

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

Holyoke High School realizes that student support services are vital for the success of its students. The essential areas of its health services, supportive guidance program, comprehensive range of library services, and special education offerings are **consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.** In addition, numerous academic, social, and after school programs exist to further enable students in their efforts to succeed. Taken altogether, the programs and services of Holyoke High School provide all students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to graduate prepared to pursue higher education without remediation and/or a rewarding career and to function as responsible citizens in a diverse society.

Holyoke High School has made a concerted effort *to provide students with the resources, programs and services they need in order to achieve the school's academic expectations for learning.* The Holyoke High School Course Selection Guide is consistent with Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 and Title IX and includes all courses of study open and available to all students. Holyoke High School provides challenging Standard and Special Education academic courses as well as Honors and/or Advanced Placement classes in World Languages, Mathematics, Science, English, Business and Social Studies. In addition, Holyoke High School offers a number of specific programs designed to reinforce the skills of those students who are in need of additional support and instruction. For example, The *Read 180 Program* incorporates strategies to aid students in improving their reading, writing, and speaking skills. Two certified teachers

evaluate academic levels and instruct 125 students in the essential areas of reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and spelling. Students who have passed eighth grade but are in need of smaller classes with specialized instruction during their first year of high school are placed in the *Transitional Academy*. The program is designed to bolster the basic skills of students and includes double blocks of mathematics and language arts. In an effort to improve its instructional practices, the Holyoke Public School System has partnered with the national educational firm, *America's Choice*. A component of its rigorous program, *Ramp Up*, advances a curriculum with an accelerated methodology using double blocks in both mathematics and language arts designed to assist freshmen who have been identified as below grade level. Moreover, students who are not able to attend Holyoke High School because of long-term health or other obstacles are provided with a home tutor who follows the curriculum and utilizes materials provided by the student's classroom teachers. In keeping with its stated mission, Holyoke High School offers several programs designed to encourage students to explore postgraduate opportunities. *Jobs for Bay State Graduates (JBSG)* is a course which explores various careers and prepares students for job readiness and career survival. Through JBSG, students can apply the skills they learn in the classroom by participating in the Bay State Career Association, which utilizes project-based activities that teach leadership, and social and civic awareness. JBSG students also receive twelve months of follow-up support following graduation. Holyoke High School also recognizes and tangibly rewards students for demonstrated grade improvement through the *The Renaissance Program*. Students who have attained sufficient benchmarks under program

guidelines have the additional incentive of being excused from mid-term and final examinations.

The Special Education Department includes a Special Education Team Leader (SETL), a designated guidance counselor, eight special education teachers, and eight individually assigned paraprofessionals. Also, supportive specialists who provide part-time services include 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. Holyoke High School's special need services are presently undergoing a transition in order to more fully incorporate inclusion classes for its students. Currently, there is inclusion support, by the collaborative approach, for mainstream teachers in three language arts classes, two mathematics classes, and three social studies classes. In addition, a special education teacher is assigned to facilitate inclusion support to aid mainstream teachers with necessary accommodations for students who have that provision within their Individual Education Plans (IEP). Resource classes are also offered to special education students for additional instruction in their academic subjects. Assistive technology is provided for identified student needs. Although there is a concerted effort to provide students with equal access to all resources, the capacity to provide full inclusion for all students lags behind. Holyoke High School has recognized its obligation to more completely devote its energies to this concern, and this committee has prioritized it as the number one need.

Many enriching academic support services are ongoing at Holyoke High School outside of the scheduled school day. All teachers are available for an after school office hour on a weekly basis. Students are additionally able to take advantage of further

tutoring opportunities before and after school as well as on Saturdays. The *Athletic Educational Support Program* provides academic tutoring by certified teachers after school, 2:55-3:40 pm, Monday through Thursday. It is a weekly requirement for student athletes with a G.P.A. lower than 1.66. In addition, those athletes with any grade lower than C- must attend office hours in that subject. However, all students are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend as needed. *Tutoring for MCAS* occurs in mathematics and language arts both before and after school. *Saturday School*, which is an obligation for those students with attendance or disciplinary problems, is also available for those students wishing to receive extra help from certified teachers. *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)* is a program structured to give students the skills, encouragement, and preparation needed to pursue postsecondary education. Meeting after school four days per week, the *GEAR UP* program services approximately 225 students per year. Holyoke High School has two *Upward Bound* programs, one associated with Holyoke Community College and the other with Northfield Mount Hermon Preparatory School. Both offer intensive academic and social support to students with year-round tutoring, advising, after-school programs, test preparation, college and financial aid application assistance, cultural trips, college visits, career exploration, and leadership development.

