

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Holyoke High School's vision statement and expectations for student learning were developed by the school community and approved and supported by both the faculty and the Holyoke School Committee. The Mission and Expectations for Student Learning Committee began to formulate the school's vision statement at its first meeting in June 2005. As the committee began to meet regularly in September 2005, it drew upon input from staff, students, parents, and representatives from both the school committee and the local business community. The makeup of the committee was diverse, representing the guidance department and eight academic departments as well as the above-mentioned representatives. The committee reviewed the national No Child Left Behind Act, the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, the State Curriculum Frameworks and the district's goals to determine the larger community's fundamental values and educational beliefs. The district's vision, which **represents the community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning**, addresses two specific goals with which Holyoke High School's programs are consistent: 1) Provide each student the opportunity to graduate from high school ready to pursue success without remediation and 2) Prepare each student to become a responsible citizen in a diverse, global society. Holyoke High School's vision statement, which reflects the district's goals, was approved by the faculty on June 5, 2006.

Using the State Curriculum Frameworks, the district's goals, and Holyoke High School's vision statement, the vision committee developed eight (8) student learning

expectations - four academic expectations, and two each of social and civic expectations. The document was scrutinized by faculty, parents, students, and members of the business community. Suggestions and potential amendments were noted, and further discussions by the vision committee led to revisions. In June 2006, the faculty voted to approve the eight expectations for student learning in the current form. On June 26, 2006, the Holyoke School Committee approved both the Holyoke High School Vision Statement and the eight expectations for student learning. Since that time, copies of the school's vision statement and expectations for student learning have been both posted throughout the school and included in the school's Student Handbook. In addition, the school's vision statement has been added to the bottom of the official school stationery.

In its consideration of learning expectations for students, the Mission and Expectations Committee was careful to **define school-wide academic, social, and civic learning expectations that accurately reflect the school's vision.** Since eight academic departments and the guidance department were represented on the committee, a diversity of ideas was shared regarding the expectations, and lively discussion was the norm. It was eventually decided that to be truly school-wide, the expectations needed to be defined in such a way as to be relevant to all areas of the curriculum. The committee decided upon expectations that are neither exclusionary (hence, "school-wide") nor simply "department-specific." For example, the expectation that students will "use critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning techniques" applies as well to the physical education classroom as to the mathematics classroom.

The final part of this process was the development of school-wide rubrics and the revision of unit lesson plans with respect to evaluating proficiency in meeting stated

expectations. **For each academic expectation in the vision statement, the school now has a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.** These school-wide rubrics are followed in each department and are augmented by specific assignment rubrics within each department. Rubrics are shared with students so that they can understand what they must do to demonstrate proficiency.

Just as the vision and expectations for student learning committee has developed both school-wide and departmental rubrics for the purpose of evaluating student achievement of school-wide academic expectations, so too has it identified **rubrics by which to assess the school's progress in school-wide civic and social expectations.** These rubrics are driven by data taken from discipline reports and attendance records. Athletic and extracurricular activity rosters, student participation in community service, and records of recognition related to civic and social expectations that are received by both the students and the school are usually kept by the advisers of those activities and by the athletic director where sports are concerned.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices at Holyoke High School are guided by the Vision Statement, which is consistent with district and state guidelines and grounded in the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, the State Curriculum Frameworks and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. In addition to setting higher expectations, increasing available technology resources, and increasing access to academic studies, these practices offer students access to work-based learning involving a collaboration of education and business partners; education with professional development and planning opportunities; opportunities for active learning; individualized

guidance services; extensive special education services; and a structured system of extra help, including both weekly office hours and daily after-school tutorial programs.

Clearly, **the vision statement and the school's expectations for student learning guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of Holyoke High School and are evident in the culture of the school.** The major restructuring practices at Holyoke High School such as elimination of “principles” (basic) level classes, the return of a full seven-period day, later starting and ending times for the school day, collaboration with America’s Choice on several initiatives (e.g. Ramp-up classes, 25 Books Campaign), school-wide weekly MCAS preparation, and greater access to advanced placement level classes all reflect the belief that all students should be exposed to the same challenging curriculum and that it is the obligation of the school to provide the necessary support to enable all students to take advantage of the courses and programs offered by the school. As a result, the faculty has broadened its instructional practices to include not only the traditional lecture/ discussion format, but also more active, hands-on, and cooperative/ interactive learning strategies to provide for a larger scale of learning opportunities for reinforcement of classroom learning. Moreover, the school’s business partnerships, as well as community service, peer-mediation, and diversity outreach programs all reflect Holyoke High School’s commitment to community involvement within the school.

