*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

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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:**  | October 8, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Update on Chronically Underperforming Schools: SY2021-2022 Quarter 1 Reports |

This month, I am presenting the first of four SY2021-2022 quarterly progress updates to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on the four chronically underperforming schools’ implementation of their school turnaround plans, focusing on activities from July to October 2021. This memo also provides an update on the strategic planning process for these four schools that took place in summer 2021. Future quarterly updates for SY2021-2022 will be presented in December 2021 and March 2022, and a final annual review in June 2022.

SY2020-2021 accountability data has been included for your reference.

**Chronically Underperforming Schools**

In the fall of 2013, four schools were designated as chronically underperforming in response to their low performance and lack of improvement while in underperforming status: John P. Holland Elementary School (UP Academy Holland) 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.

**Strategic Planning with School Empowerment Network**

The Department’s Office of Strategic Transformation (OST), in partnership with the School Empowerment Network (SEN), engaged school leaders of the four chronically underperforming schools in a robust strategic planning process in the summer of 2021 to review School Quality Reviews (SQRs) from SY2020-2021 and student data to create high-leverage goals and action plans for their schools. This process included at least four meetings with each school leader in July and August to discuss school goals, areas for growth, and specific actions intended to advance student achievement and racial equity this school year.

Throughout the year, OST will meet regularly with school leaders of the chronically underperforming schools to discuss progress on school action plans and benchmarks and provide support. Updates on the focus of each of those action plans are summarized below.

**Updates on the Chronically Underperforming Schools**

*Paul A. Dever Elementary School, Boston.* The Paul A. Dever Elementary (Dever) opened school with School & Main Institute (SMI) returning as receiver for the second year (Dr. Fran Roy providing on-the-ground support) and Margaret Reardon in her second year as principal. The Dever staff spent two weeks in August preparing for the school year by participating in professional development focused on creating safe and supportive school climates such as developing responsive and trauma-informed classrooms.

This year the Dever is moving to a fully inclusive co-teaching model to support students with disabilities, particularly those with an emotional impairment. Teachers have been trained in co-teaching strategies and instructional and social-emotional techniques to support all students in the classroom.

The instructional foci for the upcoming year include: improving teachers’ classroom assessment practices through professional development and coaching; building and enacting a robust teacher observation, feedback, and coaching system to drive continuous instructional improvement; and developing clear instructional expectations and supporting teachers to enact those expectations consistently.

*UP Academy Holland, Boston.* Victoria Thompson is in her third year as principal of UP Academy Holland (UAH). UP Education Network continues to be the receiver for the school. The school year started with strong student engagement and students who are excited to return to in-person schooling.

After a thorough review of data, the UAH team will focus on literacy as an instructional priority through an increased focus on skills-based phonics instruction and increased opportunities for student discourse in the classroom. All teachers will participate in a multi-year professional development course on the fundamentals of early literacy and the instructional leadership team will lead collaborative lesson-planning meetings supporting teachers’ ability to facilitate student discourse in their classrooms.

*Morgan Full Service Community School, Holyoke.* Steven Moguel is in his third year as principal of Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) and Anthony Soto is in his first year as receiver for the school and the district. Morgan began the school year with strong systems for students and was implementing data-informed small-group literacy groups by the second day of school.

Morgan’s areas of focus for the upcoming year are pedagogy and teacher support and supervision. In the focus area of pedagogy, leaders aim to improve student achievement by building teachers’ capacity to consistently enact research-aligned instructional strategies and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). In the focus area of teacher support and supervision, leaders aim to norm staff on a schoolwide teaching rubric and consistently enact a teacher observation, feedback, and coaching system to drive instructional improvement.

*John Avery Parker Elementary School, New Bedford.* The John Avery Parker Elementary (Parker) opened the SY2021-2022 with School and Main Institute (SMI) returning for a fourth year as receiver with Dr. Fran Roy as the point-person and Amy Bousquet in her first year as principal.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the staff will continue to build upon their work encouraging student ownership of learning and problem-based mathematical thinking as well as expanding student discourse and close reading strategies in English Language Arts (ELA). Goals and action steps in Parker’s strategic plan include improving student achievement in ELA through a focus on close reading skills and comprehension across grades; improving instruction in ELA by revising team lesson planning protocols to prioritize higher-level learning tasks; and developing teachers’ ability to facilitate student discourse that supports comprehension of complex texts. Another set of goals and action steps aims to create more equitable opportunities for all families to have a voice in schoolwide goal setting, progress monitoring, and student goal setting.

## MCAS and Accountability Data 2021















