



Hello,

The Holyoke Teachers Association eagerly awaits such efforts as Acting Education Commissioner Russell Johnston's provisional approval to end state receivership of Holyoke Public Schools, anticipated for July 1, 2025. The Holyoke Public School system has been in state receivership since 2015.

This is a pivotal moment to free our members' collective right and voice to fight for the best possible outcomes for Holyoke students. The Holyoke Teachers Association is ready to work alongside community members and leadership to nurture a school system that supports the holistic needs of students and their families. **We believe a fundamental part of this transition is a superintendent search and restored collective bargaining process without the problematic constraints of receivership. This is HTA's priority as we enter our next round of contract negotiations in 2025.**

Receivership has unjustly silenced educators who are passionate advocates for the needs of their students. Our unions have been forced into "consultation" with the state over our working conditions, limiting our collective bargaining rights. Without authentic bargaining, working conditions have worsened for educators in Holyoke Public Schools. We look forward to addressing such important issues as educators' right to safety in their classrooms through strong contracts and ensuring living wages and fair benefits for all teachers, paraeducators, counselors, and staff specialists. Addressing these issues is key to retaining quality Holyoke educators in the long term.

Most importantly, receivership has failed to address the socio-economic inequality that students and their families navigate in such demographically similar cities as Southbridge, Lawrence, and Holyoke – particularly affecting students of color and historically marginalized communities. When students are forced to continually prepare for high-stakes tests to produce data and metrics to move our district out of "under-performance", it vastly limits our opportunities within schools to address student needs, voice, and creativity.

After nearly ten years of state receivership, it is the Holyoke Teachers Association's goal, together with our students, caregivers, and community, to support a path towards ending the way DESE supports so-called "chronically underperforming" schools, and to set a precedent to end receivership practices we have seen throughout the state of Massachusetts.

In solidarity,

Holyoke Teachers Association