

Holyoke Public Schools Level 5 District Turnaround Plan

October 1, 2015



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Students, families, educators, staff, partners, community members, and friends of the Holyoke Public Schools:

We are excited to share with you the following plan for turning around the Holyoke Public Schools.

Throughout the spring and summer, we listened carefully to the input you provided at informal venues such as the Community Conversations/las Conversaciones con la Comunidad, through your feedback on the Receiver's entry plan, and through more formal processes such as the Local Stakeholder Group recommendations. By considering your input along with information from other sources, we have prepared this turnaround plan for the district. Thank you for your many inspiring ideas for how we can make the Holyoke Public Schools a district that prepares every student to succeed. As you will read in the following pages, our purpose is to promote rapid improvement, for the benefit of all Holyoke students. We will create new opportunities for student learning while building on the promising practices and programs that already exist in the district.

Throughout the plan, we focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
- Extend time to increase learning opportunities, for both students and staff
- Provide students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential
- Invest partners' knowledge and skills strategically
- Engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the district

At the core of this plan is our firm belief that *all* Holyoke students deserve a world-class education. For too long, too many Holyoke students have not received a high-quality education or were allowed to fail. This is unacceptable. While many of Holyoke's students and families face distinct challenges, these are not an excuse but rather a reminder that the district must do more to provide a strong educational program for each and every student. With this plan, we will raise the bar by improving the instruction and services we offer, and provide students with

the skills and tools they need to be successful in school now, and later in college and their careers.

The strategies in the pages that follow will require considerable planning, discussion, and community participation to be effective. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please continue to find information and learn about opportunities to get involved on the Holyoke Public Schools website (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/>) and through other district communications. Together we will achieve great things for the students of Holyoke.

The transformation of Holyoke from a district where an excellent education is the exception to a district where excellence is the rule will not happen overnight. The plan provides information about how we will measure our progress along the way. Your active participation will be critical as we expand learning opportunities during the coming years. We look forward to partnering with you and encourage you to read the turnaround plan.

Sincerely,

Signed by Receiver Zrike

Stephen Zrike
Receiver
Holyoke Public Schools

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Executive Summary

In April 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to designate the Holyoke Public Schools chronically underperforming (Level 5), placing the district in state receivership. In July 2015, by appointment of Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Stephen Zrike became the Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools. The receivership provides the opportunity for a significant, sustained district turnaround in Holyoke.

At the core of this plan is the firm belief that *all* Holyoke students deserve a world-class education. For too long, many Holyoke students have not received a high-quality education or were allowed to fail. With this plan, we will raise the bar, improve the instruction and services we offer, and provide students with the skills and tools they need to be successful in school now, and later in college and their careers.

Central to the turnaround plan are the educators¹ who are charged with transforming the district from one of low performance to one in which student achievement is consistently strong. Job one is ensuring that we employ an effective teacher in every classroom and that effective administrators lead our schools. To accomplish this, the district will implement strategies to retain high-performing staff and to recruit new talent to Holyoke, to ensure that all students receive strong instruction, interventions, and supports in every classroom, every day.

Throughout the plan, we focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
- Extend time to increase learning opportunities, for both students and staff
- Provide students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential
- Invest partners' knowledge and skills strategically
- Engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the district

¹ In this turnaround plan, the term "educator" means teachers, administrators, and other professional staff.

The Holyoke Public Schools will be a system of great schools that prepares its students for college and careers by challenging them to think critically and by providing safe, nurturing, culturally relevant environments in which they can learn and grow. The district's efforts will include a special emphasis on reengaging disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. The district will invest all its human, financial, and other resources in strategies that support students' learning, reallocating resources where appropriate from the central office to schools, in direct support of students. Guided by a central office designed to effectively support schools at all grade levels, the district's educators will participate in making school-level decisions that are tailored to their students. The Holyoke Public Schools will be a service-oriented district, truly welcoming and engaging families as active participants in students' education, and focused on building families' trust in the school system.

To achieve rapid improvement of academic achievement for all Holyoke's students, the district will implement strategies in five Priority Areas. These Priority Areas are aligned with the recommendations of the Holyoke Level 5 district Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) that were submitted to Commissioner Chester and Receiver Zrike on July 10, 2015, and are based on *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*.² The guide presents key turnaround practices to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.

The Holyoke Level 5 district turnaround plan Priority Areas include:

- Priority Area 1: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Priority Area 2: Establish focused practices for improving instruction.
- Priority Area 3: Create a climate and culture that support students and engage families.
- Priority Area 4: Develop leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.
- Priority Area 5: Organize the district for successful turnaround.

Holyoke's turnaround will include concentrated efforts to improve its lowest performing schools: William J. Dean Vocational Technical High School (Level 4); Morgan Full Service Community School (Level 5); and schools at risk of falling into Level 4 status.

² Lane, B., Unger, C., and Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. See [Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis](#). This document is based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 underperforming (Level 4) schools during the first 3 years of turnaround (2010–2011 to 2012–2013).

The Receiver and the Commissioner will monitor these Priority Areas closely, to ensure that strategies are being implemented effectively and are yielding the desired results. Changes will be made as needed to ensure that these strategies are having the desired impact on students' learning. Holyoke will invest its resources in strategies and tools that maximize student achievement; where strategies and tools do not demonstrate an impact on student learning, funds will be reallocated.

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of resources results in increased student learning. Staffing costs account for the bulk of expenditures in the school district's budget. The district must ensure that those expenditures are made in the most effective manner to increase student learning; therefore, principals will have the authority to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained. In turn, professional learning and staff support are essential investments in staff. In every budget, the district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses.

For the last several years, district administrators have had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget, and look to reorganization and reallocation to make funds available for key improvement initiatives. Some funding constraints of fiscal year 2017 are already known, so the challenge of fully implementing turnaround initiatives is to continue with reorganization and reallocation that prioritizes adequate funding for instruction.

The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Ensuring that great schools are available for all of Holyoke's students will not happen overnight. Decades of decline have led to Holyoke's chronic underperformance. The strategies in the following pages will require considerable planning, discussion, and community participation in order for them to be effective. The plan includes information about how we will measure our progress along the way. The district will exit from receivership once gains are sufficient and positive change has been institutionalized to ensure continued growth and sustainable results.

Summary of Key Issues and Priority Areas

Background

In March 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) reviewed and discussed ESE's 2015 District Review Report about the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS). The report described a district that ranked at or near the bottom of the state on nearly every academic and non-academic indicator. "Student achievement and growth in the Holyoke Public Schools are among the lowest in the state overall and for student subgroups...From 2011 to 2014, student academic achievement and growth declined in nearly every grade and subject."³ In addition to the 2015 Holyoke District Review Report, BESE was concerned about the history of underperformance that showed that the district's proficiency rates in English language arts (ELA), math, and science were all significantly below the state rate for the district as a whole and in each tested grade. The district's four-year graduation rate was also significantly below the state rate, with its drop-out rate notably above the state rate. BESE also reviewed the extensive history of accountability and assistance that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has provided to HPS, including support in planning, implementation, and funding of turnaround efforts for Holyoke's district and school improvement strategies. After providing an opportunity for community input on April 27, 2015, at the recommendation of Commissioner Mitchell Chester, BESE voted to designate the Holyoke Public Schools chronically underperforming (Level 5) on April 28, 2015, placing the district into state receivership.

This state receivership provides an important opportunity for a significant, sustained district turnaround in Holyoke. Under state receivership, the governance of the district has been streamlined, with all operational powers of the superintendent and school committee held by the district's receiver. In July 2015, by appointment of Commissioner Chester, Stephen Zrike became the Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools.

Findings

As of April 2015, when BESE voted to declare HPS chronically underperforming (Level 5), the district had a long history of difficulty in providing the appropriate systems and structures to ensure that all students are able to achieve. Some of the key findings from the District Review Report include the following:

- Graduation and drop-out rates: Despite improvement from a 2011 rate of 49.5 percent, in 2014, the district's four-year cohort graduation rate was 60.2 percent, 25.9 percentage points below the state rate of 86.1 percent. The annual drop-out rate for

³ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 15. Click F-J (next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

Holyoke has consistently been more than three times higher than the state rate, and was 6.4 percent in 2014, significantly above the statewide rate of 2.0 percent.

- Low proficiency rates: ELA, math, and science proficiency rates in 2014 were significantly below the state rates for the district as a whole and in each tested grade. ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district were 34 percent in 2011 and 32 percent in 2014, 37 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 69 percent. Math proficiency rates in the district were 27 percent in 2011 and 28 percent in 2014, 32 percentage points below the state rate of 60 percent. And grade 5 science proficiency rates were 11 percent in 2011 and 9 percent in 2014, 44 percentage points below the state rate of 53 percent. Proficiency rates varied considerably among schools, indicating wide disparities in students' educational experiences from school to school. Holyoke's highest performing school, Sullivan, was in the 21st percentile of elementary/middle schools, with a cumulative Progress and Performance Index of 41 for all students; the target is 75.
- Low levels of student achievement, particularly for subgroups: Based on statewide 2014 accountability results, 8 of Holyoke's 9 schools with a sufficient amount of data to report were in the lowest performing 20 percent of schools in their grade spans, with William J. Dean Vocational Technical High School (Dean) and Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) in the lowest 5 percent of schools in their respective grade spans statewide. Holyoke's schools also have subgroups that are among the lowest performing subgroups statewide. For instance, as a group, English language learners (ELLs) at White Elementary School are among the lowest performing in the state, and students with disabilities at Holyoke High School have shown persistently low graduation rates.
- Attendance and suspension rates: The 2013–2014 student out-of-school suspension rate, at 20.0 percent per year, was more than 5 times higher than the state average of 3.9 percent; this continued a trend dating back to 2003 in which at least 1 in 5 Holyoke students received an out-of-school suspension each year. Holyoke students on average were absent 13.8 days in the 2013–2014 school year, as compared with a state average of 8.7 days. This represented the eighth consecutive year in which the average number of days missed for students in Holyoke exceeded the state by at least five days per year.
- Accountability status: Of Holyoke's 11 schools, Dean was previously designated underperforming (Level 4) for being among the lowest achieving and least improving schools in the Commonwealth; and Morgan was designated chronically underperforming (Level 5) in October 2013 for its continued decline during its 3 years of Level 4 status, making it one of the first schools in the Commonwealth to be placed in receivership.

- Low levels of student growth: On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for ELA was 39; for mathematics, it was 45. Growth rates have been similarly low over the past four years. The statewide median SGP in both content areas is 50; these SGPs indicate Holyoke students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide. This means that students who already are behind are losing further ground compared with their peers.

Systemic Challenges

The district review findings and other data indicated that the district had multiple systemic challenges that impeded its ability to accelerate and support students' academic performance. At the time of the district's Level 5 designation in April 2015, some of the challenges as noted by the district review team included:

- Inconsistent instructional quality: The quality of instruction across Holyoke varied school to school and classroom to classroom, with inconsistent implementation of standards-based, rigorous instructional tools and materials. During school year 2014–2015, the district's 5 specific instructional practices⁴ were in their initial states of implementation and were not embedded in instruction at the classroom level. During observations conducted by the district review team, the quality of instruction was inconsistent and did not demonstrate mastery implementation of the district's instructional practices. The review team did not see clear and consistent evidence of rigorous lessons and high expectations for students in half of classrooms districtwide. Notably, observers saw evidence of instructional modifications that would enhance learning by Holyoke's students with disabilities and ELLs in only 35 percent of classrooms.
- Incomplete assessment system: The district did not have in place a complete system of formative assessments, and different schools were using different types of assessments, administered at inconsistent frequencies across the district. As of the end of school year 2014–2015, the assessment system had not been completed. The absence of a comprehensive assessment system limited educators from using assessment data to improve instruction and tailor supports to students' needs.
- Challenges at the secondary level: Holyoke's two high schools were not consistently preparing all students for college and careers. As stated above, Holyoke's four-year cohort graduation rate was only 60.2 percent in 2014, more than 25 percentage points below the state rate, and its drop-out rate was more than 3 times higher than the state

⁴ In school year 2014-2015, Holyoke identified 5 instructional practices on which it would focus: 1) student discourse, 2) vocabulary, 3) close reading, 4) text-based questions, and 5) school-specific climate and culture strategies (to be determined by school leaders).

rate. The district did not have a strategic, coordinated series of activities and supports to prepare middle school students for high school and lay the foundation for college and careers.

- Absence of leadership opportunities for teachers and other staff: The district had not developed a variety of opportunities for teachers or other staff to serve in leadership roles that benefit individual schools and the district as a whole. Teachers had little direct participation or formal collaboration in the overall planning, design, or implementation of professional development programs and services at the district level. For example, teachers had previously served on the district's professional development committee, but there were no teacher representatives in school year 2014–2015. Non-teaching staff may have had even fewer opportunities to contribute in leadership roles.

Vision

The Holyoke Public Schools will be a system of great schools that prepares its students for college and careers by challenging them to think critically and by providing safe, nurturing, culturally relevant environments in which they can learn and grow. The district will invest all its human, financial, and other resources in strategies that support students' learning. Guided by a central office designed to effectively support schools at all grade levels, the district's educators will be empowered to make school-level decisions that are tailored to their students. The Holyoke Public Schools will be a service-oriented district, truly welcoming and engaging families as active participants in students' education.

Throughout this plan, we will focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
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Turnaround Practices

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, signed into law in 2010, provides authority and tools for school and district leaders and the Commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to bring about rapid improvement in schools and districts that are underperforming (Level 4) and chronically underperforming (Level 5). In support of this work, ESE engaged The

Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL, LLC) to track the progress of Massachusetts' underperforming schools once they were in turnaround status, and identify lessons learned from the schools that made significant achievement gains during their first three years of turnaround, including the district systems and resources that supported them in their efforts. The result of this work is *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*,⁵ a document based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 Level 4 schools during the first 3 years of turnaround (2010–2011 to 2012–2013). The guide presents key turnaround practices to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.

Because the findings from the report indicate the types of supports necessary for effective and rapid acceleration, the Turnaround Practices serve as the basis for the Priority Areas of this turnaround plan.

Priority Areas

To achieve rapid improvement of academic achievement for all of Holyoke's students, the district will implement strategies in five Priority Areas that are aligned with the recommendations of the Holyoke Level 5 district Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) that were submitted to Commissioner Chester and Receiver Zrike on July 10, 2015.⁶ The plan identifies where strategies are informed by specific LSG recommendations.

Priority Area 1: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

In order to achieve the rapid improvement of academic achievement for all Holyoke students, the district must provide high-quality instruction for all students in every classroom, every day. Students will experience a culture of high expectations with an instructional program designed to meet their needs and built upon the cultural and linguistic assets they bring to their education. The district will provide a strong system of high-quality core instruction, and tiered interventions in every school, for every grade level. In order to tailor educational strategies to meet students' needs and result in improved student learning, the district will collect, analyze, and share data among its educators and other staff. Holyoke's turnaround will be successful as it develops and implements comprehensive strategies to address the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, both significant HPS populations.

⁵ See Lane, B., Unger, C., and Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. Retrieved from www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/default.html

⁶ See Appendix D for the Local Stakeholder Group's recommendations.

Priority Area 2: Establish focused practices for improving instruction.

HPS will design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students' educational experiences. To significantly improve students' progress in later grades, the district will also design a secondary educational experience in grades 6–12 that provides students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential, including a specific focus on the instructional program and student supports in the middle grades. The district will also build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation. The district's efforts will include a special emphasis on reengaging disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. To support these focused practices, the district will ensure that Holyoke's educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

Priority Area 3: Create a climate and culture that support students and engage families.

HPS will transform its culture into one of high standards and positive regard, and ensure that HPS schools provide environments that foster rapid improvement of academic achievement. District and school staff will work together to build all students' social/emotional skills to promote engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness. In order to develop school environments that foster strong academic achievement, HPS will develop structures and supports to identify and address holistically students' strengths and needs. The district will organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners' efforts and align them to the district's turnaround strategies. Finally, the district will engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the school system.

Priority Area 4: Develop leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.

Outstanding educators and staff are critical to the success of all components of this turnaround plan. Working together, Holyoke educators will implement high-quality instruction and be responsible for improved student achievement. Therefore, the district will ensure that Holyoke's educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth, and achievement. The district will create opportunities to use the staff's expertise throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround. It will be necessary to develop and enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels designed to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration.

Finally, the district's employees will be evaluated through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides all staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

Priority Area 5: Organize the district for successful turnaround.

The district will build robust systems to recruit, develop, and retain strong staff members and deploy them where they are most needed, motivating high-performing staff to remain in Holyoke and recruiting new talent to the district. The Receiver will grant autonomies so that school teams can tailor programs for their students' needs; school teams will be supported by the central office to use these autonomies effectively. HPS will develop and implement systems to maximize the use of existing school time and strategically add time where it is needed. The district's central office will be redesigned to ensure that it has the best structure for providing supports to the schools, and its systems will be revised or replaced as necessary to streamline district services and increase productivity and effectiveness. The district will invest its resources in strategies that lead to student achievement, and use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for a successful turnaround. Finally, the district will help prepare the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

The Receiver and the Commissioner will monitor these Priority Areas closely, to ensure that strategies are being implemented effectively and are yielding the desired results; the Receiver will also designate high-level central office staff to monitor implementation effectiveness regularly. Changes will be made as needed to ensure that these strategies are having the desired impact on students' learning. The plan includes benchmarks within each Priority Area's section. For the turnaround plan's Measurable Annual Goals, see Appendix B.

Holyoke's Level 4 and Level 5 Schools

Holyoke's turnaround will include concentrated efforts to improve its lowest performing schools: Dean and Morgan. The Receiver is developing a tiered system of central office supports for all of the district's schools, with a special emphasis on the district's lowest performing schools. In addition to the resources the Receiver will provide to all Holyoke's schools, he also plans additional supports for these two schools.

Dean

In June 2010, Dean was designated underperforming (Level 4) accountability status by Commissioner Mitchell Chester. Dean was approved for three years of School Redesign Grant (SRG) funding in July 2011 to restart the school with a turnaround operator, Collaborative for Educational Services (CES). SRG funding was provided to the school for fiscal years 2012, 2013,

and 2014. In July 2013, a new turnaround operator, Project GRAD USA, partnered with the district to support Dean; this partnership concluded in June 2015. The school's original three-year turnaround plan has expired, and Dean remains in Level 4 status.

Dean, the only Level 4 school in the district, will receive focused support and assistance to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement of its students. Dean's leadership team will receive frequent coaching, directly from the Receiver, with additional guidance provided by HPS's Director of Leadership Effectiveness; in school year 2015–2016, this coaching will focus on areas such as implementation of intervention blocks to provide supports for struggling students and using assessment data to improve teaching and learning. The Receiver, central office department heads, and other district staff will provide on-site observations of and expertise to the school to improve its instructional practices. The Receiver has already dedicated additional resources for Dean, such as funding for a literacy coach, a new position that will provide support to teachers. The district also plans to continue to invest in Dean's facility, such as by updating machinery and safety equipment. The Receiver has asked for state assistance and guidance about Dean's technical programs, ensuring that the programs are providing a solid foundation for students as they build their career knowledge and skills. The district will also partner with the Regional Employment Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to create Dean's schoolwide and program-specific advisory groups. As indicated in Priority Area 2, the district will review the career/vocational/technical education programs currently available to Holyoke's students, improve the quality of all programs that are retained, and consider additional programs---including regional and partnership options---aligned with the demand of the labor market and student interest. The Receiver will review any Memoranda of Agreement involving Dean, and will adjust those agreements as necessary to be consistent with the turnaround plan.

