



Mayor Michelle Wu

## **Literacy Task Force, City of Boston**

Boston City Hall, Room 806

Zoom link to come

September 28, 2023, 3-4:30pm

### **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
- Meghan Crowley, Policy Fellow, Equity and Inclusion Cabinet

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### **Prewrite:**

- Review the "for discussion" documents 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, review the draft definition of literacy and draft data collection methods documents
3. Continue to Identify roles for task members to accomplish between meetings to move us toward the end of phase 1 of our work.

## Agenda

3:00-3:10: Settle in, welcome, quick review of agenda

3:10-3:20: Warm-up/Community Building: What's one thing you are excited about for the fall?

3:20-3:50: Review proposed definition of literacy: Approval requested

3:50-4:20: Review proposed data collection methods: Approval requested

4:20-4:25: Determine next steps and schedule next meeting

4:25-4:30: Final questions, comments, and wrap-up

## Attendance

- Nicole Simeon
- Manuel Coronado
- Papa Diop
- Lori D'Alleva
- Lee Haller
- Mario Paredes, for Monique Nguyen
- Brooke Machado & Joseph Le, for Trinh Nguyen
- Councilor Julia Mejia, with Julisa Curet Rodriguez
- Lesley Ryan Miller
- Edith Bazile
- Dr. Liz Santiago
- Ân Lê

## Minutes

1. Santiago: In between meetings, I circulated definition of Literacy developed with Machado, Bazile, and Ryan Miller.
2. Introductions (see attendance above): What are you excited about for the Fall?



3. Review proposed definition of literacy: Subcommittee work on definition of literacy and scope of our work is being brought back to this group. We will break off into pairs to discuss and then bring back to the larger group.
  - a. Councilor Mejia: Will there be space for community stakeholders to give feedback before we finalize?
  - b. Santiago: Yes, today, we will try to get a literacy definition into a place to bring to the community for feedback. We were not able to come up with scope of work; we realize that we are too early on. We are hoping to bring this to Chief Solis Cervera for a budget ask, which will likely be for someone to pull together research.
  - c. [Attendees broke out into pairs]
  - d. Report back to whole group:
    - i. Haller: Draft definition - very inclusive, which has pros and cons, no conclusion on whether to keep it this way or narrow it down
    - ii. D'Alleva: From adult ed perspective, expansive definition is appreciated because anything that is a barrier to a job or higher education is a literacy issue
    - iii. Bazile: Importance of assistive technology
    - iv. Diop: Definition is inclusive and really good. A “developing” / “emerging” framing is good.
    - v. Santiago: We want to be very obvious about home literacy and speaking, reading, writing in languages other than English is also very valuable. Any reactions to those pieces? Do we need to do this again?
    - vi. Paredes: Echo what others said on inclusivity. Can we blend first and second sentences more? Can we add “continuum” as part of framing? Liked “interact with world around us”. Can we use gender neutral language?
    - vii. Machado: Feel really happy that definition we developed and refined encompasses more than the stock definitions that other entities have out there. I agree with everything Mario (my partner) said. We have to understand that this definition will also need to be concise enough for external audiences.
    - viii. Santiago: I also like how this is OUR definition and to reflect what we are discussing.
    - ix. Santiago: Note end of year report, and Councilor Mejia reiterated that she and Chief Solis Cervera can advocate for budget items related to our work. We can use these 2 objectives to drive our work between now and then.



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- x. Machado: Page 2 of draft definition – I appreciate the note on use of language and being person -focused
  - xi. Bazile: Suggest replace “remediation” with “intervention”
  - xii. Santiago: I will revise and send around a 2nd draft to everyone to review. You can all send me comments individually.
4. Next item: Review proposed data collection methods
- a. Santiago: How can we get more community members around the table to get heard and counted? How do we have a more accurate picture of literacy numbers in Boston? This document is my brainstorm of how to reach residents.
  - b. Haller: Is this “additional” to anything else discussed?
  - c. Santiago: I was thinking “additional” to existing data sets but we have not identified what we have captured already.
  - d. Paredes: Is this for self-reporting of people’s level of their own literacy?
  - e. Diop: I spoke to Michael Farma at Mass. DESE – he is ready to present to us their data on HiSET
  - f. Coronado: Can you clarify community center idea?
    - i. Santiago: I was thinking a table at community centers or libraries where people can come share their experiences.
  - g. D’Alleva: Issue of low-literacy level in state intake form
  - h. Ryan Miller: Been thinking about access. Ideas of website with audio – are there examples.
  - i. Machado: I want to mention some leads I have on some of the bullets. Jim from Suffolk House of Corrections. BPHC for people housed in shelters – they have many programs, e.g. Healthy Mom Healthy Baby. BPS - family literacy program that serves parents of BPS students. BPL - Community Learning Center. Wants to acknowledge ENB’s work on ESL for parents
  - j. Bazile: We should look at DYS as well
  - k. D’Alleva: DYS does not use DOE for education; they use something else, which has a lower standard. So when they get out, they will have to go to grade for a lower age group, so they will drop out.
  - l. Santiago: Noting that First Literacy is doing a series on What Literacy Means to Us. Maybe expand that to paint as large of a picture as possible.
  - m. Santiago: Let’s take a look again at our list of data sets/sources that already exist and make sure everything is there
5. Next Steps:
- a. Santiago: Since Councilor Mejia mentioned community engagement as so important, I will try to synthesize everything that was brought up here to



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give you all next time for review. I will also get something drafted to think about what budget asks to make.

6. Wrap-Up:

- a. Santiago: Please email me with any questions or thoughts. Thank you!
- b. Next Meeting: Oct. 30. 2023, 2pm, hybrid