



By email

June 23, 2025

Joshua A. Garcia, Mayor and Chair of Holyoke School Committee
City of Holyoke
536 Dwight Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Anthony Soto, Receiver
Holyoke Public Schools
57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Dear Mayor Garcia and Receiver Soto:

I am pleased to inform you that Holyoke Public Schools (HPS or the district) will exit chronically underperforming status on July 1, 2025. On October 29, 2024, then Acting Commissioner Russell Johnston announced his provisional decision to remove the chronically underperforming designation from HPS, with the intent to revisit this decision in June 2025 based on the Holyoke School Committee's (HSC's) progress toward implementing its capacity-building plan. Based upon the evidence of progress that HSC's Local Control Subcommittee has presented to Acting Commissioner Johnston and now myself, I am confident that the HSC is well prepared to resume local governance of the district, with transitional supports provided by the exit assurances.

Enclosed please find the exit assurances document for HPS that was provided to the HSC on April 28, 2025. Under 603 CMR 2.06 (13)(a,b), upon my removal of HPS' chronically underperforming designation on July 1, the provisions of M.G.L. c. 69, § 1K for districts designated as chronically underperforming will cease to apply to HPS, except for those maintained through exit assurances; and the employment of Anthony Soto as HPS receiver will end. Beginning July 1, Mr. Soto will continue leading the district as Interim Superintendent for the 2025-26 school year, under the contract ratified by the HSC on May 12, 2025.

This historic decision honors the entire Holyoke community, and particularly the students, families, educators, staff and leaders who have carried forward the district's transformational efforts over the past ten years. Under Receiver Soto's leadership,

community stakeholders have consistently shared their input into the district's strategic planning and decision-making processes. The HSC has adopted the same high standard of community collaboration by partnering with a Community Advisory Team during the implementation of its capacity-building plan. The Holyoke community's robust experiences with stakeholder collaboration during the period of receivership provide a strong foundation for continuing to refine the district's strategic plan implementation so that it achieves sustained improvements in outcomes for all Holyoke students.

It is my sincere hope and expectation that HSC and HPS will continue to demonstrate their growing capacities to achieve the strategic improvement goals they have set in collaboration with the Holyoke community. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will continue to support the district's strategic transformation efforts by providing monitoring and consultation around the metrics identified in the exit assurances document. DESE looks forward to continuing to work with HPS to advance many of the core initiatives in the district's strategic plan in support of the district's students and families.

Sincerely,

Patrick A. Tutwiler, Ph.D.

Interim Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Cc: Dr. Yadilette Rivera-Colón, Vice Chair, Holyoke School Committee
Lauren Woo, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Encl: Chronically Underperforming District Exit Assurances and Strategies for Sustainability for Holyoke Public Schools, signed April 28, 2025