Morgan

In June 2010, Morgan was designated underperforming (Level 4) accountability status by Commissioner Mitchell Chester. Morgan was approved for three years of SRG funding in July 2011 under the federal transformation model. SRG funding was provided to the district for fiscal years 2012, 2013, and 2014. At the expiration of its three-year turnaround plan, based on its continued low performance and absence of improvement, Morgan was designated as a chronically underperforming (Level 5) school in October 2013. In January 2014, Commissioner Chester appointed Project GRAD USA as the receiver for Morgan, and in June 2014 a final version of the Morgan turnaround plan was issued. Following the Level 5 designation for the Holyoke Public Schools in April 2015, Stephen Zrike was appointed the district's Receiver, effective in July 2015. In his role as district Receiver, he became responsible for the

implementation of the turnaround plan for Morgan School; Project GRAD USA concluded its receivership work in June 2015.

Morgan, the only Level 5 school in the district, will receive focused support and assistance to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement of its students. In addition to the ongoing school monitoring, technical assistance, and professional learning community supports that ESE will make available, a dedicated central office liaison ensures that questions and needs are addressed quickly. Morgan's leadership team will receive frequent coaching, directly from the Receiver, with additional guidance provided by a central office liaison. In school year 2015–2016, this coaching will focus on areas such as using student performance data to match supports to students' specific needs; developing systems to give meaningful feedback to teachers about their instructional practices; and identifying challenges to and necessary supports for the implementation of school priorities. The Receiver, central office department heads, and other district staff will provide on-site observations of and expertise to the school to improve its instruction. The school's turnaround plan provides for additional academic support staffing, including an ELA coach and a math coach full-time at the school; the school's schedule also allows for additional professional development and common planning time. The Receiver has also allocated additional resources to fund a Director of School Climate and Student Support as part of the school's Full Service Community School model, an investment designed to improve students' academic progress.

Strategic Use of District Resources

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning, reallocating resources where appropriate from the central office to schools, in direct support of students. Holyoke's current per-student expenditures exceed a number of comparable districts. The district must ensure that those expenditures are made in the most effective manner to increase student learning; therefore, principals will have the authority to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained. In turn, professional learning and staff support are essential investments in staff. In every budget, the district must curtail expenditures that fail to demonstrate a relationship to strong student learning, and reallocate funds and staff positions to more productive uses.

For the last several years, district administrators have had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget, and look to reorganization and reallocation to make funds available for key improvement initiatives. Some funding constraints of fiscal year 2017 are already known, so the challenge of fully implementing turnaround initiatives is to continue with reorganization and reallocation that prioritizes adequate funding for instruction.

Statutory Basis for the Implementation of the Turnaround Plan

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, through the turnaround plan, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten classes; following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the district; establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

Currently, the district's eight collective bargaining agreements have expired. The terms outlined in Appendix A are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working rules and to any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately October 30, 2015. The Commissioner and the Receiver reserve the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

The turnaround plan is authorized for a period of three years. The Commissioner and the Receiver may develop additional components of the plan or amend the plan, as appropriate. The district will exit from receivership once gains are sufficient and positive change has been institutionalized to ensure continued growth and sustainable results.

Priority Area 1: Provide High-Quality Instruction and Student-Specific Supports for All Students Including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.

Challenges

Holyoke schools have demonstrated a consistent pattern of persistent and pervasive low performance in ELA, mathematics, and science over the past four years. With few exceptions, most students in the Holyoke Public Schools are not performing at grade level in all tested subjects and performance for students with disabilities and English language learners is substantially lower than other students' performance. Research-based practices are not uniformly applied across the district, such as providing excellent core instruction and tiered supports, using inclusive practices, direct, explicit English language instruction (English as a Second Language, or ESL), and sheltering content for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Most of the classroom instruction observed during the Holyoke district review⁷ demonstrated the absence of rigorous instruction or engaging academic tasks aligned to the expectations and standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Further, the majority of classrooms did not implement a range of research-based instructional strategies, such as systematic checking for understanding or using data to identify and address students' individual needs.

During the 2015 district review, the majority of observed classrooms did not show consistent evidence of the use of appropriate instructional strategies for students with disabilities or for ELLs, including inclusive practices or sheltering content, to enable all students to improve proficiency. Although Holyoke's administrators have earned the SEI endorsement, not all teachers have met this requirement. For example, 28 percent⁸ of the core academic teachers who are required to be endorsed in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) had not met that requirement by the end of school year 2014–2015. Student progress may be limited by the absence of trained teachers.

According to its most recent Coordinated Program Review,⁹ Holyoke's educators also have not received adequate training necessary for special education, resulting in inconsistent understanding and information about special education policy and practice across the district. This inconsistent understanding may have had an impact on student services and placements. For instance, the district's school year 2014–2015 data show that 26.3 percent of students with

⁷ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), Appendix C. Click F-J next to District Review Reports and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

⁸ These figures do not include teachers newly hired to the district in 2015–2016.

⁹ See the [Holyoke Public Schools 2013 Coordinated Program Review Report](#). Click English Language Learner (ELL) CPR Reports. Under Districts click H and scroll to Holyoke School District 2013.

IEPs were served in substantially separate placements, nearly double the state rate of 14.4 percent for that same period. Overall, 24.1 percent of Holyoke’s students are identified as students with disabilities, compared to a range of 12.5-24.1 percent in other Gateway Cities in Massachusetts.¹⁰ Moreover, the district’s 2014–2015 data identify 31.8 percent of the district’s ELLs as students with disabilities, compared to 16.5 percent of ELLs statewide who are also students with disabilities. This percentage may indicate that the district may have difficulty determining when a student’s performance is affected by language and culture rather than by a disability, thereby limiting the district’s ability to provide appropriate services matched to these students’ needs.

Rationale

In order to achieve rapid improvement for all Holyoke students, Holyoke Public Schools must effectively recruit, develop, and retain educators who will provide strong instruction, interventions, and supports for all students in every classroom, every day. Given the pervasively flat and extremely low performance in the district, programs and practices must be reviewed and changed as necessary to improve outcomes for students. Direct services to students, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities, must be increased. Students must experience a culture of high expectations with an instructional program designed to meet their needs and build on the cultural and linguistic assets they bring to their education. Educators and other staff throughout the district will be more effective when they are provided the tools, time, and support to meet the needs of Holyoke’s students while holding each other accountable for continuing to improve outcomes. These foundational strategies are at the heart of successful teaching and learning and must be the district’s urgent and immediate work.

Strategy A: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students.

- **Assess instruction and support system and implement school-based improvements:** With support from the district, each school will assess how its current program meets expectations for providing high-quality core instruction and tiered supports. Each school’s operational plan will include focused action steps to improve the systems and practices that support learning for all students, including providing focused professional development. See also Priority Area 4 and Priority Area 5.
- **Strengthen delivery of strong core instruction (Tier 1), and supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) interventions:** The district will establish strong school-based systems for delivering high-quality core instruction. Core instruction will be designed to engage

¹⁰ Gateway Cities in Massachusetts include: Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester.

and meet the needs of the varied learners in every classroom and will ensure opportunities for students to learn complex concepts and demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. To ensure that the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities are being met in core instruction (Tier 1), research and evidence-based practices will be embedded into daily classroom instruction, including SEI strategies and strong inclusionary practices. Using information from the schools' assessments, the district will develop strategies for strengthening access to and use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions that are comprehensive, responsive, flexibly-delivered, and implemented with fidelity.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IV (all recommendations), V (5b, 5c), X (4c).

Strategy B: Collect, analyze, and share data to tailor educational and support strategies to improve student learning.

- **Implement effective data use practices:** Holyoke educators and other staff will have access to a wide variety of formative, benchmark and summative data that will allow them to identify and address specific student needs. Content coaches will assist school leadership to ensure that district expectations for effective data use for instruction, collaboration, and monitoring interventions are implemented consistently across schools. All schools will use or create common planning time to support instructional planning and the identification and monitoring of both academic and non-academic interventions. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Upgrade the district's assessment system:** The district will review and upgrade its assessment system to ensure that assessments are culturally appropriate and high-quality.
- **Implement supports and interventions:** Based on the analysis of data, schools' instructional and support teams will develop appropriate responses to ensure student learning, such as regrouping students according to their needs or identifying specific Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. School staffing will be examined to determine if alternate strategies are needed to strengthen the quality of core instruction in all classrooms. See also Priority Area 3.
- **Building-Based Support Teams (BBSTs):** The district will evaluate and adapt Holyoke's approach to BBSTs to ensure they systematically identify students' academic, social, and emotional needs and identify appropriate strategies to meet those needs. See also Priority Area 3.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation V (5b).

Strategy C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of English language learners throughout the district.

- **Strengthen the program for ELLs in all grades:** The district will ensure that its English Language Education/English Language Development (ELE/ELD) program fosters rapid English language acquisition and academic growth for ELLs. Each school will have clear pathways for ELLs to gain higher levels of English proficiency throughout their academic experiences.
- **Revise curricula:** The district will revise the current curricula to ensure they are aligned with World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Analyze student data and tailor supports accordingly:** The district will support teachers in the analysis of *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS)* data and other relevant data, the development of formative assessments, and the application of findings to instruction through specific WIDA training.
- **Implement Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) strategies:** The district will address ELLs' needs by implementing SEI strategies effectively. The district will ensure that all core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them earn the SEI Endorsement and will provide pathways for non-core educators to complete professional development designed to help them meet the needs of ELLs. The district will ensure that its existing cadre of coaches receives appropriate training so they can support SEI, ESL, and general education teachers.
- **Provide high-quality English as a Second Language (ESL) services:** The district will ensure that ESL teachers are adequately prepared to deliver instruction aligned with WIDA Essential Actions in both English language development classes and during other time dedicated to English language development.
- **Assess effectiveness of Metcalf's dual-language program:** The district will assess the effectiveness of the dual-language program at Metcalf to determine whether it is an exemplary model of dual-language education. During school year 2015–2016, the district will make a determination about the future parameters of the program.
- **Investigate alternative ELL program options:** Because of the high percentage of ELLs (28.5 percent) and students whose first language is not English (47.7 percent), the district will investigate alternative ELL program models that can build bilingualism and biliteracy for its students. The district will explore possible models in school year 2015–2016 to determine which it may implement beginning in school year 2016–2017. Potential models may include a newcomers program, which would be designed to strengthen the foundational skills of students new to the country and to Holyoke; and a maintenance bilingual program, an additive educational model in which students would

develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy in English and Spanish while developing their understanding of diverse cultures.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations VII (1, 2a, 2d, 3, 4) and VIII (1).

Strategy D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities throughout the district.

- **Review the Special Education Program:** The district will review its Special Education Program and services in their entirety and provide comprehensive recommendations to improve services and programming. The district will use this review to improve its Special Education Program beginning in spring 2016.
- **Provide comprehensive services matched with students' needs:** The district will ensure that all special education placement options, including out-of-district placements, will have clear and culturally competent entry and exit criteria, progress measurement tracking and analysis procedures, guidelines for opportunities for increased student access to inclusive settings, and appropriate physical spaces.
- **Increase student opportunities to learn in inclusive settings:** Students will have increased opportunities to receive quality instructional time in inclusive settings.
- **Increase time spent in direct service of students:** The district will manage scheduling of educators and service providers to increase their time spent in direct instruction and support for students. This will also reduce the reliance on outside providers for speech and language and occupational therapy services. The district will begin this process in school year 2015–2016 by reviewing and optimizing current schedules for service providers as part of the Special Education Program review.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1a) and VI (1, 2, 3a, 3b).

Priority Area 1 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students.

- By November 2015, each school will develop a process by which it monitors student progress toward end-of-year outcomes.
- By December 2015, using a framework provided by the district, each school will have begun to develop a school operational plan outlining essential actions it will take during school year 2015–2016 to increase its capacity to provide high-quality core instruction and tiered supports.

Strategy B: Collect, analyze, and share data to tailor educational and support strategies to improve student learning.

- By November 2015, schools will report to the Receiver their current schedules for using or creating common planning time for grade/subject teachers (or creating alternate opportunities for frequent collaboration) in school year 2015–2016.
- By May 2016, the district will complete an inventory of its assessments and will determine which ones will continue to be used and which other assessments need to be developed or procured.

Strategy C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of English language learners throughout the district.

- By the end of October 2015, the district will have a plan to ensure that core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them will earn the SEI endorsement by June 30, 2016. By June 30, 2016, the district will develop a plan for non-core academic teachers to successfully complete an SEI course.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will have completed a review of current services for ELLs and develop a plan to maximize availability of quality services for gaining higher levels of English language proficiency throughout students' academic program.
- By April 2016, the district will have completed its review of alternative ELL program options, and will have identified a strategy and timeline for implementing any new program models beginning in school year 2016–2017.

Strategy D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities throughout the district.

- By January 2016, the district will review its Special Education Program, identifying best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps in services for students with disabilities in the district.

- By April 2016, the district will have analyzed the findings and recommendations in the review and will have developed a plan for implementing the essential elements in subsequent school years.

Priority Area 2: Establish Focused Practices for Improving Instruction.

Challenges

Holyoke Public Schools' programs and services are not meeting the needs of all students as evidenced by the district's low student achievement, with the majority of schools in the bottom tenth percentile across the state. According to 2015 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) data, in ELA only 34 percent of Holyoke students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* and 31 percent scored *Warning* or *Failing*. In mathematics, only 27 percent of students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* and 42 percent were at the *Warning* or *Failing* levels. In science, while 23 percent of students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced*, 39 percent scored *Warning* or *Failing*. Core instructional programs are not consistently rigorous, research-based, and aligned to state standards with a coherent progression from one grade to the next. As indicated in the 2015 Holyoke District Review Report, the district's K–12 curriculum is not complete and the current curriculum does not fully meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.¹¹

During the 2014–2015 school year, Holyoke's pre-kindergarten program had 221 students enrolled. However, 445 students were enrolled in kindergarten, indicating that there may be additional students who could benefit from pre-kindergarten in the district. Student learning gaps measured by the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) and described in the Holyoke District Review Report include, "68 percent of kindergarteners were unable to accurately identify a minimum of 13 letters and their sounds," and "58 percent did not exhibit a minimum of five early literacy behaviors that indicate reading readiness." Additionally, in 2015, only 20 percent of grade 3 students were reading on grade level, as measured by the MCAS ELA assessment of students performing at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels.

Holyoke students' options at the secondary level do not provide sufficient preparation for college or careers upon graduation. In fact, many students never complete their K–12 educational experience, as evidenced by 2014 data showing a four-year cohort graduation rate for Holyoke High School (HHS) students of 68.4 percent and an annual drop-out rate of 5 percent. At Dean, the results were even lower with a four-year graduation rate of only 41.5 percent and a drop-out rate of 10.2 percent.

Across the district, instructional materials and technologies are not being fully used to enhance students' educational experiences. As noted in classroom observation data in the Holyoke District Review Report, there was "limited use of technology in the classrooms and limited

¹¹ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 27. Click F-J next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

availability of resources to meet students’ diverse learning needs.” As a result, all students are not being prepared for success in careers, college, and a digital society.

Rationale

Students in the Holyoke Public Schools must be provided with a rigorous and engaging pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educational experience in order to close current academic achievement gaps. It is critical to begin this experience at an early age, as research shows the positive impacts of high-quality pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. According to the Center for Public Education, “Early childhood programs can alleviate learning gaps if children receive strong instructional and emotional support from teachers.”¹² Additionally, as students progress through the secondary grades, they require educational experiences that are responsive to the unique needs of adolescents and build a solid foundation of knowledge and skills that will prepare them for college and careers. Educational models tailored to students’ needs and high-quality educational tools and materials will support this effort. To ensure that every student is successful, Holyoke educators will recognize the unique needs and strengths of every student and respond with appropriate instruction, support, guidance, resources, and tools to promote success.

Strategy A: Design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students’ pre-kindergarten to grade 12 educational experiences.

- **Expand pre-kindergarten access:** The district will have pre-kindergarten available for every four-year-old child in Holyoke by the end of the turnaround plan period. Additionally, the district will use the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative (HELI) partnerships and resources to support the expansion of pre-kindergarten and build on the successful family engagement strategies that community-based programs have implemented.
- **Align pre-kindergarten and kindergarten:** All pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs will provide consistent, developmentally appropriate expectations, environments, curriculum, and instructional practice. Students will engage in dynamic learning opportunities that will foster growth both academically and socially.
- **Redesign kindergarten:** The district will redesign the kindergarten program so students are engaged in rich and developmentally appropriate learning that successfully prepares them for elementary grade level expectations. The curriculum will reflect integration of literacy and language throughout the content areas with an emphasis on developing inquiry skills. Professional development will be provided for kindergarten teachers and staff to support the new curriculum and instructional strategies.

¹² See [Pre-kindergarten: What the Research Shows](#). The Center for Public Education.

- **Create a foundational skills block in kindergarten through grade 3:** Holyoke’s academic program will provide all students in kindergarten through grade 3 with targeted time to strengthen their foundational skills in core academic areas and academic language development. Through the process of developing its operational plan, each school will propose how it will customize the block to meet students’ individual learning needs, strengthening their literacy skills and reaching the goal of reading on grade level by grade 3. See also Priority Area 5.
- **Accelerate progress for students in grades 3–5:** The district will work with its schools to develop and implement interventions for students in grades 3–5 who have not reached proficiency in one or more subjects. As part of its efforts to identify and support students who are not on track for on-time graduation, the district will use multiple sources of data to help schools identify these students and tailor interventions to meet their needs.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (3), VIII (2), and VIII (6).

Strategy B: Design a secondary educational experience that prepares all students for success in college and careers.

- **Strengthen middle grades programming:** To ensure that students enter high school with the skills necessary for success, the district will create a rigorous academic experience for students in the middle grades (6–8). The district will consider several interventions to better support these students, including: providing course offerings (such as algebra I, coding, and robotics); adding an advisory period; implementing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); adding enrichment activities tailored to students in the middle grades; and strengthening partnerships between the K–8 schools and the high schools. One area of focus will be to build targeted programming between grades 8 and 9 to enable a smooth transition to high school.
- **Add middle grade options:** The district will create at least one additional middle school option that is specially designed to strengthen the middle school experience. Configurations for consideration will include a grades 6-12 school and a magnet middle school. The creation of these additional middle grade options may require redrawing school assignment boundaries.
- **Convene Secondary Education Redesign Working Group:** The district will convene a working group to provide the Receiver with recommendations about a redesigned high school experience in Holyoke that will be operating beginning in fall 2016. The group will provide recommendations that will lead to high-quality educational programming with a focus on college and careers for all students and a continuity of services from

grades 6–12, with a specific focus on the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. The group may also provide recommendations about topics such as: the creation of a 9th grade academy; summer programming for at-risk students; models for guidance counselor and graduation coach support; implementation of ILPs; career exploration activities for grade 9 students; and high school orientation for all grade 9 students.

