



# HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

57 Suffolk Street - Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Tel. (413) 534-2005 ♦ Fax. (413) 534-2297

Dr. Stephen Zrike, Jr., Receiver

---

September 23, 2016

**To: Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Re: Holyoke Public Schools Level 5 District Turnaround Plan**

Dear Commissioner Chester:

The team at Holyoke Public Schools has reflected on our first year of the Level 5 District Turnaround Plan implementation. After much discussion and thought, I request your approval of a few modifications to the plan. The essence of the plan remains the same. Some modifications simply represent a change in vernacular. Other modifications reflect a refinement of an activity, after a year of learning.

- **Simplifying the Priority Area titles (TAP 2)**

We would like to simplify the Priority Area titles, so that the priorities can be communicated more simply and memorably. The refined titles are consistent with the turnaround plan. Additionally, select language, such as “personalized pathways” and “empowered schools” are reflective of our district values, which were articulated through a collaborative process earlier this year.

Priority Area #	Priority Area (as of 10/1/16)	Requested Priority Area Name Change
1	Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.	High Quality Instruction for All
2	Establish focused practices for improving instruction.	Personalized Pathways
3	Create a climate and culture that support students and engage families.	Engaged Students, Family and Community
4	Develop leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.	An Effective and Thriving Workforce
5	Organize the district for successful turnaround.	A System of Empowered Schools

- **Change Building Based Support Teams (BBSTs) to Student Support Teams (SSTs) (TAP 17, 34)**

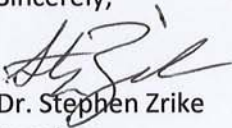
As indicated in the turnaround plan, BBSTs were run differently, with varying levels of effectiveness, at each school. In some situations, BBST almost has a negative connotation, which has prevented school-based teams from doing the intended work. Accordingly, we are instead moving towards a

Student Support Team (SST) at each school, which is a collaborative team that analyzes and responds to students' social-emotional, behavioral and academic needs.

- **Changing the titles for select staff members (TAP 36)**

The turnaround plan refers to family liaisons and outreach workers. The new organizational structure within the Department of Student, Family and Community Engagement has the position of School Family Promoter, which combines aspects of both of those positions. The purpose of this **School Family Promoter** position will be to lead school-based activities to expand and deepen relationships with families, promote attendance and punctuality, and promote parent involvement, voice and leadership at each school.

Sincerely,



Dr. Stephen Zrike  
Receiver