



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
**From:** Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner  
**Date:** September 12, 2014  
**Subject:** Level 5 Schools – Quarterly Progress Report

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In the fall of 2013, four schools were designated as chronically underperforming (or Level 5) schools in response to their lack of progress in meeting turnaround goals over three years: John P. Holland Elementary School and Paul A. Dever Elementary School in Boston, Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke, and John Avery Parker Elementary School in New Bedford. Since this designation, the appointed receivers for the first three schools, and the superintendent in New Bedford for the fourth, have been hard at work implementing the school turnaround plans for the 2014-2015 school year, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has been providing support and progress monitoring of the Level 5 school turnaround efforts.

This month I am presenting the first of four FY2015 quarterly progress reports to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on the four Level 5 schools and implementation of the school turnaround plans. This memo includes updates from each receiver and Superintendent Durkin for Quarter 1, focusing on Level 5 school launch efforts from July-September 2014. In addition to presenting these more extensive quarterly reports, I will update the Board monthly on the Level 5 schools.

### **ESE Support and Oversight of Level 5 School Launch Efforts**

ESE provided support, technical assistance, and oversight to the four Level 5 schools throughout the summer as they prepared to begin school this fall. One key focus of ESE's support was the work between the Level 5 receivers and the Boston and Holyoke school districts, as all parties worked together to address the logistics of operating a Level 5 school within a district. ESE staff observed professional development at all four schools over the summer. The many professional development topics included strategies to engage families in their children's learning, unpacking the Priority Areas in the turnaround plan, writing and using content objectives, and implementing RETELL/SEI training, and a variety of curriculum-specific training activities. ESE staff members were also present at each school's opening day, and were pleased to see each school's dynamic team organized and ready for a strong start, and families and students excited for the year ahead.

ESE will continue to provide individualized technical assistance and oversight to the Level 5

schools throughout the year, in support of students' learning and effective implementation of the turnaround plans. We look forward to updating the districts and stakeholders on the schools' progress.

## **Pending Litigation**

In July 2014, the Holyoke Teachers Association and the New Bedford Educators Association (both represented by the Massachusetts Teachers Association) each filed suit in Middlesex Superior Court against the Board Chair and Commissioner in their official capacities and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The complaints are similar, alleging that the process followed in creating the school turnaround plan and the substance of the plan for each of the two schools are inconsistent with state law (G.L. chapter 69, section 1J, part of the Achievement Gap Act). The complaints closely mirror the arguments that the unions presented to the Board on appeal in the Spring of 2014.

The unions are seeking a declaratory judgment (a declaration by the court that actions were inconsistent with the law), certiorari (review of a decision), and mandamus (ordering a public official to perform an act the official has refused to perform). Specifically, they are asking the court to declare that the Commissioner and the Board did not comply with the law and to enjoin the Department from implementing the turnaround plans until it has complied with the law and the court's orders. They also seek compensatory pay for union employees working under the new compensation systems and costs and attorney's fees for the unions. In neither case has the union sought a preliminary injunction, which means the work of implementing the turnaround plans is proceeding.

The Office of the Attorney General is representing the Board, Board Chair, and Commissioner in this matter, and has served responsive pleadings with the unions. No hearing date has been set.

## **Looking Ahead to Quarter 2**

In December 2014, we plan to focus the second quarterly report on progress in advancing teaching and learning in each of the schools. We will provide updates on how the schools' are implementing the priority areas for improvement in each turnaround plan. We will also present more information about the system ESE will use to monitor Level 5 school progress while supporting the efforts of the receivers, Superintendent Durkin, and school leadership to achieve improved results for the students served in the four schools.

Attachments: Level 5 Schools Quarterly Report, September 2014, for:

- John P. Holland Elementary School (content provided by UP Education Network)
- Paul A. Dever Elementary School (content provided by Blueprint Schools Network)
- Morgan Full Service Community School (content provided by Project GRAD USA)
- John Avery Parker Elementary School (content provided by Superintendent Pia Durkin)