Several Holyoke High School programs appropriately and acceptably enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff, and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Holyoke High School's commitment to its students' social and emotional well-being is exhibited through the *Student Conflict Resolution*

Experts (SCORE) Peer Mediation Program. Seeking to address and resolve any conflict that occurs within the student body, the *SCORE* program is a direct intervention service under the guidance of a coordinator who utilizes trained students to aid in mediating disputes. The program is a collaborative effort between the Center for Human Development, The Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, and the Holyoke Public Schools. The *SCORE Peer Mediation Program* has had 805 referrals over the past eleven years and has successfully mediated 605 cases of the 637 cases which completed the process. A further commitment to the social and emotional needs of the Holyoke High School student body may be found in the recent formation of the *Gay/ Straight Alliance* in 2005. An initial accomplishment of the *Gay/Straight Alliance* was its sponsorship of a successful school-wide assembly to promote awareness and embrace diversity. The *Gay/Straight Alliance* meets regularly to provide for mutual support and to ensure that sexual identity and other related concerns are not causes for mistreatment or discrimination.

Beginning in 2005 as well, an after school program called *Connections* seeks to realize the goal of supporting the social, emotional, and physical development of students by encouraging and strengthening their relationships to peers, teachers and the community. Students are actively engaged in a homework hour where tutoring is available. A host of different workshop activities such as cooking, hip-hop, salsa dancing, fitness, and website design follows for the programs final hour and twenty minutes. The *Connections Program* provides a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment so that Holyoke High School students have a greater opportunity to accomplish academic, social, and physical success.

All student support services including health services, special education, guidance and library information services, are regularly evaluated and revised. The principal directly evaluates all school personnel either annually or biannually, depending on the professional status of the individual. School-based programs that are contracted or established with the support of the central administration are evaluated by their respective agencies, with input from the school administration. These include *GEAR UP, the Teen Clinic, Upward Bound, the SCORE Program, the Connections Program, and Jobs for Bay State Graduates*. The *Leadership Team*, a group composed of department heads and other faculty representatives, regularly meets with the principal to advise and review issues related to the general welfare of the student body. Also, the *School Improvement Council*, composed of students and parents, regularly conducts meetings to review issues and concerns of school life. Through these last two advisory bodies, Holyoke High School complements its formal evaluation process by obtaining regular feedback for the purpose of evaluating and then improving the various student services.

Holyoke High School is proud of its **ongoing efforts to keep students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and the citizens of Holyoke informed of the activities, opportunities, and support services for its students.** A state of the art media center, the Edward Shevlin Television Studio and Media Center, was established in 2005 at Holyoke High School to disseminate information related to the district's schools. It also provides educational resources and programs to the entire community of Holyoke as well. A dedicated channel provided by Comcast, the local cable company, *HPS 12* airs information, announcements, a "bulletin board," and educational initiatives and programs about Holyoke High School and district schools twenty-four hours a day,

seven days a week. Additionally, the district has a web site, www.hps.holyoke.ma.us, that provides students and parents with the opportunity to attain information about the activities and services at Holyoke High School. It is currently being updated and expanded to allow for greater communication capabilities. Holyoke High School contributes to the district's quarterly publication, *Connections*, that presents the news of the district in both English and Spanish. Not to be confused with the after-school program, the publication *Connections* is a recipient of the 2006 APEX Award for Publication Excellence. It is mailed to the parents of every student. Every year, three open houses (one for 8th graders in the spring, one for entering freshmen in August, and the traditional open house in the fall) are held at night to inform parents of all the academics opportunities, programs, and related support services at Holyoke High School. In an effort to stay on top of the issues and services available to students, the *Special Education Advisory Council* not only serves in an advisory capacity but also regularly presents programs and related activities for any family with a special needs student. In an effort to reach out to the parents/guardians of students with attendance and other at risk issues, Holyoke High School employs an Attendance Officer and two Family Liaisons. Through these and other programs, Holyoke High School has significantly reduced both absences and truancy. From the 2003-2004 school year to the present, truancy has fallen from 10.66 % to the current rate of 3.17%. All support staff of Holyoke High School complement the above efforts by providing ongoing, personal, and customary communication including letters to parents, telephone calls, brochures, flyers, and media announcements.

Student records are kept confidential, consistent with federal and state laws.

Cumulative folders are stored in the school vault with only limited personnel having access to these student records. The health records of each student are not currently stored in a locked filing cabinet, and this has been recognized as a need. SPED documents are secured in the locked office of the Special Education Team Leader.