- **Redesign high school:** The district will redesign the high school experience for all students by creating an innovative system with multiple academic and technical pathways to college and careers. The district will take full advantage of the assets of both HHS and Dean, as well as the resources of local institutions of higher education and the regional workforce development network, to create this integrated and comprehensive approach to college and career readiness.
- **Ensure high-quality career/vocational/technical education (CVTE) options:** The district is committed to ensuring that Holyoke’s students have access to high-quality in-district career/vocational/technical education. The district will review the CVTE programs currently available to students, improve the quality of all programs that are retained, and consider additional programs---including regional and partnership options---aligned with labor-market demand and student interest.
- **Develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all high school students:** By the end of the 2015–2016 school year, all rising grade 9 students will enter high school with ILPs; this practice will be expanded to students in additional grades during the 2016–2017 school year.
- **Coordinate professional development within and across high schools:** Beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, the district will provide professional development that includes teachers from both district high schools, using the Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) as a starting point for this collaboration.
- **Convene Dean’s advisory committees:** In school year 2015–2016, Dean will convene its General Advisory Committee and all Program Advisory Committees to advise and assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each technical program.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IX (the whole group of recommendations).

Strategy C: Create strong college and career pathways to close skills gaps and opportunity gaps.

- **Create rigorous pathways in grades 9–12:** As a key element of the high school redesign described above, the district will create a system of rigorous academic and technical pathways in grades 9–12 that prepare all students for college and careers.

- **Align middle grades:** The district will align its kindergarten through grade 8 curriculum with the pathways for grades 9–12 so that students enter high school with the academic preparation, career awareness, and social/emotional skills necessary for success.
- **Conduct a labor-market analysis:** In conjunction with workforce development partners, the district will conduct a labor-market analysis to determine what knowledge and skills Holyoke’s students will need to be competitive in the local labor market.
- **Support informed pathway selection:** The district will support students and families in making informed decisions about pathway selection. The district will review its current secondary counseling structures and consider holding additional outreach events, such as parent nights, visits for grade 8 students to high school campuses, and shadowing days so that students and families can select the best high school pathway for each student.
- **Expand early college programming:** The district will collaborate with local higher education institutions to develop expanded early college opportunities aligned to the district’s pathways, and to expand existing early college programming in Holyoke.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (7) and IX (3).

Strategy D: Build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation and reengage those who have left the system.

- **Create vacation academies:** Beginning in school year 2015–2016, the district will develop and implement targeted academies during school vacation periods to provide intensive support to struggling students. The district will select educators from both within and outside Holyoke with track records of accelerating student growth to teach in its academies. See also Priority Area 4 and Appendix A.
- **Restructure credit-recovery programs:** The district will examine its current credit-recovery programs to ensure that they are structured in a way that meets students’ needs and encourages their participation. The district will also further develop these programs to include a blend of computer-based and classroom-based instruction.
- **Develop programs for over-aged, under-credited students:** The district will provide pathways for successfully educating students who are over-aged and under-credited for their grade levels.
- **Reengage students who have left the district and those at risk of leaving:** The district will make a concerted effort to reengage disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system, and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. As part of this effort, the district will pursue options that include staff dedicated to

reengagement and development of a reengagement center. This effort will also include students at risk of dropping out, such as those with high rates of absence.

- **Identify and support students who are not on track for on-time graduation:** The district will analyze student data frequently for early warning signs of students who may not be on track for on-time graduation in order to provide those students with appropriate supports. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Expand summer programs:** The district will build on its existing summer programs to develop a comprehensive, districtwide summer program targeted to students who need accelerated improvement to prepare for the start of the school year.
- **Align school day and out-of-school programs:** The district will use the infrastructure of the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative workgroups to align the academic work happening during the school day with students' out-of-school activities.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (2a, 5a, 7) and IV (1).

Strategy E: Ensure that Holyoke's educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

- **Develop an engaging, standards-based, aligned curriculum:** The district will engage in a multi-year, multi-phase process to evaluate and strengthen as needed the current curriculum in ELA/literacy, mathematics, science and technology/engineering, history and social science, foreign language, the arts, physical education, and health/wellness.
- **Support instructional planning:** The district will support schools in the development of collaborative teacher teams and site-based scheduling that promote frequent professional collaboration to improve instructional practices. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Use aligned, culturally relevant instructional materials and tools:** Teachers will use culturally relevant materials, resources, and texts aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks so that all students are able to engage in meaningful learning experiences that build on their strengths, background, and perspectives. Instructional materials and resources will include those that provide tailored supports to ELLs and students with disabilities to address their unique learning needs and close achievement gaps.
- **Provide curriculum and tools to improve students' writing skills:** The district will work with schools to provide teachers with the tools they need to improve students' writing skills. During school year 2015–2016, the district will explore curriculum and scheduling options to ensure that each school has structures in place to develop students as

proficient writers who meet or exceed expectations for opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing as outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum standards.

- **Increase access to instructional technology:** The district will provide all students with access to technology tools. Technology will be used to differentiate instruction and provide targeted supports for students with disabilities, ELLs, and other students. See also Priority Area 5.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (4) and VII (3).

Priority Area 2 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students' pre-kindergarten to grade 12 educational experiences.

- By December 31, 2015, the district will complete a review of its current kindergarten curriculum, instructional practices, and master scheduling practices, along with an initial exploration of best kindergarten practices in high-performing schools and districts in Massachusetts. By March 31, 2016, the district will determine its direction for the development of kindergarten programming and ensure that this work is appropriately integrated into the school year 2016–2017 budget.
- By June 2016, the district will have reviewed current pre-kindergarten models and developed a plan to expand access to a high-quality pre-kindergarten experience to every four-year-old child in Holyoke by the end of the turnaround plan.

Strategy B: Design a secondary educational experience that prepares all students for success in college and careers.

- By January 31, 2016, the district will convene both the General Advisory Committee and each Program Advisory Committee at Dean to advise and assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each technical program. By March 31, 2016, the district will submit its Annual Perkins Report about the district's progress on all 8 core indicators.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will create a plan for the implementation of recommendations made by the Secondary Education Redesign Working Group; implementation will begin in school year 2016–2017.
- By June 1, 2016, 100 percent of rising grade 9 students will be ready to enter high school with ILPs.

Strategy C: Create strong college and career pathways to close skills gaps and opportunity gaps.

- By December 31, 2015, the district will hold initial meetings with local higher education institutions about the establishment of early college programming.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will develop a plan for potential pathways and options to be launched in school year 2016–2017, including the creation new academic and/or technical pathways for implementation in grades 9–12.

Strategy D: Build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation and reengage those who have left the system.

- By April 2016, the district will develop a measure to determine whether students are on track for on-time graduation.
- By April 30, 2016, the district will have implemented at least one vacation academy during a school vacation period that provided intensive, customized academic support to struggling students.

Strategy E: Ensure that Holyoke’s educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

- By March 1, 2016, the district will conduct an audit of existing technological and other educational tools and materials at both school and district levels, to determine where additional investments may be needed to fill gaps; the audit will include a focused look at tools and materials targeted for ELLs and students with disabilities. This audit will inform the district’s technology plan for school year 2016–2017 and beyond.
- During school year 2015–2016, the district will explore curriculum and scheduling options to ensure that by June 30, 2016, the district has structures in place to develop students as proficient writers who meet or exceed expectations for opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing as outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum standards.

Priority Area 3: Create a Climate and Culture that Support Students and Engage Families.

Challenges

HPS data demonstrate that there are significant improvements needed in Holyoke related to a distinct absence of a culturally affirming climate of high expectations for all students. According to the Holyoke District Review Report,¹³ in observed classes high expectations for all students were not seen consistently across the district. For instance, observers saw clear and consistent evidence that students were engaged in challenging academic tasks in only 50 percent of the elementary, in 55 percent of the middle, and in 31 percent of the high school classes. Across the district, in only 34 percent of observed classes were teachers seen clearly and consistently providing multiple opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking skills. In addition, the district review team did not see positive learning environments consistently across the grade levels.

Multiple years of behavior data also indicate the need for improvements in the district's culture. For instance, the 2013–2014 student out-of-school suspension rate, at 20.0 percent per year, was more than 5 times higher than the state average of 3.9 percent; this continued an out-of-school suspension rate trend dating back to 2003 where at least 1 in 5 students received an out-of-school suspension each year. In addition, almost 29 percent of students were chronically absent (defined as absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled) during school years 2013–2014 and 2014–2015. The district does not have a coordinated system to assess and identify students' social/emotional challenges and needs and to provide comprehensive supports to address those needs.

Qualitative data synthesized from a series of parent focus groups in spring/summer 2015 suggest there is a deep level of family mistrust of Holyoke schools and the desire for much more effective communication between schools and families. Finally, because of deferred maintenance and other facility issues, the district's school buildings vary widely in terms of providing safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments for Holyoke's students.

Rationale

Research conducted nationally and among Level 4 and Wraparound Zone schools in Massachusetts demonstrates that a key factor in effective turnaround is a school climate in which students feel safe and supported, while they are being challenged and engaged. One critical dimension to this work is recognizing the direct connection between social/emotional

¹³ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 30. Click F-J (next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke District Review Report 2015.

development, academic learning, and success in life.¹⁴ Schools must take ownership for the social/emotional competence of their students and implement strategies to teach and model those skills, just as they would for traditional academic content areas. In addition, strategies must be actively pursued to promote positive relationships among students, educators, staff, and families. In order to support this new culture of high expectations for both academic and social/emotional growth, HPS will restructure staff positions and create systems to identify students' assets and needs, connect them to appropriate in- and out-of-school supports, and actively monitor those supports. In addition, it is critical that HPS staff engage with the diverse student body and their families in a way that is culturally competent and positions families as active partners in students' educational experiences.

These areas of work are vital in any school context, but particularly with respect to addressing the achievement gap and the out-of-school factors that exacerbate it. There is growing evidence that attention paid to school climate, social/emotional aspects of learning, and effective family engagement can mitigate the impact of socio-economic context on academic success¹⁵ and improve achievement and motivation to learn; attendance; parent engagement; and health and behavioral outcomes.

Strategy A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.

- **Set high standards for students and staff:** Holyoke Public Schools will establish a culture of high standards for all students and staff at every school and districtwide. Beginning in school year 2015–2016, the district will use key back-to-school events to start setting this new culture of high expectations, including but not limited to: the August leadership retreat, professional development days before the school year begins, and convocation.
- **Promote attendance and engagement:** Students and staff will come to school and work each day ready to engage. The district's high expectations include expectations around attendance. The district will redefine its approach and strategies about attendance to include consistent neighborhood-based outreach and targeted efforts to reengage students who have become separated from school. The focus of the district's outreach and reengagement work will shift from the schools to the community, and the role of the school-based outreach workers will be clarified to reflect this shift. Outreach workers will no longer provide primary clerical support to the front office at schools.

¹⁴ Domitrovich, C., Dusenbury, L. & Hyson, M. (2013): *Beyond Academic Competence – The Foundations of School Success*. <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1303EduPolicyForumNonCognitive.pdf>

¹⁵ Astor, R.A., Benbenisty, R., & Estrada, J.N. (2009). School violence and theoretically atypical schools: The principal's centrality in orchestrating safe schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 423–461. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/policy/sc-brief-v3.pdf>

- **Use data to monitor climate and student support needs:** Educators and other staff will use formative and summative data to assess school climate, student supports, and other factors affecting the conditions for learning in the schools and make improvements as needed. See also Priority Area 1.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IV (4c) and V (1).

Strategy B: Build all students’ social/emotional skills in order to promote school engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness.

- **Develop and implement strategies in support of social/emotional learning (SEL):** The district will develop and implement strategies needed to promote students’ social/emotional learning, using tools such as professional development around the impact of trauma on learning. These tools and strategies will exist within a tiered system of supports for students’ learning. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Restructure district staffing in support of SEL:** The Receiver will assign clear roles and responsibilities for social/emotional learning throughout the district, both at central office and at the school level; some assignments may result in new positions. Although development of students’ social/emotional skills is the responsibility of all staff, individuals assigned these roles and responsibilities will oversee the implementation of SEL efforts and ensure that staff are receiving support and feedback.
- **Enhance the district’s positive behavior management and disciplinary approach:** The district will review and revamp its current approach to disciplining students, including its protocols, structures, and facilities (e.g., student support rooms, PBIS). The district will clarify positive behavioral expectations and will assess existing alternatives to suspension to determine whether they should be revised, expanded, or discontinued, and provide training to support staff in these changes. The district will continue to implement Restorative Circles at Holyoke High School while also exploring the use of other restorative justice practices across the district.

Strategy C: Ensure that all HPS buildings provide environments that will foster rapid improvement of academic achievement.

- **Develop safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments:** The district will ensure the creation of safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments in all its schools and in district buildings. HPS will establish a districtwide crisis team and ensure that each school convenes a school-based crisis team. The district team will review and monitor schools’ crisis plans and will work with public safety and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

- **Create spaces that promote family and community partnership:** In addition to the students and staff who use the schools and district buildings every day, families and other community stakeholders will be welcomed and encouraged to access and participate in school and district activities. In school year 2015–2016, the district will undertake strategies and improvements to provide welcoming and culturally affirming spaces, such as training front office staff in customer service strategies; providing interpretation services to facilitate conversation; and identifying space for families and other stakeholders to meet on site.
- **Provide well-maintained facilities that support turnaround strategies:** The district will review and revise protocols and staffing as needed to ensure that all the district’s buildings are safe places for learning and working. As part of its commitment to provide well-maintained facilities, the district will create a long-term capital improvement and facility plan. The district will work with organizations such as the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to plan for longer-range maintenance and other facilities issues, including but not limited to potentially building a new school centrally located in the city.
- **Expand nutrition programs that support student learning:** The district will continue and expand its food programs that benefit students throughout the year, including breakfast in the classroom, the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, after-school and summer programs, nutrition support for homeless families, and the weekend (food) backpack program. The district will expand its breakfast in the classroom program in a phased process that will result in all students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 receiving breakfast in the classroom in school year 2016-2017. The district will also explore offering breakfast in the classroom for Holyoke’s high school students. District staff will work to ensure that healthy and culturally relevant foods are a key component of the district’s food programs.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1a, 1b, 6d) and V (5b).

Strategy D: Develop structures and supports to identify and address students’ strengths and needs.

- **Assess and support student needs:** The district will reformulate Building-Based Support Teams (BBSTs), both the creation and supervision of these teams at the central office and implementation at the schools, to ensure that students’ academic, mental health, enrichment, and other needs are being accurately assessed and properly supported. See also Priority Area 1.

- **Pilot redesigned Full Service Community School model:** In school year 2015–2016, the district will pilot a redesigned Full Service Community School model at 4 of its schools. The purpose of this redesigned model will be to strengthen school climate and culture, student support, SEL, and family and community engagement. This pilot will promote reenvisioned roles for all staff in the participating buildings, including new leadership responsibilities for some staff. Some structures that will be redesigned include systems for universal assessment, collection and use of data to inform progress and determine program effectiveness, and more strategic coordination of services, programs, and partnerships.
- **Provide central office supports for culture and climate:** The district will review its protocols and oversight around school and district culture and climate, and refine existing structures, staffing, and programs as needed to build strong and supportive cultures in each of the district’s schools.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1b, 2a, 6b).

Strategy E: Organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners’ efforts and align them to the district’s turnaround strategies.

- **Provide central office support for partnership development:** The Receiver will designate clear ownership at the central office for organization and oversight of the district’s work with partners that align with and support the turnaround plan strategies. The district will conduct a school- and district-level analysis of what the most pertinent needs are, identify partners to address those needs, and support the management of those partnerships to ensure effectiveness.
- **Collaborate with partners:** The district will develop and sustain a coalition of HPS’ partners in order to ensure maximum communication, collaboration and effectiveness across partners’ efforts. To do this, HPS will build on the existing structures that have been established through the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative and may leverage that infrastructure to support other school improvement priorities.
- **Work with state agencies to provide additional supports:** In addition to its work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the district will collaborate with other state agencies to reinvigorate existing partnerships and develop new ones that can support Holyoke students’ learning. See also Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (5a) and III (3).

Strategy F: Build relationships with families, repair trust in the school district, and encourage and support families to be active partners in students' learning.

- **Set family engagement expectations for all HPS staff:** In order to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement for its students, the district must effectively engage with Holyoke's families. The Receiver will work with staff to develop a clear mission and purpose statement about family engagement that conveys the district's responsibility for building relationships with families and repairing trust in the school district. HPS staff will go into the community to interact with families outside of district buildings.
- **Prioritize and support family engagement:** HPS will designate clear central office leadership for the organization of student and family engagement efforts and will monitor the effectiveness of those efforts across the district and at each school. In addition, the district will provide guidance to more clearly define and leverage the roles of staff who interact with families frequently (e.g., counselors, family liaisons, outreach workers) and will provide training and support to strengthen the effectiveness of those interactions.
- **Provide opportunities to expand staff cultural competence:** The district will provide opportunities for HPS staff to learn information and skills that may improve their interactions with the district's students and families, such as tours of local Holyoke neighborhoods as part of new staff induction; learning opportunities about poverty or Puerto Rican culture; and conversational Spanish courses offered in conjunction with local institutions of higher education.
- **Develop a Family Resource Center:** The district will develop a Family Resource Center to serve as a hub for information and services for families, both within and outside of the district. The student enrollment process will be facilitated through the Family Resource Center and as part of this integration, the district will review and revise the current student assignment process as necessary.
- **Create school-based structures for family input:** The district will ensure that each school has all organizations required by statute (e.g., School Site Council, ELL Parent Advisory Committee) and will also consider other venues and structures in which families can have a voice in the operations and strategic vision of the schools.
- **Conduct home visits:** Beginning in summer 2015, the district has piloted a home visit program in order to talk with families about school year 2015-2016, discuss their aspirations and concerns for their children, and provide families with an opportunity to get to know school staff. This strategy is also a cultural competence-building activity for school staff. HPS will broaden this practice and expectation across the district.

- **Use multiple strategies to engage with families:** The district will employ multiple strategies to communicate with families to share information and seek their input and participation. The district will build on a variety of techniques piloted in spring and summer 2015, including neighborhood-based conversations and information sessions, social media, and other communication methods. The district will also make HPS communications available in multiple languages to facilitate communication for all families. Family volunteer opportunities will be offered, and the district will ensure that schools create or continue events that support family members' partnership in student learning.
- **Celebrate students' heritage:** The district will support schools to host events and promote practices that celebrate students' cultural heritage. These strategies will be tailored to each school community and families will be key participants in their planning.
- **Develop a Parent University:** The district will develop a Parent University for Holyoke families to provide learning opportunities such as how to access district resources, language skills programs (e.g., ESL), and adult education courses (building on the work of the Holyoke Adult Learning Center). The Parent University will better coordinate and build on existing district offerings for families in English as a Second Language and GED courses.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations I (1), II (1a, 2b, 3b, 5b, 6c), and III (1).

Priority Area 3 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.