## Level 5 Schools Quarterly Report – September 2014

| <b>John P. Holland Elementary School</b>  |                      |                           |        |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| <b>Current School Status</b>  | Level 5 School       | <b>Location</b>           | Boston |
| <b>Receiver Name</b>  | UP Education Network | <b>Current Enrollment</b> | 777    |
| <b>Year Designated Level 5</b>  | 2013                 | <b>Percentage SWD</b>     | 15%    |
| <b>Year Designated Level 4</b>  | 2010                 | <b>Percentage ELL</b>     | 40%    |
| <b>Grade Span</b>   | K – 5                | <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>     |        |
| <b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>  | 86                   | Afr. Amer./Black          | 43%    |
|   |                      | Asian                     | 10%    |
|   |                      | Hispanic                  | 40%    |
|   |                      | White                     | 1%     |
| <p><i>Priority Areas:</i></p> <p><b>Priority Area #1:</b> Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence and achievement</p> <p><b>Priority Area #2:</b> Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data</p> <p><b>Priority Area #3:</b> Expand the school day and school year, build in time, deploy resources, develop programs, and create identification and tracking systems to ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and English Language Learners, receive the academic and other supports they require to learn and succeed</p> <p><b>Priority Area #4:</b> Recruit and hire extraordinary leaders, teachers, and support staff, and build and utilize systems to evaluate, develop, promote, reward and retain this staff over the long term</p> <p><b>Priority Area #5:</b> Fully engage all of the school’s families in the learning of their children</p> |                      |                           |        |

### Content provided by: UP Education Network

#### Executive Summary

In January 2014, the Commissioner named UP Education Network as the receiver for John P. Holland Elementary School. Since this announcement, UP Education Network has been working closely in partnership with Boston Public Schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as families, students and the community in preparation for launching [UP Academy Holland](#) (UAH) in August 2014. Accomplishments of the last quarter have included:

- **Hiring a talented and diverse team:** as of August 26th, UP Academy Holland was 98 percent hired and is fortunate to have an incredibly talented and diverse team. Forty-seven percent of school staff are people of color, and 40 percent of staff speak a language in addition to English.
- **Developing a common vision of excellence among our school staff:** Staff at UP Academy Holland engaged in a four-week orientation to develop a common vision, experience high quality professional development, and practice important academic and operational components of the school. In addition, staff developed detailed plans for

curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, professional development, and school operations.

- **Building the foundation for partnership with families:** UP Academy Holland has reached out to all families at the Holland Elementary School through a combination of mailings, individual phone calls, home visits, information sessions, family orientation days, and more. At meetings, we have provided Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian-Creole, Cape Verdean Creole and Portuguese interpretation. We have sought to understand families' hopes for their students and build the foundations for strong relationships and partnerships.
- **Welcoming students:** To support students in transitioning to UP Academy Holland, all students participated in Student Orientation during the first two weeks of school. During this time, students learned about the mission and vision of the school, and a culture of high expectations was introduced and taught through procedures and routines. This is an important time in helping prepare students for a successful year.

### **Updates on Priority Areas**

**Priority Area #1:** Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence and achievement

- The leadership team has created a code of conduct, school culture manual, and student and family handbook to develop seamless school operations, consistent systems, and concretely reinforce high academic and behavioral expectations for students.
- School staff were trained on and practiced these systems during their four-week August orientation.
- Student orientation provided students with the opportunity to learn these new expectations and procedures, understand their importance, and practice them.
- UP Academy Holland's staff painted the interior of the building so that the physical environment of the school is warm, welcoming, and reinforces a culture of excellence and achievement.

**Priority Area #2:** Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data

- UP Academy Holland has created a rigorous curriculum, including designing and documenting new scopes and sequences for the school.
- The school has conducted an in-depth analysis of the John P. Holland's 2013-2014 MCAS and ACCESS results to inform its understanding of student needs and has also identified an interim assessment provider to analyze data on an ongoing basis throughout the school year to drive instruction.
- We have hired an outstanding principal and three Deans of Curriculum and Instruction who provide the academic leadership and vision for the school. The Deans of Curriculum and Instruction are participating in a rigorous training and coaching program

to strengthen their ability to provide high quality instructional observations and feedback to teachers.