Holyoke High School has sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective guidance, health, special education, and library media services to students. In an effort to increase personal contact with students and improve parental trust, the Guidance Department added two professional staff members in the 2006-2007 academic year, thereby bringing its total to seven full-time certified guidance counselors supported by a part-time secretary. Six of the counselors are certified, with one working under a Department of Education waiver. The Health Office is staffed by two full time registered nurses. The Teen Clinic staff is composed of a full-time nurse practitioner, a mental health counselor, and a secretary/office manager. As required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the full-time nurse practitioner is licensed to practice in the state of Massachusetts and is supervised by a medical director who is board certified in pediatric medicine and also licensed to practice in the state of Massachusetts. The Special Education Department includes a Special Education Team Leader (SETL), a dedicated guidance counselor, eight certified special education teachers, and eight individually assigned paraprofessionals. Also, supportive specialists who provide part-time services include 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. There is also one full-time certified library/information specialist.

Holyoke High School guidance counselors provide educational, career, and short-term personal counseling so that students may benefit from a meaningful course of study while enjoying their high school experience. With seven full time counselors, the present student to counselor ratio is approximately 180 to 1. All students are assigned alphabetically to a counselor, except for English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students. Two counselors, each having two grades, share the responsibilities of ELL students. *A specific counselor is dedicated to the delivery of special education services*, and that counselor's role is identified as such in the student's IEP. Students enrolled at Holyoke High School meet either *individually or as part of a group with their guidance counselor* to discuss scheduling issues early in the fall of their freshman year. Each spring, all students in grades 9 through 11 meet with their counselors to discuss past performance, *schedule the following year's courses*, and weigh future goals. Students may also request meetings with their counselors any time during the school year for further course selection assistance **or for personal matters**. The Guidance Department also provides *college counseling* for students in grades 11 and 12 and sponsors a *College Selection Night* in October and a *Financial Aid Assistance Night* in December of each year. In addition to providing counseling for PSAT, SAT I, and SAT II, the department maintains a display area for college reference materials and resources for scholarships and job opportunities. Group meetings between students and college and military representatives are regularly scheduled. This year, the Guidance Department will administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) to students in

grades 10 and 11 for an examination of career possibilities based upon their interests and abilities. Emphasis on *career counseling* is focused through the Guidance Department's investment in the *Tech Prep Program*. Federally funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, *Tech Prep* seeks to bring high school, college, and career experiences together. Students begin taking a sequence of courses in high school which allows them to earn free college credit and to get a head start in related degree programs in two-year colleges. A Tech Prep Career Pathway Guidebook is being finalized to improve course selection with career and technical opportunities. The Guidance Department has worked diligently to establish strong links with area colleges and particularly with Holyoke Community College. Since the program's inception, over 400 students at HHS have been able to make the most of their college and career opportunities by taking advantage of the *Tech Prep Program*.

Holyoke High School makes available comprehensive health services which include preventative health and direct intervention services, appropriate referrals, mandated services, emergency response mechanisms, and ongoing student health assessments. Holyoke High School benefits from the support of two health service providers. The Health Office, part of the district's School Health Program, is staffed by two full time registered nurses who ensure that the standards and practices required by Massachusetts State Law are being fulfilled. The nurses follow protocols involving first aid care, mandated health screenings, and immunization requirements. Logs are maintained and shared with the principal to assure for the well being of the students and for appropriate referrals. With the goal of helping students to be physically and emotionally healthy and ready to learn, the Teen Clinic has continued to provide

comprehensive services to students for the past twenty years. A program of the River Valley Counseling Center and affiliated with the Holyoke Medical Center, the Teen Clinic is staffed daily during school hours. Services include treatment for acute and chronic medical conditions, sports and school admission physicals, basic lab testing, immunization updates, and counseling about risk behavior common to teenagers. Students without health insurance are not turned away, but are asked to provide written parental consent. Success of the Teen Clinic may be measured by the confidence of more than 50% of the student body which seeks its services annually. Both the Health Office and the Teen Clinic have a cooperative referral system including parents, staff, and all major pediatric providers in Holyoke, the Department of Social Services, and support agencies servicing adolescents in the community.

The William R. Peck Library at *Holyoke High School* provides library information services that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. Research projects across the disciplines require library bibliographic skills, access to library resources, and the ability to use library resources. Library instruction is based on the learning needs and abilities of the students. The librarian allows the discipline and topic to guide database instruction. Thus the librarian not only teaches computer literacy but also aids the teacher in curriculum instruction.

