*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |
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# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | January 11, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | Chronically Underperforming Schools: 2nd Quarter FY 2019 Progress Reports  |

In the fall of 2013, four schools were designated as chronically underperforming in response to their low performance and lack of improvement while designated as underperforming schools: UP Academy Holland (UAH) and Paul A. Dever Elementary School (Dever) in Boston, Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) in Holyoke, and John Avery Parker Elementary School (Parker) in New Bedford. During our December 2018 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting, three of the four receivers for the chronically underperforming school made presentations on the implementation of their respective turnaround plans. You will hear from the fourth school receiver during the March 2019 Board meeting.

In order to continue to provide you with timely information about the chronically underperforming schools, I have included below the second of four FY2019 quarterly progress updates to the Board for each school, focusing on activities from October-December 2018. Future quarterly updates for FY2019 will be presented in April 2019 and a final annual review in June 2019. We have also included an annual comparison of suspension and discipline data as well as updated FY2019 demographic data for your reference.

**Paul A. Dever Elementary School, Boston, MA**

Prepared by Michael Contompasis, Receiver

Successes:

* During the second quarter, the Dever School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) took steps to increase educator effectiveness during Common Planning Time (CPT). The Instructional Leadership Team increased their capacity to facilitate CPT by learning skills such as: facilitation skill-building, use of data to drive instruction, leadership development and other capacity building (of adults), and school improvement strategies.
* The Dever has met its benchmark goal of creating a Student Support Team (SST). The Student Support Team is charged with identifying students with unmet needs and proactively responding to students. The Student Support Team is a collaborative, school-based, problem-solving team that is organized to address students’ academic and/or behavioral/emotional needs. This year, the Dever carved out time in the daily schedule for the SST to meet, and over a six-week cycle, the SST meets to discuss student data, ask probing questions, propose possible interventions, and measure the impact of each intervention. At the end of the six weeks, the roster of students identified for targeted supports is re-examined. The school has gone through one cycle already this school year. During the 2016-2017 school year, seven students were identified, and during the 2017-2018 school year, 21 students were identified. However, this year, the proactive and structured approach has already helped to identify 22 students, leading to more targeted supports and interventions for those specific students
* Another area of success at Dever School is a positive school climate marked by increased student enrollment, low suspensions, low detentions, and fewer classroom disruptions. As of December 2018, there have been four out-of-school suspensions; in December 2017, there were a total of 20 out-of-school suspensions; and in December 2016, there were 47 out-of-school suspensions. Efforts to create a positive and responsive climate are lowering incidents of student discipline. Additionally, more and more families are choosing the Dever. In planning for the 2018-2019 school year, student enrollment was projected at 344 students, and ultimately 416 students enrolled. Next year’s projections are slated for 430 students, the first upward trend in more than seven years.

Challenge:

* In the upcoming quarter, the Dever will focus on academic rigor. Interim assessment data, classroom observations, and teacher evaluations demonstrate that students are not meeting learning goals. The instructional leadership team has identified the rigor of classroom tasks to be one main reason why goals in academics are not yet attained. The Dever will work with the Office of Strategic Transformation at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) and Boston Public Schools to align supports to target the issue of rigor in a systematic way. Through bi-weekly learning walks, the Dever will gather feedback with regard to improving rigor in classrooms. In addition, the school is working to build capacity within the instructional team in this area in order to provide more targeted professional development to teachers.

**Paul A. Dever: Demographic and Discipline Data**[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| **School Information** |  | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** |
|  |  |  | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019** |
| **Location** | Boston | **Total enrollment** | 356 | 410 |
| **Current status** | Chronically underperforming | **Students with disabilities** | 14 percent | 13 percent |
| **Receiver name** | Michael Contompasis | **English learners** | 48 percent | 50 percent |
| **Year designated chronically underperforming** | 2013 | **Economically disadvantaged** | 81 percent | 76 percent |
| **Year designated underperforming** | 2010 | **African American students** | 25 percent | 26 percent |
| **Hispanic students** | 61 percent | 63 percent |
| **Grade span** | Pre-K-5 | **Asian students** | 6 percent | 4 percent |
| **Full-time teachers in SY 2018–2019** | 35 | **White students** | 5 percent | 5 percent |
| **New teacher hires for SY 2018-2019** | 16 | **Multi-race, Non-Hispanic students** | 2 percent | 2 percent |
| **Student Attendance** | **Student Discipline** |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |
| **Attendance Rate** | 92 percent | 92 percent | **Students disciplined** | 43 | 9 |
| **Chronically absent**  | 32 percent | 34 percent | **In-School suspension**  | 1 percent | 0 percent |
| **Student Restraint** | **Out-of-School suspension**  | 9 percent | 2 percent |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** | **Expulsion**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Students restrained** | 18 | 9 | **Removed to alternate setting**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Number of Restraints** | 29 | 16 | **Emergency removal**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Injuries** | - | 0 |  |  |  |

