

Level 5 Schools 2015-2016 Quarter 1 Report: Morgan Full Service Community School

School Information		Student Enrollment and Demographics ^a	
Location	Holyoke, Massachusetts	Total SY 2015–16 Enrollment	362
Current Status	Level 5	Percentage SWDs	20%
Receiver Name	Dr. Stephen Zrike	Percentage ELLs	42%
Year Designated Level 5	2013	Percentage Black	4%
Year Designated Level 4	2010	Percentage Latino/Hispanic	93%
Grade Span	PK–8	Percentage Asian	0%
Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2015–16	58	Percentage White	2%
		Percentage Multirace	1%
Priority Areas			
<p>Priority Area 1: Recruitment and development of professional talent.</p> <p>Priority Area 2: Systems to support professional learning and responsiveness in practice.</p> <p>Priority Area 3: Creating a Center of Excellence for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).</p> <p>Priority Area 4: Targeted and aligned resources.</p> <p>Priority Area 5: Enhancing and sustaining family and community engagement.</p>			

^a Student demographic data, including percentages of students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs) is from the 2014–15 school year due to the movement of students at the start of the school year. These data will be updated to reflect the 2015–16 school year in Quarter 2 reports.

Content provided by Superintendent Stephen Zrike

Executive Summary

The three major focus areas for the beginning of the 2015–16 school year were staffing (recruitment of highly qualified staff), planning and executing 13 days of professional development (PD), and finalizing curriculum maps for major content areas. The 13 days of PD (10 for all staff and an additional three for new staff) were aligned to the Morgan School Turnaround Plan and high-leverage instructional strategies. The first part of PD was a three-day new teacher orientation that consisted of professional expectations, turnaround plan elements and examples, and classroom management strategies. Four days focused on Backwards Planning using new curriculum maps and assessments to model lessons with a focus on opportunities for student discourse. One day focused on how to support student culture through positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and Second STEP. The final two days focused on implementing reading comprehension strategies across all content areas.

Updates on Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Recruitment and development of professional talent.

- **Highlight:** Two full-time coaches were hired to support teaching and learning in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics throughout the building. Coaches have begun working with new teachers and providing face-to-face feedback.

- **Highlight:** Six new educators with urban school teaching experience were hired. These educators teach in Grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 in both ELA and mathematics.
- **Highlight:** Two reading interventionist positions were created and dual-licensed teachers (elementary and reading specialist licenses) were hired. Both interventionist positions were filled by first-grade teachers at Morgan who are dually certified with reading and elementary licenses and who have significant teaching experience. As there is one fewer first grade class this year than in 2014–15, two first grade teachers moving into these interventionist roles left one open first-grade teaching position. This position was filled by a first-year teacher who was previously a paraprofessional and a student teacher at Morgan.
- **Challenge:** Attracting highly qualified staff to fill all positions has been a challenge due to late summer resignations. Morgan still had three openings at the beginning of September for two English language development (ELD) teachers and one part-time specialty teacher. One ELD position was filled by mid-September, and Morgan continued to interview candidates for the second ELD position. Without the part-time specialty teacher, middle school teachers rotated to cover these responsibilities, which eliminated common planning time for the middle school team. Morgan is currently working to have an outside community organization fill this need by providing specialty classes in the arts.

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

- **Highlight:** Our curriculum maps were redesigned to align to our building resources. Curriculum maps in all Grades K–8 for ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies were introduced to all staff during August PD. Teachers were able to plan lessons for the first week of school using the maps.
- **Highlight:** Unit assessments for ELA, mathematics, and science in Grades K-8 were developed and aligned to our curriculum maps.
- **Highlight:** A coaching schedule was developed for our 15 new teachers (including six first-year teachers) for the first two weeks of school; each new teacher will be supported by our coaches and administrators. A new schedule will be developed for each two-week period.
- **Challenge:** Developing a system and schedule for intervention that engages all staff members and focusing on reteaching and/or enrichment standards has been difficult. So far, small intervention groups have been created and are being served primarily by interventionists, special education teachers, and ELD teachers. General education teachers and paraprofessionals occasionally work with small intervention groups, and the school will continue strengthening the tools for these noninterventionists working with intervention groups. Reteaching has begun using unit assessments to determine areas in need of reteaching.

