

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SUPPORT STANDARD

The principal's job description grants the principal the clear authority to supervise the school's educational program and the structure of the school. Through the Educational Reform Act, the principal is given autonomy and decision-making authority.

The job description states that the principal works with the School Council to develop and implement a building improvement plan consistent with the goals and objectives as established by the Holyoke School Committee. The principal develops an effective and meaningful relationship with the entire local community. He develops a plan in connection with the Curriculum Director and Academic Coordinator. The Principal is also responsible for developing effective in-service programs for all staff in concert with the district's plan, mission and goals. This promotes and strengthens a strong and active School Council. The principal acts on a regular basis to administer comprehensive testing programs and to develop in conjunction with the School Council an annual budget. The principal submits semi-annual progress reports and supervises and supports all extracurricular activities at the school. In addition, he projects future needs concerning student enrollment, training and the monitoring of student attendance.

The principal has the authority in the operation of the school as long as School Committee policy is followed. The principal makes various budget requests to both the superintendent and the school committee. The principal supports teachers and learning needs by reviewing academic data with the Leadership Team. To determine student strengths and weaknesses, he consistently provides test data to department heads and teachers. To strengthen instruction, the principal is constantly requesting additional staff, upgrading school technology,

providing opportunities for staff professional development and accessing grant funding for student programs. The principal works to adopt and maintain safety net programs such as MCAS Monday, MCAS prep, Connections and Gear-Up. He has eliminated “Survey” (basic level) courses and strengthened the curriculum by adding honors courses to grade nine and expanding Advanced Placement course offerings. **The principal has adequate autonomy and decision making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.**

The principal plays a leadership role in the development of new proposals and instructional programs and in the development of the school’s mission statement. He is constantly monitoring the staff and students to ensure that the goals of the mission statement are being implemented throughout the school environment.

The principal is a visible force in the day to day operation of Holyoke High School (HHS). He is constantly visiting classrooms and monitoring the hallways and adjacent outside grounds.

The principal facilitates the leadership team meetings on a regular basis (bi-weekly or as needed). His goal is to ensure that academic concerns are addressed and educational policies are being followed. The Leadership Team functions as a liaison among the principal, faculty and students.

The principal acknowledges the academic success of students by ensuring that honor roll letters are sent out to parents as well as by having the names of honor roll students posted prominently in the school. He also promotes other programs such as the Renaissance Program and Gear-Up which are designed to recognize student achievement in both social and academic areas.

The safety and security of the students and staff is provided for by the practice of routine fire drills, bus evacuation drills, regular locker checks and periodic electronic metal detector searches. The principal works with the school resource officer to maintain order as well as to provide a safe environment. **Through these policies the principal has provided leadership in the school community.**

Holyoke High School administration consists of one principal and four assistant principals. Each assistant principal is responsible for student management and discipline of one of the four grades by enforcing rules and policies that are outlined in the student handbook. Each assistant principal also has additional administrative duties such as school operations, student services and activities, instructional supervision or curriculum. Assistant principals are involved with parents and make referrals to several outside agencies including the Department of Youth Services, Department of Social Services, counseling agencies, police, and community organizations. The administrators also work closely with all in-school programs such as the school nurses, teen clinic, mediation, the guidance department, Gear-Up, Upward Bound and America's Choice Ramp-Up. Their involvement with these programs is vital in driving the mission statement. Administrators keep abreast of current issues through participation in professional development activities.

Holyoke High School has a Leadership Team consisting of teacher representatives from all departments who meet on a regular basis with the principal to discuss school issues. Through this forum, which allows the principal to communicate to all departments and staff, teachers have an open discussion with the principal on important topics facing the school. The Leadership Team provides recommendations about school organization, rules, professional development, and curriculum.

Teachers are also involved in committee work covering curriculum development, school security policies, and rules. Teachers also work closely with all in-school programs and keep up with current issues and techniques through professional development. **Teachers and administrators together have ample opportunities to exhibit leadership and initiative for school improvement.**

Although no organizational chart exists for Holyoke High School, all school programs report directly to the principal. All administrators support teachers and staff. The size of the school supports and enhances student personalization. Smaller learning communities have been investigated as a means of breaking the larger school into more personalized units. During the school year 2004-2005, a transitional academy was established which serves students entering high school who did not have the necessary academic skills to succeed in a regular ninth grade curriculum. It has since continued with modifications. Additional programs to address the needs of non-traditional students are greatly needed, and establishing an alternative high school needs to be explored. **Therefore, HHS is keeping current with new trends in organizing its school. It is making strides in developing new programs to enhance student learning.**

All students have the opportunity to access any course appropriate to their grade level and to the goals of the mission statement. Levels of classes in academic departments include standard, honors, and Advanced Placement. Data has been compiled by the School and Community Profile Committee on the distribution of students from the school's various ethnic and socioeconomic categories in various levels and types of courses or sequence of courses.