- By November 2015, the district will have identified student, staff, and parent surveys to measure the instructional and social/emotional climate in each school. The district will also articulate a process for collecting, analyzing and using those data to inform school and districtwide improvement efforts.
- By January 2016, the district will review its current protocols, data collection, and staffing related to student attendance in order to enhance its approach.

Strategy B: Build all students' social/emotional skills in order to promote school engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness.

- By June 2016, the district will identify tools and establish processes to monitor the effectiveness of its strategies in support of students' Social Emotional Learning (SEL).
- By February 2016, the district will review and assess the effectiveness of its current approach to disciplining students, including protocols, structures, and facilities currently used in those processes (e.g., positive behavioral expectations, student support rooms, PBIS, alternatives to suspension); this review will serve as the basis for future decisions about the district's approach.

Strategy C: Ensure that all HPS buildings provide environments that will foster rapid improvement of academic achievement.

- Based on climate data collected during school year 2015–2016 (see Strategy A), each school will incorporate strategies to create a safer, healthier, and more welcoming learning environment into the development of its school year 2016–2017 school operational plan.

Strategy D: Develop structures and supports to identify and address students' strengths and needs.

- By April 2016, the district will review and analyze all its behavioral and support programs to determine whether students' needs are being met at all grade levels and will make decisions about consolidation, reconfiguration, discontinuation, and/or creation of programs as necessary.
- By April 2016, the Receiver will have reviewed the progress and results of the Full Service Community School pilot and will decide which aspects to replicate in additional schools.

Strategy E: Organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners' efforts and align them to the district's turnaround strategies.

- By February 2016, the district will conduct a school- and district-level analysis of district needs and existing partner-provided resources to determine where there are gaps and redundancies.
- By July 2016, a coalition structure will be established to enable collaboration between HPS, community partners, and other state and local agencies in support of turnaround priorities.

Strategy F: Build relationships with families, repair trust in the school district, and encourage and support families to be active partners in students' learning.

- By January 2016, the district will designate clear central office leadership for the organization of student and family engagement efforts in order to support and monitor those efforts across the district and at each school.
- By May 2016, the district will develop a prospectus for creating a Family Resource Center and will identify the necessary funding, space, and human capital to support it.

Priority Area 4: Develop Leadership, Shared Responsibility and Professional Collaboration.

Challenges

Holyoke has not developed the leadership, shared responsibility among its staff, and encouraged professional collaboration sufficiently to support strong academic outcomes for students. For example, in the 2014 TELL Mass survey, 56 percent of Holyoke’s teachers who responded disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.”¹⁶ On the same survey, when asked how much time they devoted in an average week to common planning time, 44 percent of Holyoke’s teachers who responded indicated that in an average week they devoted an hour or less per week, and another 26 percent of teachers reported that in an average week they devoted no time to common planning time.¹⁷ Forty-four percent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that an appropriate amount of time was provided for professional development.¹⁸

Structures for teacher leadership have been inconsistent across the district, with an absence of meaningful leadership roles; the few opportunities had limited participation in school year 2014–2015 because of scheduling before and after school, instead of during the school day. In addition, schools are in different stages of developing leadership teams and the teams are not high functioning. The district has not effectively used data to recognize excellence in teaching and has not provided model classrooms where teachers can learn from the effective practice of their peers. Staff voice and input have also been limited, with the central office doing most of the planning and making most of the decisions.

Implementation of an educator evaluation system to promote the growth and development of all educators, to place student learning at the center, to recognize excellence in teaching and leading, to set a high bar for professional teaching status, and to shorten timelines for improvement¹⁹ has been a challenge for Holyoke. Effective implementation of the educator evaluation system has been constrained by several factors, including the length of educator improvement plans, the number of forms required for evaluation, and the limits on who could serve as an evaluator. Holyoke was required to evaluate all educators in 2013–2014 but did not submit evaluations for almost 20 percent of those educators. In addition, the evaluation system did not include evaluation protocols and tools for all groups of staff (e.g., paraprofessionals and nurses). Holyoke also has specific challenges in identifying measures of educator impact and

¹⁶ See [TELL Mass 2014 survey of Holyoke teachers](#). The Holyoke Public Schools response rate on this survey was 62.61 percent.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See [603 CMR 35.00](#).

implementing the Student Impact Ratings in accordance with the timeline outlined in the Massachusetts regulations on Evaluation of Educators.²⁰

Rationale

Strong teaching and leadership are critical to the success of all components of this turnaround plan. Working together, Holyoke educators will provide high-quality instruction and be responsible for improving student learning, growth, and achievement. Holyoke's human capital systems must be able to identify, effectively evaluate, develop, support, and retain educators and other staff who possess the commitment and demonstrated ability to work effectively with Holyoke's students; informal and formal leadership roles will enable the district to leverage staff expertise. In order to attract and retain the highest quality staff, it will be essential to revamp the compensation system to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth are key factors. Further, Holyoke will need educators who are willing and interested in collaborating with each other and with administrators to bring about positive change in instruction and results for students. The strategies outlined in this plan require all HPS employees to work together to define and execute the district's turnaround efforts.

Strategy A: Ensure Holyoke's educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth and achievement.

- **Create district structures to support professional learning for all staff:** The district will create an Office of Professional Learning to provide timely, collaborative learning experiences that strengthen teaching practice and build leadership capacity. Holyoke will provide indicators of high-quality, district-based professional development (PD) and will review district and school sponsored PD regularly.
- **Provide high-quality professional learning for a thriving workforce:** The district will ensure that staff members have access to a range of professional learning opportunities including: teacher-led school-based sessions aligned to school goals; peer observations of model classrooms where teachers can learn from the effective practice of their peers; job-embedded PD; and district-supported offerings. Through the process of developing school operational plans, the Receiver will review schools' proposals for PD. See also Priority Area 1 and Priority Area 5.
- **Add time for professional learning:** Teachers will be afforded regular preparatory time during the work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning and professional development. Through the process of developing school operational plans, each school will propose to the Receiver a school schedule that incorporates additional

²⁰ See [603 CMR 35.00](#)

time for professional learning for all staff, including professional development. The district will ensure that beginning in school year 2016–2017, at least 10 professional development days are scheduled for each school. Professional development may be offered in full days or shorter time increments. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.

- **Use data to drive PD:** Holyoke will create a districtwide task force composed of staff from various roles to analyze student learning and achievement data and assess current PD offerings. After analyzing available data, this task force will make recommendations to the Receiver for professional learning opportunities with the goal of improving professional practice and student outcomes.
- **“Holyoke University”:** During school year 2015–2016 the district will begin to create a “Holyoke University” to provide a menu of high-quality PD offerings for staff to select. A school may also include “Holyoke University” offerings as a component of the school operational plan that it proposes to the Receiver. Effective educators, as approved by the Receiver, will take on leadership roles as presenters of PD. See also Priority Area 5.
- **Cohort-based induction model:** Holyoke will build on its existing induction program of professional support for new teachers and administrators in accordance with the Induction and Mentoring Regulations²¹ and based on the ESE Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs.²² The program will provide targeted PD to meet the needs of beginning and incoming educators, and will be aligned to district priorities for student growth, learning, and achievement. Holyoke will also provide a mentoring program for teachers in their first three years of teaching.
- **Coaching for continuous improvement:** The district will ensure that all staff benefit from coaching to improve their performance. The district will work with administrators to create a culture where coaching is understood as a normal and essential component of continuous improvement, with clearly stated expectations as to scheduling and related logistical matters to support coaching. See also Priority Area 1.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (8) and IV (all recommendations).

Strategy B: Create opportunities to use the expertise of staff throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround.

- **Create clearly defined educator leadership roles:** The district will create school-based and districtwide leadership opportunities, such as a teacher cabinet.
- **Develop pathways to leadership and additional responsibility:** Holyoke will develop formal paths to school and central office administrator leadership positions for those

²¹ See [603 CMR 7.00](#).

²² See [Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs](#).

educators who are interested in administrative leadership roles. Building on the expertise of the educators in the district, Holyoke will create new leadership roles at the school level based on individual school needs and will encourage staff to engage in this work and to recommend districtwide roles to the Receiver.

- **Ensure that schools have effective staff:** To ensure that schools have the most effective staff working in the most productive manner, principals will make staffing decisions based on the best interests of the students in their schools, including having the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. The Receiver will make school leadership changes as appropriate in order to bring focus and urgency to school redesign. See also Appendix A.
- **Connect the work of teams to student outcomes:** The district will redefine the role and function of the school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs).

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (7).

Strategy C: Develop and/or enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration across and within schools.

- **Create a culture of collaboration:** Holyoke will create a culture of collaboration where all staff members will be learners. Team structures will bring educators together in grade level, content area, and/or vertical teams to examine data from common assessments and refine instruction to improve student growth.
- **Collaborate around effective practices:** Educators who have demonstrated effective practice that results in student growth and achievement will be asked to model their effective practices by making their classrooms available for peer observations and sharing samples of student work.
- **Plan and conduct PD collaboratively:** Educators will have additional opportunities for common planning time and professional learning time. In school year 2015–2016, as part of the process of developing the school operational plan, each school’s ILT will work with the district’s teaching and learning team to propose to the Receiver a common planning time schedule for school year 2016–2017. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.
- **Fulfill professional obligations:** Teachers and other professional staff will be expected to devote the necessary time and effort to achieve and maintain high-quality education, including fulfilling their professional obligations around common planning and professional learning time, as defined by the principal and approved by the Receiver. See also Appendix A.
- **Collaborate with industry:** At Dean in school year 2015–2016, the district will establish both schoolwide and program-specific advisory councils designed to foster professional

collaboration between Dean staff and industry professionals in support of the school's programs. See also Priority Area 2.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (5c).

Strategy D: Evaluate district employees through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

- **Support the growth and development of all educators:** Educators shall be evaluated according to the ESE model system for Educator Evaluation as adapted by the Receiver.²³ All other staff will be regularly evaluated based on evaluation tools developed or adapted by the Receiver. The district will create a supervision and evaluation committee to advise the Receiver on effective implementation of the system. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.
- **Shorten timelines for improvement:** The HPS educator evaluation system and the HPS evaluation processes for other staff will include a "Receiver's Review." The Receiver's Review will be a fair and expedited process to ensure that educators and other staff of concern are identified and held accountable. During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Educators and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. Educators and other staff whose performance is determined to need improvement will be placed on an appropriate plan. See also Appendix A.
- **Dispute resolution:** HPS will use a dispute resolution process that values employees' input, allows for the fair, rapid, and effective resolution of employee concerns, and ensures that the Receiver retains his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. See also Appendix A.
- **Focus on student growth and achievement:** The district will develop and disseminate best practices for supervision, feedback, and coaching that contribute to classroom and student outcomes. Holyoke will investigate evaluation technology and data management platforms that will assist the district in implementing evaluation protocols and facilitating information-sharing between evaluators and staff.
- **Recognize excellence in teaching and leading:** Evaluation data will help inform the PD provided to both new and experienced educators while also recognizing effective educators and rewarding them with leadership opportunities. See also Appendix A.

²³ See [603 CMR 35.00](#).

- **Revamp compensation approach:** The district will revamp its approach to compensation to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth are key factors in a professional compensation system and that employees have opportunities for additional responsibility and leadership. See Appendix A.
- **Develop actionable feedback to strengthen evaluators' practice:** The district will analyze summative evaluation data to identify areas for additional professional learning for administrators in school year 2015–2016, including calibrating appraisal of effective instruction, conducting observations and providing feedback, and using measures of student learning, growth, and achievement.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (2a).

Priority Area 4 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Ensure Holyoke’s educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth, and achievement.

- By December 1, 2015, the district will develop a structure, clear responsibilities, and charge for an Office of Professional Learning.
- The professional learning task force will convene by December 1, 2015, to begin the work of developing PD offerings for school year 2016–2017.
- By January 31, 2016, the district will review its current induction and mentoring activities for new teachers and administrators to determine effectiveness of support; by June 30, 2016, the district will improve its induction and mentoring activities in preparation for school year 2016–2017.

Strategy B: Create opportunities to use the expertise of staff throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround.

- By March 15, 2016, the professional learning task force will administer a survey to all staff to assess the quality of professional learning opportunities and to determine staff’s interests and needs for school year 2016–2017.
- By June 15, 2016, the district will assess the effectiveness of its use of the Teacher Advisory Council to determine any modifications that may be needed to improve effectiveness for school year 2016–2017.

Strategy C: Develop and/or enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration across and within schools.

- By November 1, 2015, the district will hold the first convening of school ILTs to begin to evaluate their processes and structures and to share best practices.
- By May 1, 2016, through the process of developing operational plans, each school will create a schedule for school year 2016–2017 that ensures opportunities for educators and other staff to collaborate and to learn from each other.

Strategy D: Evaluate district employees through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

- By October 15, 2015, the district will begin to implement the Massachusetts Model Educator Evaluation System, as adapted by the Receiver, consistent with Massachusetts regulations on Evaluation of Educators.²⁴

²⁴ See [603 CMR 35.00](#)

- The district will begin collecting year one educator impact data from District Determined Measures for some educators by June 1, 2016.

Priority Area 5: Organize the District for Successful Turnaround.

Challenges

Systemic challenges in the organization of the district have prevented Holyoke schools from delivering high-quality education for all students. A primary challenge relates to the district's approach of strong centralization for decision-making over key factors related to its schools. Principals and school-based teams have little autonomy to make important decisions to meet the needs of the individual students in their schools. Instead, most decisions about how to implement the academic program---such as decisions about professional development---are made centrally and schools are then required to follow those mandates.

This approach has led to low staff buy-in for crafting the direction for their schools. For example, in the 2014 TELL Mass survey teachers were asked about the role they had in determining the content of in-service PD programs at their schools; 82 percent of those who responded indicated that they had either a small role (38 percent) or no role at all (44 percent).²⁵ Fifty-nine percent of teachers who responded disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e., pacing, materials, and pedagogy)."²⁶

Another key challenge is that the district currently has many systems that are confusing or outdated; in some cases, the district does not have necessary systems in place. For example, the district does not have technology platforms for managing data and communicating across departments and schools. The district has been unable to use data to plan effectively because current systems do not allow data to be compiled and reported easily. Critical district systems are not integrated, adding to the difficulty in planning holistically across the district. For example, the absence of coordination among human resources, curriculum, and budget functions limits the ability of the district to work strategically in support of student learning.

Rationale

In order to maximize the rapid improvement of academic achievement of Holyoke's students, the Receiver will organize the district and its systems for successful turnaround. Research on school and district turnaround efforts indicates that school-based autonomy can be critical for success, because educators and families are best positioned to understand and meet students' needs. Successful school and district turnaround efforts also have an explicit focus on building the capacity of educators and school community members so that they are able to leverage the

²⁵ See [TELL Mass 2014 survey of Holyoke teachers](#). The Holyoke Public Schools response rate on this survey was 62.61 percent.

²⁶ Ibid.

autonomy to lead to improved student outcomes. The Receiver will grant schools autonomy, and the central office will support schools in developing their capacity to use the autonomies to improve student achievement. Clear accountability frameworks will help the district ensure that schools' strategies lead to improvements.

In order to reach greater levels of achievement, Holyoke's students need more instructional time that is used effectively to deliver high-quality instruction and enrichment opportunities. The district needs excellent teaching and leadership in every school, and high-performing staff throughout the district. The Receiver and principals require the authority to make staffing decisions based on the best interests of students. The Receiver must have the ability to resolve employee disputes fairly and quickly while maintaining his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to reorganize the district staff, and choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan.

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning. Holyoke's current per-student expenditures exceed those of a number of comparable districts. The district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses.

Strategy A: Recruit, retain, and deploy employees strategically to lead and implement the district's turnaround strategies.

- **Motivate high-performing staff to remain in Holyoke:** The district will establish incentives for the retention of high-performing staff, such as the development of leadership structures and new opportunities for top performers. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Recruit talent to Holyoke:** The district will use innovative strategies, including but not limited to the use of proven recruitment partners and organizations, to aggressively recruit and hire talented individuals to work in the Holyoke Public Schools. The district will establish strong relationships with colleges and universities, national partners, established teacher-development programs, and other recruitment networks.
- **Transform human resources:** The district will transform its human resources function into a modern service-oriented system, providing a resource for prospective and current employees and helping the district fulfill its mission.

- **Build a diverse Holyoke workforce:** HPS will expand its recruitment to further diversify its workforce, including outreach to groups and organizations that can assist with this goal.
- **Develop internal talent:** The district will develop internal talent for teaching and leadership roles. For instance, the district will consult with local colleges and universities to develop an urban teachers' academy within Holyoke and to pilot a program to develop a paraprofessional-to-teacher pipeline.
- **Professional compensation system:** During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will develop a new professional compensation system including a career path that will compensate employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. See Appendix A.
- **Evaluate staff:** All staff will be regularly evaluated based on evaluation processes developed or adapted by the Receiver. See also Priority Area 4 and Appendix A.
- **Select and retain the most effective staff:** In order to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained, the Receiver and principals will have authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates, without regard to seniority. The Receiver will establish selection criteria for layoffs which will include the following, as appropriate: qualifications; licensure; work history; multiple measures of student learning; operational need; and the best interests of students. The Receiver will have the right to reassign educators and other staff. See also Appendix A.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations X (1, 2a 3a, 3b, 5a).

Strategy B: Empower schools to tailor turnaround strategies to their school communities and to develop and share innovations across the district.

- **Grant school-level autonomies:** Schools in HPS will have the autonomy to tailor programs to best respond to students' needs. The Receiver will identify the specific autonomies that may be granted to schools based on an assessment of their performance and readiness to use the autonomies effectively. See also Strategy F.
- **Develop school operational plans:** In school year 2015–2016, each school will develop a school operational plan for school year 2016–2017. In addition to the school's instructional models and tiered supports, each plan will also include information about how the school will use any autonomies granted by the Receiver and how the school will use extended learning time, such as PD and common planning time. The principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require reasonable exceptions to these provisions and may

require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of students. The Receiver will review and modify or approve all school plans. See also Strategy C.

- **Share best practices among schools:** The Receiver will share best practices among schools in the district.
- **Develop an accountability framework:** In school year 2015–2016, the district will develop an accountability framework that clearly identifies what is expected of schools, how progress will be defined and measured, and how schools can maintain or expand the autonomies available to them. The district will conduct periodic monitoring of each school’s progress in meeting its desired outcomes and effectively implementing the strategies identified in its operational plan. This monitoring enables the district to identify schools that may need additional support.

Strategy C: Maximize the use of time to improve student achievement.

- **Use school operational plans to optimize the use of time:** For school year 2015–2016, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school’s strong plan for expanding learning time for school year 2015–2016, including plans for extended time for Level 4 or Level 5 schools. Through the process of developing school operational plans for school year 2016–2017, each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students, and members of the community to develop a school operational plan that will include a proposed draft school schedule for school year 2016–2017 and a menu of strategies to more effectively use instructional time to improve student achievement. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, changes in the school day, school year, and/or school calendar. For example, the expanded minimum hours may be accomplished by implementing staggered teacher schedules and/or using support from outside partners to provide programs and services to students. See also Strategy B and Appendix A.
- **Add time for instruction and enrichment:** Beginning with school year 2016–2017, each elementary and middle school’s program shall be a minimum of 1330 hours per school year. The increased minimum hours will include time for students to be engaged in both high-quality instruction and enrichment activities. High school minimum hours will be established as part of the secondary redesign being conducted in school year 2015–2016. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Establish the district calendar and consider alternate school calendars:** The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. However, through the process of developing school operational plans, the Receiver may approve an alternate school calendar at the request of a principal if the Receiver and the principal determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of students. For example, some principals

may find that moving to a modified, year-round calendar may best support students in their schools as a proactive strategy to prevent summer learning loss. See also Strategy B and Appendix A.

