

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education releases New Bedford Public Schools from state monitoring

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has concluded its monitoring of New Bedford Public Schools' implementation of its Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) and has expressed its confidence in the district's ability to continue its track record of progress under the plan and leadership's strategy.

In a letter dated July 14 to Superintendent Dr. Pia Durkin, Senior Associate Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Dr. Russell Johnston, wrote, "As recent AIP monitoring reports have indicated, the district has made great strides to address the systemic concerns raised in the 2011 district review, which was the impetus for engaging the district in the AIP process. District and school leaders have used this process to develop, embed, and sustain systems for planning, implementing, and analyzing strategies to improve teaching and learning across the district. While there is much work to be done to ensure that all New Bedford students receive a strong education and achieve at high levels, I am confident that the district has effective processes in place in order to continue to bring about meaningful improvement."

The DESE will continue its quarterly progress reports to the New Bedford School Committee on the Parker School and pledges "to work closely with the district to track the progress of its two Level 4 schools, New Bedford High School and Hayden/McFadden Elementary."

Dr. Johnston's letter concluded with praise for the district's continued progress. "I commend you, your staff, and the New Bedford community for your commitment to improving outcomes for students," he wrote.

In thanking DESE officials for their continued support and guidance, Superintendent Pia Durkin added, "This is a major milestone in New Bedford's reform journey. The release of the designated state monitor clearly confirms that our district-wide efforts to implement systemic change in our schools has provided the confidence to DESE that we have the right strategy, we are doing the right work, and we are on the right track. I am tremendously proud of New Bedford's principals, teachers, staff and, most importantly, our students and families who have sustained the work in making progress. This validation by the DESE drives us all to redouble our efforts to continue the momentum."

"DESE's decision is further validation of the progress of New Bedford Public Schools, and the hard work of the administration and staff. On behalf of New Bedford's families, we remain determined to keep the system on the steady path of improvement," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.