

Level 5 Schools 2015–16 Quarter 2 Report: Morgan Full Service Community School

School Information		Student Enrollment and Demographics	
Location	Holyoke, Massachusetts	Total SY 2015–16 Enrollment	382
Current Status	Level 5	Percentage SWDs	18%
Receiver Name	Dr. Stephen Zrike	Percentage ELLs	39%
Year Designated Level 5	2013	Percentage Black	3%
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	3%
		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>			

Content provided by Superintendent Stephen Zrike

Executive Summary

Staffing and Leadership Support: Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) was fully staffed by mid-October 2015, with the middle school schedule restructured so all students receive daily science and social studies instruction. In light of the resignation of the Dean of Instruction in October, the district is partnering with SchoolWorks to provide coaching and support around instructional improvement to Morgan administration, academic coaches, and teachers. The school also has begun an intensive partnership with the district’s Teaching and Learning Team, creating an opportunity for all Morgan teachers to consistently receive individualized feedback.

Instruction: The school has refocused on the use of the Reach Curriculum for literacy instruction in grades K–4, and organized intensive professional development to support its implementation. The daily targeted skills instruction (“intervention”) block was reorganized, with the decision to focus on literacy in K–5 and the integration of Lexia Core 5 to support individualized, customized skill development; grades 6–8 developed specific interventions based on student instructional needs in ELA, mathematics, and science. Morgan teachers used ANet data to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan reteaching in ELA and mathematics.

The UMass STEM Ambassador Program began in October, with students working on specific science standards. These standards were chosen for the UMass STEM Ambassador Program based on an analysis of student data.

Family and Community Engagement: Principal Lingsch and Morgan received the City of Holyoke Community Partnership Award from local law enforcement agencies based on Morgan's outstanding dedication, support, and leadership toward public safety efforts in the city of Holyoke. Family Fun Nights continue to be held consistently, and Morgan teachers used a district conference day to participate in home visits and/or meet with families at school. A refocus of the full service community school model on student social-emotional supports continues, and work is underway to increase community collaboration in this process.

Updates on Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Recruitment and development of professional talent.

Highlight: Morgan administrators were able to fill two vacant English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher positions in September and October. The school was fully staffed by mid-October.

Highlight: Rather than hiring a part-time arts teacher as originally planned, school leaders took the opportunity to partner with Enchanted Circle Theater (ECT), a local arts integration organization, to work on integration of theater arts activities into all content areas. The school has budgeted for two cohorts of Morgan teachers to collaborate with ECT teaching artists (one cohort from October to January, and the other from January to March). Teachers had the opportunity to opt into either cohort. Professional development for the first cohort occurred over four sessions during October and November, and the residency began in December and will continue into February. This cohort consists of 12 teachers spanning across grades 3–8 and in all content areas.

Highlight: In light of an unexpected need for science teachers due to staff departures, Morgan leaders restructured the middle school schedule such that all students receive science and social studies instruction daily from one dedicated teacher in each discipline.

Highlight: In order to develop a cycle for instructional monitoring for improvement for all staff, Morgan is partnering with the district's Teaching and Learning Team (academic directors). This partnership has established the conditions for all Morgan teachers to receive individualized, consistent feedback on a routine basis, with frequency determined by individual need.

Challenge: Morgan's Dean of Instruction resigned at the end of October. The position was posted immediately. However, in light of a weak candidate pool, the Receiver instead contracted with SchoolWorks to provide coaching and support around instructional improvement to administrators, academic coaches, and teachers at Morgan. This created opportunities and support for Morgan school leaders to focus intensively on instructional improvement despite the loss of the Dean of Instruction.

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

Highlight: After a learning walk demonstrated limited implementation of the Reach for Reading program as the core curriculum for literacy in grades K–4, the principal sent a clear message through written and verbal communications to staff that all teachers were to use the Reach Curriculum as their core resource. She also altered the next professional development day to provide training to staff in implementing Reach, and provided additional training by the vendor before Thanksgiving, with likely follow-up in January. Learning walks and lesson plans for the month of November included specific Reach materials.

Highlight: The targeted academic skills (“intervention”) block was reorganized in October. In grades K–5, leaders decided to focus on literacy (based on need determined by examining student achievement data) and have integrated the Lexia Core 5 software application to support teachers in delivering individualized instruction to students. Teachers in grades 6–8 have developed specific interventions based on student instructional needs in ELA, mathematics, and science (Focus Mathematic Readers, Reflex, and reading comprehension strategies using ANet reteaching tools).

