

**SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE**  
**HOLYOKE HIGH SCHOOL**  
**HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS**

The first settlement in Holyoke appeared as early as 1725, and Holyoke, Massachusetts was incorporated as a city in 1873. The city, which bears the name of Captain Elizur Holyoke who explored the Connecticut River Valley in the 1830's, gave birth to the game of volleyball at the Holyoke Y.M.C.A. in 1895.

Not widely known is the fact that Holyoke, with its system of canals, was the first planned industrial city in the United States. Today, however, the majority of local business is service-oriented. Once known as the "The Paper City," Holyoke has lost, over the years, many of the factories that formerly thrived in the city due to an uncertain, difficult economic climate. This is reflected in the 2004 United States Census, which indicates a 7.3% unemployment rate in the city compared to the state rate of 5.1%. A total number of 10,573 residents out of the total population of 40,058 are served by cash assisted programs and/or Medicaid and/or food stamps. This census also states that 26.4% of Holyoke's households and 80% of students in the Holyoke Public Schools live at or below the poverty level, while the statewide percentage is 9.2%. The median household income of \$30,441 ranks Holyoke 349 out of 351 Massachusetts communities in the per capita income for FY00. Children under 5 represent 7.9% of the population. Those from ages 5 to 18 represent 21.6% of the population. Those between the ages of 19 to 64 represent 54.9% of the population, and those 65 and over represent 15.6% of Holyoke's population.

From 1980 to 2000, the Pioneer Valley region experienced a major structural change from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy. The total manufacturing

job loss in Hampden and Hampshire Counties from 1980 to 2000 equaled 32,301 jobs or a loss of 43%. However, from 1992-2002, the service sector gained over 22,000 jobs and retail gained 8,000 jobs. Smaller manufacturers are taking the place of the large-scale manufacturers.

Presently, the municipality itself is an important source of employment, second only to the Holyoke Mall at Ingleside. The Mall has established itself as a major employer of over 2,500 individuals. Other employment opportunities occur mainly in retail, health, trade, and manufacturing. Holyoke Community Health Center, Behavioral Health Center, and Holyoke Hospital Medical Center, while providing medical services to the city, are also major employers.

Even though Holyoke is suffering from the same ills associated with most urban areas, there remain various cultural opportunities in the area. Located in downtown Holyoke, Heritage State Park is home to The Children's Museum, the International Volleyball Hall of Fame, as well as the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round (vintage 1923), a Holyoke treasure salvaged from the former Mountain Park Amusement Area. The John F. Sears Auditorium, located in Holyoke High School, is a state of the art performance facility which hosts many cultural events throughout the region. Included in this cultural base is the Wistariahurst Museum, the former mansion of the Skinner family, which was world famous for its silks.

In addition, Holyoke provides many recreational opportunities. Youth programs run by the city, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Y.M.C.A., and the Boys and Girls Clubs, offer numerous and varied activities accessible to all in the community. Holyoke is also the home of numerous recreation and sport facilities, which include the

1,800 acre Mt. Tom Reservation, Fitzpatrick Skating Rink, and many city parks . In 2003, a state of the art sports complex was built adjacent to Holyoke High School. The Roberts Sports Complex, named after a former Holyoke Sports legend, Arthur H. Roberts, includes an Olympic size track, a field turf football field, as well as outdoor tennis, volleyball and basketball courts. Roberts Sports Complex, home to the Purple Knights football, soccer, field hockey and track and field teams, is the site of both regional and state track and field meets, as well as post-season events in football, soccer and field hockey. It is also home to the *Blitzin' Bears* and the *Warriors*, semi-professional football teams. Located next to Holyoke High School is Mackenzie Stadium, another sporting venue, which along with being the home field for the Purple Knights baseball and softball teams, also hosts youth baseball leagues, and Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA) and collegiate baseball tournaments. Mackenzie Stadium and the City of Holyoke are home to the *Holyoke Giants*, a New England wooden bat collegiate baseball team.

