



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

June 1, 2015

Dear Parents, Family Members, Caregivers, and Other Members of the Holyoke Community:

I am very pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Steve Zrike to serve as the receiver for the Holyoke Public Schools. Dr. Zrike has deep experience in both urban and suburban school districts. He will be responsible for leading the turnaround effort for Holyoke's schools. Dr. Zrike is a lifelong educator who started as a teacher before going on to lead turnaround efforts at urban schools. He has extensive experience working with families and community organizations to improve students' learning.

Over his 17-year career in education, Dr. Zrike, who grew up in a bilingual, Spanish-speaking home, has worked as a teacher, principal, leadership coach, administrator and superintendent. While in Chicago, he led a network of 26 K-8 schools with 18,000 students, 96 percent of whom were Latino, 92 percent of whom were from low-income families and 40 percent of whom were English language learners. Prior to that, he worked at two Boston Public Schools and had a leadership role in improving two middle schools and two high schools.

Since 2013, Dr. Zrike has served as the superintendent of the Wakefield Public Schools. Under his leadership, the district designed and opened an early childhood center that tripled the number of pre-kindergarten students enrolled in the district and has launched a successful effort to implement full-day, tuition-free kindergarten for all students in the 2015-16 school year. He also launched a Parent University to provide families with workshops on a range of topics.

Dr. Zrike will begin his work in Holyoke on July 6th. Both he and I look forward to working with you to improve Holyoke's schools for all of its students. Dr. Zrike will be holding meetings and events throughout the upcoming months in order to hear and learn from you directly.

I hope that you will join me in welcoming Dr. Zrike into this new role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitch D. Chester".

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education