*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner  |
| **Date:**  | December 13, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Update on Southbridge Public Schools |

*Overview*

To keep the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) well informed about the progress being made by schools and districts in state receivership, I will provide regular and ongoing updates to the Board during this school year, starting with a presentation this month on Southbridge Public Schools.

Southbridge Public Schools (SPS), led by Receiver Jeffrey Villar, remains committed to implementing the priority areas in its turnaround plan, which has recently been renewed for an additional three-year term[[1]](#footnote-2).

In assessing the progress made during the first six years of SPS receivership, it must be acknowledged that more than two school years have been significantly disrupted by pandemic conditions, including loss of in-person instructional time. While the pandemic has prolonged the timeline for achieving desired outcomes, the district has made progress despite the challenging circumstances. Specifically, the SPS has implemented a standards-aligned ELA and mathematics curriculum that incorporates grade-level instructional practices in K-12, dramatically reduced out-of-school suspensions, established an effective positive behavioral support system for students, and strengthened key areas of central office operations.

Moving forward, the district has established aggressive goals for improvement, particularly focused on increasing student achievement as measured by statewide assessments, improving outcomes for multilingual learners, and reducing the chronic absenteeism rate.

*2022 Accountability Data[[2]](#footnote-3)*

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| **Gr. 3-8** **Math** % Meeting/Exceeding Expectations | 10% |
| **Gr. 3-8 ELA**% Meeting/Exceeding Expectations  | 12% |
| **Gr. 10 Math** % Meeting/Exceeding Expectations | 14% |
| **Gr. 10 ELA**% Meeting/Exceeding Expectations | 22% |
| **4-year Graduation Rate**  | 55.2% |
| **Chronic Absenteeism** | 41% |
| **Gr. K-8 Progress toward attaining English Language proficiency** | 30% |
| **Gr. 9-12 Progress toward attaining English Language proficiency** | 10.5% |

*Grant Funding*

In FY2023, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, through the Office of Strategic Transformation, has provided $1,200,000 in grant funding to Southbridge. This funding is supporting key partnerships in the district to deliver leadership coaching, curricular materials, and professional development to strengthen data-driven decision making and the rigorous enactment of ELA and mathematics curricula.

At the December 20, 2022 Board meeting, Southbridge Receiver Jeffrey Villar and Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston will be present to address the Board and answer questions.

1. [Southbridge Renewed Turnaround Plan](https://www.doe.mass.edu/level5/districts/level5districts.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For additional years of data, see: [2022 Accountability Data - Southbridge (02770000) (mass.edu)](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=02770000&orgtypecode=5&) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)