Holyoke, a city rich with tradition, hosts many activities to celebrate its culture and diversity. After months of preparation and activities, the city honors its Irish heritage with the Saint Patrick's Day Parade, now in its 52<sup>nd</sup> year. The parade, the second largest of its kind in the country, draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city during the parade weekend. In addition to a televised parade on Sunday, a road race on Saturday has expanded into a nationally recognized competitive event. The large Hispanic Community celebrates with *the Festival of Hispanic Families/Hispania de Familia*. This five day festival, now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, celebrates not only Hispanic culture and achievement, but also honors a particular family chosen by a committee, as a role

model. These cultural activities have become a rich part of the tradition and history of the city.

For the 2005-2006 academic year, the total population of the school district was 6,486 students. English was the second language of 53.6% of the students in Holyoke, compared to the state average of 14.3%. Holyoke's per pupil expenditure was \$8,463, 12% higher than the state's per pupil expenditure of \$7, 421. Of Holyoke's total revenues, approximately 66% comes from state aid. Since the city does not distinguish the breakdown of funds disbursed to each municipal department, the school's budget is highly dependent on the Massachusetts economy as a whole.

From 2003 to 2006, Holyoke's public schools have been in a period of transition, with the feeder schools to the high school changing from a middle school model, grades 6-8, to a K-8 model in order for students to attend schools in their neighborhoods. Currently there is an early childhood center, three elementary schools, four K-8 schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one technical vocational high school. Students generally enter ninth grade at Holyoke High School from one of ten public feeder schools or three parochial schools. Also located in Holyoke are four licensed special education schools that service students of various ages and needs. There are also four programs in the city offering graduate equivalency diplomas (See Appendix.) The Holyoke Charter School opened in 2005 with 617 Holyoke school age children from kindergarten through grade 7. The Holyoke Public Schools also participate in the state's school choice program. Twenty-six students, or 2% of the student population, attended Holyoke High School through school choice in 2005-2006. The previous year saw 17 students attend Holyoke High School through school choice.

In the 2005-2006 school year at Holyoke High School, there were 107 teachers and 1,250 students, resulting in a student/teacher ratio of 16:1. The percentage of teachers at Holyoke High School licensed in their teaching assignments was 98.1%, as compared to 94.4% statewide. Most teachers taught five forty-nine minute classes with one preparation and one duty period each day in a five-day weekly rotating schedule. A ninth grade English Department Inclusion model was put into place in 2005-2006 and has expanded in 2006-2007 to include the tenth grade. Current contract provisions mandate a 184 day work year for teachers, with students attending 180 days. The additional 4 days for staff are devoted to professional development. Seventy-six percent of Holyoke High School teachers hold a Masters Degree or higher. Approximately 98% of core academic teachers are identified as highly qualified compared to the state average of 93.8%. Average teacher attendance rate, excluding absences for professional reasons, was 96% for the 2005-2006 school year. The administrative staff included one principal and three assistant principals. The staff included eleven custodial employees and nine clerical/support staff.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, 142 students, or 11.4% of the school population, received services through the Special Education Department, which included a team leader, a guidance counselor, eight teachers and eight individually assigned paraprofessionals. Itinerant teachers supporting the Special Education Department included an adaptive physical education teacher, a speech pathologist, a bilingual speech assistant, a vision therapist, an occupational and physical therapist, a school psychologist and an educational tester, all of whom serviced students on the basis of individual educational plans. One hundred and twenty-six students, or 10.1% of Holyoke High

School students, were English Language Learners (ELL). For 51% of the students at Holyoke High School, English was their second language. In the district, 53.6% of students were second language learners, with Spanish as the first language for the majority of the English Language Learners.

