Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monday, April 27, 2015
4:05 p.m. – 8:35 p.m.
Holyoke War Memorial Building
310 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:
Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Margaret McKenna, Boston
James Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. He welcomed members of the Holyoke community to the special meeting to present their views to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on the Holyoke Public Schools and the Commissioner’s recommendation for Level 5 status. He asked Commissioner Chester to make an opening comment. The Commissioner said his recommendation is based on concern for the future of young people in Holyoke and the persistent and pervasive low performance of the district. He said receivership does not mean mass firings or privatization but it is different from business as usual.
Commissioner Chester said if the Board endorses his recommendation, he would name a receiver in the next two months, convene a local stakeholder group to help guide development of a turnaround plan, and begin implementing it in the fall. He said he makes his recommendation with a profound sense of responsibility to everyone in the community, especially to the students.

Chair Sagan invited public comment from the audience. The following individuals addressed the Board on the Holyoke Public Schools and the Commissioner’s recommendation for Level 5 status:

Invited Officials and Representatives:
Mayor Alex Morse
State Senator Donald Humason
State Representative Aaron Vega
Superintendent Sergio Paez
School Committee Vice-Chair Devin Sheehan
School Committee Member Dennis Birks
City Councilor Todd McGee
Holyoke Teachers Association President Gus Morales
Parent Representative Kelly Przekopowski
Holyoke Parents and Families:
Tahara Baldwin
Libby Hernandez
Gary Enright
Alana Shirley
Paul Lusignan
Juan Vidal Martinez
Christine LaBoursoliere
Erin Brunelle
Tricia Roy
Elizabeth A. Butler
Sarah McIntyre
Sandra Harnois
Michael Moriarty
Christine Valois
Attorney Nyles Courcha
Paula Burke
Josie Porter
Bobby Stanton
Mary McAndrew

Holyoke Students:
Jovonnie Marnero
Verenyse Vargas
Nayarit Mendez
Shaniyah Torres
Jesús A. Rivera
Finn Montalvo
Summer Kaeppel
Zachary Torres
Corey Edwards

Holyoke School Staff:
John Breish, Sullivan Principal
Karyn McDermott
Gia Santaniello
Anna Rigali
Mark Ostroff
Mary Brazeau
Amy Drohan
Yari Rodriguez
Andrew Verrocchi
Angela Thatcher
Carol Hepworth, Director of Special Education

Holyoke Community Members:
Dr. Sonia Pope
Tamara Lawrence
Darlene Elias
Dean Nimmer
Kimberly Beauregard
Beth Brogle
Helen A. Florio, Executive Director, Holyoke Taxpayers
Kathleen Anderson, President, Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce
Susan Van Pelt
Gladys Lebron-Martinez, Holyoke City Councilor
Hazel Rosario
Lorraine Gurham
Barbara C. Bernard
Mike Sullivan
John McAndrew
Daniel Glanville
Shelley Whelihan
Joe McGiverin, Holyoke City Councilor
James Leahy, Holyoke City Councilor

Chair Sagan thanked the many members of the Holyoke community who attended the meeting and expressed their views. He said Board members value all the comments and will take into account all the information they have received as they consider their decision.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board