



Mayor Michelle Wu

Literacy Task Force, City of Boston

Zoom

December 14, 2023, 10-11:15 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

Prewrite

- Read draft report to Chief Cervera



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, review the 2023 report of our work and recommendations for 2024 and beyond
3. Discuss next steps related to work in 2024

Agenda

- 10:00-10:05: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda
- 10:05-10:15: Updates on where we are as we near the end of the year
- 10:15-10:45: Review Recommendations document
- 10:45-11:00: Identify initial ideas for completing recommend work strands including sub-committee work and potential partners
- 11:00-11:15: Determine next steps schedule next meeting, Final questions, comments, and wrap-up

Attendance

- Papa Diop
- Nicole Simeon
- Manuel Coronado
- Brooke Machado
- David Leonard
- Mario Paredes
- Gayana Daniel
- Xiomara Gomez
- Edith Bazile
- Trinh Nguyen
- Councilor Julia Mejia
- Dr. Liz Santiago
- Meghan Crowley
- Ân Lê



Minutes

1. Santiago: Welcome, final meeting of 2023, overview of agenda
2. Santiago: Review Recommendations document. Take a few minutes to re-familiarize yourself with it and then we will go into small groups to discuss.
 - a. Small Group Debrief
 - b. Santiago: Large Group Debrief. Anything you want to discuss or share?
 - i. Coronado: I guess one of my concerns or doubts is what steps we will be taking budget wise. What that timeline would look like, and if it is realistic to what we want to achieve next year.
 - ii. Santiago: I had a lot of unknowns with this piece and what the City can provide.
 - iii. Nguyen: I agree with the important question- budget?
 - iv. Lê: What would be helpful is if that TF can look at those items and decide if they're the right items. And then decide how we want to prioritize them against each other. What Meghan and I can do over the next 3-4 weeks is get cost estimates, because budget proposals are due mid January. Meghan and I can work on that and hopefully speed things up. What we need to know from TF is whether these are the correct things to look into?
 - v. Paredes: I think the Northeastern proposals are due Dec. 20th, right?
 - vi. Santiago: Does anyone have thought on what to prioritize?
 - vii. Bazile: I think this is a great framework you designed. I was really impressed with the document. Thinking about the changing populations and about how we're doing this work prek-12 and focus on what's happening for students in schools, so we can be more proactive for the next generation. I'm wondering how we can have a more robust focus on the prek-12 BPS system.
 - viii. Santiago: What I think is a challenge is the scope of literacy is so large in what we're trying to accomplish. Coming up with a way to approach the collection of data is going to be the first major thing we undertake. Once we find the gaps with that, how do we get those voices? It's 2 levels: existing data and things we need to look at to get



the full picture. We have to get started and if we can get some help through a University partner or expert who can organize data collection like this. But we need a plan and that's where the priority is for me.

- ix. Leonard: 2 things from our group to make it stronger: many individuals with literacy needs may be reluctant to share fully until trust is built. Also, explicitly call out the need to reach people who may have difficulty actually reading the survey itself or accessing digital platforms.
- x. Santiago: Thank you David, it can't be just surveys. Whether it's community centers, libraries, whatever it may be, but we need a documented plan. That, for me, is the first step.
- xi. Leonard: Suggestions for language, I like starting points of collecting data that exists and beginning a survey. I think in our case, looking at both children and adults, the project to collect data that exists could look at both, the survey may need to be focused on adults.
- xii. Gomez: I have a question about the budget, when you get the budget is it for the program or is it for the plan? I don't know if we can recruit people from different cities in Boston to collect information.
- xiii. Santiago: First step is to identify gaps and second step is to fill in the gaps. If we create a survey, starting with adults makes sense to me, also building a picture of what's missing
- xiv. Lê: I think it might be a possibility to do something like that. There are some City rules around that. It's a maybe and we can put it on a list of things to explore for a budgetary ask.
- xv. Santiago: I'm hearing what was presented can't happen all at once.
- xvi. Paredes: I was going to suggest the youth side, BPS being a good starting point to see what exists. For adults, I wonder if reaching out to DESE to see what they have. They partnered with UMass and they may have stuff they gathered in a statewide report.
- xvii. Machado: Worker Empowerment partners with DESE and they are excited to provide assistance and we can count on them as a partner.