**Priority Area #3:** Expand the school day and school year, build in time, deploy resources, develop programs, and create identification and tracking systems to ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and English Language Learners, receive the academic and other supports they require to learn and succeed

- UP Academy Holland has adopted a school schedule and calendar that provides significant additional learning time for students and meaningful time for staff collaboration and professional development.
- During the four-week August orientation, school leaders and teachers conducted an in-depth analysis of 2014 Holland MCAS data to understand the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). UP Education Network's Directors of Special Education and English Language Learning provided training to UAH staff on best practices and provided support in adapting the school's programs to meet student needs.
- ELL services will be provided through a combination of language-specific Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classes (Vietnamese and Spanish), hybrid classes, and push-in and pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) support. UP Academy Holland has hired SEI teachers at each grade level, four full-time ESL teachers, and an ESL Coordinator to support this work.
- Services to students with disabilities will be provided in both inclusive and substantially separate settings. In addition to teachers and resident teachers, a special education coordinator has been hired to support the overall special education program.
- UP Academy Holland has established partnerships with several organizations to provide after-school options for families, including College Bound Dorchester, the Holland Community Center, and Strong Women, Strong Girls.

**Priority Area #4:** Recruit and hire extraordinary leaders, teachers, and support staff, and build and utilize systems to evaluate, develop, promote, reward and retain this staff over the long term.

- UP Education Network has partnered with UP Academy Holland to hire a talented and diverse team.
- The school's leadership team has been fully hired and is comprised of eight members, of which 50 percent identify as persons of color.
- Across the school, all instructional roles have been filled although UP experienced some challenges with on-boarding new teachers through Boston Public Schools human resource systems.
- Forty-seven percent of the UAH staff identify as persons of color, and 40 percent speak a language in addition to English.
- All staff participated in four weeks of intensive professional development and training in August to develop a common vision for the year. Staff will continue to have professional

development every Wednesday afternoon and five full day professional training days throughout the year.

**Priority Area #5:** Fully engage all of the school's families in the learning of their children.

- UP Academy Holland hired a Dean of Families and Community, a Community Outreach Coordinator, and school staff have taken steps prior to and since the start of the school year to develop a strong foundation of partnering with families. These steps include:
  - Parent phone calls and home visits;
  - Four information sessions for families to learn about the school and have an opportunity to ask questions;
  - Four Family Council Planning Sessions where families contributed to the design of UP Academy Holland;
  - Two Family Orientation sessions; and
  - Five-day Student Orientation.
- UP Academy Holland hosted a kick-off event on September 6<sup>th</sup> to welcome families, students, and the community.

## Level 5 Schools Quarterly Report – September 2014

| <b>Paul A. Dever Elementary School</b>  |                           |                           |                  |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Current School Status</b>  | Level 5 School            | <b>Location</b>           | Boston           |
| <b>Receiver Name</b>  | Blueprint Schools Network | <b>Current Enrollment</b> | 558              |
| <b>Year Designated Level 5</b>  | 2013                      | <b>Percentage SWD</b>     | 15%              |
| <b>Year Designated Level 4</b>  | 2010                      | <b>Percentage ELL*</b>    | 24%              |
| <b>Grade Span</b>   | K – 5                     | <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>     |                  |
| <b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>  | 75                        |                           | Afr. Amer./Black |
|   |                           | Asian                     | 8%               |
|   |                           | Hispanic                  | 59%              |
|   |                           | White                     | 3%               |
| <p><i>Priority Areas:</i></p> <p><b>Priority Area #1:</b> Rapidly accelerate all students’ language development in English and provide families with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish language development for their students</p> <p><b>Priority Area #2:</b> Improve instructional quality and maximize time for core instruction</p> <p><b>Priority Area #3:</b> Use data to drive instruction</p> <p><b>Priority Area #4:</b> Establish a culture of high expectations and college and career readiness</p> <p><b>Priority Area #5:</b> Hire and cultivate high-performing and high-potential staff</p> <p><small>*Data as of 2013-2014 school year.</small></p> |                           |                           |                  |

**Content provided by: Blueprint Schools Network**

**Executive Summary**

For the past three months, Blueprint Schools Network (Blueprint) has been leading a comprehensive process of planning and preparation for an outstanding school year at the Paul A. Dever Elementary School (Dever) in Dorchester. Our main areas of focus this quarter have included staffing, family outreach and partnerships, facilities and operations, professional development and orientation, and curriculum planning. Through these efforts, Blueprint was poised to greet students in a school that is orderly, welcoming and primed for success from day one in September.

Our activities during this quarter have been directly informed and guided by the priority areas for improvement and corresponding activities outlined in our turnaround plan for Dever. We have made significant progress towards accomplishing these objectives and will continue to move forward with the aim of ensuring all of our performance benchmarks are met and exceeded. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and Boston Public Schools (BPS) in this important work and will continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure all of Dever’s students receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers and beyond.

