# Level 5 Schools 2016–17 Quarter 2 Report: Morgan Full Service Community School

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| **School Information** | | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** | |
| **Location** | Holyoke, Massachusetts | **Total SY 2016–17 Enrollment** | 413 |
| **Current Status** | Level 5 | **Percentage SWDs** | 19% |
| **Receiver Name** | Dr. Stephen Zrike | **Percentage ELLs** | 37% |
| **Year Designated Level 5** | 2013 | **Percentage Black** | 4% |
| **Year Designated Level 4** | 2010 | **Percentage Latino/Hispanic** | 91% |
| **Grade Span** | PK–8 | **Percentage Asian** | 1% |
| **Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2016–17** | 59 | **Percentage White** | 3% |
| **Percentage Multirace** | 1% |
| **Priority Areas** | | | |
| **Priority Area 1:** Recruitment and development of professional talent.  **Priority Area 2:** Systems to support professional learning and responsiveness in practice.  **Priority Area 3:** Creating a Center of Excellence for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).  **Priority Area 4:** Targeted and aligned resources.  **Priority Area 5:** Enhancing and sustaining family and community engagement. | | | |

*Source.* Content provided by Receiver Dr. Stephen Zrike.

## Executive Summary

Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) continues to build on the momentum gained last year to create a climate and culture where students and staff feel safe and supported to accelerate their improvement and outcomes in teaching and learning. Leadership continues to build the capacity of the instructional leadership team (ILT) to lead the improvement work; enrich the data cycle and professional learning, with a focus on using various and targeted student achievement data strategically to inform decisions; and improve and enhance student support, enrichment opportunities, and course offerings for students. This work continues despite staffing, Internet, and data systems challenges experienced at the start of this year.

Every teacher at Morgan has made at least three visits to students’ homes this year, and 77% of the teachers have exceeded that goal. Home visits are integral to the culture and climate at Morgan, and staff learn from each other to improve this practice and enhance its impact on student performance. Morgan continues to offer families opportunities to participate in school events, with 44% of families participating in at least one event so far this school year. Morgan has continued with and accelerated its staff participation in the work of the South Holyoke Safe Neighborhood Initiative when it sponsors events at the school. This initiative is a critical community connection for the students and families at Morgan. Thirteen Morgan staff to date have voluntarily participated in these events.

Morgan continues to work on improving student attendance. Currently, the elementary attendance rate is 93.8% and the middle school attendance rate is 94.2%. The overall attendance rate is down from the previous school year by 1.7%. However, Morgan is still learning a new Student Data System (SchoolBrains) and updating the attendance daily, ensuring it is not double counting students who move between schools in Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) in the counting of attendance or discipline issues.

## Updates on Priority Areas

**Priority Area 1:** Recruitment and development of professional talent.

* **Highlight:** All Morgan teams and planning sessions are consistently using student achievement data to make decisions for professional learning, content lesson planning, flexible groupings, and interventions. Morgan leaders also are selecting teachers to be trained in specific computer-based interventions aligned to their content areas and creating professional learning communities (PLCs) where teachers learn how to better use that specific data to ensure they are developing a pool of talent in both intervention implementation and data use.
* **Highlight:** All Morgan teachers have received face-to-face feedback immediately following observations and classroom visits. This feedback is provided by the Morgan principal, assistant principal, and instructional leadership specialists (ILS). This is an intentional change from last year when Morgan teachers waited for written feedback, limiting the opportunity to engage in active discussion about teaching and learning.
* **Highlight:** Morgan leaders have created a tool that they are using to track their observations and interactions with teachers about teaching and learning. This tool is creating a structure to support rich conversations with teachers, allowing leaders to record and track actions steps recommended so that ongoing feedback is consistent, sequential, and moves teacher practice to deeper levels. The use of the tracker combined with the commitment for all teacher feedback to be face-to-face is providing strategic planning and conversations about teacher practice as it impacts student achievement at Morgan.
* **Challenge:** Allocating time for both the English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics ILS to coach teachers directly and lead professional learning has been a challenge in the opening months of school. The ELA ILS has been teaching and covering for middle school and other areas of the school with staffing challenges. The Mathematics ILS is new to her position at Morgan and is working to balance the role of half-time coach and half-time coordinator for the Blueprint tutoring program. As the staffing issues are resolved, the ELA ILS will resume her full coaching responsibilities. Morgan and district leadership are working with the Mathematics ILS to give her support in her new role and help her build systems and structures for both coaching and coordination of tutoring.
* **Challenge:** There have been significant staffing challenges at Morgan during the first quarter. The middle grades, particularly, have been significantly impacted; a counselor, ELA teacher, science teacher, and special education teacher serving the middle school grades have all resigned since the beginning of August professional development, in addition to Morgan’s art teacher. In addition, a middle school mathematics teacher is on an extended maternity leave and a kindergarten teacher and a kindergarten and Grade 1 ESL teacher are on medical leave. In each situation, the Morgan leadership has made shifts and used creative staffing to cover classrooms and instruction. In addition, leadership continues to recruit for and interview candidates who are highly qualified.