- xviii. Santiago: An, do you think you have enough of a priority?
- xix. Lê: Yes, I just wanted to give TF space to say what was missing or if it's enough.
- xx. Santiago: Feedback is more than welcome.
- xxi. Simeon: Can we share the document with external people outside of TF?
- xxii. Lê: If it's within your organization and for people with lived experience an organization you may be connected to, but I would not share this widely yet. If there's somebody you know with lived experience, I wouldn't share this with them yet.
- xxiii. Santiago: Ordinance was clear, it's looking at literacy in multiple languages. I am proposing we look at English first and next phase would be to look at other languages. I was trying to contain this huge undertaking first.
 - 1. Machado: I would support leaving native language as an off-shoot. Literacy issues in any language would affect this work, but there are resources that provide native literacy classes.
 - 2. Diop: Focusing on English primarily makes a lot of sense.
 - 3. Paredes: I agree that starting to open some of those doors so that data gathering can lead to some of those other things.
 - 4. Councilor Mejia: My initial reaction is that so many people come here with interrupted education and about 29% of Boston's population is of immigrant descent. As we continue, maybe if there's a pilot or resources, we can study the needs of native speakers, I think it's worth the consideration. I want to make sure this initial consideration does not leave out native speakers.
 - 5. Santiago: As part of the ordinance it's clear native language literacy is part of it, that's not up for debate. It's more about whether we start with English literacy first to parse out all the work we have ahead of us.



6. Councilor Mejia: This budget season, I'd see if there's a way to do something on a smaller scale for native language speakers, so they are a part of conversations.
7. Paredes: I wonder if there can be a section of any final report that can highlight the particular needs of literacy for ESOL community members.
8. Lê: Something I want to put on table, for the data collection piece, could we just add an additional component of "also, what is your literacy like in your native language?" making an additional question for something we're already doing.
9. Councilor Mejia: I appreciate the thought of how we are including that voice in the survey. As we continue to develop the framework, who are the people administering the survey? Do we have a group of ambassadors and we're cultivating them to help us engage diverse communities? Best way for legislation to work is if we're clear of what we really need. I think it's about being as inclusive as possible.
10. Bazile: I want to echo what Councilor Mejia said. If we think about racial and linguistic diversity of populations that have been left out, it's important to focus on the intersectionality that further compromises and marginalizes those populations. I think it's important to look at both components, race and linguistic diversity.
11. Leonard: I like recent suggestions to ensure there is a component of the first set of work to address individuals with other native languages. The document does a good job of acknowledging some of this.
12. Daniel: Thank you Councilor for the point about ambassadors. I'm thinking about how we are doing the data collection when it comes to reaching out to constituents around literacy. Using LCA to make sure ambassadors are fully trained? We have tools in the City of Boston that people can use or leverage for data



collection. If we are mailing documents out, that could be another conversation. I need to understand the data collection piece.

13. Santiago: We definitely need more clarity on how to approach that, we will do that. It can be part of the plan to build that out earlier rather than later.

14. Councilor Mejia: Because we're in practice of how-to, the City has liaisons for cultural affairs that hits various targeted communities. Get surveys into the hands of small business owners and leverage relationships with people. I want to think about this work as one little piece at a time. Thinking about the data being already out there but contracting key individuals to help. I would add that to your budget.

15. Simeon: For the budget part, can there be a conversation about compensating the task force members and organizations moving forward?

16. Lê: I can make a note to look into that and follow up with the Task Force.

xxiv. Gomez: When does this proposal have to be delivered, is there a limited time?

1. Santiago: We are trying to shoot for getting recommendations by the end of year to make sure we're a part of budget conversations.

c. Santiago: Once we start meeting in 2024, it will be very tactical. But, we will send information for meetings going forward and continue to do this important work.

3. Santiago: Closing remarks.