The ethnic breakdown of the student population of Holyoke High School in 2005-2006 was 4.5% African American, 0.8% Asian, 57.6% Hispanic, 0.3% Native American, and 37% White. Statewide the breakdown of ethnicity was 8.3% African American, 4.6% Asian, 12.9% Hispanic, 0.3% Native American, 72.4% White, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1.4% Multi-race/Non-Hispanic.

The current student population for the 2006-2007 school year is 1,260. The administrative staff consists of one principal and four assistant principals. The Guidance Department has increased by two and now includes seven counselors. Inclusion now takes place in both ninth and tenth grade English classes.

Holyoke High offers three levels of academic classes: Advanced Placement, Honors, and Standard. Students must earn 120 credits as well as pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), in order to graduate with a high school diploma. Students receive 1.25 to 7.5 credits per course. For students, the following requirements must be included in the total credits for graduation: English (four courses), Mathematics (three courses), Science (two courses/three courses starting with the class of 2010), Social Studies (two courses, including one course in U.S. History/three courses, including one course in U.S. History starting with the class of 2011) and Physical Education (four courses). Holyoke High School, a Chapter I school, is composed of eleven departments: English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science,

Business/Technology, World Languages, Physical Education, Health, Special Education, Music (choral and instrumental), and Art (visual). Independent study programs are contained within the context of individual courses, such as portfolio development in the Visual Arts Department. In place are Ramp-Up reading and mathematics courses which target underperforming students. These courses are part of the program of America's Choice, the turn around partner working with the Holyoke Public Schools. The students enrolled in these courses are identified through their Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and MCAS results. The average class size at Holyoke High School for the 2005-2006 school year was sixteen students. However, classes range in size from one (ELL Reading) to seventy-six (Band) students per class. The average class size by department was as follows: English/20, Mathematics/21, Science/18, Social Studies/21, Business/Technology/18, World Languages/18, Music/30, Art/21, Physical Education/26, Health/12 and Special Needs/10. 8.4% of students were enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement course; 36.7% were enrolled in at least one Honors level course; and 63.3% were enrolled in Standard level courses only. Detailed curricular enrollments for each instructional area can be found in the appendix.

During the 2004-2005 school year, there were 1,916 out-of-school suspensions, 1,587 in-school suspensions, 2 expulsions, and a 14.7% retention rate. During the 2003-2004 school year, there were 2,508 out-of-school suspensions, 1,976 in-school suspensions, 0 expulsions, and a 15% retention rate.

To combat the retention rate, various programs have been initiated and funded. Connections is a program which assists in after school tutoring. MCAS tutoring, both in the morning and after school, provides extra support for students preparing to take or re-

take the MCAS. The Student/Athlete Tutoring Program is open to all students after school. The Saturday School program exists to help address the attendance rate. The Summer Success Academy provides English and mathematics tutoring for MCAS preparation and academic support. Summer School offers courses to make up lost credits. An additional outreach worker assists in involving parents with students' absenteeism and academic progress. Holyoke High School has also added two additional guidance counselors for the 2006-2007 academic year.

The student attendance rate at Holyoke High School in 2005-2006 was 85% and in 2004-2005 was 87%. Faculty attendance was 96% in 2005-2006 and 94% in 2004-2005. Despite many socio-economic challenges, the attendance rate at Holyoke High School has improved.

In the 2004-2005 school year, there were 1,230 students attending Holyoke High School. In the 2005-2006 school year, the total number of students attending Holyoke High School was 1,250. The current enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year is 1,260 students, and the projection for the 2007-2008 school year is 1,213 students.

In 2004, 77% of sophomores passed the English Language portion of the MCAS; 82% of sophomores passed in 2005; and 74% of sophomores passed in 2006. On the mathematics portion of the MCAS, 70% of sophomores passed in 2004; 75% of sophomores passed in 2005; and 74% of sophomores passed in 2006. The greatest improvement was in the ELA advanced category which increased from 13% in 2004, to 16% in 2005, to 26% in 2006.

