Literacy Task Force, City of Boston
Zoom
May 21, 2024, 10:30-11:30 am

Task Force Members
- Dr. Edith Bazile, Black Advocates for Educational Excellence
- Yorsalem Brhane, BINCA
- Manuel Coronado, Immigrants Lead Boston alum
- Lori D'Alleva, Charlestown Adult Education
- Xiomara Gomez, Gardner Pilot Academy Adult ESOL program
- Lee Haller, English for New Bostonians
- Stephen Hunter, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- Nicole Simeon, Bunker Hill Community College, First Literacy Scholar
- City Councilor Julia Mejia, *ex officio*
- Gayana Daniel, Office of Language and Communications Access, *ex officio*
- Papa Diop, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, *ex officio*
- David Leonard, Boston Public Libraries, *ex officio*
- Lesley Ryan Miller, Boston Public Schools, *ex officio*
- Monique Tú Nguyen, Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement, *ex officio*
- Trinh Nguyen, Worker Empowerment Cabinet, *ex officio*

Facilitator, Dr. Elizabeth Santiago, *The Untold Narratives*

City of Boston Staff for Task Force
- Mariangely Solis Cervera, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
- Ân H. Lê, Director of Policy and Research, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet
- Meghan Crowley, Intern, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet

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Meeting Goals:
By the end of this meeting we will:
1. Continue to build community as literacy task force members,
2. Discuss draft survey developed by NU's research team, and
3. Build on our previous discussions to set the stage for our work in 2024.

Agenda

- 10:30-10:35: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda
- 10:35-10:45: Re-acclimate us to our work plan
- 10:45-11:10: Discuss next steps for survey. Questions to consider:
  - Is it worthwhile to start with a qualitative survey that is of a self-reported nature versus one that formally tests the person's literacy skills?
  - If we pursue both, what are the steps to develop and implement both types of surveys?
  - Outcome: determine next steps for survey including forming a sub-committee to review the Northeastern team's draft survey and make recommendations for next steps.
- 11:10-11:20: Discussion of deployment of survey. Questions to consider:
  - How do you see the survey being deployed? What are your initial thoughts on the roadmap?
  - Update from https://unlockingliteracy.ai
- 11:20-11:30: Determine next steps, schedule next meeting, and wrap-up

Attendance

- Papa Diop
- Manuel Coronado
- Mario Paredes (for Monique Tú Nguyen)
- Gayana Daniel
- Councilor Julia Mejia
- Edith Bazile
- Melissa Therous (for David Leonard)
- Nicole Simeon
- Natalia Espinosa Tokuhama
- Meghan Crowley
- Dr. Elizabeth Santiago

Minutes

1. Meeting began at 10:31am
2. Councilor Mejia: Let me know if the task force has budget needs that I should be

advocating for.

3. Santiago: Welcome, quick review of agenda

4. Santiago: Re-acclimate us to our work plan

    a. Santiago: Northeastern team came in to look at existing data and gaps in data, as well as provided ways to address those gaps.

5. Santiago: Discuss next steps for survey.

    a. Santiago: Is it worthwhile to start with a qualitative survey that is of a self-reported nature versus one that formally tests the person's literacy skills?

        i. Bazile: Exploring the adult and immigrant populations is important to see how they're guiding children into the education process and understanding how their children develop. This is needed to close gaps. It will take an intense resource of people to pull from adults. Practical literacy skills are essential to navigating your environment.

        ii. Santiago: One thing to consider, what is our role or are we just advising?

        iii. Santiago: We may not be able to tackle this as a large group and may need a small group to tackle these specifications. Another possibility is a separate survey to get at these anecdotal and storytelling pieces. Is there any interest in a subcommittee?

            1. *Bazile raised hand*

        iv. Santiago: How do we target people who have not been counted in the past. This may be a separate group. Is anyone interested in this?

            1. *Bazile and Coronado raised hand*

        v. Bazile: What is one data point we can gather and address that will make the biggest difference in targeting and addressing the literacy gap in accessing services and resources in the City of Boston? How do you stop the bleeding? You never know what the current generation goes through to break through the cycle. Recognize that resistance to education is not resistance, but a pattern of behavior. We need to change institutions. How do we create a bridge to say we recognize what you have (not deficit lens)?

      vi. Espinosa Tokuhama: Is there a step at the end to report back to the community all the information we gather? We make sure it's a relationship of learning rather than pulling information.

     vii. Diop: Adult programs have been moving away from Adult Basic Education level. Boston has few programs with those levels. How can we collect more data? Regarding surveys, I would go for the suggestion of 2 surveys.

    viii. Coronado: How can we realistically take the next step? Focus on one group first and/or what kind of literacy are we focusing on. One of my concerns is what we can realistically do next to get us to our goal.

     ix. Santiago: This has been helpful. We need to figure out our next charge. I suggest two subcommittees. One subcommittee focused on considerations we'll present to a data gatherer about the types of things we should focus on when it comes to data collection. For the data gatherer, how do we hire someone with the equity and literacy expertise needed? The second subcommittee would be focused on targeting folks who haven't been counted, may not trust us, etc.

        1. Santiago: Bazile and I on the first subcommittee. Bazile, Coronado, and myself on the second subcommittee. If anyone would like to join one of those subcommittees, let me know.

      x. Santiago: Councilor Mejia asked about budget considerations and we discussed budgeting for tools to build website accessibility, as well as resources for the data collection.

6. Santiago: Overview of meeting with Burnes Center for Social Change.

    a. Santiago: Miller and I met with a team from the Burnes Center for Social Change at Northeastern University. They are working on an Unlocking Literacy project: https://unlockingliteracy.ai. They are planning an event in September or October to bring in BPS families to the Museum of Science to discuss their needs around literacy. Opportunity for us to do something there.

7. Santiago: Any final questions or thoughts?

8. Meeting closed at 11:23