## Updates on Priority Areas

**Priority Area #1:** Rapidly accelerate all students' language development in English and provide families with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish language development for their students.

- **Staffing:** Blueprint has hired two (2) Reading interventionists and four (4) ESL teachers to support the implementation of targeted, small group and individualized language instruction to students. A Literacy Coach/Director has also been hired to lead the implementation of a comprehensive literacy plan for school. Two (2) Spanish teachers have been hired to provide students with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish language instruction.
- **Scheduling:** Dever's daily student schedule includes increased time for ELA instruction (165 minutes), multiple opportunities for small group work and intervention time, and a designated English Language Development (ELD) block daily (30 minutes). During the ELD block instruction will be differentiated according to students' English language proficiency levels and focused on building students' English language acquisition strategies as well as their oral and written English language skills. Time has also been allocated in the schedule to provide all students with content-enriched Spanish language instruction (30 minutes per day) if they elect to participate in the program. During September, family interest will be surveyed and students will be assessed so that they can be placed in the appropriate Spanish language course starting in October.
- **Facilities and Operations:** Space has been allocated for small group and one-on-one instruction to occur throughout the building. In addition, an effort has been made to ensure classrooms have the furniture needed (i.e. small tables) to facilitate this method of instruction.
- **Professional Development and Orientation:** During Dever's three weeks of August professional development, staff were trained on ELD instructional best practices, World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards, and received specialized training regarding the implementation of the new curriculum materials and instructional strategies selected to support language acquisition at Dever. In addition, staff received training regarding cultural competency, diversity and inclusion with a particular emphasis on building awareness of the needs and diversity of Dever's student population.
- **Curriculum Planning:** For reading, Dever will utilize a Balanced Literacy approach to reading instruction based on the model of Uncommon School's *Great Habits, Great Readers*, and use the *Imagine It* and *Imagine Learning* reading program as a resource for instruction. These programs are explicitly designed to support small group, differentiated instruction and include built-in supports and resources to meet the learning needs of ELLs. In addition, Dever will use the *WILSON Reading System* as a supplemental resource for small group instruction and individual interventions for struggling readers. *Lucy Calkins' Writers Workshop* will serve as the model for writing instruction.
- **Family Outreach and Partnerships:** Blueprint has worked closely with Dever's leadership team, ESE, and the school's full-time Family and Community Coordinator to develop a plan for outreach to families regarding the content enriched Spanish class option that will be offered. Families will be informed of the opportunity in September

and given the option to enroll their child in the program. Instruction for this class will begin in October and occur five (5) days a week.

**Priority Area #2:** Improve instructional quality and maximize time for core instruction.

- **Staffing:** Blueprint has hired both a math and literacy coach for the school to focus explicitly on ensuring consistency and high quality of instruction in these critical core content areas. Blueprint has also hired additional interventionists in reading (2), math (1), and ESL (4) to work with small groups of students who need additional specialized instructional support in these areas throughout the school day.
- **Scheduling:** As noted above, Dever's student schedule includes a considerable increase in instructional time for literacy and language development. In addition, students will receive 90 minutes of math instruction daily. Teacher planning blocks have been designed to facilitate common planning time across grade levels four times a week in order to facilitate collaboration and ensure alignment of instruction. Student schedules in fourth grade have also been structured to accommodate the implementation of the Math Fellows Program. Six Math Fellows have been hired to provide targeted, small group tutoring support to all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who are not enrolled in the schools Therapeutic Learning Community (TLC) program for 45 minutes a day.
- **Facilities and Operations:** Blueprint was awarded an Extended Learning Time (ELT) grant for Dever by ESE. This funding will be used to support key initiatives outlined in the turnaround plan by leveraging additional instructional time during the school day and year.
- **Professional Development and Orientation:** Blueprint has built in three weeks of summer professional development for teachers, as well as additional time throughout the school year for ongoing development through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which have been organized by grade level. Teachers will have 240 minutes of collaborative learning and planning time weekly, with sessions on Tuesdays that will be focused explicitly on analyzing the most recently available student performance data. Other sessions will be used to provide on-going support, training and opportunities for collaboration and planning for teachers regarding the successful execution of the instructional strategies and curriculum programs used in school, as well as to address additional professional learning needs as they are identified throughout the school year.
- **Curriculum Planning:** Blueprint has selected curriculum programs for ELA instruction with specific supports and resources built in for facilitating small group, differentiated instruction – including specific guidance and materials to address the learning needs of ELLs. Literacy and math instructional blocks have been intentionally designed with an aim of facilitating time for small group instruction, as well as individualized academic interventions and enrichment opportunities. The *Math in Focus* curriculum will be used as a resource for math instruction. This curriculum was selected because it is well suited to accommodate differentiated, small group instruction and the learning needs of ELLs and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.
- **Family Outreach and Partnerships:** School partnerships will be leveraged to support the implementation of initiatives using additional learning time at the school – including