In the 2005-2006 school year, 81.6% of Holyoke High School's graduating class planned to attend a two or four year college. Western Massachusetts has 32 post

secondary institutions, including universities, colleges, and community colleges. Holyoke Community College, located in Holyoke, Massachusetts, is the largest community college in Massachusetts.

Students at Holyoke High School are recognized for their academic and non-academic efforts and achievements. In June 2006, 344 citizenship and academic awards were presented, with the total monies awarded equaling \$279,000. In addition, Holyoke High School also has the Renaissance Program, Gear-Up, Rising Stars, and Youth Leadership programs as well as the Connections after school program which recognize students for achievement. Furthermore, Holyoke High School, home of the Purple Knights, presents a number of athletic awards each year. These awards are in the form of pins, letters and certificates. In the 2004-2005 school year, 537 awards were presented.

Holyoke High School offers a wide range of extracurricular activities for students, ranging from interscholastic athletics to school sponsored clubs, organizations, and student government. The extracurricular programs offered at Holyoke High School are listed in the course selection guide given to students annually (See Appendix.)

Co-curricular activities include the school newspaper, *The Herald*, which is written and published as part of the Media course offered in the English Department. The yearbook, *The Annual*, is also designed and produced as part of the Publication Production course offered in the English Department. These are two of the various co-curricular activities offered at Holyoke High School. (See Appendix)

Collaborative programs existing with community organizations and local colleges provide after-school programs for at-risk, college-bound, and limited English proficient students. Gear-Up, Connections, and Upward Bound provide academic tutoring and

opportunities for social, health, and peer leadership development. Approximately 30% of participants have employment opportunities with various community organizations.

The faculty of Holyoke High School has the opportunity to participate in professional development activities through the Holyoke Professional Development School (HPDS). Periodically, a catalog is published covering a broad range of topics which will be covered in workshops designed to enrich teachers' knowledge and enhance instruction. Collaborations also exist with Holyoke Community College, Northfield Mount Hermon School, Amherst College, and Westfield State College. Partnerships involve students from these colleges acting as tutors, classroom assistants, and pre-practicum participants, with the main focus of these partnerships being to provide academic support and encouragement for students aspiring to post-secondary education.

Holyoke High School is facing issues and challenges common to most urban areas. One such issue is a high level of poverty, which often results in a high rate of transiency, increased drug usage, high teenage pregnancy, poor attendance, a high dropout rate, and a high retention rate. Holyoke High School also has many students whose primary language is not English. Despite these challenges, Holyoke High School is also striving to meet state expectations with MCAS testing and, on the federal level, with the many mandates of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Holyoke High School is meeting the nutritional needs of students by providing breakfast and free/reduced lunch. A teen clinic offers medical and counseling services, and school nurses help diagnose vision and hearing problems and scoliosis. Outreach workers assist in monitoring attendance and act as liaisons with parents/guardians. Also, home tutoring is available for the educational needs of those students who can not attend

school. Gear Up, Upward Bound, and the Connections program introduce at-risk students to post secondary opportunities; after school academic tutoring helps those students who fall behind; MCAS preparation after school and in the summer helps students ready themselves for the MCAS; Saturday school helps students with attendance issues, and English Language Learning classes assist students whose primary language is not English. These programs and services are in addition to the traditional curricular and extra curricular activities offered at Holyoke High School. (See Appendix.)

Holyoke High School utilizes results of MCAS testing, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing, and Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) testing to identify student needs. This data is disseminated to teachers and is used in making curriculum decisions, differentiating instruction, and assessing students. Holyoke High School, in the 2006-2007 academic year, will be implementing a mentoring program.

Holyoke will continue to face many problems in the future – poverty, transiency and second language issues. It is important that the Holyoke Public Schools look at these issues as challenges and not as excuses. Some things remain beyond the control of the district, but it is essential that high goals that are still achievable are set. As seen in this report, Holyoke High School has initiated programs to meet the needs of all students.

Adopted unanimously by HHS Staff on December 15, 2006