- **Use out-of-school time for additional instruction and enrichment:** The district and its schools may develop creative strategies to provide students with opportunities for additional instruction and enrichment outside of the regular school day. As described in Priority Area 2, vacation academies will be used to provide struggling students with focused, data-driven instruction during vacation periods. The district may also choose to use time after school, on holidays, on Saturdays, and/or during the summer to provide additional learning opportunities for students. See Appendix A.
- **Support schools to use time effectively:** The district will provide training and support to schools in developing effective strategies to maximize use of time. The district may engage partners with expertise in the use of expanded time to support principals and their schools teams in the design and execution of their school-based plans. All school plans for time use will be reviewed and modified or approved by the Receiver through the process of developing school operational plans. See also Strategy B.

Strategy D: Design a central office that is structured to provide maximum support and assistance to Holyoke’s schools.

- **Redefine and redesign the central office:** As school-based teams begin to develop the needed capacity to fully use autonomies to meet the needs of their students and improve student achievement, the Receiver will redefine the role and purpose of the central office. Beginning in fall 2015, the district will review the current structure and functioning of the central office to ensure that it supports schools effectively. Existing positions and programs may be consolidated as needed to ensure strong school support. See also Strategies B and C and Priority Areas 3 and 4.
- **Deploy central office staff to support school capacity to use autonomies:** The central office will support schools in developing their capacity to use autonomies to improve student achievement. Central office supports will be adjusted over time based on schools’ increasing capacity. See also Strategy B.
- **Reallocate cost savings for school support:** Through the review of central office, the district will also identify potential cost savings that can be reallocated in direct support of school-level work.

Strategy E: Organize district systems and structures to create efficiencies and streamline support to schools.

- **Refine student enrollment and assignment processes:** The district will review and refine as necessary current enrollment and school assignment patterns to ensure

equitable educational experiences for all students across grade levels in all neighborhoods and wards. As part of this review, the district will examine current enrollment boundaries and assignment patterns.

- **Examine grade configurations and school distribution:** The district will examine its current grade configurations, such as the K-8 school model, to determine whether current district structures are well-suited to educating students at all grade levels. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Analyze and revamp data management systems:** The district will conduct an analysis of current ways in which data are collected, reported, and used throughout the district. As a result of this analysis, the district may identify the need to revamp existing data systems or implement a new data management system that will connect and integrate the district's existing data systems. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Audit technology infrastructure:** The district will conduct an audit to determine what new technology may be needed to gain efficiencies in existing district systems, such as human resources, payroll, and office systems. The audit will include an examination of how existing systems can be integrated to improve productivity and data-sharing across the district.
- **Create a districtwide technology strategy:** The district will create a districtwide technology strategy that supports the learning and teaching goals of the district. The Receiver will convene stakeholders to provide input and recommendations for the technology strategy. See also Priority Area 2.

Strategy F: Invest the district's resources in strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

- **Assess and reallocate district resources:** HPS will evaluate the distribution of the district's funds and reallocate all available financial resources (district, state, federal and other) as necessary to support turnaround priorities and schools.
- **Grant school autonomy over use of funds:** The Receiver may grant schools flexibility around the overall use of funds designated for their schools. The flexibility may include decisions about programming and compensation models. See also Strategy B.
- **Support schools to use resources effectively:** The district will support schools to use resources effectively.
- **Assess management systems:** The district will review and streamline operational systems to reduce costs and improve services districtwide.

Strategy G: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround.

- **Use proven partners:** To accelerate improvement, the district will contract and collaborate with proven partners---including charter schools, turnaround operators, and

education management organizations---to support district and school improvement efforts.

- **Change policies and union contracts, including collective bargaining agreements:** Certain immediate changes to the district’s policies, union contracts (including collective bargaining agreements), and working conditions are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must also have the ability to address issues as they arise, including making additional changes to collective bargaining agreements to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Holyoke students. Appendix A contains changes that will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be incorporated into future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or the Commissioner, at their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K.
- **Change employment contracts:** Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan. As a result, the end date for all employment contracts for all current principals shall be changed to June 30, 2016. Likewise, the end date for all employment contracts with all other administrators and other staff shall be changed to June 30, 2016. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee. The Receiver may, at his discretion, extend any employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract.
- **Provide flexibility for procurement policies and processes:** To the extent permissible, the district will provide schools with the ability to conduct their own procurements, while ensuring the proper district-level financial controls and oversight.
- **Change vendor contracts:** To ensure that its resources support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, HPS will review its vendor contracts and will limit, suspend, or change those contracts where appropriate.
- **Dispute resolution:** HPS will use a dispute resolution process that values employees’ input, allows for the fair, rapid, and effective resolution of employee concerns, and ensures that the Receiver retains his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. See also Appendix A.

Strategy H: Build the capacity of the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

- **Build school committee capacity:** The Receiver will provide regular updates to the school committee about the implementation of the turnaround plan. A PD plan will be

developed in coordination with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees that will focus on preparing the committee to resume its duties when the district has demonstrated sufficient gains and made the changes necessary to meet its goal of exiting receivership.

- **Reallocate resources:** The Receiver will reallocate the committee's staff as necessary to support school initiatives.

Priority Area 5 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Recruit, retain, and deploy employees strategically to lead and implement the district's turnaround strategies.

- By December 1, 2015, the district will develop a strategy to identify and contract with proven partners to support struggling schools.
- By June 30, 2016, the district will develop a professional compensation system.

Strategy B: Empower schools to tailor turnaround strategies to their school communities and to develop and share innovations across the district.

- By November 15, 2015, the district will identify the specific autonomies that may be granted by the Receiver to schools through the process of developing school operational plans.
- By November 15, 2015, the district will develop an accountability framework to evaluate the readiness of schools to use different Receiver-granted autonomies.

Strategy C: Maximize the use of time to improve student achievement.

- By December 15, 2015, the district will develop the process, templates, and tools that school-based teams will use to develop school operational plans.
- As part of the process of developing school operational plans, by April 1, 2016, each Holyoke school will develop a draft school schedule for school year 2016–2017; the Receiver will review and amend or approve these schedules.
- By April 30, 2016, at least one vacation academy will be planned and successfully implemented during a school vacation period.

Strategy D: Design a central office that is structured to provide maximum support and assistance to Holyoke's schools.

- By February 1, 2016, the district will undergo a review of central office structure and functions, with a goal of developing recommendations about how to structure the central office to best support schools to improve student achievement.

Strategy E: Organize district systems and structures to create efficiencies and streamline support to schools.

- By May 1, 2016, HPS will create a Technology Plan for the district to be implemented beginning in school year 2016–2017.

Strategy F: Invest the district's resources in strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

- By February 1, 2016, the district will conduct a financial audit and analysis of the central office's structure to identify resources that can be redeployed to schools.

Strategy G: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround.

- By April 1, 2016, the district will review existing municipal procurement protocols and determine any circumstances in which schools may conduct their own procurements. If there are any circumstances in which schools may conduct their own procurements, the district will provide pertinent guidance and technical assistance to schools by May 1, 2016.

Strategy H: Build the capacity of the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

- By June 30, 2016, the district will work with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to create a PD plan for the school committee for the upcoming school years.

Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan

This section serves to highlight how the turnaround plan addresses the specific student subgroups and programmatic areas identified in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(c).

The secretaries of health and human services, public safety, labor, and workforce development and other applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare officials will coordinate with the Secretary of Education and the Commissioner about the implementation of strategies related to items 1–3 below, subject to appropriation.

(1) Steps to address social service and health needs of students and their families in order to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn

The district has multiple partnerships with area health service organizations, universities, and local and state agencies such as the Department of Public Health to provide direct health services, prevention programs, and health information to students and their families. The district will review its existing partnerships in order to coordinate health services, prevention, and screening activities taking place throughout the district, at all grade levels.

The district currently works with outside providers to offer school-based psychotherapy in its schools, matched with individual students' needs. The district will ensure that students receive necessary mental health screenings and services and family counseling as appropriate. The district will improve its coordination of outside health and mental health service providers with district service providers to maximize student and family access. Providing health and mental health services on-site is designed to reduce dismissals for outside appointments and increase student attendance, and to provide increased access to necessary services.

The district will also refine its processes for referring students and families to social service providers as necessary. For instance, the district will build on relationships with outside agencies, including state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the partnerships developed through HELI, to assess and revise its current protocols for referring students and families to community social service resources.

See also Priority Area 3.

(2) Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the community, to promote a safe and secure learning environment

The district's focus on building a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations will be central to its ability to foster safe and secure learning environments districtwide. Further developing the district's partnerships with child welfare and law enforcement organizations ---

and incorporating these partners throughout its work---will help to reinforce the culture the district is working to create. The district recognizes that these partners must be involved in the work at the early, culture-setting stages in order to identify law enforcement and safety concerns.

The district has piloted the use of a restorative justice protocol at Holyoke High School. The district is committed to analyzing the successes and challenges of the pilot to date to determine whether this protocol has reduced problematic student behaviors. If the program is shown to be effective, the district will determine how it may expand the pilot to additional schools, at different grade levels. Some counselors from Holyoke's K-8 schools have already participated in an initial restorative justice training.

Educators and other staff will use data to assess school climate, student supports, and other factors affecting the conditions for learning in the schools. Having readily accessible data that can be aggregated and analyzed easily will enable the district to identify trends and address any child welfare and safety issues in the early stages.

In addition, the district will partner with local law enforcement agencies as appropriate to ensure that all HPS schools are safe places for students to learn and educators to work. In school year 2015-2016, working with the Holyoke Police Department, the district will ensure that there are trained officers in place at both high schools, during school hours and at school-based events. The district will also build on its existing partnerships with the DCF, the Department of Probation, and the Juvenile Court.

The district's commitment to developing a Family Resource Center will also ensure that families have access to information about these resources.

See also Priority Area 3.

(3) Steps to improve workforce development services provided to students in the district and their families in order to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities

Since the district was placed into chronically underperforming (Level 5) status, many stakeholders have come forward to support the work of the receivership and to discuss the impact of the district's turnaround efforts on Holyoke's workforce and industry. Municipal officials, community organizations, local businesses, regional organizations, and state agencies all recognize the need for Holyoke's students and families to be prepared to participate fully in Holyoke's economy as it grows.

A key component of the district's turnaround will be redesigning its approach to secondary education, focusing on developing multiple academic and technical pathways to college and careers. HPS will take full advantage of the assets of both HHS and Dean, as well as the resources of local institutions of higher education and the regional workforce development system, to create an integrated and comprehensive approach to college and career readiness. In fall 2015, the district will convene a Secondary Education Redesign Working Group to make recommendations for redesign options for implementation in school year 2016–2017.

Importantly, the district will begin providing students exposure to college and career information and activities in middle school. Using the recommendations of the Secondary Education Redesign Working Group, HPS will better support its students in the middle grades; the group may provide recommendations about topics such as: the creation of a grade 9 academy, summer programming for at-risk students, models for counselor and graduation coach support, implementation of ILPs, career exploration activities for grade 9 students, and high school orientation for all grade 9 students.

In school year 2015–2016, the district will reinvigorate the advisory committees at Dean, which bring outside professional expertise to interact with both staff and students at the school. The schoolwide advisory committee will be reconstituted, and program-specific advisory committees will be created. Input and guidance received from industry experts will be used to ensure that Dean's programs are effectively preparing students for careers after graduation. The district is committed to providing additional opportunities for Holyoke High School students to learn more about a variety of career paths and opportunities. The district also will provide additional college information and exposure to students at both of Holyoke's high schools. This may include field trips to area colleges and universities, information fairs on-site in the district, and seminars about application and financial aid processes.

See also Priority Area 2.

The district also plans to create a Parent University, offering courses and seminars that will help Holyoke's families develop their workforce skills. Offerings may include skill-building topics such as English as a Second Language, or job search opportunities such as building interview skills. The district will review its existing partnerships with local workforce development organizations to determine where referrals and event opportunities can be expanded (e.g., career fairs, job posting access). The district's planned Family Resource Center will be an important resource for connecting families with workforce development opportunities and referrals as well.

See also Priority Area 3.

(4) Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students

The district will continue to build on its work with local and state partner agencies to ensure students' needs are being met so they are able to focus on school. For instance, the district will build on its existing partnerships with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide housing information to families at Holyoke's full service community schools. The district will continue to grow its food service programs that assist students in need, such as its breakfast in the classroom and summer meals programs and its weekend backpack program for food distribution.

See also Priority Area 3.

While the district strives for high-quality instruction in every classroom, for every student, it is particularly important that English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have teachers who are skilled in meeting their diverse needs. The district will provide professional learning opportunities to strengthen educators' ability to provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports, and will work with ESE to ensure that core content educators are trained and receive their endorsements in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI).

The district will strengthen the academic program for ELLs in all grades, ensuring that its program fosters rapid English language acquisition and academic growth. Pathways to support building higher levels of English proficiency in each school will minimize the possibility of long-term ELLs remaining in the program more than six years throughout the students' time in school. The district will also review its curricula, assessments, and instructional strategies to ensure they are fully effective for ELLs. The district is committed to ensuring all its educators are prepared to teach ELLs, including through SEI endorsement course offerings, and will monitor instruction to ensure that these strategies are being implemented correctly.

In order to identify best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps related to the provision of special education services to students with IEPs, the district will conduct a review of the policies, procedures, and practices currently in place for its special education program; this review will result in recommendations for action steps to address any gaps or challenge areas. Students will have increased opportunities to receive quality instructional time in inclusive settings. The district will also increase educators' and direct service providers' time spent in direct service of students.

See also Priority Area 1.

(5) Alternative English language learning programs for English language learners

The district already has a dual-language program at Metcalf School; in school year 2015–2016, that pilot will continue, expanding the dual-language offering to include kindergarten and grade 1. The district will assess the effectiveness of the dual-language program at Metcalf to determine whether it is an exemplary model of dual-language education. During school year 2015–2016, the district will make a determination about the future parameters of the program.

During school year 2015–2016, the district will investigate alternate ELL program models that can build bilingualism and bi-literacy for its students. The district will explore possible models in school year 2015–2016 to determine which of these models it may implement beginning in school year 2016–2017. Potential models may include a newcomers program and a maintenance bilingual program. During school year 2015–2016, the district will assess its internal data about its newcomer students to determine whether different and/or augmented services are needed and develop a plan to further support these students in school year 2016–2017 and beyond.

See also Priority Area 1.

(6) A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided by the Commonwealth, federal government, or other sources

The Fiscal Year 2016 budget was adopted by the Holyoke City Council in June 2015.

See also Appendix C.

Appendix A: Required Contract and Policy Changes

SECTION 1: REQUIRED TERMS FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district, or a school in the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming or chronically underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, if the district does not already have the classes; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices related to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

Currently, the district's eight (8) collective bargaining agreements have expired. The terms outlined below are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, working rules, and any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately October 30, 2015. The Receiver reserves the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

These terms shall supersede any contrary provisions of the district's collective bargaining agreements or any pre-existing district or school committee practices or policies, except that the provisions in the Morgan Turnaround Plan (including its Appendix A) will remain in effect. The terms reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, work rules and any practices or policies, and are implemented pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K. Provisions of collective bargaining agreements that are inconsistent with or do not otherwise support the goals of the turnaround plan are suspended.

I. Receiver

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K, the Receiver for the Holyoke Public Schools is vested with all the powers of the superintendent and the school committee. Wherever a reference in a collective bargaining agreement is made to the "school committee" or the "superintendent," it will be interpreted to mean the "Receiver."

II. Management Rights

Nothing contained in the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as provided in G.L. c. 69, § 1K.

III. School-Based Decision-Making

The Receiver will determine what autonomies he will provide to individual district schools. Through a school-based decision-making process, schools will create annual school operational plans addressing those autonomies that have been granted to the school, subject to the Receiver's approval.

IV. Professional Compensation System

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Receiver will develop a new professional compensation system, which will be implemented after consultation with the union, and which will contain a career path which will compensate employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth, and which may allow for school-based variations.

Teachers, from within and outside of the Holyoke Public Schools, may also be eligible to serve in the vacation academies. Teachers serving in the vacation academies will be paid a stipend which will be subject to taxes and/or withholdings, will not be added to the base salary, and will not be counted toward salary for retirement calculation purposes.

The Receiver may review and adjust the salary of an individual employee in order to attract or retain a highly-qualified employee, or when he otherwise determines that such an adjustment is in the best interest of the district.

V. Teaching & Learning Time

Professional Obligations

Teachers and other professional staff shall devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high-quality education in the Holyoke Public Schools. For example, unless formally excused, teachers and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, graduations, and other similar activities. Teachers will also be afforded regular preparatory time during their work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning periods and professional development.

School Schedules

For the 2015–2016 school year, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school’s strong plan for expanding learning time for the school year 2015–2016, including plans for extended time for Level 4 or Level 5 schools.

Beginning with the 2016–2017 school year, each elementary and middle school’s program of instruction for students shall be a minimum of 1330 hours per school year.

During the 2015–2016 school year, each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students and members of the community to develop a new school schedule for the 2016–2017 school year based on student needs and school and community assets. Each plan will address how learning time will support (1) high academic success, especially through personalized support and learning; (2) a well-rounded education that will provide a broad and rich school day including English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, drama, technology, sports, and social/emotional learning; and (3) expanded time for teachers to collaborate, use student data, and develop their practice. Plans should be creative with regard to the use of instructional technologies, staggered teacher schedules, vacation academies, summer learning and enrichment programs, and outside partners. Each plan must address opportunities to incorporate community partners and resources and must include an appropriate and sustainable arrangement about teacher and staff responsibilities, hours, and compensation. Each plan must include a minimum of 10 days of professional development, which may be offered in full days or shorter time increments, totaling at least 10 days.

The principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require any reasonable exceptions to these provisions and

may require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of the students. Plans will be approved at the Receiver's discretion.

School Calendar

The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. The Receiver may approve an alternate calendar at the request of a school principal, if the principal and Receiver determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of the students in the school.

VI. Evaluation

Educator Evaluation System

Educators and administrators shall be evaluated according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education model system as adapted by the Receiver.

The Receiver will develop and implement evaluation processes for all other district personnel.

The HPS educator evaluation system and the HPS evaluation tools for other staff will include a "Receiver's Review." The Receiver's Review will be a fair and expedited process to ensure that teachers, administrators, and other staff of concern are identified and held accountable. During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to need improvement, will be placed on an appropriate plan.

VII. Staffing

In filling positions, principals have the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that he determines appropriate in filling vacancies.

