

Jeffrey C. Riley

*Commissioner*

June 30, 2021

# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Dear Holyoke Public Schools students, families, educators, staff, partners, community members, and officials:

On March 19, 2021, I appointed Mr. Anthony Soto to be the acting superintendent/receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS). I appreciate and wish to acknowledge the work that Mr. Soto has done with the leaders, staff, and community in Holyoke to continue to implement the district turnaround plan and complete the school year safely and effectively, including bringing students back to in-person learning this spring.

In mid-May, staff from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Office of Strategic Transformation asked members of the Holyoke community and key stakeholders what skills and attributes they wished to see in the new superintendent/receiver. We used [HPS](https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HPS-Receiver-Input-Key-Takeaways_FINAL-02-28-20.pdf)  [Receiver Input: Key Findings and Takeaways](https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HPS-Receiver-Input-Key-Takeaways_FINAL-02-28-20.pdf) from spring 2020 to anchor the community conversations about what was still important and what, if anything, more I needed to consider. We heard from representative groups of students, families, teachers, school, and district leaders, School Committee and City Council members, and the acting mayor of Holyoke. I would like to thank everyone who shared their thoughts about the qualities they hoped to see in the district’s next superintendent/receiver.

There was overwhelming support from stakeholders for Mr. Soto to become the next superintendent/receiver. In that spirit, I am pleased to announce that I have appointed Mr. Soto to be the next receiver for the Holyoke Public Schools, effective July 1, 2021.

As a Holyoke native, Mr. Soto is well known to many of you. He attended Holyoke Public Schools, including Kirkland, Lawrence, and Peck. Following his graduation from Dean Technical High School as salutatorian, he attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he received both his undergraduate and master’s degrees in accounting. Mr. Soto served as budget director for the Springfield Public Schools for eight years before coming back to Holyoke in 2016 to serve as the school district’s chief finance and operations officer. Additionally, Mr.

Soto was a fellow in the inaugural cohort of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Influence 100 program, which is designed to prepare participants for the role of superintendent.

I look forward to supporting Mr. Soto in this role. Our immediate focus must be on the best interests of students and the successful opening of school this fall. It will be critically important that we are able to quickly and effectively engage and support students to fully reconnect them

with school and to put them on a path to success. I also look forward to continuing to engage with members of the community, and I hope you will join me in celebrating Mr. Soto’s appointment.

Sincerely,

**SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER RILEY**

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education