The Special Education Department employs multiple strategies to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, have equal access to the same curriculum and expectations for student learning. The curriculum of all of the programs is aligned to meet the Massachusetts State Standards as well as individual needs per Individual Educational Plans. Two self-contained

classes exist for developmentally delayed students. Replacement model classes service students with major academic deficits. They include courses in English, Ramp-Up English, Mathematics, Ramp-Up Mathematics, World History, U.S. History, Biology, and Reading. The Resource Room provides support to learning disabled students. Students utilizing this model attend classes within the mainstream and attend daily class in the resource room to learn study skills and receive support in their mainstream coursework. An Inclusion consultant is available to provide support to classroom teachers of identified students by giving suggestions for accommodations in instruction and assessment. Inclusion models have been used at HHS; however, more academic support is needed for the influx of both inclusion and transient students. Business technology was the first area to establish a co-teaching model. However, it was discontinued due to lack of staff. A co-teaching model in grade 9 English was established during the school year 2005-2006 and has been extended into the tenth grade during the 2006-2007 year. **Student grouping reflects the diversity of the student body, fosters heterogeneity, and reflects sound educational practice.**

The master schedule of HHS has been changing over the last 5 years. A traditional 6-7 period schedule of 45-55 min had been run for years. A daily rotating schedule has been in effect for 2 years. Teachers in all subject areas are required to spend a period of time every Monday addressing MCAS preparation. A new program, America's Choice Ramp-Up, has been launched for students in 9th grade who are up to two years below grade level, and it requires a double block period of time in mathematics and/or English. In September 2005, school started one hour later (8:15 a.m.) in an attempt to increase student performance. Many teachers feel that the old schedule and more electives would allow for more flexibility in students' scheduling. **Although the revised schedule is followed, the majority of the students and staff prefer an**

earlier starting time. The present schedule limits after school work opportunities for students and causes conflicts with extra-curricular activities with area schools.

Holyoke High School offers many opportunities to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. Students at H.H.S. have a voice in the decision-making process through representation at all School Committee meetings. The two elected student representatives serve as student liaisons who provide input and address concerns of the student body. Parents contribute to the decision-making process through the School Improvement Council. Parents also play important roles in organizations such as athletic booster clubs and “Band Parents”. There is still a great need for more parent and community involvement to help promote the success of students.

The faculty and staff exercise a role in decision making through the Leadership Team, which is composed of the principal, an assistant principal, department chairpersons, and elected faculty-at-large members. All areas of the school staff are represented on the Leadership Team, which meets approximately once a week to deal with school-related issues. Monthly faculty meetings and monthly department meetings allow sufficient opportunity for input on all matters that pertain to the staff and faculty. **Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are present at HHS. All members of the staff have ample opportunity to participate in the responsibility and ownership of the school.**

There are no official cap sizes on most classes. Academic class sizes in regular education range from 2 - 91, with an average class size of 20.9 (as indicated on page 11 of School and Community Profile dated 11-2-2005). Special education classes range from 5 - 13, with an average class size of 7.9. However, there are occasional unreasonable overloads in particular classes. When overloads occur, teachers work with guidance and the administration to attempt to solve these issues. Some issues are not resolved due in part to the lack of elective

courses. Programs with state or national mandates on class size, such as special education and Read 180, meet the state requirement. Attempts are made to meet the requirement for number of teacher aides needed in special education programs. Hiring more teachers would lower the teacher/student ratio to better meet the needs of all students. **When class size remains reasonable and when guidelines are followed, student academic achievement is better realized.**

The implementation of a student mentoring program is under development for the 2006-2007 school year and will incorporate all grades at HHS. The program will enhance student learning by promoting the personal growth of students and professional growth of staff. The mentor program will foster collegiality, encourage best practices, and create a culture of support with a community of learners. **This program will be established in the near future to meet the needs of students.**

All school staff is involved in collaboration within and across departments in support of learning for all students. Teachers receive feedback from curriculum coordinators on MCAS. All departments make use of open response questions, and the English Department is responsible for a five paragraph essay bi-annually. All teachers participate in MCAS Mondays, a program wherein part of each Monday class is dedicated to MCAS-related work.

Advanced Placement teachers are offered the opportunity to attend an Advanced Placement Seminar and to collaborate on the high school syllabus. SAT preparations are offered by a mathematics and an English teacher on alternating days. The Physical Education Department, when appropriate, team teaches and collaborates daily on grading, discipline, and activities.