Highlight: Morgan teachers used ANet Interim 1 (A1) data to identify strengths and weaknesses in ELA and mathematics. Specifically, mathematics teachers analyzed weaknesses and created reteaching plans at the cluster level; ELA teachers analyzed text complexity and specific text features to develop their reteaching plans based on weaknesses and created a mini assessment for follow-up.

Challenge: Now that Morgan has the infrastructures (a consistent core curriculum, interventions, an instructional leadership team (ILT) and instructional focus, stabilized staffing) in place, the challenge is to support every teacher in providing a structure that allows students to be engaged in meaningful tasks that approximate grade-level standards rather than using “scaffolds” and/or “supplemental materials” that reduce the level of rigor. The school has identified responding to this challenge as its instructional focus, and the school ILT is working to lead professional learning and customized teacher supports to achieve this focus.

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

Highlight: In response to an unexpected science teacher vacancy at the middle school level, school leaders hired a teacher who they believe has the potential to have significant impact on student learning, and who has responded to the assignment with great commitment and enthusiasm. She commits mornings to planning before the students arrive and stays late to help the Connections after-school program.

Highlight: The UMASS STEM Ambassador Program began on October 5, 2015. Students are working on Earth science standards, the planets, and landscape, based on 2015 MCAS data indicating that they lack mastery in these standards.

Highlight: Morgan received a global volunteer event grant for water filtration for grades 5–8 from EMD/Living Innovation (Millipore Corporation). The purpose of the grant is to allow Morgan to partner with EMD to positively impact our local community during the global volunteer event.

Challenge: Core instruction for ELA and mathematics continues to be a major area of concern, in light of student achievement data as well as classroom observations and learning walks; the need to work intensively to address these concerns has made it challenging for school leaders to focus consistently on STEM integration. However, with new supports from SchoolWorks in place, leaders anticipate getting back on track.

Priority Area 4: Targeted and aligned resources.

Highlight: The Pre-K team from the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC), offering a Pre-K classroom through the Department of Early Education and Care's Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) initiative, participated in a full week of preservice training. This included a joint session with Morgan's existing Pre-K teacher and kindergarten teachers along with additional professional development provided through the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI).

Highlight: Morgan leadership and the district Teaching and Learning Team developed a teacher support plan that includes a cohort planning approach for ESL and special education teachers involving collaboration between the principal and the district ELL and special education directors.

Highlight: Leaders are working on developing a collaborative lens to provide meaningful and actionable feedback to teachers around specific Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) strategies, such as student-to-student discourse.

Challenge: With the departure of the Dean of Instruction, the school's capacity for providing support for SEI instruction has diminished. School leaders are working with the central office team, specifically with the Director of English Language Education, to enhance the school's capacity in this area. Recently, a cohort of teachers of ELLs began receiving monthly professional development as one way to build this capacity.

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

Highlight: Principal Alyson Lingsch and Morgan received the City of Holyoke Community Partnership Award from local law enforcement agencies, including Springfield and Holyoke Police Departments, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, and the South Holyoke Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SHSNI). Principal Lingsch, representing Morgan, was presented with a plaque inscribed with these words: "City of Holyoke Community Partnership Award presented to Alyson Lingsch and Morgan Full Service Community School in recognition of your outstanding dedication, support, and leadership towards public safety efforts in the city of Holyoke. You have demonstrated selfless commitment by supporting our family-fun evening events for the youth and families of South Holyoke."

Highlight: The school hosted three SHSNI Family Fun Nights that have helped create positive connections between Morgan families, staff members, and community members. These events allow parents, students, and staff members to come together in a relaxing setting and see one another in a different light rather than in a "typical" school setting. Events include Bingo, dancing, board games, face painting, and basketball.

Highlight: On October 30, 2015, the school used a district conference day to support every teacher in participating in home visits and/or meeting with families in agreed-upon

community venues. Thirty home visits were completed, with each individual teacher or team determining the purpose or focus of individual visits. Additional visits will be scheduled in the spring.

Challenge: With a new Director of Climate and Culture who began work on September 21, 2015, efforts to increase student social-emotional supports are underway. However, more work is needed to include community collaborators in this process. The school is partnering with the District Full Service Community School Director to increase the number of community partnerships within the school. New focus partners include the Women of Color Attorney group and community mental health partners.