



Mayor Michelle Wu

Literacy Task Force, City of Boston

Zoom

August 26, 2024, 09:00-10:00 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

- Ân H. Lê, Director of Policy and Research, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet
- Natalia Espinosa Tokuhama, Deputy Director of Policy and Research, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet

Meeting Goals

By the end of this meeting we will:

1. Continue to build community as literacy task force members,
2. Discuss reports developed by two committees meeting on 1) data and equity



and 2) data gathering methods, and

3. Introduce Northeastern University's Burnes Center for Social Change about their Unlocking Literacy project.

Agenda

- 9:00-9:05: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda and quick introductions
- 9:05-09:15: David Fields and Dane Grambell of Northeastern University's Burnes Center for Social Change join us to share an overview of their Unlocking Literacy project and discuss potential partnership opportunities.
- 09:15-09:35: Data and storytelling committee share their report.
 - Outcome: determine next steps for building and launching a
 - campaign related to literacy in the City.
- 09:35-09:55: Data and equity committee share their report.
 - Outcome: determine next steps for analyzing existing data with
- equity in mind and recommending additional data collection
- efforts.
- 09:55-10:00: Next steps, schedule next meeting, and wrap-up

Attendance

1. Nicole Simeon
2. Natalia Espinosa Tokuhama
3. An Le
4. Guadalupe Martinez
5. Dane Gambrell (invited guest presenter from Burnes Center)
6. David Fields (invited guest presenter from Burnes Center)
7. Dr. Elizabeth Santiago
8. Lee Haller
9. Trinh Nguyen
10. Brooke Machado
11. Gayana Daniel



12. Papa Diop
13. Mario Paredes
14. Lesley Ryan Miller
15. Stephen Hunter

Minutes

1. 9:03 Liz Santiago starts meeting
2. Introductions
3. 9:08 David Fields & Dane Gambrell re: Unlocking Literacy campaign
 - a. Last year, brought together stakeholders from government and higher ed to see what could be done to increase literacy today in Boston and in MA
 - b. All Our Ideas campaign this past Spring
 - i. Tried to learn what problems and concerns are for K-12 literacy
 - ii. A bit like an online survey but with choosing random pairing of answer choices from bank of 150 choices, can answer once or up to 30 times – ranking / voting results
 - iii. 38,000 votes from ~2,700 individuals from throughout the US
 - c. Looking for ways to engage locally, in person convening in Fall
 - d. There are early education faculty at NU campus in Oakland, CA – looking at comparing and contrasting with Boston
 - e. Where might there be opportunities for collaboration? What questions are the TF interested in answering? Can NU's effort lead to new questions for TF's work?
 - f. Q/A & Comments
 - i. TN - How does the NU work connect or prioritize or choose between K12 and adult literacy?
 1. DF - Has been focused on K12, and has not looked at adult literacy; but could look at it
 - ii. NET - Interested in the data collection methods and tech. How does this data show how Boston is doing v. nationally?
 1. LRM - Boston tends to do as well or better than counterparts nationally, but the standard is quite low.



- iii. Not a lot of data about respondents because no registration (to get a lot of responses) – there was an optional demographic survey but not tied to people’s responses
 - iv. BM - Do we know if respondents were mostly educators, families, etc.? We know that how people answer connects with how they are politically
 - v. NU - we are not literacy experts – we are here to help with tools and processes
 - vi. LS - we are charged with looking at literacy rates in Boston and have been looking at data gaps. Have been looking to do a campaign to see how we can help people tell stories of what literacy looks like for them. Is there an opportunity to have some visibility in the NU- led Fall convening?
 - 1. In early stages of planning
 - 2. BPS’s objectives: get feedback from families, and share with families what every student is entitled to
 - vii. More information about Unlocking Literacy is here:
<https://unlockingliteracy.ai/>
 - 1. d.fields@northeastern.edu and dane@thegovlab.org
4. 9:27 Data and Storytelling Committee report out
-  Committee_Report_Storytelling.pdf
- a. LS, EB, NS, MC
 - b. How to connect to community members who might not have been counted in a formal survey
 - i. E.g. Community Ambassadors – can we partner with Everyday Boston to be at their “Connection Stations”?
 - c. How to build off what NU student project from Spring could be adapted to also get feedback about how people feel about literacy issues?
 - i. Tried to be as asset-focused at possible
 - d. Boston.gov content accessibility - looked at universal design and ADA for design principles, e.g. plain language
 - e. Next Steps and Recommendations



- i. Campaigns
 - ii. Website building
 - iii. Survey finalization
 - iv. Grassroots story ambassadors
- f. Comments:
 - i. BM - suggests using network of Adult Literacy Initiative, recognizes that this is limited because it includes people who are already halfway there, but could be starting point for connecting with their friends and family
 1. Some of the TF members lead organizations / programs that are in ALI
 2. We should also have incentives for participation, e.g. gift cards
 3. LS - suggests that we focus on adults
 4. PD - suggests that TF meet with the managers of the BCYF programs (throughout all locations) and Commissioner who all sit at HQ
 - ii. LS - If you have additional feedback, please let Liz know, but committee would like to move forward with the next steps recommended
 - iii. LS - thank you to committee members for all your hard work
5. 9:40 Data and Equity committee report [Committee_Report_EquityandData.pdf](#)
 - a. LS, EB, LRM - focused on K-12 due to expertise of EB and LRM
 - b. LS looked at AIR report (2003) - do we need to do another one like that?
 - c. Wants to ask adult literacy experts on what is needed
 - i. TN (via comments) - yes, 2003 is too dated; BPDA [sic.] has a lot of data and a research team
 - d. For K-12, looked at BPS school committee goals
 - i. Currently under review to be updated
 - ii. Can TF connect to offer suggestions?
 - e. Developed some recommendations for BPS
 - f. Can we have a conversation on how to approach adult literacy?
 - g. Comments:



Mayor Michelle Wu

- i. LH - good to know that MA participated in national survey, would want to know how it was done
 - ii. TN (via comments) - If there is a scope for the 2003 update report and \$, please let us know.
- h. Please let Liz know how you want to engage and move forward
- i. AL - Do we know how much guidance non-BPS K-12 schools take from BPS?
 - i. LRM - Mostly, no, except for in-district charter schools
- j. Volunteers for Data and Equity for Adult Literacy Committee
 - i. BM, SH, LH
- k. BM- Can we connect with adult ed programs to reach people who did not meet required minimum standards for admission (which vary)?
- l. LS - would like to hire firm to get data about adults - but realizes it could be expensive - would want to have well defined scope before exploring - goal is to have recommendation by December