The Receiver has the right to lay off teachers and other staff because of reductions in force or reorganizations resulting from declining enrollment or other budgetary or operational reasons. The Receiver will establish the selection criteria for layoffs of teachers and other staff. Such selection criteria may include, but are not limited to qualifications, licensure, work history, multiple measures of student learning, operational need, and the best interests of the students. Where all other factors are equal, seniority may be used as the deciding factor. The Receiver

may adopt any procedure(s) that he determines appropriate in the event of a reduction in force.

The Receiver has the right to reassign educators and other staff, including those who have been displaced from their positions. After discussion with the affected educator or staff member, the educator or staff member may be assigned to any open position for which he or she is qualified. If the educator or staff member is not assigned to a mutually agreeable position, the Receiver will assign the educator or staff member to a position for which he/she is qualified. Such an assignment may include instructional support, substitute teaching, or administrative tasks. If no mutually agreeable position is available, the Receiver may lay off the educator or other staff. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that he deems appropriate in the assignment/reassignment of educators or other staff.

The Receiver may formulate job descriptions, duties, and responsibilities for any and all positions in the district.

All HPS staff are expected to be involved in a variety of educational and administrative activities that are necessary to fulfill the mission of the district.

The Receiver may outsource work in whole or in part, may transfer bargaining unit work, and may hire and employ part-time employees.

The Receiver may create nontraditional administrative positions in order to operate the district efficiently. Such positions will not be covered by any district collective bargaining agreement.

The Receiver may change work schedules for all bargaining units to mirror the time that schools are in session and offices are open.

VIII. Dismissal

In schools declared underperforming or chronically underperforming, teachers with professional teacher status and all represented district staff that have completed their probationary period may be dismissed for good cause.

IX. Grievance and Arbitration

Dispute Resolution:

Any dispute over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/HPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the turnaround

plan shall be subject to the following dispute resolution procedure, which shall be the exclusive process available for resolving the dispute.²⁷ Accordingly, the provisions of the grievance and arbitration articles of all the collective bargaining agreements are suspended and/or modified relative to such disputes.

Step 1

- The employee may bring a concern to the principal/head of department in writing within five (5) calendar days of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the concern. The employee should specifically state the desired resolution.
- The employee may be represented by a union representative at any stage of the dispute resolution process.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the principal/head of department should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the principal/head of department should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 2

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the principal/head of department, s/he may bring the concern to a senior HPS executive, designated by the Receiver, in writing within 5 calendar days of receiving the principal's/head of department's decision.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the HPS executive should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the senior executive should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 3

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the senior HPS executive, s/he may bring the concern to the Receiver (or his designee, if applicable) in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving the previous decision.
- Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the Receiver or his designee should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 10 calendar days of the meeting, the Receiver should issue a decision in writing to the employee, which shall be final and binding.

²⁷ This dispute resolution process does not apply to disputes relating to the dismissal of a teacher with professional teacher status. Those disputes will be governed by the arbitration process set out in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(d), or G.L. c. 71 § 24, as appropriate.

General Provisions

- Failure of the employee to advance the grievance to the next level within the time period shall be deemed to be acceptance of the prior grievance response.
- The Receiver may suspend the time periods in writing with the union.

During the 2015–2016 school year, the Receiver will develop a dispute resolution process that will be applicable to disputes other than disputes over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/HPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the turnaround plan. Before the implementation of the dispute resolution process, the current grievance and arbitration system will remain in place for such other disputes.

X. Handling New Issues

Any changes which the Receiver deems necessary to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Holyoke students may be implemented after a ten-day period of consultation with the appropriate union. These changes may be implemented at the Receiver's discretion, consistent with G.L. c. 69, s. 1K.

XI. Existing District Practices

The Receiver may implement changes pursuant to the turnaround plan notwithstanding any existing district policy, "past practice," side letters, or extra-contractual agreements. To the extent that a collective bargaining agreement codifies and/or incorporates existing policies or practices, such provisions are suspended.

SECTION 2: REQUIRED CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan. Consequently, the end date for all employment contracts for all current principals is changed to June 30, 2016. Likewise, the end date for all employment contracts with all other administrators and any staff members with individual contracts is changed to June 30, 2016. The Receiver may, at his discretion, extend any such employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee.

SECTION 3: REQUIRED CHANGES TO OTHER CONTRACTS

The district must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning. The district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses. For example, to the extent permissible, the district will provide schools with the ability to conduct their own procurements, while ensuring the proper district-level financial controls and oversight. Likewise, to ensure that its resources support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, HPS will review its vendor contracts and will limit, suspend, or change those contracts where appropriate.

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(1) Student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates	Attendance rate (Increase)	92	92	93	94	
	Percentage of students chronically absent (10% or more) (Decrease)	29	26	24	22	
	Out-of-school suspension rate (Decrease)	13	11	10	9	
	In-school suspension rate (Decrease)	6	5	5	4	
	Percentage of students suspended more than 10 days (Decrease)	2	1	1	1	Cumulative; replaces Exclusion rate
	Dismissal rate (Decrease) *	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
(2) Student safety and discipline	Interpersonal incidents (Decrease) **	616	565	513	462	
	Weapons incidents (Decrease)	24	22	20	18	
	Incidents of substance possession/use/intent to sell (Decrease)	71	65	59	53	
	Incidents of theft/vandalism (Decrease)	99	91	83	74	
(3) Student promotion and dropout rates	Grade 9 retention rate (Decrease)	16	14	13	12	
	Dropout rate – Aggregate (Decrease)	6	6	5	5	
	Dropout rate – High Needs students (Decrease)	7	7	6	5	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(3b) Graduation rates	Four-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	56	59	63	67	
	Four-year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	60	64	67	70	
	Five-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	56	59	63	67	
	Five-Year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	58	62	65	69	
(4) Student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; (5) Progress in areas of academic underperformance; (6) Progress among subgroups of students, including students from low-income families as defined by Chapter 70, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities; (7) Reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students	ELA CPI - Aggregate (Increase) ***	65	68	71	74	
	ELA CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	61	64	67	71	
	ELA CPI - English language learners (Increase)	51	55	59	63	
	ELA CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	48	52	56	61	
	Math CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	57	61	65	68	
	Math CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	54	57	61	65	
	Math CPI - English language learners (Increase)	45	49	54	59	
	Math CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	42	47	52	57	
	Science CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	58	61	65	68	
	Science CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	53	57	61	65	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	27	25	23	20	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	31	28	26	23	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	41	38	35	31	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	51	46	42	38	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	38	35	31	28	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	42	39	35	32	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	53	48	44	40	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	62	57	51	46	
	Science MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	35	32	29	26	
	Science MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	40	37	34	30	
	ELA MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	5	5	6	7	
	ELA MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	2	2	3	3	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	Math MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	8	9	10	12	
	Math MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	5	5	6	7	
	Science MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	3	4	4	5	
	Science MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	1	2	2	2	
	ELA Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) - Aggregate (Increase)	43	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	41	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	43	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	33	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - Aggregate (Increase)	40	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	40	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	37	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	35	51	51	51	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - All ELLs (Increase)	46	51	51	51	
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - Long Term ELLs (Increase)	34	51	51	51	
(8) Student acquisition and mastery of 21st century skills	Percentage of high school graduates completing MassCore requirements (Increase)	22	25	29	32	Baseline data to be updated in fall 2015 to include summer graduates
	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 6-8****	0	13	25	38	
	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 9-12****	10	21	32	43	
(9) Development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school levels	Percentage of high school students having at least one early college experience in high school (includes passing AP or dual-enrollment course) (Increase)	16	22	27	33	
	Percentage of students achieving college readiness benchmark score on PSAT assessment (Increase)	5	13	20	28	
	Percentage of students "on track for on-time graduation" as defined by district	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; to be updated in plan by spring 2016

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(10) Parent and family engagement	Percentage of families, including families whose home language is not English, reporting that they have opportunities to learn how to support their child's learning at home	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of families reporting that they feel welcome when visiting their child's school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of families reporting that they receive responses to central office and school inquiries in a timely way	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of teachers conducting at least three home visits during the course of year	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
(11) Building a culture of academic success among students	Percentage of students reporting that most students in their classes try hard to get good grades	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that they are able to get the help they need to be successful at school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that their classes really make them think	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(12) Building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff	Percentage of staff reporting that their professional development experiences add value to their work	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of staff reporting that they have a say in decision-making at their school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that their culture and native language are respected at school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Teacher attendance rate (days attended)	94.3	94.7	95.1	95.5	
(13) Developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through grade 3	Percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 2 reaching end-of-year grade level target on ELA diagnostic assessments	42	47	52	57	
	Percentage of pre-kindergarten students identified as being "on track for literacy" based on district early literacy assessments	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available

* Dismissal rate = Total number of dismissals from non-routine student-nurse encounters divided by total number of non-routine encounters

** Interpersonal incidents includes count of offenses for: physical attacks, physical fights, sexual harassment, and sexual assault (including rape).

*** Note that assessment goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decisions and timelines.

**** For this measure, computer science programs must be at least one academic quarter in duration.

Appendix C: Budget for the District

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of resources such as time, funds, human capital, and operational supports results in increased student learning. The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which all of the district’s strategies will be based. The Commissioner and the Receiver are fully committed to aligning the use of resources in support of student learning.

The Receiver recognizes the challenge of allocating resources most effectively when budget increases are limited. For the last several years, district administration has had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget and look to reorganization and reallocation to fund strategic initiatives. Some funding constraints for future fiscal years are already known, so fully implementing turnaround initiatives requires continuing reorganization and reallocation to prioritize resource allocations that best support student learning.

The FY16 general funds budget below is an updated version of the June 24 (2015) budget approved by the Commissioner as acting Receiver. The total remains the same, with adjustments made as the budget was set up in the district’s financial system with updated salaries and costs. The Receiver may make further reallocations. The list of FY16 grants is current as of August 30, 2015, and is subject to change.

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

August 30, 2015

District Expenditures	
Schools	
Dean Tech	3,841,877
Therapeutic Intervention Program	593,563
Donahue	3,703,702
Holyoke High	7,403,874
Kelly	3,238,983
Lawrence School	2,298,657
McMahon	2,980,473
Metcalf	1,638,364
Metcalf Dual-Language Program	90,000
Morgan	2,559,863
Peck	3,286,998
Sullivan	3,359,007
White	2,740,269
Substitutes (all schools)	800,000
SUB-TOTAL - SCHOOLS	38,535,630

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

August 30, 2015

Districtwide Offices	
Superintendent/Receiver Office	1,252,346
Assistant Superintendent Office	180,408
Athletics	603,306
District Curriculum Offices	554,761
Finance	1,715,364
Human Resources	308,413
Operations - Food, Buildings and Maintenance, Security	5,003,425
Operations – Transportation*	5,800,000
	<i>Funded by grants</i>
Professional Development Department	59,400
School Committee	968,642
School Health	5,234,215
Special Education (In-District)	2,615,000
Special Education (Out-of-District)	905,619
Student Services	1,394,015
Technology	26,594,914
SUB-TOTAL - DISTRICT-WIDE	26,594,914
DISTRICT TOTAL EXPENDITURES	65,130,544
<i>* The FY16 transportation budget is still under review.</i>	
City Expenditures for Education	
Administration	69,400
Operations & Maintenance	75,000
City Retirement & Unemployment Compensation	2,648,641
Insurances – Retirees & Active Employee Health & Life; FICA	8,753,210
Insurances - Property	120,000
School Choice Tuition Expense	1,952,896
Charter School Tuition Expense	11,285,629
TOTAL CITY EXPENDITURES	24,904,776
District and City Expenditures for Education	90,035,320

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

FY16 Grants

Entitlements and Grants Approved as of Sept. 4, 2015*

Federal Grants	
Title I	5,847,659
Title I Carryover	300,000
Title II-A	676,661
Title III	243,886
Title III Carryover	190,117
Title III Summer Grant	11,235
IDEA: SPED Entitlement Grant	1,910,467
SPED Program Improvement	32,535
Early Childhood SPED Program Improvement	3,500
21st Century Community Learning Centers - SPED Enhanced	25,500
21st Century Community Learning Centers	610,469
Mass Grad Carryover	175,000
Perkins Secondary Allocation Grant	174,314
Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program	174,105
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	69,300
Race to the Top (Birth to Grade 3)	41,400
McKinney-Vento	40,000
Subtotal Federal	10,526,148
State Grants	
Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act – Youth	150,114
Essential School Health Services	106,600
Community Adult Learning Centers	433,289
School to Work	8,500
Quality Enhancements in After-school/Out of School Time	20,000
Adult Career Pathways	53,740
Academic Support Services	46,300
Quality Full Day Kindergarten	172,050
Morgan School Turnaround Support	410,000
Subtotal State	1,400,593
Private Grants	
Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice	500
Linda Schulman Innovation Grant	1,000
Subtotal Private	1,500

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

TOTAL GRANTS*

11,928,241

** Additional grants have been or will be applied for. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will grant additional funds to the district specifically for turnaround support.*

Note: The Holyoke Public Schools also receive a Preschool Expansion Grant of \$1,425,000 from the Department of Early Education and Care; most of the grant is passed through to community partners providing preschool expansion classes for students who are not enrolled in the Holyoke Public Schools.

**Appendix D: Holyoke Public Schools Level 5 District Local Stakeholder Group
Recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver
Submitted July 10, 2015**

The Holyoke Public Schools were designated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as chronically underperforming (Level 5) on April 28, 2015. Massachusetts law indicates that within 30 days of a district being designated chronically underperforming, the Commissioner and Receiver shall convene a local stakeholder group to solicit the group's recommendations for the Commissioner's and Receiver's Level 5 district turnaround plan.

The Holyoke Public Schools' Local Stakeholder Group was convened on Wednesday, May 27, 2015. The statute allowed 45 days for the Local Stakeholder Group to complete its work; the group met five times during this period. The membership of the group, which includes representation as outlined in G.L. c. 69, §1K(b) is listed on the following pages.

All of the meetings were open to the public. Except for the first meeting, all other meetings were video recorded and posted on the Holyoke Public Schools' website. All meetings were led by facilitators.

The Holyoke Public Schools' Local Stakeholder Group worked diligently to execute its charge to provide recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver as they create the turnaround plan for the district; these recommendations are designed to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students.

The Local Stakeholder Group submitted the following letter and recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver on July 10, 2015, within the 45 day window required by statute. The Commissioner and Receiver reviewed and considered all of the recommendations submitted.

**A Letter to Dr. Steven Zrike, Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools and Dr. Mitchell Chester,
Commissioner of MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, from the
Members of the Holyoke Public Schools Local Stakeholder Group**

July 10, 2015

Dear Commissioner Chester and Dr. Zrike:

The members of the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) of the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) are pleased to present you with our recommendations. Thank you for the assignment, Commissioner Chester. And thank you, Dr. Zrike, for your pledge to consider our recommendations with care. It has been our honor to do this work, and we have taken it very seriously.

All stakeholders are committed to helping the district and Dr. Zrike in developing and implementing the turnaround plan. We believe that the needs of our students, families, teachers and staff are critical, and therefore, we respectfully request that the turnaround plan be created and implemented with purposeful urgency.

We would welcome an opportunity in the coming weeks to meet with you to discuss and explain our work. We would ask for and encourage you to maintain ongoing communication with the members of the Holyoke community. We also ask that this communication employ a variety of media, not just limited to email and computer-based, so as to reach the maximum number of people.

Our Process

Over the past 45 days, we met five times for a total of 14.5 hours (the full meeting schedule can be found below). In rapid succession, we received your charge from MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston; established norms to guide our work; asked for and received in-depth data and presentations from HPS and ESE staff, community partners and our own members; engaged in spirited debate about the most pressing challenges and promising current and future strategies; proposed and posted a set of draft recommendations; and developed a carefully prioritized set of final recommendations for your consideration.

We have sought out a high degree of interaction with the public: all but the first of our meetings were video-taped. Each meeting's notes, presentations, and draft documents have been posted online (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/localstakeholdersgroup.htm>). With help from ESE and HPS, we offered translation services to members of the LSG and the public, and

translated core documents into Spanish. We have engaged the public at each of our meetings, ranging from 40 to 100 people each time, set up our meetings so that each one included a break to allow for more interaction, and consistently made ourselves available for discourse.

Meeting locations and schedule:

Meeting schedule	Location	Meeting topic
Wednesday, May 27, 2015 3:00-5:00 pm	The Community Room, Holyoke Public Library (250 Chestnut Street, Holyoke)	Introductions, member roles and expectations
Monday, June 1, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Kittredge Center, Holyoke Community College (303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke)	Student supports and special populations
Wednesday, June 10, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Leslie Phillips Theater, Holyoke Community College (303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke)	Family and community engagement
Wednesday, June 17, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center (206 Maple Street, Holyoke)	Secondary schools
Wednesday, July 1, 2015 2:30-6:00 pm	Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center (206 Maple Street, Holyoke)	Final wrap-up and review of recommendations

Arriving at Our Recommendations

Through this work together, we have identified ten “areas of work” that we believe offer the greatest promise for the future of Holyoke students. We value each of these areas of work highly and do not rank them in priority. Within each of these, we have crafted our shared vision statement. We then offer you our “core recommendation” – stating the recommended approach and strategic direction that sums up our best thinking for that area of work. Then, under the twin banners of these visions and core recommendations, we have made a set of specific recommendations, with our highest priority recommendations listed first. LSG members voted democratically to determine the prioritization of the specific recommendations. Recommendations containing the same primary numerical label denote an equal amount of votes. The secondary alphabetical label is used for reference purposes only; it does not indicate any priority order (e.g. recommendations marked 2a and 2b received the same number of votes, and were second in the priority ranking of overall recommendations for that section).

On the Issues of Affordability, Sustainability and Scalability

We have observed the following set of norms in doing this work: Encourage full participation and listen respectfully to all LSG voices; Check for understanding; Balance advocacy with inquiry;

Make recommendations that are affordable, sustainable, and scalable. Of these, only the last – to make recommendations that are affordable, sustainable and scalable – has proven difficult. While we recognize that budgetary constraints within Holyoke Public Schools are real and persistent, we are also aware that the resources for learning and schooling opportunities in HPS pale by comparison with the resources of the public school systems of many other Massachusetts communities. It is imperative that more sustainable financial resources be made available from the Commonwealth, the City, and through private sources and corporate fundraising. We have striven to offer recommendations that HPS can implement within tight budget constraints, so that promising and effective initiatives can become sustainable over time.

At the same time, we know that high functioning schools and successful students emerge in contexts of carefully targeted resources and opportunities to innovate. We have therefore taken every opportunity to recommend strategies that may increase HPS access to partnerships and resources that all students, educators and families require in order for students to achieve at high levels. You will note these throughout the document.

Three Core Values

Three strong themes have emerged from our work:

We believe in this community and in its many strengths, and we believe that building on our strengths is essential for success. *In our work, we tackled the hard issues directly, from the unacceptably low academic achievement of our student body, to the inadequacy of our response to the non-academic needs of students and families, to the urgent requirement to recognize and engage the cultural, language and learning differences of students, with high expectations for students and for schools. At the same time, we repeatedly affirmed the assets, resources and capacities of HPS and its community. These assets include, first and foremost, our students, intelligent and brimming with potential; our families, whose determination to do the right thing for their children has been a guiding light for this LSG team; our educators, whose efforts on behalf of students are driven by strong commitments to opportunity and by high levels of professionalism; and the diversity of community and civic institutions surrounding the schools. These strengths form an excellent foundation on which to build.*

The educators, families, and civic and community leaders of Holyoke and the region – together with their institutions – stand ready to help you. *We know that our service as LSG members concludes with this communication to you. However, we do not expect to quit; to a person, each of the members of the LSG has a strong willingness, even eagerness, to continue to*

support your efforts and the efforts of the Holyoke Public Schools to successfully advance the education of all students. The many organizations that we represent share this feeling.

