



Mayor Michelle Wu

Literacy Task Force, City of Boston

Boston City Hall, Room 806

Zoom link to come

July 25, 2023, 2-3:30pm

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
 - Johannah Cooper, Policy Fellow, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet
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Prewritek

- Review the “for discussion” document and come prepared to discuss



Meeting Goals:

By the end of this meeting we will:

1. Continue to build community with each other as literacy task force members.
2. Building on our previous discussion, determine what we can reasonably accomplish from now until December 2023.
3. Identify roles for task members to accomplish between meetings to move us toward the end of phase 1 of our work.

Agenda

- 2:00-2:10: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda (name placards)
- 2:10-2:30: Warm-up/Community Building: What's one thing you are excited about after our first meeting and one question you have?
- 2:30-2:35: Announcements:
- What to do if contacted for an interview?
- 2:35-3:15: Review proposed work, timeline and tasks
- 3:15-3:20: Schedule follow-up meeting cadence
- 3:20-3:30: Final questions, comments, and wrap-up
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Attendance (online)

- Manuel Coronado
- Lori D'Alleva
- Yorsalem Brhane
- Nicole Simeon
- Edith Bazile
- Lesley Ryan Miller
- Luz Johannah Perez
- Councilor Julia Mejia
- Gayana Daniel
- David Leonard
- Monique Tu Nguyen

Attendance (in-person)



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- An Le
- Lee Miller
- Papa Diop
- Brooke Machado
- Dr. Liz Santiago

Minutes

1. Chief Solis Cervera and Dr. Liz Santiago welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. Introductions (see attendance above)
3. Dr. Liz Santiago asked participants to share what they are most excited about based on discussion from last meeting
 - a. Promoting a lifelong literacy journey– getting books in homes, promoting access to/use of public libraries
 - b. Supporting literacy especially for Black and Latino residents
 - c. Gathering data about needs that exist in Boston
 - d. Working on both adult and youth literacy
4. Announcements
 - a. If members of the task force receive interview requests they should let Dr. Liz Santiago, An Le or Meghan Crowley (beginning in September) know to facilitate coordinating with a reporter
 - b. The City of Boston Office of Returning Citizens would like to participate in the work of the Task Force to the extent they are able and allowed. An Le asked the group if there were objections to allowing this group to participate
 - i. Questions raised about the role of the City’s Office of Returning Citizens– clarification about their work and role related to serving previously incarcerated populations
 - ii. Lori– it would be beneficial to the group to have someone who was involved in the carceral system to participate and may need to work with other partner organizations, including advocates to get access to information about literacy challenges
5. Review and discussion of previous work
 - a. Councilor Mejia confirmed that the work is expected to continue through December 2026 and asked the group to consider what amendments may need to be made to the ordinance to guide this work



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- b. Group in agreement about notes and definitions from previous meeting
- c. Councilor Mejia suggested there may be communities, including youth and adults involved in the carceral system, missing from these conversations
- d. Edith– clarifying language to ensure that it is more inclusive of important cultural considerations and for those who may have differing literacy levels in their native languages and in English
- e. Dr. Liz Santiago– would like to include where the Task Force stands on the importance of the different language used to define the work of the group including honoring the dignity of one’s native language and culture to ensure we are not centering only one type of literacy in our work
- f. Councilor Mejia– Appreciates the thoughtfulness of this work and suggested it can set a standard for related work/efforts in other City departments
- g. Brooke– likes the asset-based approach because there is often a focus on deficits
- h. Lee- something missing is recognizing the diversity of lived experiences
- i. Dr. Liz Santiago– will follow up with methods to collect information/thoughts from group members. Began discussion about the collective definition of literacy and suggest subcommittees to work
- j. Papa– shared story of individual who is only able to read Quran and can communicate verbally, highlighted example of the diversity of lived experience
- k. Lee- Affirmed that there are individuals who can read/write in languages other than their native or English, examples of need to broaden the definition of literacy
- l. Dr. Liz Santiago– discussion about the ages to be included in the definition of this work in relation to another group formed to focus on early childhood literacy
- m. An– will be important to know what work that group is focusing on and determine how this Task Force wants to



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- n. Edith- children who are unable to read relative to their grade level are more likely to experience challenges related to their education later and shared statistics about youth educational challenges in the U.S., behavioral problems often arise in schools related to learning challenges and not receiving proper interventions/support, want to be sure there is proactive efforts rather than waiting for failure of students/families
 - o. Dr. Liz Santiago- have to begin young and show to adults about what happens when literacy issues are not addressed. Going to keep age in and will wait to see what the other group is working on. One subcommittee could work on the definition of literacy- Edith, Brooke and Lesley to work on this. Going to follow up on other divisions of work- data collection sources and methods of collecting additional data, mapping services that already exist and later the gaps that exist
6. Wrap-Up
- a. The group is not going to meet in August and will plan for mid-to-late September via Doodle Poll link
 - b. Dr. Liz Santiago presented the roadmap for work and proposed information included in report to be submitted in December
 - c. Councilor Mejia reminded the group that November/December is time in which administration begins looking at budget priorities to submit for request
 - d. An- Around November 15th is ideal for Chief Solis Cervera to know what the Task Force may need and beginning of January for final requests
7. Dr. Liz Santiago thanked members and provided details about next steps