



# Holyoke Public Schools

57 Suffolk Street- Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Tel. (413) 534-2005 Fax. (413) 534-2297

spaez@hps.holyoke.ma.us

Dr. Sergio Paez, Superintendent of Schools

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May 19, 2014

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
c/o Rhoda E. Schneider, General Counsel ([rschneider@doe.mass.edu](mailto:rschneider@doe.mass.edu))  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Re: Appeal Concerning Final "Level 5" Turnaround Plan for the Morgan Elementary School in Holyoke, Massachusetts

Dear General Counsel Schneider:

With regard to the final Morgan Elementary School Turnaround Plan ("Plan") referenced in your letter dated April 18, 2014, please accept this appeal on behalf of the Holyoke School Committee pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 69, Section 1J. This appeal is based on G.L. c. 69, Section 1J(q)(1) ("such modifications would further promote the rapid academic achievement of students in the applicable school").

The Holyoke School Committee at its meeting on May 5, 2014, voted unanimously to authorize this appeal which relates to the component of the Plan that contemplates an English Language Learner (ELL) Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) that will work to champion student learning and raise achievement at Morgan. Specifically, the School Committee seeks through this appeal to expand this extremely worthwhile endeavor by incorporating, as well, a "Special Education Parent Advisory Committee" (SEPAC) which would be established along the same guidelines as the English Language Learners Parent Advisory Committee (proposed timeline: Summer 2014). It would be launched to cultivate parent leadership and advocacy around serving students with learning disabilities. Through SEPAC, Morgan will recruit and develop parent leaders who play an active role in shaping and enacting a range of school and community initiatives.

The Committee believes that the inclusion of SEPAC would be an important step, like PAC, that would promote the rapid academic achievement of students at Morgan. As the Plan reflects, students with disabilities along with English Language Learner students represent substantial segments of the "high needs" populations at Morgan to be served by the Plan. The relevant statute also provides that in creating the Plan consideration should be given to implementing important steps to address the social service and health needs of all students at the school *and their families* as well as steps designed to address achievement gaps for limited English proficient, *special education* and low-income students. G.L. 69, Section 1J(n). Just as PAC is intended under the Plan to increase the success of English Language Learner (ELL) students by advocating for the families of these students and bridge the gap between Morgan and ELL student parent(s) and families, SEPAC would function in the same manner for Morgan students with learning disabilities and their parent(s) and families.

"A community working together to prepare our students for their future."

On behalf of the Holyoke School Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide our input.

Sincerely,

**Signed by Dr. Sergio Páez**

Dr. Sergio Páez, Secretary  
Holyoke School Committee

cc: Mayor Morse, Chair, Holyoke School Committee  
Devin Sheehan, Vice Chair, Holyoke School Committee  
Holyoke School Committee Members  
Commissioner Mitchell Chester