**Priority Area 2:** Systems to support professional learning and responsiveness in practice.

* **Highlight:** The Morgan staff and leadership, along with the Holyoke district leadership, are using and implementing Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) for the first time. The Morgan teachers are learning and using the reports that identify the next skill or standard to teach that will help to fill the gaps for individual students. It has worked especially well in Grades K–5, in which the teachers have used their Professional Choice time to analyze STAR data and create flexible groupings.
* **Highlight:** STAR has provided Morgan teachers with another focused student achievement data point along with ANet and classroom assessments. The data have been used to inform next instructional steps, flexible groups, and intervention. Grade-level teams have integrated this into their 8-week data cycles.
* **Highlight:** The Morgan leadership have worked with their district instructional support liaison to differentiate district support for specific Morgan needs. They began the school year using the district feedback tool called Praise, Question, Suggestion(PQS) with the liaison and administrators to calibrate their lens and feedback to teachers during observations. The next step currently in progress is to work with the two content ILS to do the same. This step represents a strategic and intentional shift in focus for this district support, and the leadership will continue to revisit this and shift the focus as needed to drive the work forward.
* **Challenge:** There were major implementation and technical issues in the beginning of the school year regarding online testing, data storage, and retrieval. HPS transitioned to a new student information system (SchoolBrains) in the summer. There were and continue to be major issues and glitches in this process. At the same time, HPS experienced major and crippling Internet attacks throughout the first 2 months of school that essentially closed off Internet access for days at a time. Testing was delayed and interrupted, and the sorting and access to data were compromised. The administration of STAR also was new to everyone with expected implementation challenges. The combination of these factors impacted instructional progress and the use of data to improve instruction. The Internet issues have been much improved since mid-November. The struggles with SchoolBrains and data remain a work in progress at both the school and district levels, and resolution is a major priority.

**Priority Area 3:** Creating a Center of Excellence for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

* **Highlight:** All Morgan science teachers are doing the grade-level STEM challenges with fidelity in Grades K–8. They are administered after every unit, which is, on average, twice a month.
* **Highlight:** All Morgan teachers are using the Next Generation Science Standards for planning, instruction, and assessment. They also are all using Engineering practices 1, 2, and 3 (questioning, modeling, and intentional use of data) consistently.
* **Highlight:** Computer coding is a student choice for the enrichment block on Fridays. Morgan has completed two cycles of enrichment. Computer coding has been the most popular student choice.
* **Challenge:** As discussed in Priority Area 1, Morgan School does not have a highly qualified science teacher for Grades 6, 7, and 8 at the current time.

**Priority Area 4:** Targeted and aligned resources.

* **Highlight:** Morgan has a tighter and more strategic ESL schedule. All ESL teachers are teaching the ESL curriculum and content in their own classrooms for students requiring this. They have developed a student-specific combination plan of the push-in and pull-out models for strategic groups.
* **Highlight:** For the first time this year, special education (SPED) and ESL teachers are co-planning with all of the grade-level teachers they work with, allowing them to plan and align content instruction, support, and modifications. This integration happens during the morning grade-level content planning on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The teams rotate between mathematics and ELA every other week. The integration of these teachers strengthens the strong routine and practices established at Morgan during these morning learning sessions.
* **Highlight:** SPED teachers are using Wilson Reading in Grades 2–8 for students with disabilities with approximately 20 students. Teachers are developing an understanding of this new intervention and are better able to use it strategically with students and appropriately match their instructional needs.
* **Challenge:** The SPED and ESL staffing gaps described in Priority Area 1 impact the consistency of instruction and support for these two subgroups. Morgan leadership has made shifts and used creative staffing to cover instruction for these students and continue to recruit for and interview highly qualified candidates.

**Priority Area 5:** Enhancing and sustaining family and community engagement.

* **Highlight:** Morgan teachers have increased the number of community walks and home visits in which they have participated. Every Morgan teacher present from August professional development through November 4 has completed at least three home visits to students’ families. Twenty-seven out of 35 (77%) teachers exceeded the three home-visit goal. All teachers have autonomy to plan their visits strategically; some try to visit all families, others choose to revisit and circle back to families, and some strategically choose their visits based on specific issues and concerns.
* **Highlight:** Morgan has seen an increased presence of families in the school so far this year. To date, 169 out of 389 (44%) Morgan families have participated in at least one grade-level or schoolwide academic event.
* **Highlight:** Morgan has continued with and accelerated its staff participation in the work of the South Holyoke Safe Neighborhood Initiative when it sponsors events at the school. This initiative is a critical community connection for the students and families at Morgan. Thirteen Morgan staff to date have voluntarily participated in these events.
* **Challenge:** Morgan leadership acknowledges the need to norm the practice of home visits among all teachers. The data currently show that certain teachers and grade levels are using this practice effectively and consistently. Morgan leadership will address this individually with teachers who need to improve as well as address and revisit the practice and expectation schoolwide through the ILT and professional learning.