trained volunteers who will support small group reading instruction (Generations, INC.) and the integration of social and emotional learning into the daily curriculum (Open Circle). Additional time in the day will also be used to plan for and facilitate family outreach and events.

**Priority Area #3:** Use data to drive instruction.

- **Staffing:** One of the key competencies Blueprint looked for in the selection and hiring of Dever's staff was basic proficiency in the collection and use of data to inform instruction and a belief that this practice was valuable and necessary.
- **Scheduling:** Blueprint has developed an assessment calendar for the school that includes benchmark, predictive and ongoing formative assessments – including DIBELS, Achievement Network standards based assessments (every 4-6 weeks), and MCAS predictives. As discussed in the section above, every Tuesday, Dever's PLCs will focus explicitly on analyzing this data to inform, modify and improve instruction.
- **Facilities and Operations:** A “data room” has been designated to track school-wide student progress throughout the year. This is a secure space where academic data for all students will be available for teachers and administrators.
- **Professional Development and Orientation:** Professional development regarding the use of data to inform instruction was provided during initial summer professional development and will be an ongoing and consistent focus of school-wide professional development throughout the year.
- **Curriculum Planning:** Instructional teams have begun collecting and analyzing the most recently available student data – including MCAS scores - to prepare for instruction and inform the key standards that will be the focus areas addressed during the first weeks of school. Additional benchmark assessments administered during the first weeks of school will further inform this planning.
- **Family Outreach and Partnerships:** Blueprint has partnered with Achievement Network to facilitate the implementation and analysis of ongoing, regularly scheduled (every 4-6 weeks), standards-based assessments to inform instruction and measure academic progress throughout the year.

**Priority Area #4:** Establish a culture of high expectations and college and career readiness.

- **Staffing:** An Assistant Principal has been hired to support culture building and the setting of consistently high expectations for students and staff. A Family and Community Engagement Coordinator was hired to plan and implement events that celebrate academic success, encourage family and community engagement and partnership, and celebrate cultural diversity.
- **Scheduling:** The *Open Circle* curriculum will facilitate character building and emotional learning during morning meetings. Training regarding the implementation of this curriculum was provided to all teachers during August professional development. This time will also be used to solidify Dever's core values and expectations for academic

achievement and student conduct, and to build an inclusive school community where all students feel welcomed and accepted.

- **Facilities and Operations:** Displays with a focus on college-going and celebrating academic success have been created throughout the building. Hallways are lined with college pennants and a welcome board will display where each Dever staff member attended college. This work has been done in an effort to promote dialogues and awareness among students and staff about the purpose and value of higher education and to emphasize the belief that college is an option for every child.
- **Professional Development and Orientation:** A significant portion of the August professional development provided for teachers was focused on orienting staff and setting expectations for school-wide rituals, routines, and policies. This included clearly outlined protocols for student discipline and behavior interventions (including PBIS training). In addition, a consultant was hired to provide staff with culturally responsive leadership training in order to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive school community for all students.
- **Curriculum Planning:** As noted above, Dever will implement the *Open Circle* curriculum to support the social and emotional education of students. In addition, Dever has developed a set of core values – based on the *Peace for Kids* curriculum – which include “responsibility”, “gratitude”, “service”, “honesty”, “patience” and “integrity”. These core values will be the basis of the school’s character education programming and will be emphasized through modeling and teaching by every adult in the school.
- **Family Outreach and Partnerships:** An orientation for families at the start of the school year outlined the expectations and goals of the school and all families were presented with a Parent Compact that acknowledges an agreement to support the school and their students in meeting these expectations. Dever’s Family and Community Outreach Coordinator, in partnership with Blueprint staff, have also worked to develop partnerships with community agencies such as the Geiger Community Health Center, Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts, Walter Denny Boys and Girls Club, University of Massachusetts – Boston, and the Harbor Point Task Force in an effort to foster relationships with local community partners who can contribute to building a strong and positive school community and culture.

