Literacy Task Force, City of Boston
Zoom
April 9, 2024, 12-1 pm

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*

<u>Facilitator</u>, 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

Guests from Northeastern University
- Evelis Cruz
- Cameron Ackerman-Faedi
- Laura Fusaro
- Lydia Butler-Orr
- Leah Peters

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Prework
- Review materials from Northeastern team (materials to come)

Meeting Goals:

By the end of this meeting we will:
1. Build community as literacy task force members.
2. Build on our previous discussion to set the stage for our work in 2024.
3. Discuss draft survey developed by Northeastern University's research team

Agenda
- 12:00-12:05: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda
- 12:05-12:10: Re-acclimate ourselves to the work of the Northeastern University team and their role in supporting the task force
- 12:10-12:30: Presentation of Northeastern University's draft survey
- 12:30-12:50: Discussion of survey questions (you will receive the questions in advance to be prepared for this discussion) and how the survey will be distributed.
- 12:50-1:00: Determine next steps schedule next meeting, discuss potential future presentations, final questions, comments, and wrap-up

Attendance
- Papa Diop
- Nicole Simeon
- Natalia Espinosa Tokuhama
- Martine Maingot
- Mario Paredes
- Lori D'Alleva
- Lee Haller
- Leah Peters
- Laura Fusaro
- Gayana Daniel
- Evelis Cruz

- Edith Bazile
- David Leonard
- Brooke Machado
- Lydia Butler-Orr
- Stephen Hunter
- Lesley Ryan Miller
- Meghan Crowley
- Dr. Elizabeth Santiago

Minutes

1. Meeting began at 12:04pm
2. Santiago: Welcome, introductions, quick review of agenda
3. Presentation from Northeastern University team on survey questions and roadmap
   a. Butler-Orr: Overview of overarching goals, methodology, and survey format
   b. Fusaro: Overview of demographics, numeracy, and digital literacy
   c. Cruz: Overview of practical literacy, resource utilization, and storytelling/open-ended questions
   d. Peters: Overview of the survey roadmap and recommendations/conclusion
4. Santiago: Questions for NU team
   a. Bazile: Relationship between literacy and incarceration, how are you gathering those responses and tapping into cycles of the demographics who are missed?
      i. Butler-Orr: creating buckets of demographic goals and doing subgroup analysis
      ii. Peters: Some populations may need their own survey
   b. Leonard: 200 of what? How did you get to 200 being a statistically significant number? We can at least reach out to the office of returning citizens for people who were formerly incarcerated.
   c. Machado: Appreciate the inclusion of storytelling opportunities. How do the responses to these questions provide information on literacy level? For example, "can you help your children with homework?" How can we pinpoint that this is a literacy issue versus a different issue (relationship with child,

work, disability, etc)? How do we know these questions indicate a level of literacy for an individual? Have they been proven?

  i. Fusaro: There are core questions and a question bank which allow us to go deeper into some sections.

  ii. Butler-Orr: These questions are meant to be honed by literacy experts or even removed entirely if you decide.

  iii. Santiago: There was a lot of discussion around self-reporting vs the survey feeling like a test. We can do work to refine. Goal was to make it accessible and friendly and for folks not to feel interrogated. Balance between a broad set of questions vs the specificity which it seems we need to work on.

  iv. Cruz: We want you to be able to use the questions flexibly based on the population you work with. These questions are the base and the goal is for you to style them the way you need to to get results. Play around with formatting and how questions are deployed.

d. Paredes: Iis there going to be any sort of way to compare the responses to existing data? How are we thinking about doing that? What reading grade level are these questions written in? For example, some words like "proficient" etc. might require a certain reading level

  i. Butler-Orr: Survey will have audio option for all questions and respondents can record their responses instead of writing. The survey will also be in as many languages as possible.

e. Bazile: When you're talking to an adult about low literacy, it can bring feelings of shame or embarrassment. I see the survey as reporte building. There has to be some trust building to honor the dignity of the individual. Acknowledge that and get the qualitative data to go into these sensitive topics. "What was your experience with schooling? Were there any gaps?" This allows you to discover barriers. This is a piece that needs to be frontloaded here.

f. Haller: What about people who don't complete the survey? Maybe because they find questions too personal or they don't understand. Track percent completion of people who start the survey to evaluate how well it's reaching people who want to fill it out.

g. Bazile: In order to be access-based it is important to acknowledge that they do have skills. Important to find out how they access information. Is this

survey going to be in-person where there is someone who shares the same culture to capture their stories?

      i. Cruz: Maybe focus groups branching off the survey

5. Santiago: Next steps: NU team closes out this week. Please share more feedback. I will put everything together in a recommendation document. Next meeting most likely in May.

6. Meeting closed at 12:55