During monthly department meetings, teachers exchange ideas and discuss issues. Co-planning for inclusion classes is conducted by special education teachers and a content teacher.

Many teachers feel that the principal could be more flexible with scheduling in order to give teachers an opportunity to be more creative with the curriculum. **Common planning time for interaction/dialogue among department members is needed to continue progress in this area.**

The principal provides an environment which enables students to achieve their academic potential. He also provides opportunities to his staff to meet the rigorous demands of State Education Reform. District policy dictates that each school has a Building Based Support Team (BBST) to handle pre-referrals for possible SPED placement and for 504 accommodation plans. The environment could also be improved with the purchase of more technology equipment and the updating of the science facilities.

The assistant principals provide support to the principal, teachers and students by ensuring that the educational flow is not compromised. In addition they are a vital link to the community.

The custodians' attention to safety and cleanliness of the building provides teachers and students the opportunity to work in a building which promotes respect, pride and civic responsibility. Other staff members such as coaches, the athletic trainer, the nurses, and the mediator enhance the high school experience. Coaches promote a philosophy which focuses on the full range of the students' athletic experience. The athletic trainer provides physical, emotional and educational support and rehabilitation. The nurses promote the physical and mental well-being of the students. The mediator provides students with a way to resolve problems before they escalate. **It is evident that all school staff demonstrates a concern in promoting the well-being and learning of students.**

The school believes it is important to let students know how much their efforts contribute to their community. The HHS faculty reaches out on a daily basis to acknowledge students'

efforts to make the school and the city better places. The school publishes and displays the honor roll in a glass case in the school's foyer. Also, throughout the building, there are many public display cases and bulletin boards to showcase student work. Students' art exhibits and murals have been displayed at local museums and the public library. Information is also provided to the local newspapers and the local television channels on student achievement such as "Champions of Character", and the "As Schools Match Wits" academic team. This same information is displayed on the school website, which also contains pictures, maps, and video clips of musical performances and sing-a-longs at area nursing homes.

Students' athletic accomplishments are displayed throughout the school. As a way of recognizing interscholastic sports, members are acknowledged at team award banquets at the end of each individual sports season. A pep rally is the culminating event of the fall football season. Special groups such as madrigal singers, the bell choir, and jazz band enhance the school and offer students the opportunity to display their creative talents. Rising Stars is another program that acknowledges students' academic achievement and school citizenship. In addition, organizations such as Student Council, Peer Mediation, the school newspaper, the annual musical, the yearbook, a district wide newsletter, Class Day scholarships, and the Renaissance and Connections programs are ways in which recognition is brought to groups as well as to individual students. **These examples demonstrate both the success of students and students' connection to the school's vision statement.**

Holyoke High School has several supports in place to foster a safe, positive environment. New programs are being established to enhance students' sense of well-being and feelings of investment in their school. It is the intention that this atmosphere will carry over into school performance and enhance a sense of academic, social and emotional development.

Many of the school's organizations such as Connections and sports teams encourage peer relationships and opportunities for leadership roles. The mission of the Connections program is to enhance the knowledge, skills and interests of participating students to support their social, emotional and physical development. This strengthens their connection to peers, teachers and the community and correlates directly with the high school mission statement.

The main goal of the Holyoke Public Schools is to provide an education for all students in a safe and secure learning environment and, in doing so, instill a sense of responsibility to become upstanding citizens of the City of Holyoke. The discipline handbook is designed to support the school's mission statement. The goal is for students, staff and administrators to treat each other with respect, dignity and civility. There is a need to address a more consistent discipline policy. Many measures have been implemented to increase students' attendance and to reduce tardiness. These include attendance officers, Saturday School, warning letters to parents (3, 6, and 9 days of absence), later starting time, and close monitoring by vice principals and guidance counselors of student attendance.

The fact that students feel a sense of pride and ownership in the school is evidenced by the number of students involved in an extensive number of extra-curricular activities and sports. Acts of vandalism are few, infrequent and attended to immediately. In addition, school pride is exhibited through the annual football rally, School Spirit Week and the student-faculty volleyball game.

Holyoke High School has a School Resource Officer (SRO) from the Holyoke Police Department on staff. The School Resource Officer Program is a collaborative effort by a law enforcement officer, educators, students, parents and the community to provide a safe school environment. The goal of the SRO is to reduce crime, drug abuse, and violence within the school as well as to provide a connection to the community.