The evidence is clear: high expectations, collaboration, and the willingness to work through differences are the core ingredients to achieving results. *We offer our own experience as evidence of the power of this approach. As a diverse team, many of whose members did not know one another before, the LSG is demonstrating what works: intensive, collaborative effort and a shared sense of urgency, all focused on achieving big improvements. We hope this spirit of ambitious, inclusive teamwork will be a powerful common theme in the work ahead.*

Sincerely,

The Members of the Local Stakeholder Group of the Holyoke Public Schools

Members of the Local Stakeholder Group

Position, per statute	LSG members
The superintendent, or a designee	1) Paul Hyry-Dermith – Assistant Superintendent, Holyoke Public Schools
School committee chair, or a designee	2) Mayor Alex Morse – Chair, Holyoke Public Schools School Committee
Local teachers’ union president, or a designee	3) Gus Morales – President, Holyoke Teachers Association
A selection of administrators from the district, chosen by the Commissioner from among volunteers from the district	4) Jacqueline Glasheen – Principal; Kelly Full Service Community School 5) Vionette Escudero – Associate Principal; Dean Technical High School
A selection of teachers from the district, chosen by the local teacher’s union	6) Shelley Whelihan – Lt. Elmer J. McMahon Elementary School 7) Brigetann Reilly – Dean Technical High School
A selection of parents from the district chosen by the local parent organization	8) Jennifer Keitt – Maurice A. Donahue Elementary School 9) Marie Auguste – Morgan Full Service Community School 10) Vilma Soto – Peck-Lawrence Full Service Community School 11) Edgardo Camacho – E.N. White School
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health, and child welfare agencies chosen by the Commissioner	12) Debra Sicilia – Director of Areas for Holyoke and Greenfield, Department of Children and Families 13) Yasmin Otero – Regional Director; Department of Transitional Assistance
Representatives of applicable state and local workforce development agencies chosen by the Commissioner, as applicable	14) David Cruise – President and CEO; Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. 15) Bill Ennen – Project Director, Regional Programs; Innovation Institute at MassTech Collaborative
A representative of an early education and care provider chosen by the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care, or for middle or high schools, a representative of the higher education community selected by the	16) Stephen C. Huntley - Executive Director; Valley Opportunity Council 17) Jeffrey Hayden – Vice President of Community Relations; Holyoke Community College

Secretary of Education	
A member of the community appointed by the Chief Executive of the city or town	18) Erin Hebert , Holyoke High School class of 2014; Yale University class of 2018

Facilitators:

1. Andrew Bundy, Partner; Community Matters
2. David Castelline, Consultant, Teachers21
3. John D’Auria, President; Teachers21

ESE Staff:

1. Lauren Woo; Educational Specialist

**Holyoke Public Schools Local Stakeholder Group
Recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver**

I. Cultural Responsiveness and Competence:

Vision: *Students, parents and educators in the HPS feel themselves to be a part of a community of learners that is knowledgeable about and respectful of each student’s and family’s race, culture, and language, and taps this knowledge and respect to inform teaching and learning practices throughout the district.*

Core recommendation: *In all aspects of its work – from curriculum development, to teaching, professional development, family and community engagement, and all other core teaching and learning activities – HPS actively supports all educators and staff to engage in a steady commitment to culturally sustaining and relevant work.*

1. Recognize that achieving and maintaining cultural competence (through PD/trainings) is a core requirement for all adults working in HPS, including guidance counselors and case managers. These trainings should focus on all cultures but especially on Latino children and families.
- 2a²⁸. Acknowledge the significance of the fact that 79% of HPS students are Hispanic, and only 27% of HPS staff are people of color; 10% of HPS teachers are Hispanic.
- 2b. Hire more teachers who speak Spanish.
3. Understand that for many parents, “...the most culturally responsive thing an educator can do is to make the effort to get to know my child and my family.”
4. Further acknowledge that “it is up to us.” All adults who are a part of HPS, now, must create a positive cultural experience for students and adults. While new and ongoing efforts to diversify the teaching and administrative staff of HPS are critical (see X. *Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention* recommendations, below), in the near term, the job of creating a culturally responsive classroom, school and district falls to those adults and students currently in the system.

II. Parent, Family and Community Engagement:

Vision: *Every parent in the community feels welcomed and respected in their child’s school, and has a strong sense of how they can be active supporters of their child’s learning. Community organizations and regional agencies play an active role in supporting schools, families, students and educators with programming that is carefully aligned with the mission of HPS and the vision and priorities of individual schools.*

²⁸ *Recommendations containing the same primary numerical label denote an equal amount of votes. The secondary alphabetical label is used for reference purposes only; it does not indicate any priority order (e.g. recommendations marked 2a and 2b received the same number of votes, and were second in the priority ranking of overall recommendations for that section).*

Core Recommendation: *Place family and community engagement at the center of the HPS Turnaround Plan, regardless of the structures and programs involved.*

- 1a.** Create a plan to improve communication with families and hold school leaders accountable for increased family engagement.
- 1b.** Implement best practices from Holyoke’s Full Service Community Schools program (FSCS) in all HPS schools, with an emphasis on creating a welcoming environment for all parents. (We do not recommend that all HPS schools become FSCS schools, just that the best practices from them be applied across HPS.)
- 2a.** Ensure that out-of-school time programming, including district or community based summer programming, is focused on activities that are aligned with the district goals of accelerating student achievement and improving the high school graduation rate.
- 2b.** Create adult learning opportunities for parents/families.
- 2c.** Hire a parent coordinator/advocate in every building.
- 3a.** Understand and capitalize on the critical nature of parent engagement in the development of language.
- 3b.** Provide teachers with professional development assistance in engaging parents.
- 4a.** Continue to strengthen the connection between home language and school language, as is done through the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI).
- 4b.** Create resources for parents to support their students at home even when their first language is not English.
- 5a.** Continue the FSCS practice of requiring partner organizations to design or re-design their programming to align effectively with their HPS school partner(s).
- 5b.** Increase accountability for all HPS professional staff to improve family and community engagement so that outcomes can be tracked and improvement plans consistently applied.
- 5c.** Closely examine the role that Lawrence Community Works is fulfilling in the Lawrence turnaround effort for possible replication in Holyoke. The LSG believes there are many business and civic organizations who will want to bring resources in support of Holyoke Public Schools. The Mayor and Superintendent in Lawrence have each specifically called out the important role Lawrence Community Works is fulfilling, especially in regards to the coordination and alignment of resources for children and families which strengthens the conditions for students and families outside of the typical school day.
- 6a.** Create an overarching structure to help coordinate outside service providers.
- 6b.** Preserve programs that are working in the district.
- 6c.** Continue to encourage parent volunteers and leaders in all schools.
- 6d.** Create a centralized calendar of events that includes culturally relevant holidays and activities for parents to engage in.

7. Ensure strong alignment between each program and school.

III. Curriculum and Instruction:

Vision: *Each HPS school offers its students a full, stimulating, and academically enriching curriculum which will contain elements unique to each school, but which is fundamentally aligned, across schools, with a common set of high expectations.*

Core Recommendation: *Coordinate and implement an effective, research-based and culturally responsive K-12 curriculum consistently at all schools, implementing, improving and sustaining it over time.*

1. Adequately train teachers and leadership on effective implementation of a culturally sustaining and relevant curriculum, including accountability measures.
- 2a. Maintain and expand honors and AP courses.
- 2b. Support and train teachers on the integration of arts into education.
3. Sustain the current efforts of effective HELI programs (see II. Parent, Family and Community recommendations, above).
4. Create research-based curriculum consistency across the district.
5. Include teacher leaders in every step of curriculum work.
6. Bolster comprehensive sex education using research-based curriculum.
7. Create a career pathway model K-14 or K-16.
8. Engage teachers in planning professional development.

IV. Instructional Support:

Vision: *The District and each school focuses with a laser-like precision on the importance of high quality pedagogy that engages all learners and stretches them to grow as thinkers. HPS teachers experience their classrooms, schools and district as supportive adult learning environments, where high expectations for educators and students thrive in a culture of a common vision, shared practice and rigorous peer exchange and support.*

Core Recommendation: *Give educators at all levels access to robust professional development, models of instruction, opportunities to see exemplars of high quality, and steady support.*

1. Focus professional development on targeted and specific areas that respond to the highest needs of teachers and the greatest potential to positively impact student learning (cultural competency, support for implementing Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) instructional strategies, reading instruction, etc.)
2. Bring back use of the professional development Catalog (catalog of “cost free options” for professional development (after-school, during the summer) that the district would compile and put out. Educators could elect to take the courses).
3. Increase the capacity of principals to provide effective feedback to teachers in their implementation of SEI strategies.

4. Examine the consistency of support for educators across all schools.
5. Give school leaders autonomy within their buildings to support teachers as needed, based on building/population data.

V. Student Support:

Vision: *All HPS students have reliable access to the social and emotional support required for learning.*

Core Recommendation: *Focus intently on what HPS can control, and commit to it fully. Re-commit HPS resources to the most successful HPS school-based responses to unmet student needs. Expand partnerships and grant-funded projects with community and regional resource organizations that are expressly designed to meet the demand for student support.*

1. Develop a plan to increase student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. Use data to address any patterns for sub groups.
2. Recognize, as neither an excuse nor an insurmountable obstacle, the simple reality that every student has a set of basic needs – many of them non-academic – that must be met if she or he is to learn successfully.
3. Create an alternative school for students who have difficulties in the typical environment to meet all their educational, emotional and social needs.
- 4a. Hire qualified counselors for mental health.
- 4b. Expand student support to meet the social and emotional needs of students, with particular focus on high school students.
- 5a. Develop an effective social skills curriculum, consistently implemented at all schools.
- 5b. Using multiple sources of data and information, carefully and rigorously examine the effectiveness of current programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice. Where this examination supports work that is happening, continue, and expand it; where warranted, make changes to improve supports and results for students.
- 5c. Expand targeted social skills classes (e.g., Tier 2).
- 5d. Create a comprehensive social skills curriculum available to all our students that addresses age level concerns and is taught by a full-time, licensed professional.
- 5e. Support and establish Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) in all schools.

VI. Special Education:

Vision: *Educators, families and students have high expectations for the academic and learning success of all students with disabilities and have access to an array of resources that are coordinated and aligned to ensure student success.*

Core Recommendation: *Equip educators with the knowledge, skills and resources to adapt instruction and curriculum to meet the unique needs of learners while maintaining the highest*

expectations for achievement. This means addressing not only the skill-development needs of educators and providing the resources needed, but also sharing a clear belief that high levels of achievement are possible.

1. Ensure that all identified special education students are taught in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational setting and are provided with a continuum of instructional programming and an array of supports and services.
2. Re-evaluate students that full-inclusion models who aren't succeeding – determine the best educational setting based on these new evaluations.
- 3a. Review school staffing and budget allocation formula to ensure district-wide equity of educational programming, staff deployment, and student services and supports.
- 3b. Provide greater guidance to parents about the options and rights for special education students. Provide instructions for parents about the types of questions/services they should be requesting for special education students.
- 3c. Examine the referral process for access to special education services.
- 3d. Hire test proctors rather than using special education teachers (see *X. Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention* recommendations, below).
- 4a. Provide a parent coordinator/advocate in every school.
- 4b. Provide more staff members so students who need it can have 1:1 attention.

VII. English Language Learners:

Vision: *All students learning English have a strong, consistent support system for doing so, with high expectations for English language fluency in reading, speaking and writing; every HPS student graduates fluent in English; speaking more than one language is widely treated and experienced – by students, parents and educators alike – as a good thing, as an advantage.*

Core Recommendation: *Continue to build capacity within HPS, among individual educators and teams of teachers and school leaders, to actively support English language learners (ELLs) in all aspects of curriculum and instruction.*

1. Recognize and promote bilingualism.
- 2a. Increase number of teachers completing SEI course to 100 percent; create incentives for teachers to complete course; partner with area colleges to assist in SEI implementation.
- 2b. Create opportunities for parents to learn and interact in English.
- 2c. Create and implement ELL curriculum for all grade levels.
- 2d. Support teachers implementing SEI instructional strategies with professional development and principal feedback.
3. Add World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)/deeper practice in ELL instruction; add accountability measures for SEI/WIDA.
4. Provide parents the option of placing their children in bilingual programs.

VIII. Pre-K and Kindergarten:

Vision: *All of Holyoke’s youngest children arrive in HPS early learning centers, Kindergarten and elementary schools with a high level of readiness – ready to play, ready to be a part of a group, ready to learn – because of their early and frequent engagement in early learning at home, early childhood education, and high quality pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) and Kindergarten programming.*

Core Recommendation: *HPS increases seats for pre-K and Kindergarten to the maximum extent possible, partners closely with pre-K and community providers to increase the number of children served, and vigorously supports regional and statewide efforts to expand age 0-5 supports for families.*

1. Achieve universal, dual-language pre-K for all students.
2. Advocate, with other civic leaders, for mandatory Kindergarten.
3. Give pre-K and out of school partners access to student data to measure outcomes.
4. Aim preschool efforts towards key readiness qualities and educational milestones.
5. Create exit survey for pre-K families.
6. Understand screening criteria for Kindergarten; articulate it to partners and families.

IX. Secondary Schools and Workforce Development:

Vision: *HPS high school students are immersed in rigorous and stimulating learning experiences that engage them deeply, prepare them well for college and the workforce, and challenge them to embrace academic, social and leadership responsibilities both in school and in their family and community lives.*

Core Recommendation: *Develop powerful, aligned programs for William J. Dean Technical High School (Dean) and Holyoke High School (HHS). At Dean, consistently improve a series of career pathway learning experiences that provide high levels of post-secondary and career readiness that are linked, through strong partnerships, with local employers and higher learning institutions. At both Dean and HHS, offer students an increasingly personalized set of rigorous learning opportunities; more advanced placement, independent study and dual enrollment opportunities; and consistently rigorous academic experiences tailored to the passions and interests of students. Strive for alignment of the two schools, creating a shared, high expectations culture.*

- 1a. Examine the performance and experiences of former HPS students at Holyoke Community College to learn how HPS schools can better prepare and support students.
- 1b. Support a community-wide effort, with strong higher education leadership, to create an Urban Teacher Academy that would help HPS students become teachers, and

develop a pool of HPS graduates who can become HPS teachers. (See this recommendation in X. *Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention*, also.)

2. Strengthen connections between Dean and the college and business communities.
3. Conduct an assessment of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at Dean to determine its responsiveness to documented local labor market demand.
- 4a. Rally business engagement to support and strengthen school initiatives.
- 4b. Create powerful alternative school options for students who need them.
- 4c. Create a college-going culture for all students; emphasize college for all.
- 5a. Incorporate work-based learning opportunities as an integral part of a comprehensive program to increase the high school graduation rate.
- 5b. Hire attendance officers to work with chronically absent students.

X. Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention:

Vision: *Each HPS educator and staff person experiences their school and the district as stimulating and rewarding learning environments that reliably attract excellent candidates and vigorously support the hiring, development, continuous learning, leadership and retention of HPS teachers, administrators, and staff.*

Core Recommendation: *Create a strong, spelled out plan for how HPS will attract, retain and develop highly qualified teachers and administrators.*

1. Create a robust plan to recruit highly qualified teachers.
- 2a. Examine the implementation of the teacher evaluation process to ensure the process and protocols are applied with fidelity.
- 2b. Create a more effective and efficient system for providing qualified substitute teachers so that current staff are not pulled away from normal duties to cover for absences (see this recommendation in VI. *Special Education* recommendations, above).
- 3a. Create an Urban Teacher Academy, in partnership with local universities and colleges, to increase pipeline of teachers from HPS back to HPS – define goals, measures of success (see this recommendation in IX. *Secondary Schools and Workforce Development* above).
- 3b. Develop a strategic plan for increasing HPS staff diversity, with concrete benchmarks for progress, to which HPS holds itself publicly accountable.
- 4a. Hire more Spanish speaking teachers and create opportunities for English speaking teachers to learn Spanish.
- 4b. Create plan to reduce the turnover rate of teachers.
- 4c. Offer leadership training for teachers to learn how most effectively to engage and support paraprofessionals to increase student learning.

- 5a. Strengthen targeted professional development for paraprofessionals and strengthen pathways for paraprofessionals to become professional educators.
- 5b. Strengthen paraprofessional and specials/co-curricular teachers' understanding of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), accommodations, and how to provide accommodations.
- 5c. Create a mentor program, especially for bilingual employees.
- 6a. Make more intentional use of ELL and special education teachers in their respective roles, limiting the use of these teachers as substitutes and test proctors (see this recommendation in VI. *Special Education* above).
- 6b. Continue to work with staff on cultural proficiency.
- 6c. Recruit Holyoke graduates; encourage Holyoke students to pursue a career in teaching.
- 7. Create pathways for teachers to become administrators.

Other areas discussed:

The following topics/areas were discussed and debated. The LSG members held a variety of opinions that did not coalesce into a clear recommendation.

- Views on Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) run from total support to strong skepticism about their effectiveness.
- Some view the 90-minute block as counterproductive, others support it.
- Some view K-8 schools as problematic, others are not sure. The LSG recommends that the receiver and Commissioner review the current district grade organizational configuration to determine the most effective systemic educational delivery model to accelerate student achievement.
- The team debated about whether and how to strengthen the team/intervention process, including Tier 2 interventions and links with out of school time partners, prior to referral for evaluation for possible special education placement.

Appendices:

The following documents were submitted by individual members of the LSG who requested they be sent with the official Holyoke LSG recommendations. The LSG members agreed to share these documents as appendices; they were not reviewed formally or voted on by the LSG.

1. Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. Recommendations
2. HTA's Recommendations

Appendix #1: Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. Recommendations

1. Review the current district grade organizational configuration to determine the most effective systemic educational delivery model to accelerate student achievement.
2. Review school staffing and budget allocation formula to ensure district-wide equity of educational programming, staff deployment and student services and supports.
3. Develop a district wide process to increase opportunities to accelerate shared governance procedures in each school to create culture of collaboration and communication.
4. Examine the implementation of the contracted teacher evaluation process to ensure the process and protocols are applied with fidelity and in accordance with the intent and purpose of the language.
5. Ensure that all identified special education students are taught in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational setting and are provided with a continuum of instructional programming and an array of supports and services.
6. Incorporate work-based learning opportunities as an integral part of a comprehensive program to increase the high school graduation rate.
7. Conduct an assessment of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at William J. Dean Technical High School to determine their relevancy to respond to documented local labor market demand.
8. Ensure that the Chapter 74 mandated Program Advisory Committees in each of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at William J. Dean Technical High School are properly constituted, reflect the required membership as mandated by DESE regulations, and meet on a regular and consistent basis.
9. Ensure that out-of-school time programming, including district or community based summer programming, is focused on activities that are aligned with the districts goals of accelerating student achievement and improving the high school graduation rate.