**UP Academy Holland (UAH), Boston, MA**

Prepared by UP Education Network, Receiver

Successes:

* The UP Academy Holland team has worked very hard to ensure students are maximizing learning time and has robustly decreased the amount of student referrals to the Dean’s Office by 40 percent from last year to this year. The team has accomplished this decrease in referrals through a strong Tier 1 social-emotional learning curriculum, Open Circle, as well as increased training for staff members on social-emotional learning instruction.
* The UP Academy Holland team has seen success in teacher retention at this point in the year. In past years, the team has struggled with mid-year vacancies, where staff members would leave before the year is over. During the 2017-2018 school year, the school had seven mid-year vacancies, and during the 2018-2019 school year, the school has only experienced one mid-year transition due to a personal situation. The UP Academy Holland team attribute this to a strong culture of feedback with the leadership team and continuous improvement and strong coaching for all adults in the building.
* The UP Academy Holland team has improved tiered systems of support for students who need more targeted interventions and has seen success in the second quarter. For example, UAH has added more targeted supports, including the development of a targeted intervention team, mapped interventions based on data collection, and clear indicators for when a student should be referred to the targeted intervention team. Targeted interventions are both academic and behavioral and include specific reading supports, social skill building, social emotional learning support, and/or additional counseling. The targeted intervention team has succeeded in building a strong cycle of data-driven intervention meetings, leading to fewer student discipline referrals than in years past. The team will continue to work on refining the frequency of these targeted intervention meetings, as well as developing more clear criteria for determining how to match the best intervention to the needs of each individual student.

Challenge:

* The entire school team is focused on increasing proficiency levels of all students, and the upper elementary literacy team has been focused on improving literacy proficiency in grades 3-5. Historically, this has been a growth area of the team, and the diagnostic and interim data demonstrate that the school has not seen a huge gain in literacy proficiency. UP Academy Holland attributes this to their upper elementary teachers struggling to find the most effective way to teach close reading. The leadership team and teacher leaders have done multiple observations of the 3rd-5th grade literacy classes and, using observational data along with interim assessment data, have created a plan to improve instruction. This cycle of professional development was rolled out to the team in early December and will be closely monitored through December and January, until the next round of interim assessment data.

**UP Academy Holland: Demographic and Discipline Data**[[2]](#footnote-2)

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| **School Information** | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** |
|  |  | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019**[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| **Location** | Boston | **Total enrollment** | 762 | 771 |
| **Current status** | Chronically underperforming | **Students with disabilities** | 13 percent  | 14 percent |
| **Receiver name** | UP Education Network | **English learners** | 37 percent | 34 percent |
| **Year designated chronically underperforming** | 2013 | **Economically disadvantaged** | 75 percent | 73 percent |
| **Year designated underperforming** | 2010 | **African American students** | 45 percent | 46 percent |
| **Hispanic students** | 43 percent | 44 percent |
| **Grade span** | Pre-K-5 | **Asian students** | 7 percent | 5 percent |
| **Full-time teachers in SY 2018-2019** | 63 | **White students** | 2 percent | 2 percent |
| **New teacher hires for SY 2018-2019** | 17 | **Multi-race, Non-Hispanic students** | 3 percent | 3 percent |
| **Student Attendance** | **Student Discipline** |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |
| **Attendance rate** | 93 percent | 92 percent | **Students disciplined** | 79 | 14 |
| **Chronically absent**  | 27 percent | 26 percent | **In-School suspension** | 7 percent | 1 percent |
| **Student Restraint** | **Out-of-School suspension**  | 6 percent | 1 percent |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** | **Expulsion**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Students restrained**[[4]](#footnote-4) | 0 | 19 | **Removed to alternate setting**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Number of restraints**[[5]](#footnote-5) | - | 42 | **Emergency removal**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Injuries**[[6]](#footnote-6) | - | - |  |  |  |

**Morgan Full Service Community School, Holyoke, MA**[[7]](#footnote-7)

Prepared by Superintendent Zrike, Receiver

Successes:

* Morgan leaders and teachers are implementing a strong and consistent instructional data cycle. There is a regular cadence to the scheduled collaborative professional learning times whereby teachers and leaders engage in standards-based planning. This planning process involves developing standards-based lessons and assessments, analyzing student work products and assessment results, identifying skill gaps for students, and developing targeted re-teaching plans that move students toward grade level standard attainment. Morgan leaders and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) continue to make this their priority and monitor progress to make necessary adjustments to stay on course. For example, during the second quarter, the ILT has adjusted the assessment cycle to every other week as opposed to weekly as originally planned, to allow more effective and targeted focus on analysis of student work to pinpoint the instructional needs and related intervention and re-teaching.
* Morgan teachers are committed to implementing the instructional data cycle described above. They understand that this is a high-leverage practice and that if they continue to do this work well and together, the Morgan students will improve academically. As a result, the focus of professional learning is fully on improved teacher practice and accelerating content expertise; that is, getting better at intervention and re-teaching work targeted to address identified student gaps. The work is about skill-building and not will-building.
* Morgan principal, Steve Moguel, has launched a new family outreach and communication structure with the goal of giving families and caretakers another option to know and understand the work of Morgan and to target specific areas and topics to support student achievement. It is called *Monday Mornings with Moguel* - a monthly town hall style meeting that includes breakfast where parents meet and talk with the principal about specific topics. Two sessions have already occurred. In October, Principal Moguel met with pre-K and K parents to discuss the importance and expectations of these early grades; 10 families attended. In November, the invitation was open to all parents to discuss the importance of school attendance, and 12 families attended. While this initial attendance is low, Principal Moguel received positive feedback from the families who participated. In the future, Principal Moguel will work with support staff to improve the communication and notification of these meetings. The team is currently finalizing plans for a session in early January, which will likely be for families of students in Grades 1 and 2 focused on the topic of reading at home and supporting math computational fluency.

Challenge:

* Some key members of the Morgan school team who are critical to building the systems that support instructional improvement have experienced a high degree of absence this school year. These absences are for legitimate reasons (e.g., medical needs, jury summons, etc.) but have resulted in key team members missing most of October and November. Unfortunately, many of these absences will continue to occur during the beginning of 2019. Principal Moguel has developed solutions to address the negative impact associated with these staff absences. These include calling back a retired teacher to support culture and tapping advanced teachers on the Morgan staff to coach new teachers. One priority area that is likely impacted is student attendance, as three of the absent staff members dedicate their time on building and supporting systems to improve student attendance. Compared to last year, the aggregate Morgan attendance is down 3.2 percent (from 94.7percent in 2017-2018 to 91.5 percent in 2018-2019). The Morgan team has developed an action plan to address this issue. For example, Morgan staff are reaching out to the families of all students who are regularly absent to inquire about students’ wellbeing, problem solve, and reset expectations. School and district staff are holding weekly attendance meetings using a case management model to address chronic absentee issues and implement a continuum of supports and reporting structures. The Morgan leadership team is using daily and monthly attendance incentives with students. Finally, support staff are working with the families of the 47 (25 percent) new students that have enrolled at Morgan since the start of the year to set attendance expectations.

**Morgan Full Service Community School: Demographic and Discipline data**[[8]](#footnote-8)

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| **School Information** | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** |
|  | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019**[[9]](#footnote-9) |
| **Location** | Holyoke | **Total enrollment** | 416 | 306 |
| **Current status** | Chronically underperforming | **Students with disabilities** | 18 percent | 17 percent |
| **Receiver name** | Stephen Zrike  | **English learners** | 31 percent | 23 percent |
| **Year designated chronically underperforming** | 2013 | **Economically disadvantaged** | 93 percent | 93 percent |
| **Year designated underperforming** | 2010 | **African American students** | 4 percent | 5 percent |
| **Hispanic students** | 91 percent | 90 percent |
| **Grade span** | Pre-K-4 | **Asian students** | 1 percent | 1 percent |
| **Full-time teachers in SY 2018-2019** | 18 | **White students** | 2 percent | 3 percent |
| **New teacher hires for SY 2018-2019** | 3 | **Multi-race, Non-Hispanic students** | 1 percent | 2 percent |
| **Student Attendance** | **Student Discipline** |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |
| **Attendance rate** | 93 percent | 93 percent | **Students disciplined** | 39 | 36 |
| **Chronically absent**  | 29 percent | 24 percent | **In-School suspension**  | 1 percent | 1 percent |
| **Student Restraint** | **Out-of-School suspension**  | 8 percent | 7 percent |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** | **Expulsion**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Students restrained**[[10]](#footnote-10) | - | - | **Removed to alternate setting**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Number of restraints** | - | - | **Emergency removal**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Injuries**[[11]](#footnote-11) | - | - |  |  |  |

**John Avery Parker Elementary School, New Bedford, MA**

Prepared by School and Main Institute, Receiver

Successes:

* A continuing area of success for the Parker Elementary is the development of a comprehensive social and emotional support plan for students. Parker has assigned point persons to “check-in” with students multiple times a day, reminding them of their goals, and reflecting with them on their successes and challenges. In addition, the support team conducts classroom walkthroughs six times per day – three in the morning and three in the afternoon, with the goal of proactively identifying and addressing any student issues that may be developing. The results are positive. Teachers report feeling supported. The number of students who need check-in supports for behavior decreased this quarter with four students no longer needing the daily check-in process. In addition, office referrals for conduct issues have decreased by at least 50 percent since the beginning of the year.
* The staff at Parker have also redesigned the academic intervention model “PRIDE.” Last year, PRIDE was an hour-long intervention class, designed as a pull-out model for English learner students and students with disabilities. This resulted in academic intervention plans that supported a small group of students but left many other students who also needed support without access to intervention. The Parker team has redesigned PRIDE so that all students receive intervention or enrichment during this period of the day. The team has also restructured how teachers plan for PRIDE, set goals, and monitor their progress in order to measure the efficacy of these interventions. Now, students are grouped based on academic needs for intervention or enrichment. While students who struggle academically receive additional supports, students who are meeting or exceeding expectations are provided with opportunities to extend and challenge their learning through enrichment.
* Mathematics instruction has moved from a traditional model of skill-based practice to a mathematics workshop, where students consistently problem solve, reason, and make sense of mathematics. This work is supported by innovative math resources with the goal of creating communities of young mathematicians. Gallery walks, critiquing the reasoning of others, and modeling one’s thinking are now the norm in these mathematics classrooms.

Challenge:

* Now that the Parker has improved the climate and culture and teachers are gaining confidence using the new mathematics resources, the Parker team’s next level of work is to improve instruction in English language arts and science. Teachers will need additional support, training, and feedback to ensure that classrooms across all content areas are characterized by strong academic discourse, student reasoning, and higher-level thinking.

**John Avery Parker: Demographic and Discipline data**[[12]](#footnote-12)

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| **School Information** | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** |
|  | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019**[[13]](#footnote-13) |
| **Location** | New Bedford | **Total enrollment** | 285 | 248 |
| **Current status** | Chronically underperforming | **Students with disabilities** | 14 percent | 14 percent |
| **Receiver name** | School & Main Institute | **English learners** | 32 percent | 34 percent |
| **Year designated chronically underperforming** | 2013 | **Economically disadvantaged** | 72 percent | 72 percent |
| **Year designated underperforming** | 2010 | **African American students** | 16 percent | 17 percent |
| **Hispanic students** | 35 percent | 35 percent |
| **Grade span** | Pre-K-5 | **Asian students** | 1 percent | 0 percent |
| **Full-time teachers in SY 2018-2019** | 22 | **White students** | 39 percent | 39 percent |
| **New teacher hires for SY 2018-2019** | 6 | **Multi-race, Non-Hispanic students** | 8 percent | 9 percent |
| **Student Attendance** | **Student Discipline** |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** |
| **Attendance rate** | 94 percent | 94 percent | **Students disciplined** | 26 | 27 |
| **Chronically absent** | 15 percent | 18 percent | **In-School suspension**  | 1 percent | 0 percent |
| **Student Restraint** | **Out-of-School suspension**  | 8 percent | 9 percent |
|  | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** | **Expulsion**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Students restrained**[[14]](#footnote-14) | - | 0 | **Removed to alternate setting**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Number of restraints** | - | - | **Emergency removal**  | 0 percent | 0 percent |
| **Injuries**[[15]](#footnote-15) | - | - |  |  |  |

**Definitions**

**Attendance rate:** Attendance rate indicates the average percentage of days in attendance for students enrolled in grades PK-12.

**Chronically absent (10 percent or more):** The percentage of students who were absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. For example: A student who enrolled in a school for 50 days and missed five days, the student is counted as absent 10 percent or more that school year.​​

**Restraint:** Direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement.

**In-School suspension rate:** The percentage of enrolled students in grades 1-SP who received one or more in-school suspensions.

**Out-of-School suspension rate:** The percentage of enrolled students in grades 1-SP who received one or more out-of-school suspensions.

**Removed to an alternate setting:** Alternative settings can include home tutoring, in-district alternative program, alternative program in another district, private alternative setting, or work/community service setting.

**Emergency removal:** The removal of a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

1. See page 11 for definitions [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See page 11 for definitions [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Data as of October 1, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Suppressed when fewer than 6 students are restrained [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. UAH experienced technical issues with reporting data in SY2017, and the school documented 132 restraints, 31 students restrained, and 2 injuries. Due to technical issues, those data elements were not included in Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s reporting for SY2017. Those issues were resolved in time for the SY2018 reporting. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Suppressed when the number of injuries to staff or students is between 1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In the fall of 2018, the grade-span for the Morgan School changed from serving grades Pre-K–8 students to Pre-K–4 students, as two new middle school options were opened: Veritas Prep Holyoke and Holyoke STEM Academy. More information on the district’s middle school redesign efforts can be found here: <https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/turnaround/msredesign/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See page 11 for definitions [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Data as of October 1, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Suppressed when fewer than 6 students are restrained [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Suppressed when the number of injuries to staff or students is between 1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See page 11 for definitions [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Data as of October 1, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Suppressed when fewer than 6 students are restrained [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Suppressed when the number of injuries to staff or students is between 1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)