The librarian maintains a copy of the most recent Holyoke High School curriculum and refers to it directly when placing orders. She also solicits material requests from both teachers and department heads. The librarian also maintains a list of requests made by teachers and students throughout the school year. The school's mission

statement is reflected in library programs and materials, both of which reflect high academic expectations and support student achievement.

Classes across the disciplines are booked in the library for the majority of the school day. The library uses a combination of fixed and flexible scheduling to ensure maximum access to library resources. Students also use the library individually for research, reading, and word-processing.

The librarian is *knowledgeable about the Holyoke High School curriculum and supports its implementation*. The librarian is represented by the English Department Chairperson at Leadership Team meetings and is regularly apprised of curriculum and other related school issues. In addition, the librarian attends monthly English Department meetings.

Holyoke High School's library seeks to **improve teaching and learning by making available a wide range of books and periodicals, technology, and library/information services to assist both faculty and students**. There are 24,700 holdings in the Holyoke High School library. The current collection has been developed according to recommended percentages by Dewey classification, patron considerations, curriculum, direct requests, and age sensitive title replacement. Any student completing library research is able to utilize a variety of resources, from the accessible and general to the challenging and focused. Because of the Dewey classification system, one book discovery leads to another. Holyoke High School students may enjoy the use of the library's ten computers for Internet research, composition, or school information. The library subscribes to a number of online databases, some of which are provided through membership in the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System. Search engines

such as EBSCO Magazine Database, Grolier Encyclopedia, Infotrac, Netlibrary, and Newsbank provide students with sophisticated research advantages. The library catalog is fully automated.

The library also subscribes to twenty-eight print periodicals. Paperbacks are kept on wall racks and on two freestanding display racks. One section of the library is dedicated to housing the reference resources. The library also maintains a bookcase for Holyoke High School students with both challenging and pronounced learning disabilities. In some cases, these students have contributed to this bookcase with books that they have made in class. Although they may choose books from any section of the library during weekly visits, they often choose books from this bookcase.

Holyoke High School's student body of 1,250 students is approximately 57.6% Hispanic. Forty-six percent of the total school population has a first language other than English, and 57% is considered low-income.¹ Therefore, there is a separate section of approximately 1,000 books dedicated to materials written in Spanish. These materials include fiction, nonfiction, and reference resources and are catalogued by regular Dewey classification system. This section encourages students with limited English proficiency, as well as bilingual students and Spanish language learners, to enrich their lives and scholarship through reading.

Holyoke High School has invested in three Smartboards for both library and classroom use. A large storeroom contains the audiovisual equipment, which consists of 12 televisions with videocassette players/recorders, 15 audio cassette players, one compact disk player, four In-Focus projectors, seven filmstrip projectors, two slide projectors, four record players, and 20 overhead projectors. Also housed here is the

¹ Massachusetts Department of Education School Profile.

library collection of 965 videos and DVDs, 40 filmstrips, 45 records and 120 cassette tapes. The storeroom also contains stored periodicals, *The Annual* (the Holyoke High School Yearbook) from 1915-present, and *The Herald* (Holyoke High School's newspaper) from 1898-1982.

Students, faculty, and support staff have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs. The library is open, with the librarian present, during all seven periods of the school day from 8:00 a.m. to 2:55 p.m., Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. on Fridays. Typically, the library will accommodate one to two scheduled classes per period. The library has a seating capacity of 120 and allows for two classes to function comfortably simultaneously. The librarian supports faculty and staff in using technology and library resources on an individual basis or at the time that they schedule their classes. Individual students are allowed to make full use of the library's resources with a pass from their teacher. Approximately thirty individual students per day arrive with passes. The library is not open before school and is open after school Monday through Thursday only because various school programs use it as a facility. This has been recognized by the committee as a need to be addressed.

The librarian *fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.* An orientation for all entering freshmen is conducted to inform them of the resources available. Students learn the basics of where various resources are located in the library and how to find them using the electronic card catalog. They are also introduced to the reference section and to proper library behavior and etiquette. Computer research techniques and

Internet policies are also reviewed. Students often then participate in a scavenger hunt to find specific information and engage in newly learned skills by picking out a related book. Through this orientation, all students are insured a basic level of information literacy. Upper class students are updated with training in using the databases, formatting bibliographies, and conducting the more rigorous research that their courses require. By reinforcing their learning through actual experience, students are expected to work towards self-sufficiency in the library.

Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The Librarian informs faculty members of available information resources and technologies through a monthly newsletter that highlights materials and programs that the library promotes. The newsletter also includes a list of recent acquisitions, either purchased or received through donations. The librarian also informs teachers directly of new selections in their fields. Both the book selection policy and the request for reconsideration of challenged school library media materials are clearly written and adopted by the Holyoke School Committee. There is also an approved policy for removing aged, inaccurate, or damaged materials. Both students and staff comply with Internet use policies by signing and submitting agreements with technology use policies.