10. Review the scope, scheduling and content of the district's teacher professional development program to allow for district-wide, in-school, or external programming opportunities that will improve teaching practice.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed by David Cruise

David M. Cruise

Appendix #2: HTA's Recommendations

Holyoke Teachers Association Turnaround Plan Recommendations for Local Stakeholder Group

In order to ensure that the turnaround plan in the Holyoke school district addresses the complex, underlying causes of educational underperformance declared by the Board of Education, and in order to address the real educational, social, health, and economic needs of Holyoke students and their parents, the Local Stakeholder Group should include the following in its recommendations to the Receiver, provided pursuant to G.L. c. 69, section 1K(c):

- (1)** Steps to address social service and health needs of students at the school and their families, to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn; provided, however, that this may include mental health substance abuse screening:
- (2)** Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the school community, in order to promote a safe and secure learning environment:
- (3)** Steps to improve workforce development services provided to students and their families at the school, to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities.
- (4)** Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students:
- (5)** Alternative English Language Learning programs for limited English proficient students, notwithstanding chapter 71A:
- (6)** A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided:

The HTA has grouped their recommendations into the following categories, using the law as its guiding principle:

- I. Health and Well-Being**
- II. Restructuring Special Education Services**
- III. Restructuring English language learner (ELL) Services, including the Culture of all our Learners**
- IV. Safe and Secure Learning: Student Learning Conditions and Teacher Working Conditions, one in the same.**
- V. Community Workforce Development**
- VI. Budget**

I. Health and Well-Being

Social Service and Health Needs of Students & Families

1. A School Doctor hired to work with and oversee all health care personnel in the District
2. One School Psychologist for each of the following grade spans at each school: PreK-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12. This person should be experienced in issues for the appropriate developmental level.
3. One certified, trained Social Worker or more assigned to each school who will oversee and coordinate the physical, mental, social and emotional health care needs of all students in that school.
4. One Parent/Community Outreach Worker or more at each school who will oversee and coordinate the services students and families receive, be responsible for communicating with parents/guardians, and will work with the Social Worker to help meet all the needs of the child and family
5. Two Nurses at each school, to handle, coordinate, and communicate about health needs and issues, scheduled in flexible shifts so that the office is always open during the school day.
6. One trained Crisis Intervention Specialist at each grade level (PreK-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12) to handle the social/emotional issues that arise.

Improve and Expand Child Welfare Services

1. One certified, trained Social Worker or more assigned to each school who will oversee and coordinate the physical, mental, social and emotional health care needs of all students in that school.
2. One Parent/Community Outreach Worker or more at each school who will oversee and coordinate the services students and families receive, be responsible for communicating with parents/guardians, and will work with the Social Worker to help meet all the needs of the child and family. This person will also do home visits to help with issues that may be stemming from the home environment.
3. More guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, transition counselors and intervention specialists.
4. Add Behavior Interventionists to all buildings
5. In order for Holyoke to realize its full potential and help its students achieve at the highest levels, the Holyoke teachers feel that class size must be addressed. A potential framework for such a discussion would include setting maximum limits in how many students are in a class based on grade level, such as, 12-15 in preK-2, 15-18 in 3-6, and 18-22 in 7-12.

6. Part of having a full, well rounded, enriching educational experience, students must have access to programs such as music, art, extracurricular activities regardless of their academic performance. ALL students, no matter what their educational challenges or issues are, MUST have equal access to these important components of a well-rounded education. The constraints of scheduling or personnel must not dictate whether or not a certain population of students receives these experiences.
7. Adequately fund and provide extracurricular activities and sports to both high schools, so that students from each school can fully participate on any team they so chose.
8. Adequately fund and provide extracurricular activities and trips to all students, regardless of family's financial ability to pay, to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or the school's PTO's ability to raise funds. Example, if one 5th grade class goes on a trip to Plymouth Plantation, all 5th graders in the district are afforded the same opportunity.
9. Each school year, each grade level, is provided with an annual, fully funded field trip to a location, outside of the general Holyoke area to a museum, historical location, etc. to expose all children to the experiences that are outside the limits of their socioeconomic status.
10. Reinstate a PTO at each school, no matter what grade level. Actively recruit people to serve on these committees to support the schools.

II. Restructuring Special Education Services

1. Consolidated, Consistent, Equitable Referral Process for all Services: There should be one process to follow to get student services such as speech therapy, Special Ed services, etc. This process, currently known as Building Based Support Teams, or BBST, must be consistently implemented, composed, and run across all schools. Currently, there are 13 schools and 13 ways the BBSTs are run.
2. Consistent, Equitable Supports and Staffing in all schools. In order to equitably serve and educate the students of Holyoke, each school must have consistent and equitable supports, services and staffing. This way, if a child moves from one school to another midway through the year, his services will remain the same. (i.e. all schools, at all grade levels MUST have RISE, functional, TIP and Replacement model classrooms to serve students with a variety of needs.)
3. Staffing for special education services should include staffing levels that allow for co-teachers to be assigned full-time to each classroom.
4. Employ, train and assign sufficient paraprofessional staff to provide dedicated classroom and 1:1 support for all students on IEPs.

5. Educate the Special Education and ELL parents as to their rights under the law. Offer free classes to the Special Education and ELL parents about advocating for their students.
6. Provide the parents with the “Know your Rights” pamphlet at every meeting. These have not been given out in the last 5 years or more. Provide these in both languages.
7. Mandatory Educational Advocates provided for Special Education and ELL parents for all IEP meetings.
8. Additional school psychologists so the testing does not take too long. Special Education teachers should not be doing the testing or running their own meetings.
9. Develop a district-wide special education referral process that simplifies paperwork. All Special Education referrals should be monitored for timely responses, i.e. within 10 days.
10. Provide ongoing, district wide professional development opportunities for all staff to develop shared understanding and strategies for working with students who have experienced trauma, homelessness, transiency, mental health issues, substance abuse, or other issues as identified by the faculty and staff.
11. Provide ongoing, multi-lingual workshops for parents and caregivers on services, strategies and supports for issues such as trauma, homelessness, transiency, mental health issues, substance abuse, rights under Special Education laws, rights for students in ELL programs and accessing district and community services.
12. Limit the ratio of SPED and ELL students to regular education students in each classroom, regardless of the number of staff assigned to the classroom.
13. Return to the full Inclusion model. Caseload management is NOT working.
14. Consistent, equitable supports across all grade levels, at all schools. Return to the co-teaching model with one regular education teacher and one special education teacher in the classroom.
15. Expedite the referral process. Teachers should not have to implement all parts of the DCAP before a referral is started. The process is too cumbersome, too detailed. Many teachers are so overwhelmed with paperwork that they do not know how to complete nor have been trained to complete.
16. Provide appropriate support staff and services for all students.
17. Ensure that ELL and Special Education teachers are ONLY used to provide direct services to their students. They are not used for duties, study halls, testing, substituting, etc. Meetings and paperwork times are scheduled into their day. They do not take place during times that teachers are scheduled to service the students.
18. Do not schedule all ELL and Special Education students all into one class. These learning issues cannot occur within the same constraints.

19. Recreate the Central Office Team that was eliminated in 2007. The team included the OTs, PTs, psychologists, evaluators and all Special Education personnel, with a secretary dedicated to them, to handle testing, referrals, etc. There were two district wide evaluators, one bilingual and one monolingual, who handled all the testing. The team was centralized. They handled all aspects of testing. The team met and discussed students on a regular basis. All files, referrals, etc. went through this office. All Special Education referrals handled by the same staff, in a consistent manner, following a specific protocol. (For more information, see Norma Casillas, who was the bilingual evaluator.)
20. Appropriately service students with the specialized teacher who will better serve his/her need. For example, if the student needs a Bilingual Special Education teacher, then that is what should be provided.
21. Additional funding for ELL and Special Education teachers to meet the needs of all the populations.
22. Explicitly define the services provided by the Tiered Support Specialists. Let all teachers know what services that these TSSs provide.
23. Explicitly define what type of services that students need during periods such as the Intensive Learning Center, pull out services or Enhancement classes. This time should have a structured task list or curricula to follow. Behaviorally-challenged students should not be sent to these services.

III. Restructuring ELL Services, including the Culture of all our Learners

1. Establish a procedure to regularly review existing ELL programs at a building level to ensure teachers and students get appropriate supports and staffing.
2. Staff each school with sufficient licensed ESL teacher who are assigned to a single grade level and who have specific assignments.
3. Establish multiple ELL programs specifically designed to meet the needs of newcomers, long-term ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and academic supports for ELLs who are reaching English proficient and students who have exited ELL programs (levels 4, 5, and formerly limited English proficient)
4. Recruit and hire more bilingual educators in all positions, in all areas, in all schools.
5. Services for the Level 4 and 5 ELL students should be provided by an ELL teacher, not a SEI-certified person. A dually licensed teacher cannot focus on content and language acquisition at the same time and accomplish either fully.
6. Offer ongoing, no-cost SEI Endorsement and ongoing SEI professional development opportunities for all educators.
7. See further recommendations for ELLs in next sections.

8. Specialized training provided to staff around issues such as transiency, poverty, trauma, chronic absences, etc.
9. Provide enrichment experiences, such as field trips, specials, and out of classroom experiences
10. Follow the English Language Development guidelines. Do not use a teacher with multiple certifications to cover multiple responsibilities

Culturally responsive recommendations:

1. Include dates, such as Hispanic Heritage month, that will be celebrated along with our traditional holidays/history.
2. Reach out to parents to set up a centralized calendar, activities, events for schools, parents and others, but also include activities to help educate students.
3. Roll out a prepared ELA curriculum across grade levels, which include culturally sensitive literature and resources for the classroom.
4. More resources that students can identify with: LGBTQ literature, Puerto Rican Culture, etc.
5. Teach students and staff how to overcome obstacles in a positive way.
6. Offer all staff Professional Development such as Spanish for Educators, Ethnic Studies and Diversity Training.
7. Offer English Language Learning Lessons to parents at all schools.
8. Continue to work with the Latin@ Educational Advisory Group
9. Add a Puerto Rican History and Culture class to our History offerings.
10. Add Puerto Rican Cultural Education to our curriculum.
11. Reinstitute and restructure the schools' annual celebration of Puerto Rico and the United States.
12. Transitional bilingual education did not work in Holyoke previously because the staff hired were not bilingual, biliterate. We lost many bilingual teachers when they had to pass a literacy test. If we hire people who have the skills, the programs could work.
13. Continue the dual-language education programs at Metcalf.
14. Expand dual-language education programs to offer at least one dual-language classroom at each building and each grade level.
15. Offer dual-language content area courses at both high schools.
16. Offer courses and pathways for educators to qualify for the Transitional Bilingual Learning Endorsement (603 CMR 7.14)
17. While we realize it was repealed in 2002, we believe that the strongest and most prudent course of action to address the ELL population in Holyoke would be to reintroduce bilingual education in the schools.
18. Hire truly bilingual, biliterate teachers to teach the two-way bilingual programs, to promote literacy in both languages.

19. We favor a two-way program as is being piloted at Metcalf.

IV. Safe and Secure Learning: Student Learning Conditions and Teacher Working Conditions, one in the same.

A fully serviced and staff alternative school

1. Establish a Pre-K through Grade 12 Alternative School, which services students from pre-K through 12 grade, which includes the following:
 - 1.1. An Alternative, Therapeutic Setting for our students with Social/Emotional Issues: The current Therapeutic Intervention Programs (TIP) are not therapeutic. These students need a quiet, well-established routine, in a safe place, that allows them to learn and receive the emotional supports and therapies that they need.
 - 1.2. A Behavior Intervention program for students who are consistently off track, disruptive to the learning environment, and the educational progress who do not qualify for Special Education Behavioral Support. This program will concentrate on correcting the disruptive behaviors in order that they might return to the least restrictive environment.
 - 1.3. A Behavior Alternative program for our students who cannot comply with the behavior norms of a regular setting. Currently, most of these students are serviced in TIP, with our most emotionally fragile students. These students need a separate, structured program of their own, staffed by Restorative Justice trained personnel to work with and around their needs. There also needs to be a correctly equipped program to effectively and separately deal with these children. They need to be provided with supports and systems that will most effectively facilitate their learning and correct their behavior.

Social Skills and Discipline

1. A comprehensive Social Skills curriculum taught at each school, which address age level appropriate issues/concerns taught by a full-time, licensed teacher. (Example of a Middle School program is available at <http://www.ccoe.net/social/skillslist.htm>)
2. Fully enforce and follow through with the Student Code of Conduct as written. Discipline needs to be consistent in all schools. It is currently the number one complaint for all teachers at the middle school and high school level.

Safe and Secure Learning Environment

1. An assigned, consistent School Resource Officer assigned to each 6-8 and 9-12 school daily. Each of the middle and high schools needs a regular SRO presence to handle the variety of community issues that arise among adolescents and teenagers. The SRO will

provide students and staff a safe person to go to report such things as bullying, threats of violence, drugs etc.

2. An assigned, consistent SRO who visits the PreK-2 and 3-5 schools on a weekly basis. This will help to teach our students that the SRO is another safe adult they can reach out to. This SRO can also help administration deal with issues, such as bullying and violence, that arise even in the earliest grades.
3. Offer restraint and de-escalation training to all staff.
4. Well-written, specific, detailed Emergency Management plans that are written for all emergency type situations. Things such Code Red and Code White should be the same and handled the same through all the schools. These plans should be distributed to all staff and reviewed on a regular basis. These plans should include plans for things such as a fire alarm during inclement weather, blocked exits, delay in fire personnel response, etc.

Curricula, Schools, and Teaching Staff

1. Consistent, fully funded, well researched curricula for all grade and subject levels.
2. Adopt, implement and provide a curriculum and stick with it.
3. Provide teachers who are teaching curricula with a full, paid training to understand and implement the curricula, before he/she are expected to teach the curriculum.
4. Provide teachers with all materials, especially student resources, needed to teach the curricula.
5. Do not use teachers as substitutes, except in an emergency situation. Clearly define what an emergency is for using teachers as substitutes.
6. Centralize services for providing and obtaining substitutes- employ building-based, permanent substitutes and set minimum qualifications and compensation for day-to-day substitutes. (Use Kelly Services, like Chicopee)
7. Eliminate the 90-minute blocks. Students cannot focus for that long.
8. Eliminate K-8. Return to K-5, 6-8, and high school.
9. Return to five schools (K-5), two middle schools (6-8), and two high schools (9-12).
10. Reinstate the K-5 recess of at least 15 minutes or more. This is in addition to their 40 minute (SHOULD be 20 minute eating, 20 minute recess) lunch period. This would be time to go outside, exercise and socialize. All schools must have this opportunity.
11. Technology is widely discussed when speaking of our students achieving in the 21st century, but rarely is the money put in place to back such strong words. If we are to have our students excel in all things, then we have to provide them with the means of doing so. Each classroom must have fully functioning, up-to-date, supplied equipment to meet the needs of the learners. Ideally, each student would have access to a computer for all classes.

12. If we want students in Holyoke to succeed then we have to provide them and their teachers with the supplies needed. The smallest things being absent from the room can be detrimental to the learning process. Each classroom must have adequate supplies such as printer toner, pencils, paper, folders, crayons, scissors, and other necessary implements. There should not be an extensive lag time between when supplies are ordered and when the teacher receives them. Currently, teachers often have to wait months for supplies, such a printer toner, and often wind up buying their own.
13. Eliminate neighborhood schools, get kids out of their neighborhoods and expose them to other parts of the City.

V. Community Workforce Development

Adult Learning Programs for Families & Community

1. Restore the Worker Training Programs offered at Dean Technical: offer vocational and career training for parents at the local high schools, especially in the shops at Dean. Offer parents and other adults the opportunity to improve their skills and expand their knowledge to better support themselves and their children.
2. Coordinate services with CareerPoint and other outside community agencies to offer parents help in training for, interviewing for, getting and keeping better jobs.
3. Target work programs and career services to parenting teens at the middle and high schools levels.
4. Restore a Career Services and Opportunities Office at each of the High Schools: This office, which was disbanded in 2000-2001, provided much needed services to all our high school students. This is the place where students went to work on resumes, write cover letters, get job applications, complete portfolios of vocational work, etc. This office also put students at Holyoke High out on work-study and students at Dean out on co-op. When we lost this office, our students lost a go-to place and person for jobs and career assistance. When we had this office at its services, our students were much better prepared to obtain the part-time jobs, which helped their families stay afloat in many instances.
5. Review the daily schedule at Holyoke High School to better accommodate alternative learning programs, such as internships, work-study and other career services. Maintain the rotating schedule of classes for all the underclassmen. Rotate the schedule for the seniors only. Do not alter the schedule for underclassmen to accommodate this or the outside partners who may be coming in.
6. Review district policies to allow work-study or work-experience to count towards graduation credit at both high schools.
7. Coordinate the work placement coordinators at both schools, so that jobs/positions are made available to all students

8. Expand English as a Second Language classes to the offerings for parents, at night, offered at multiple locations throughout the district, free of cost.
9. Expand offerings of parent-education courses that are currently offered through other local organizations.
10. Field trips to local factories, companies, etc. that revolve around exposing the students to the variety of employment opportunities available to the community.
11. Teacher internships at local factories (School to Career, connecting Activities, Grant 480)
12. Reinstate popular vocational programs, such as Building and Grounds and HVAC to the Dean Technical High School.
13. Add additional popular vocational programs, such as Allied Health and Child Care Services to the Dean Technical High School.

VI. Budget

1. Qualified, full time grant writers, one for each school and one district-wide, to apply, monitor and report on external grant funding.
2. Training for teachers to help them write grants for their classrooms.
3. Professional development for teachers to help them search out and qualify for grants to use in their curriculums.
4. Additional funding for ELL teachers to meet the needs of the populations.
5. In accordance with MGL 69J, the turnaround plan should include an adequate, fully funded budget to fulfill the recommendations that are outlined in this plan.
6. Build a new school. The last new school in Holyoke was Dean in 1989. Seek out money for new buildings. Some of our schools, such as McMahon are very out of date and in desperate need of repairs. Money for these repairs keep getting squashed, where does the money go?
7. Move the School Department Offices out of Suffolk Street into the Lawrence School, the Lynch School (if the Mayor gives it back to the schools) or another School Department or City owned location that will not cost the City \$350, 000 a year to lease.
8. Return Lynch School to the School department as a School Department owned building. This building is built to be a school and completely outfitted to be such. Right now it is sitting vacant and not used.

In closing, in order to ensure that the turnaround plan is being fully implemented and continuously reassessed to determine where adjustments may need to be made, the HTA recommends:

1. That the LSG continue to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and make additional recommendations to the Commissioner and the Receiver. We believe this is

necessary to ensure that the turnaround process is authentic and sustainable in the long run.

2. That the turnaround plan should include joint labor-management committees at both the school and district level to promote continuous teamwork, which will lead to effective implementation and ongoing two-way feedback to better student achievement. This will also ensure that teachers' input is solicited and given meaningful consideration.
3. That the Receiver should commit to ensuring there is a culture of success for educators as well as students, which includes respecting them and valuing their expertise.