



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

October 17, 2019

Hon. Alex B. Morse, Mayor
City of Holyoke
536 Dwight Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Dr. Steven Zrike, Superintendent/School Receiver
Holyoke Public Schools
57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Dear Mayor Morse and Dr. Zrike:

I am writing in response to your October 9, 2019 joint letter requesting a change in the agreement between Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) and the City of Holyoke (City) governing municipal expenditures in support of HPS's operating budget. You indicate that the purpose of this requested change is to provide additional City funds for the construction of two new middle schools.

I approve your request to adopt the per pupil allotment method for determining the cost of administrative services provided by the City to HPS. This allotment, currently \$121.53 per pupil, is established annually by DESE. My approval is contingent upon the issuance of debt for the middle school building project and shall remain in effect during the period that such debt is outstanding.

Your agreement also provides for the cost of legal services furnished by the City to HPS, and it permits the City to retain indirect costs charged to HPS grants (with the exception of shared costs to pay the lease for the Holyoke Adult Learning Opportunities program). Both of these provisions are permissible under DESE's school finance regulations, and I support their implementation for the duration of outstanding debt for the building project.

Taken together, these changes will provide more than one million dollars toward the City's share of this much-needed school construction project. This, in turn, will reduce the amount needed to be raised through a debt exclusion.

I wish you well as you move forward with these projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey C. Riley".

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

C: Jeff Wulfson, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
William Bell, Senior Associate Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Jay Sullivan, Associate Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education