

**Holland Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group
Recommendations to the Commissioner
Submitted January 6, 2014**

Holland Elementary School was designated by Commissioner Chester as chronically underperforming (“Level 5”) on October 30, 2013. Massachusetts law indicates that within 30 days of a school being designated as chronically underperforming, the Commissioner shall convene a local stakeholder group to solicit the group’s recommendations for the Commissioner’s Level 5 School Turnaround Plan.

The Holland Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group was convened on Thursday, November 21, 2013. The statute allowed 45 days for the local stakeholder group to complete its work. The Local Stakeholder Group met four times during this period, on the following dates and times:

- Meeting #1: Thursday, November 21st, 4:30-6:30 pm
- Meeting #2: Thursday, December 5th, 4:00-6:00 pm
- Meeting #3: Wednesday, December 11th, 8:00-10:00 am
- Meeting #4: Thursday, December 19th, 4:00-6:00 pm

All of the meetings were held at the school, in the school’s library. All of the meetings were open to the public. All meetings were facilitated by an ESE staff member or a consultant hired for this purpose. All meetings were also observed by at least one ESE staff member.

The membership of the Holland Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group is listed below. The committee’s membership meets the requirements of the statute as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1J, subsection m.

Position, per statute	Designee
The superintendent or designee	John McDonough; designated alternate Rasheed Meadows
School committee chair or designee	Reverend Gregory Groover
Local teachers’ union president or designee	Maureen Rodriquez
Administrator from the school, who may be the principal, chosen by the superintendent	Jeichael Henderson
Teacher from the school, chosen by the faculty of the school	Kim Vy Nguyen
Parent from the school, chosen by the local parent organization. (Note: If school or district doesn’t have a parent organization, the Commissioner shall select a volunteer parent of a student at the school.)	Donere Johnson; designated alternate Ginnairiss Blackwell
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	Alissa Farber from Teach Plus; designated alternate Elisa MacDonald
Representatives of applicable state and local	Lisa Fortenberry from City Year; designated

social service, health and child welfare agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	alternate Nikki Tabron
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	Raghida Jeranian from City Connects
For elementary schools, a representative of an early education and care provider, chosen by the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care	Brenda Powers
Community member, chosen by the chief executive of the city or town	Marchelle Raynor
Total number of members allowed by statute: Not more than 13 individuals	Total number of members on the Local Stakeholder Group: 11

The two most significant challenges facing the students of the Holland Elementary School are their lack of grade-level academic readiness and their social-emotional learning needs. To address these areas of need, the Local Stakeholder Group met to make recommendations for successful school practices that should be continued and those that can be improved to strengthen the instruction and curriculum, ensure students receive necessary interventions and supports to improve performance, provide social-emotional supports, engage and leverage community partners, and promote the participation and inclusion of families in their students’ learning. The Local Stakeholder Group submits the recommendations below for the Commissioner’s consideration in developing the school’s turnaround plan.

Recommendations: Instruction, Curriculum and Student Supports

The Holland Elementary School has seen measurable progress in the academic gains of ELL students (see: SEI Student Performance Data provided in supporting documents). We recommend that the practices and structures implemented for this student population be replicated across the school; specifically, the SEI teaching practices and differentiation methods (RETELL and WIDA) and the reduced and differentiated class size and levels of support currently provided for ELLs. Specific to ELL students, we recommend that the language-specific SEI Program in Vietnamese and in Spanish be maintained and expanded, as both are critical strategies that have proven effective for addressing our large and diverse ELL population. Specific to Students with Disabilities (SWD), we recommend that a SPED resource teacher be added at each grade level to provide push-in services for SWD. In addition, we recommend using the Henderson School’s model for how resources are allocated to develop a similarly effective instructional delivery structure for SWD at the Holland Elementary School. (More information about the Henderson School’s fully inclusive model can be found at <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/829>.)

Intensive one-on-one tutoring for students has also led to gains. As such, we recommend the development of a consistent and intensive school-wide program of tutoring to address the grade-level readiness issues, particularly when academic gaps exceed two grade levels.¹

¹ The school and district can provide additional information about Holland’s existing tutoring program if requested.

Furthermore, we recommend that the foundational work that has been accomplished to address the diverse and intense social-emotional needs of Holland Elementary School students continue and expand. Specifically, the PBIS model, the Open Circle Curriculum, the Student Support Team (SST), the City Connects services and the school-based social worker are all essential supports.

Recommendations: Instructional Coaching and Professional Development

Currently, teachers at the Holland Elementary School benefit greatly from the support and training provided by coaching.² However, the coaching provided is intermittent. Therefore, we recommend that **full time** ELA and Math coaches be assigned to the Holland Elementary School to plan and deliver quality, targeted professional development in direct and immediate response to emerging student data and the instructional needs of students. These dedicated building coaches would then be available to model, coach and follow up with teachers in classrooms for embedded coaching. They would be directly involved in the continuous cycle of improvement and able to be immediately responsive to emerging needs of the students and staff.