Holyoke High School provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Although at the secondary level most students have already been identified for their special needs, a referral process is in place that incorporates systematic evaluation by the assistant principals and which is coordinated with the Special Education

Central Team office. The Special Education Team Leader keeps current Individual Educational Plans on all special education students and schedules meetings and re-evaluations according to the student's IEP. Teachers with students who have IEPs all receive pertinent information in the beginning of the school year.

The community at Holyoke High School remains conscientious in meeting the needs of its students and demonstratively addresses them with dedicated support in a variety of ways. In addition to the essential areas of health, guidance, library/information services and special education offerings, a host of dynamic programs and services are provided to enable students to attain success.

When the school's practices are compared to the School Resources for Learning Standard Rating Guide, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category.

Adopted by the faculty on January 18, 2007

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING STANDARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The resources for learning at Holyoke High School are aligned with its mission. The four main service areas of health, guidance, library/information, and special education are actively and effectively engaged in supporting the school's learning

expectations. In addition, Holyoke High School offers a plethora of additional resources and programs in order to ensure that all students have the greatest opportunity for success.

Holyoke High School employs a dedicated guidance department which addresses the diverse needs of a challenging environment. Counselors program the evolving requirements of a student's schedule while remaining open to accommodating any of their individual issues. They additionally advance the goal of transitioning and preparing students to meet the post-graduate expectations of college and/or a rewarding career. As a result of the self study research conducted in February of 2006, two more counselors were added, for a total of seven, to address the increased demands of assisting students with their course selection and with personal issues.

Holyoke High School has a knowledgeable and professional library/information staff member. Extensive efforts are made to augment the curriculum, make library resources available to classes throughout the day, communicate with staff and students, and advocate for the latest advancements in information technology. Although only 23.8% of school staff may have indicated a consultation with library personnel when developing or revising the curriculum, a full 84.7% are in total agreement that the librarian is knowledgeable in assisting staff's curriculum and instructional needs.

Holyoke High School has the benefit of two health care providers, the Health Office and the Teen Clinic. The Health Office provides a wide array of exams, screenings, and ongoing student health assessments. Throughout the school day, individual students have continuous access to a nurse for health, physical emergency, or sickness issues. The Teen Clinic also provides students with health related care if they

have acceptable insurance or parental permission. In addition, Teen Clinic personnel provide other services which include social, emotional, and physical resources for students. Both the Health Office and Teen Clinic serve as resources for families by offering information and advice about treatment, medication, and follow-up care.

The Special Education support services at Holyoke High School adhere to the school's vision statement and expectations for student learning. Monitoring, updating, and placing of students with special needs are tracked by the school's Special Education Team Leader, and records are secured in a locked office. Special needs students' schedules are aligned with their Individualized Education Plans, and their classes are instructed by a certified and experienced staff. As noted in the report, the Special Education Services at Holyoke High School are undergoing a transition so that they may more fully, if not completely, provide inclusion settings for all students.

Holyoke High School is dedicated to providing an abundance of additional resources that promote and support student learning. Connections, GEAR UP, Jobs for Bay State Grads, and Upward Bound are just some of the programs designed not only to assist students in their academic and social needs, but also to provide direction with college and/or other post-graduate goals. To its credit, Holyoke High School makes available extra academic assistance both before and after school so that students may have the greatest chance of success at meeting both academic and MCAS expectations. With the addition of Saturday School, students have an additional day of professional assistance available to help them outside of their normal school week.

When all offerings and programs within the various support services are taken into consideration, Holyoke High School performs in the **ACCEPTABLE** category when

the school's practices are compared to the School Resources for Learning Standard Rating Guide.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING STANDARD
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Strengths

- Addition of two guidance counselors, bringing the total to seven
- Two health care providers: the Health Office and the Teen Clinic
- Before and after school programs which provide tutoring, social activities, college exploration and other post graduate support
- Saturday School and other initiatives to reduce tardy and truancy rates

Needs

- Create a Special Education Department with a chairman
- Implement as fully as possible the inclusion of special needs students
- Add an adjustment counselor, bilingual and biculturally sensitive, to aid in reducing the drop out rate
- Include teachers and the librarian in technology decisions to assist in curriculum and classroom multimedia needs (i.e. a digital library accessible through the internet, and multimedia instructional technologies in the classroom)
- Staff the library before and after regular school hours
- Insure the confidentiality of student records in the Health Office
- Appoint a department head for guidance