**Priority Area #5:** Hire and cultivate high-performing and high-potential staff.

- **Staffing:** Blueprint selected the staff for Dever using a screening process that included performance-based assessments, demonstration debriefs, assessment of candidates’ experience using data to promote effective practice, in-person interviews targeting candidates’ beliefs and values regarding serving high-needs student populations, the academic performance of schools they have previously led or worked in, and their experience leading or teaching in turnaround schools.
- **Professional Development and Orientation:** August professional development has been completed for all staff. The training include orientation to the school culture and expectations, and sessions regarding the school’s new curriculum materials and

instructional guidelines, data collection and analysis to inform instruction, an introduction to school-based partnerships, and other topics as described throughout this report.

## Level 5 Schools Quarterly Report – September 2014

| <b>Morgan Full Service Community School</b>  |                  |                           |         |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| <b>Current School Status</b>   | Level 5 School   | <b>Location</b>           | Holyoke |
| <b>Receiver Name</b>   | Project GRAD USA | <b>Current Enrollment</b> | 373     |
| <b>Year Designated Level 5</b>   | 2013             | <b>Percentage SWD</b>     | 21%     |
| <b>Year Designated Level 4</b>   | 2010             | <b>Percentage ELL</b>     | 41%     |
| <b>Grade Span</b>  | PreK – 8         | <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>     |         |
| <b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>   | 60               | Afr. Amer./Black          | 4%      |
|  |                  | Asian                     | 0%      |
|  |                  | Hispanic                  | 86%     |
|  |                  | White                     | 2%      |
| <p><i>Priority Areas:</i></p> <p><b>Priority Area #1:</b> Recruitment and Development of Outstanding Professional Talent</p> <p><b>Priority Area #2:</b> Systems to Support Professional Learning and Responsiveness in Practice</p> <p><b>Priority Area #3:</b> Creating a Center of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)</p> <p><b>Priority Area #4:</b> Targeted and Aligned Resources</p> <p><b>Priority Area #5:</b> Enhancing and Sustaining Family and Community Engagement</p> |                  |                           |         |

### Content provided by: Project GRAD USA

#### Executive Summary

Our turnaround efforts are on track. We have recruited an exceptional leadership team that is experienced working with schools serving communities similar to Morgan's. We have hired a highly qualified staff who bring an average of six years of teaching experience; more than two-thirds of the faculty are SEI endorsed or ELL certified. We have put significant effort into creating a compelling STEM program for our students, including a STEM-dedicated director to lead our program, as well as partnerships with high-tech content delivery systems such as STEMScopes and iScience. Additionally, we have succeeded in engaging community partners and families through a number of outreach efforts, including increased recruitment for our Pre-K program as well as an upcoming open house. We have identified and are providing our teachers aligned instructional resources and the support to use them, including most recently The Achievement Network (ANet) – which will provide regular assessments and real-time feedback.

#### Updates on Priority Areas

**Priority Area #1:** Recruitment and Development of Outstanding Professional Talent.

- Our leadership team includes a building Principal, Dean of Instruction, Director of STEM and a Chief Operations Officer.

- Morgan’s staff demonstrates continuity with last year’s staff while also developing fresh talent - of the 60 staff members at Morgan, 19 (32 percent) were employed at Morgan last year, including 5 of our 34 teachers (15 percent). Our teachers have diverse experience levels, ranging from enthusiastic recent college graduates to veteran teachers with 25+ years of experience, and overall have an average of 6 years of experience. All but 11 teachers are SEI endorsed or ELL certified.
- Holyoke Public Schools and Project GRAD had to develop process and communication protocols so that new personnel at Morgan can be on-boarded in a timely and efficient manner. Because these processes and protocols were not in place initially and are still in further development, Morgan School has experienced delays in the recruitment and on-boarding process.
- A two-week summer professional development program for all instructional staff members (including paraprofessionals) focused on three areas rooted in the turnaround plan: academic writing with a focus on narrative, explanation or argument; academic oral language development; and STEM focused project-based classroom activities that develop critical thinking, communication, assessment and inquiry skills.

