boston School Committee members Rafaela Polanco Garcia and Lydia Torres to fill one vacancy on the Task Force. The group reviewed the formal nomination process, and clarified that the selected candidate must ultimately receive official approval from the School Committee. The members agreed to review the application materials and submit their candidate recommendations directly to Ms. Parvex.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, Cambridge resident and advocate, urged the Task Force to strongly support the establishment of SMART goals focused on both student outcomes and teacher diversity.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved - At approximately 6.13 p.m. the Task Force unanimously approved a motion by roll call to adjourn to the meeting.

Attest:



Lena Parvex
Executive Secretary