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

- **Highlight:** New STEM challenges were built into each unit for Grades K–8 that assess a major technology engineering (TE) standard. These challenges are designed to use the five-step design process for TE. Some examples include building and designing skyscrapers, critter cars, parachutes, and water purification systems. The STEM challenges are aligned to the next-generation science standards that are covered in each unit, and students will complete between eight and 10 such challenges during the school year. Educators participated in a STEM challenge during summer professional development, led by the STEM director, and they learned how to lead such challenges. Follow-up professional development will be offered every two weeks.
- **Highlight:** Week 1 lesson plans and daily walk-throughs indicate an increase in the amount of science instruction in Grades K–5 compared with the 2014–15 school year.
- **Highlight:** August planning meeting to design University of Massachusetts (UMASS) STEM Ambassador Program (afterschool program) in collaboration with our Connections After-School Program. The program will be led by UMASS science students who will work with students to complete STEM enrichment activities. Students in Grades 4–7 can participate on an invitation-only basis, targeting students who are struggling socially, emotionally, and academically, and who demonstrate an interest in science. This program is being funded by the 21st Century Grant. It is scheduled to begin in October 2015, although the exact start date is reliant upon the release of funds at the state level.
- **Challenge:** Recruiting and retaining highly qualified science teachers who have content knowledge and skills to teach Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) has been difficult. Teachers were provided training in project-based learning (PBL) during August PD by the STEM director, and weekly lesson plans will be monitored for their inclusion of PBL. Additional training on PBL will be offered for all Morgan educators in April 2016. Administrators are actively monitoring the science block through daily or weekly walk-throughs. Morgan has continued their recruitment efforts through an examination of substitutes working in the district, looking at any internal staff members who hold a degree in science, and considering candidates who previously held other roles in the district but have indicated a desire to shift their work.

Priority Area 4: Targeted and aligned resources.

- **Highlight:** All individualized education plans (IEPs) and 504 accommodation plans have been reviewed by the special education team and teachers are actively working to implement goals. Special education teachers and the principal looked at all students' IEPs and goals and then created the schedule for services, ensuring the additional instruction time was tied to these goals rather than offering a double dose of instruction occurring in the classroom. This approach helps special education teachers to be more prepared to speak specifically to students' goals in IEP meetings and to better understand what assistance each student needs.
- **Highlight:** Incoming students' Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test data have been shared with all staff members. ACCESS Teacher Reports have been analyzed and the data were used to understand the language comprehension levels of all incoming students. Teachers are focused on language acquisition of English language learners (ELLs) across content areas.

- **Highlight:** Recruitment for the Morgan pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) program this summer produced a high number of applicants (25 families). The program is at full capacity (16 students), and three students are on the waiting list.
- **Challenge:** At the start of the school year, two more ELD teachers were needed for the school to be fully staffed. One of these positions was filled during the first month of school, and administrators are actively interviewing candidates to fill the other position. While working to fill these positions, many staff at Morgan are integrating SEI strategies into their work. Many Morgan educators are SEI endorsed, and administrators focus on SEI strategies when providing feedback to teachers or giving suggestions. In addition, the professional development in August was also aligned to SEI standards. The dean of curriculum and instruction is an SEI instructor with significant background in ELL instruction and is able to coach teachers in using these strategies.

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

- **Highlight:** Morgan School, Holyoke Public Schools (HPS), and Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) have developed a partnership through the Pre-K Expansion Grant. VOC will run a full-day Pre-K program targeting four-year-old students at Morgan who have not completed a full year of any type of official preschool experience and whose family meets the income requirements.
- **Highlight:** Thirty staff members participated in at least one back-to-school activity with families. The activities held include Celebrate Holyoke, Morgan's Beautification Day, and South Holyoke Back to School Celebration.
- **Highlight:** Fifteen families have been recruited to participate in our early childhood initiative, Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP). Some of these families are continuing their involvement from last year. All families who had students at Morgan family and had children younger than three years at home were invited to participate. All invited families opted to participate, although some discontinued their involvement in the program due to the lack of availability to meet with the interventionist. The PCHP offers parents early support on how to work with their children to build academic readiness skills. The PCHP interventionist goes to the family's home and interacts with the child using tools such as books and toys. The following week, the interventionist will observe the parent interacting with their child with the same tool. This program gives children exposure to academics at an early age and helps parents develop skills to work with their child at a young age.
- **Challenge:** We are working to reorganize our family and community staff to maximize time and balance our staff members' work with both stakeholder groups. A new director of school culture and student support began in mid-September. Other staff members continue to cultivate relationships with community partners that were developed last year. All families who are new to the school have met the family engagement coordinator, and grade-level ambassadors began meeting newly enrolled students in mid-September. Teachers have also been calling families for positive reasons since the first day of school and have been tracking these communications.