**Priority Area #2: Systems to Support Professional Learning and Responsiveness in Practice.**

- The master schedule provides regular time for teachers to meet frequently to examine student learning data and to plan next instructional steps.
- A literacy coach has been hired to support teachers in common planning (including curricular mapping and backward design), provide routine feedback on teaching, and facilitate peer observations of classroom practice.
- Morgan will be using ANet this year, an assessment system that will deliver student-level assessments and data throughout the year. Through ANet, teachers will be able to benchmark student progress and deliver additional, targeted interventions.

**Priority Area #3: Creating a Center of Excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).**

- Morgan has built a cohesive STEM curriculum that exposes students to STEM content in a high-tech environment through both dedicated staffing and partnerships.
- In our professional development program with teachers, one of the key focus areas will be on developing STEM focused project-based classroom activities that develop critical thinking, communication, assessment and inquiry skills.
- Additionally, we have built partnerships with STEMScopes and iScience, innovative curricula through which students will be able to access high-quality STEM content.
- Because of difficulties with the Holyoke city procurement process, we were unable to receive STEM curricular materials to support August professional development or in time for the opening of school. Also, our leadership team and staff had limited access to the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) network through August, which slowed professional development and other STEM preparations where technology was mission critical.

**Priority Area #4: Targeted and Aligned Resources.**

- We have designed a multi-tiered resource system for teachers and have engaged multiple partners to ensure that our staff have a wide range of resources at their disposal.
- Our partnership with ANet, STEMScopes, and iScience will allow teachers to deliver high-tech content and assessments, supported by traditional curricular materials.
- ANet will provide teachers with quarterly data on student progress toward standards, as well as aligned instructional resources to support instructional next steps.
- Under the leadership of our Director of Operations, the school facility has undergone dramatic clean-up and renovation this summer. The vast array of materials has been sorted, assessed, and either warehoused or inventoried and reassigned. The former library has been opened up and rearranged to support media access and teacher collaborative planning. Classrooms and hallways have been repaired and targeted painting has been completed.

**Priority Area #5: Enhancing and Sustaining Family and Community Engagement.**

- Morgan has developed relationships with several local community partners. Specifically, we have finalized an early literacy program with Big Brothers Big Sisters and a financial literacy and work readiness program with Junior Achievement.
- Morgan has accelerated recruitment for its new Pre-Kindergarten program, sending letters to each family in the school's catchment area to ensure that the community is aware of its availability.
- Morgan hosted a highly successful open house for families on August 28<sup>th</sup> (150 Morgan family members participated, represented by 86 students and 64 parents and 54 family "units"; in addition, 10 key community partners attended the Open House and provided information about their programming) and has already begun communication efforts to cultivate awareness and excitement about the school.
- We launched planning for the Walk for Success event on September 20<sup>th</sup>, where representatives from the school will visit every Morgan family's home. To date, more than 80 percent of Morgan staff members have volunteered to participate. We project having at least 50 community volunteers join in the event.

## Level 5 Schools Quarterly Report – September 2014

| <b>John Avery Parker</b>  |  |                           |             |
|---|--|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Current School Status</b>  | Level 5 School                                     | <b>Location</b>           | New Bedford |
| <b>Receiver Name</b>  | Dr. Pia Durkin<br>(Superintendent,<br>New Bedford) | <b>Current Enrollment</b> | 271         |
| <b>Year Designated Level 5</b>  | 2013   | <b>Percentage SWD*</b>    | 27%         |
| <b>Year Designated Level 4</b>  | 2010   | <b>Percentage ELL</b>     | 26%         |
| <b>Grade Span</b>   | PreK – 5   | <b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>    |             |
| <b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>  | 36   | Afr. Amer./Black          | 14%         |
|   |  | Asian                     | 0%          |
|   |  | Hispanic                  | 38%         |
|   |  | White                     | 40%         |
| <i>Priority Areas:</i>  |  |                           |             |
| <b>Priority Area #1:</b> Increase the rigor of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction  |  |                           |             |
| <b>Priority Area #2:</b> Create school structures and systems that support instruction and maximize time on task                        |  |                           |             |
| <b>Priority Area #3:</b> Increase the use of data to drive instruction  |  |                           |             |
| <b>Priority Area #4:</b> Establish a school culture focused on achievement and engage families as partners in their children’s learning |  |                           |             |
| <small>*Data as of 2013-2014 school year.</small>   |  |                           |             |

**Content provided by: Dr. Pia Durkin**

**Executive Summary**

Parker School has made considerable progress in launching its turnaround plan and preparing for the 2014-2015 school year. The hiring and final on-boarding processes were completed prior to the first day of school, with the exception of some paraprofessional vacancies, which are in process and are currently being filled with substitutes.