According to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Public Secondary Schools Self-Study Survey Results, the students, faculty and parents show areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding safety issues. There is general agreement by all that the school buildings are well-maintained. An overwhelming number of staff members feel safe at school, but the number is less for parents and students. There is a need to improve the overall faculty morale to ensure a positive school environment. There are some discrepancies between the students' perception of pride and acknowledgment of the school and the staff's. **Overall the climate of the school is safe, positive and supportive.**

Since Ed Reform became law in 1993, the school board is limited to the following duties: establishing school policy, setting the school budget, and selecting the district's superintendent. The school board bases its decision on committee recommendations that stem from implementing the school's vision statement. This is accomplished through monthly meetings of the board's committees and sub-committees. These committees have monthly open public meetings, and they provide reports at the full board meetings. The school board meets bi-monthly during the school year. These meetings are announced and provide a time for the public to speak on issues pertaining to the school.

The district's governing body has recently endorsed the vision statement that is visible in the school and in the conference room where the committee meetings are held. The board refers to the vision statement when making important policy decisions.

A student handbook is located in the offices of the principal and assistant principals. The code of conduct handout details school penalties for skipping class, drug, alcohol, and tobacco violations and violent behavior in school. This handout is made available to students and parents upon request. **The school committee continues to hold the staff to the highest**

professional standards by both welcoming and encouraging input from staff, students, and the community as it deliberates on the best course of action for the district.

When the school's practices are compared to the Leadership and Organization Standard Rating Guide, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category.

Adopted by the staff on January 18, 2007

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION STANDARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teaching and learning at Holyoke High School are greatly determined by the leadership and organization of the school. The leadership at Holyoke High School is committed to the learning of all students. The school's leadership reflects the strategies and practices needed to bring a diverse student population forward in the 21st Century. Across curricula, the school committee and administration support the implementation of the school's vision statement.

The school committee and superintendent ensure that the principal has adequate autonomy and authority to guide the school in its vision to fulfill the state-mandated expectations. The principal provides leadership that enhances student expectations for student learning. However, socio-economic issues, language differences and other factors limit the effectiveness of overall community participation.

The principal has exhibited leadership by implementing several changes during his tenure. The elimination of block scheduling, addition of MCAS Mondays, AP courses, and tutoring programs are examples of academic leadership.

The students attending Holyoke High School cover a wide spectrum of academic ability. The principal and organization of the school allow all students to be successful whether the task is improving an MCAS score or gaining acceptance to an elite college.

Since the Educational Reform Act of 1993, teachers have had to assume a variety of leadership roles at HHS. This transition has enabled teachers to serve on committees, develop new curricula and initiate new programs. The leadership and structure of the school's organization provides a daily opportunity for teachers to act in leadership capacities.

Course offerings, scheduling, teaching techniques, and extra curricular activities reflect the diversity and heterogeneity of the student body. Student work and achievement are regularly acknowledged and displayed. The honor roll, Hispanic Heritage Week, Black History Month, spring musical, holiday show, spring concert, National Honor Society induction, Renaissance Program, talent show and sports banquets are examples of the celebration of student work. The vision statement works to prepare all students to become life-long learners academically, civically and socially. To fully implement the civic and social learning expectations for students, more creative strategies need to be developed.

There are adequate decision making opportunities for students, parents and staff members to address any concerns that may arise during the school year. Opportunities for collaboration are available among parents, students and staff. However, there is a need to expand community participation.

Overall the climate of the school is safe, positive and supportive. Holyoke High School strives to maintain a professional atmosphere that is committed to following the school's mission statement.

When the school's practices are compared to the Leadership and Organization Standard Rating Guide, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION STANDARD
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Strengths

- Faculty and staff
- Four assistant principals (an increase of one from the 2005-2006 academic year)
- Seven guidance counselors (an increase of two from the 2005-2006 academic year)
- Improved student attendance
- Visibility of the principal in the building
- Saturday School
- In-House suspension for discipline
- Inclusion training
- After school enrichment programs
- Monthly staff meetings to keep staff informed
- Bi-weekly leadership team meetings
- Diversity of the student body
- Discipline
- Leadership role of the principal
- Clear vision statement
- Wide range of school programs (co-curricular and extra-curricular)
- Increased level of expectations for staff and students
- Safe and secure grounds and building

Needs

- Establish an alternative high school
- Address the scope of academic support needed for the influx of inclusion students
- Develop an ongoing program to encourage parent and community involvement
- Develop a school organizational chart
- Increase the number of smart boards, new white boards and window screens
- Continue to improve faculty morale
- Construct a new science wing
- Develop more flexibility in scheduling students
- Expand opportunities for staff collaboration
- Hire more staff to lower student/teacher ratio when class size is 20-30 plus
- Re-examine the school schedule - late starting and finishing time affects after-school activities, work commitments, and medical appointments
- Add more electives across the curriculum
- Enhance the effectiveness of social and civic participation in the school