Dedicated professional development time is also available through the additional 100 hours allocated to all turnaround schools. We recommend that a portion of these additional hours be reallocated to increase learning time for students to allow for more core instruction and targeted interventions. With the inclusion of two content-based coaches in the school building, additional professional learning opportunities for staff can be embedded during the instructional day in addition to the time already provided outside of the students' instructional day. We recommend that all formal professional development opportunities be targeted, specific, purposeful training opportunities that are connected to practice and immediately translate to student performance gains.

Recommendations: Assessment

We recognize the critical value of formative and summative assessment in the instructional cycle of continuous improvement as a means to assess effectiveness of instruction and make necessary mid-course corrections. However, we believe that Holland Elementary School students are being assessed too frequently, which we feel negatively impacts academic learning time and staffing availability due to the demands of testing accommodations and test administration. We recommend the following:

- Inventory and refine the number of assessments administered to students. Eliminate those that overlap and keep those that provide timely and standards-based results that directly inform instructional revision, interventions and flexible grouping.
- Coordinate the annual testing schedule to create consistent data cycles (6-8 weeks) so that thoughtful analysis and instructional planning can be done that impacts student achievement and growth.
- Using the NAPE testing procedures as a model, provide extra staffing support for implementing testing accommodations for SWD and for the individual testing required for ACCESS. This will ensure both proper test administration and that regular core instruction and interventions are not impacted by regular school staff being pulled from duties for extensive periods of time.

Recommendations: Staffing Capacity

We recommend working with district human resources to develop a robust plan to both hire and retain effective teachers with instructional skills to do turnaround work. This will build the long-term capacity

² The school and district can provide additional information about Holland's existing coaching program if requested.

and team of staff at the Holland Elementary School. We recommend the following positions be retained or added to the faculty to provide additional staffing capacity:

- A full time, dedicated social worker to address students' social-emotional learning needs;
- A full time, dedicated data analyst and coach to customize and analyze student results as well as provide feedback and coaching to instructional staff;
- A full time, dedicated coordinator of community partners to ensure coordination among partners and with the school and to align goals to those of the school;
- A full time staff member assigned to raise funds for the school to bolster available resources;
- An interventionist assigned to each grade level to provide targeted interventions for struggling students; and
- As noted in the "instructional coaching" section above, full time ELA and math coaches.

Recommendations: Partners

Throughout the three years of turnaround, the Holland Elementary School has benefited from partnerships with several critical community organizations. However, not all partners began working with the Holland Elementary School during the first year of turnaround. It is only in the last year that the school has benefitted from the complementary services of four key partners: Teach Plus, City Connects, City Year and the Lesley Literacy Collaborative (currently being implemented in K-2). We recommend that this group of partners be maintained at the Holland Elementary School because their complementary services provide critical instructional, academic, social-emotional, and out-of-school time supports for students. In addition to continuing these partnerships, we recommend expanding the Lesley Literacy Collaborative to grades K-5. We recommend hiring a school-based staff member to coordinate services of partners and to align goals, monitor progress, and make ongoing adjustments to ensure that services and supports synchronize with the strategic initiatives of the Holland School; it will be essential that sufficient time is dedicate to ensure this alignment and coordination. (See supporting documents for additional information regarding Holland's partners.)

Recommendations: Parent Outreach and Involvement

We recognize that family and community outreach is a priority for the development and achievement of the students at the Holland Elementary School. The school has successfully implemented numerous events, initiatives and programs to engage families in their students' academic success. We recommend building on current family engagement successes in these ways:

- Ensure community events are strategically leveraged to not only build relationships and trust with families, but also to link school goals and priorities to these important opportunities;
- Maintain the newly-formed Parent Student Community Engagement subcommittee of the School Climate Team and connect their work to that of the Family Community Outreach Coordinator (FCOC) to meet the diverse and challenging issues of families and to progress monitor impact on student achievement;
- Form a family focus group to survey the opinions and vision of the families to provide the Holland families with an opportunity to shape school activities that will engage families. Use a skilled facilitator knowledgeable in family outreach and involvement to ensure the focus group is properly empowered;
- Develop a consistent schedule and protocols for family conferencing and conversations with teachers and staff to receive updates on student performance and progress;
- Maintain the successful protocol of distributing the first report card only after the teacher has met with the student's parent or guardian;
- Investigate and use best practices at other schools as a model for development in this area;

- Narrow the role of the FCOC to focus on family outreach and involvement, given that the scope of the work in this area is great enough. Community and partner coordination should be the focus of another recommended position.

The Local Stakeholder Group has provided the following documents in support of its recommendations:

- Holland Partnership Map: Community Partnerships
- History of Partners During Turnaround
- Holland Local Stakeholder Group (LSG): Requests for Additional Data
- Quality School Plans Overview
- Data Vista Strategic School Plan Draft
- Lesley University Literacy Collaborative materials
- SEI Student Performance Data

Appendix: Purpose, Intended Outcomes, and Discussion Topics
for John P. Holland Elementary School LSG Meetings

Upon designation as a Level 5 school, state law requires that the Commissioner develop a Turnaround Plan for accelerated improvement and outlines a timeline and process accordingly. The first step in this process is for the Commissioner to convene a local stakeholder group. The guidance below is designed to help Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) members understand that process.