New and returning staff set the foundation for turnaround through the Summer Academy, which included a mix of professional development and teaching opportunities. During this time, staff engaged with the turnaround plan itself and created action plans delineating ownership of the plan’s priority areas to ensure its implementation with fidelity. In addition, the principal and literacy coach provided extensive coaching on literacy instruction and teacher evaluation. Preliminary work was done to establish school-wide behavioral norms and expectations and families were invited to the school to experience student-led community shares and to meet with the new Family Engagement Center manager.

Curriculum maps and materials are being updated to ensure alignment with Massachusetts Frameworks and Common Core State Standards and the high levels of rigor necessary for

student growth and achievement. Teachers have already begun to dive into school-wide data to prepare for the launch of the school year and create plans for proactively meeting students' needs starting on the first day of school. During the final week in August staff reconvened to set a school-wide instructional focus and school-wide goals grounded in data and the work of the Turnaround Plan. A Turnaround Manager, responsible for ensuring the Turnaround Plan is implemented with fidelity, was hired in June and reports directly to the Superintendent.

### **Updates on Priority Areas**

**Priority Area #1:** Increase the rigor of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction.

- As part of district-wide efforts, new, Common-Core aligned curriculum maps and related assessments for ELA and Math will be launched this fall. Reading Street, Empowering Writers, and enVision Math will be fully implemented to support instruction aligned to new curriculum maps.
- A four week Summer Academy was held to provide teachers with whole group and individual professional development and coaching.
- Sixty students participated in a four week, 16-day Summer Academy, which included literacy and math instruction as well as art, music, physical education, and computer classes and two pilot “Community Shares,” brief assemblies of the school community—including parents and family members—in which students showcase and share their learning. Literacy and math instruction focused on themes chosen by students through a survey conducted before the end of the school year.
- The school year and day has been expanded and additional opportunities for professional development are being incorporated into the school calendar. A formal professional development plan and an educator evaluation plan have been developed, including a teacher accountability and feedback cycle to ensure teachers are implementing strategies learned and providing input on the effectiveness of professional development sessions. Starting in the spring of 2014, home language surveys were disseminated to all Parker students and the results have been used to identify students in need of English proficiency testing.

**Priority Area #2:** Create school structures and systems that support instruction and maximize time on task.

- 100 percent of core instruction, SPED, related arts, and support staff have been hired.
- The school day and year have been extended to provide additional learning time for students and professional development and collaboration opportunities for teachers. A new daily schedule was created to maximize instructional time during the school day.
- All instructional staff were placed on the New Career Ladder as outlined in the turnaround plan (key strategy 2.3).

**Priority Area #3:** Increase the use of data to drive instruction.

- The turnaround manager and principal are developing a school-wide data dashboard for monitoring key data points at the school and classroom level.
- Common formative assessments are scheduled according to the new district-wide curriculum maps.
- The principal is working with an outside consultant to refine Teacher Collaboration Team (TCT) and School Instructional Leadership Team (SILT) protocols and processes. TCT meetings have been embedded into the weekly schedule and the principal and literacy coach have developed an accountability and monitoring system for supporting TCT time.
- PRIDE (intervention) time has been established to ensure all students receive 30 minutes per day of targeted interventions or acceleration opportunities as determined by data.
- The Family Engagement Center Manager has assembled a calendar of Saturday Academies for the school year.

**Priority Area #4:** Establish a school culture focused on achievement and engage families as partners in their children's learning.

- A Family Engagement Center Manager and a Behavior Intervention Specialist have been hired and began work in July. These staff members—in collaboration with the school nurse—proactively reached out to Parker families to invite them to Parker events (Summer Academy community shares, August orientation, etc.) and to inform them of new resources and opportunities at the school. The Family Engagement Center Manager created a preliminary plan for family engagement events throughout the year.
- Early work with establishing school behavior norms began during Summer Academy and will continue to ensure consistent expectations and practices during the school year. During August orientation, teachers and staff shared these expectations with Parker families.
- Parker teachers have begun creating tools for tracking family communications to ensure they are proactively reaching out to parents/family members as needed.
- In addition, all staff members were invited to participate in a tour of the New Bedford and Parker School communities provided by a local community member. The community hosted a welcome reception for all school staff (district-wide) that are new to New Bedford Public Schools on August 26.