To support these policy and procedural changes, Holyoke High School has made related decisions such as providing each student free of charge with an agenda booklet which contains not only the school’s vision statement, but also various curricular aids (grammar terms, maps, et al), suggestions for career goals, and long-and-short term planning pages. Teachers instruct students in the use of the agenda at the opening of

school in September and model its use by posting daily agenda in classes. Moreover, teachers provide students with information via unit lesson plans, syllabi, and rubrics to clarify both behavioral and academic expectations and guidelines.

While a major effort has been undertaken recently to revise the school's vision statement and to articulate learning expectations for students, it is important to note that **the school will continue to review annually the vision statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district vision, and state and national standards.** At regularly-scheduled meetings both the School Leadership Team and School Council continually evaluate the school's policies and practices and consider ways to improve the overall quality of life at Holyoke High School. One such recently-implemented program, for example, was the suggested summer reading list for all students, begun in 2006. A non-academic improvement was the tightening and clarifying of hallway pass procedures along with the clarification of expectations for faculty on hall duty. This has resulted in a marked decrease in class time hallway "traffic."

Holyoke High School has developed a clear and compelling vision statement and expectations for student learning which truly reflect the community and which drive all of the school's efforts toward providing a challenging curriculum and a variety of opportunities for its students. Therefore, when the school's practices are compared to the Mission and Expectations Standard Rating Guide, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category.

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS STANDARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision statement and the expectations for student learning were developed by a diverse group of intellects representing all constituencies within the school community as well as members of the local business community. The vision statement at Holyoke High School was approved by the faculty of the high school in June 2006. Holyoke High School's mission and expectations for student learning committee met regularly from June 2005 to September 2006 to develop the current vision statement, which is clearly representative of both the district's and the school community's fundamental beliefs about student learning and post-graduation prospects. Underscoring all of the work accomplished by the committee has been a common goal to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve high standards through a community learning affiliation.

Resulting from, and supported by, the vision statement, the eight school-wide academic, social, and civic expectations for students are clearly stated. Holyoke High School's school-wide rubrics are also clearly evident within each department and made readily available to the students. These rubrics identify a targeted level of successful achievement for each academic expectation but can be applied universally within the academic departments.

Curriculum, instruction and assessment practices at Holyoke High School are guided by the vision statement and are consistent with state and federal guidelines, including the Massachusetts Common Core of learning, the state Curriculum Frameworks, and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. The efforts to remain consistent with these programs and efforts to outreach within the business community provide

students with opportunities for active learning. To help insure the success of every student, the school provides individualized guidance services as well as a structured system of extra help, including both weekly office hours and daily after-school tutorial programs.

Just as parents, teachers, students, and members of the community were involved in the beginning stages of the vision's development, they are also involved in the process for ongoing review of the vision statement and learning expectations. To ensure that the vision statement and expectations for student learning continuously meet students' needs, the community's expectations, and state and national standards, the school will continue to review annually each process in detail. Data from a variety of different programs, such as the summer reading campaign which began in 2006, as well as polling certain individuals such as parents, teachers and students, will be the basis for this continuous review process.

A clear and compelling vision statement and expectations for student learning and achievement have been developed and truly reflect the community and drive all of the school's efforts toward providing a challenging curriculum and a variety of opportunities for the students. Therefore, when the school's practices are compared to the Mission and Expectations Standard Rating Guide, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category.

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS STANDARD
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Strengths

- The vision and expectations for student learning were developed by representatives of all constituencies within the school community and, therefore, reflect the school community's fundamental beliefs about student learning.
- The school has established measurable academic, civic, and social learning expectations that reflect the school's vision.
- The vision statement and expectations for student learning guide the curriculum and instruction.
- Teachers set high expectations and encourage high standards.
- The faculty is willing to embark on new initiatives through involvement in America's Choice, business partnerships, and professional development in keeping with the school's vision and expectations for student learning.
- The school community is committed to ongoing review of the vision statement and expectations for student learning to ensure that both continue to reflect their beliefs and values about student learning.
- Students are kept informed of, and involved in, ongoing changes.

Needs

- Define further the levels of achievement for each expectation.
- Increase the responsibility taken by students for their learning.

- Continue the work by administrators, teachers, and parents on increasing and improving ninth grade success rates.
- Continue efforts to involve members of the school community in the ongoing review of the school's vision and expectations for student learning.

Increase collaboration both within the school and between the school and community at large.