Purpose of the Level 5 School LSG

- To engage in an evidence-based conversation regarding the core issues and challenges facing Holland Elementary School and identify what the school community believes are the key challenges creating barriers to its students' academic progress.
- To make recommendations to the Commissioner about the key components of his turnaround plan for the Holland, "in order to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students."

The Commissioner has chosen to increase the intensity to a Level 5 intervention for Holland because he believes that despite the efforts taken during the first three years of turnaround, a different mix of interventions and practices are required to put the conditions in place for an educational experience that prepares all of Holland's students to succeed. He looks forward to the LSG's ideas for how to create substantial change at the school – change that will secure rapid improvement in the academic achievement of students.

Intended Outcomes

Through the LSG's discussion and exploration of the data, to generate a set of rigorous, evidence-based recommendations that will provide the Commissioner with input directly from the Holland community and advise him as he creates his Level 5 Turnaround Plan.

The Local Stakeholder Group will consider

- The key **issues and challenges** facing the school, and the district's support of the school;
- The impact and sufficiency of the **strategies and supports** employed by the school to date – what has worked, what has not worked;
- The **school's and district's capacity**—including its systems, polices, and use of resources—to fully implement proposed strategies; and
- The **interventions and practices** that are most likely to promote rapid improvement of student achievement.

Within 45 days of its initial meeting, the stakeholder group shall make its recommendations to the Commissioner. Meetings of the local stakeholder group shall be open to the public and the recommendations submitted to the Commissioner shall be publicly available upon submission.

Meeting focus areas and discussion questions are described below.

Meeting #1: What does the evidence tell us about the key issues and challenges facing the Holland?

Data will be presented regarding the school and its performance.

Questions for discussion:

- What do the data tell us about where the school is now? What do we know about changes to the data over the past three years?
- What do the data tell us about the school's core assets and strengths?
- What do the data tell us about the school's core challenge areas?
- How is Holland using data now to inform instruction? How does the school select the most relevant data to use? What are the Holland's greatest strengths in using data? Greatest challenges?
- What data tools, skills would the school need to push the school to the next level?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can better use data tools, skills, and resources to improve instruction?

Meeting #2: How can Holland support all students to learn at the highest levels?

Information will be presented regarding the school's existing structures and supports that facilitate all students' learning.

Questions for discussion:

- What do LSG members believe to be the most significant academic challenges at the school?
- What strategies has the school already tried to overcome these academic challenges? What worked? What didn't work?
- What strategies can the school try to improve literacy in the early grades?
- What specific supports has the school tried to facilitate English Language Learners' (ELLs') learning? Are they working? How do you know?
- What specific supports has the school tried to facilitate the learning of students with special needs? Are they working? How do you know?
- What strategies can the school try to improve science?

- Is the school currently challenging all students to work to their highest potential? If not, what specific actions can be taken to increase the level of rigor in Holland's instruction?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can support all students to learn at the highest levels?

Meeting #3: How can the Holland maximize the assets and talents of partners to improve students' learning?

Information will be presented regarding existing partnerships with the school.

Questions for discussion:

- What partners currently work at the school? In what academic and non-academic areas do they provide support?
- What areas do you believe need partner support? How can partners be utilized to build on recent improvements in Holland students' attendance?
- What structures are in place to align partner efforts with school goals?

- What structures are in place to coordinate efforts between partners?
- If you had to pick just three of the school's current partner initiatives to continue, which would you select? Why? Is there evidence to show how these partners are being effective in the school?
- Does the school have an unaddressed (or under-addressed) challenge area that you believe could benefit by a partner's support? Which one, and why?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can maximize the assets and talents of partners to improve students' learning?

Meeting #4: How can the Holland maximize the engagement and support of family and community members for students' learning?

Information will be presented regarding existing family (family members of students at the school) and community (other community members or organizations unrelated to students at the school) engagement efforts at the school.

Questions for discussion:

- While engagement varies by individual, how would you rate the overall level of family member engagement at the school (low/medium/high)? What evidence supports this rating?
- While engagement varies by individual, how would you rate the overall level of community engagement at the school (low/medium/high)? What evidence supports this rating?
- What structures are in place to encourage family member and community engagement at the school? (e.g. regular, frequent schedule of calls to students' families; annual community open house, etc.) Are they working? How do you know?
Note: Please identify school-wide efforts, not unique efforts by individual teachers or staff members.
- How do school leaders and/or the school's partners bolster the school's structures to encourage family member and community engagement? What has worked? What else could school leadership and/or partners do to facilitate engagement?
- How can family and community members' talents be incorporated into the strategy to improve the school's academic performance?
- How can family and community members be part of the strategy to help improve Holland students' attendance?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can maximize family and community members' support to maximize students' learning?

Note: A portion of this meeting will be used to finalize the recommendations made across all meetings.