

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
HOLYOKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

DATE: APRIL 26, 2021

PLACE: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

CITY OF HOLYOKE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE AGENDA

DATE: _____ **MONDAY, April 26, 2021**

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

<https://hps-holyoke-ma-us.zoom.us/j/85266232176?pwd=ci9tWEs3cG81SkQxdXZrWW5GenBXQT09>

Passcode: 435164

**On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing.*

The Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. "Adequate, alternative means" may include, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

1. **CALL TO ORDER ~ ROLL CALL ~ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- a. *Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 20, I am hereby informing all attendees that a video and audio recording is being made of the meeting and the meeting is being live-streamed and run live on the City's community TV channel.*

2. **STUDENT SHOWCASE - DEAN SCHOOL STUDENTS**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public wishing to submit public comment can email lizlafond@hps.holyoke.ma.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Monday, April 26, 2021. Comments will either be displayed or read during the meeting.

4. **COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

a. **Student Reports**

- Dean Campus Students Request to Speak - Graduation Activities

b. **Superintendent/Receiver Reports**

- Return to School Update
- Standardized Testing Update
- Graduation/End of Year Activities Update
- Covid-19 Update
- 2021-2022 School Calendar (information)

5. **NEW BUSINESS**6. **ONGOING BUSINESS**7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

*The Holyoke Public Schools makes available a public discussion period for persons in the audience to address the Committee on specific agenda items. In order to hear as many speakers as possible, the Committee asks individuals to continue their remarks to two (2) minutes. Any person wishing to submit longer testimony should give copies to the Committee Secretary before the meeting so that it may be distributed to Committee members. The speaker can then summarize this testimony at the meeting within the two (2) minute time period. Persons wishing to speak should register with the Committee Secretary immediately before the meeting begins. Individuals who request specific items to be included on the Committee's agenda should mail a written request fifteen (15) days in advance of a Committee meeting date to Liz Lafond, in care of the Receiver's Office, 57 Suffolk Street, Holyoke, MA 01040.

School Committee Meeting
Superintendent/Receiver Report
April 26, 2021

Return to School Update

Overall we have approximately 57% of students in grades Pre-k to 5 participating in in-person learning 5 days a week since April 5th. Since the return to 5 days a week, some of our biggest successes have been staff and students developing relationships. Many schools took the opportunity to prepare for another “1st day of school” to practice safety protocol and classroom routines. Teachers and paraprofessionals are constantly rising to the challenge. Many are becoming masterful at using technology platforms and at engaging students in remote and in-person learning simultaneously. School leaders are staying focused on instruction even amongst the huge managerial task of maintaining in-person learning. They continue to pilot data meetings with staff and to provide thoughtful feedback to teachers to improve practice.

Student Attending Demographics Pre-K to 5					
School	Total # Enrolled	# In Person	% In Person	# Remote	% Remote
PK-5 Total	2557	1468	57%	1089	43%
DON	346	211	61%	135	39%
ENW	429	291	68%	138	32%
KLY	294	85	29%	209	71%
LAW	184	109	59%	75	41%
MCM	236	149	63%	87	37%
MET	267	210	79%	57	21%
MOR	289	167	58%	122	42%
PECK	98	48	49%	50	51%
SUL	309	153	50%	156	50%
VPH	105	45	43%	60	57%

Middle School students return to in-person 5 days a week on April 26th. Currently (as of 4/23) 31% (approx. 340 students) of grades 6-8 students will be returning to in-person learning 5 days/week. The

Middle School Campus Learning Centers provided an opportunity to get middle school students back into school routines prior to launching in-person learning 5 days/week.

Middle School In Person vs. Remote Survey Results							
School	Total	In Person		Remote		Not Yet Indicated	
	# Enrolled	#	%	#	%	#	%
Grades PreK-8 Overall	1095	340	31%	275	25%	480	44%
DON	86	25	29%	28	33%	33	38%
ENW	255	52	20%	47	18%	156	61%
KEL	50	28	56%	20	40%	2	4%
MCM	127	63	50%	58	46%	6	5%
MET	30	17	57%	7	23%	6	20%
PECK	160	40	25%	25	16%	95	59%
SUL	163	28	17%	25	15%	110	67%
VPH	224	87	39%	65	29%	72	32%

Having students in the building 5 days a week has also brought challenges. Some of the challenges have been: scheduling breakfast in the classroom as well as lunch due to 6 ft. distancing, while classrooms are at 3 ft. distancing; balancing in-person and remote students during Livestream teaching in classrooms with only one teacher; teachers planning for small group instruction and, how they can reduce screen time for students.

The exact return dates for High School students are still being determined but will begin to phase students back prior to the DESE deadline of May. The Holyoke High School High School survey for full in-person or full remote closed on April 21st. There were 462 responses with 57.4% selecting full in-person 5 days a week. The highest response rate was from 10th grade students (32.5%), and the lowest was from 12th grade (14.9%). The staff at the High School are continuing to work on outreach during this period. The school day will run with the same full day schedule and the current arrival and dismissal times. Students will transition between classes up to 3 times a day. Students will be served breakfast outside before school starts, and lunch will be served outside with alternate spaces during inclement weather.

Holyoke High School campuses are tentatively planning for students and teachers to return to school for in-person learning the weeks of May 3 and May 10. Opportunity Academy is planning on May 6th as the first day back for students. Dean and North campuses are planning for students to return the week of May 10, staggering grade level return dates in order to deliver and practice health and safety guidelines and procedures.

Standardized Testing Update

Remote MCAS administration is available for Grades 3-8 for families who chose to have their children learn remotely through the end of the school year. Remote MCAS will use a browser-based version of the TestNav system to access the test at home. The instructional technology department will review and confirm that students' Chromebooks meet the testing requirements. Families will also have the option to opt to have their child take the assessment in-person during testing days at their school. Test administrators would use synchronous video conferencing (Zoom) to remain in contact with students during remote administration. There is a scheduled DESE Training occurring Thursday, April 29th that will provide us with more details and specifics, regarding remote testing. One suggestion has been to include FACE in training so they can support parents at home, as well as, messaging.

Standardized Testing Update

MCAS Administration dates for Grades 3-8

Grades 3, 4, and 5 ELA, Math, and STE	May 10-June 11
Grades 6, 7, and 8 ELA, Math, and STE	May 17-June 11

MCAS Administration dates for HS

ELA	May 3 -June 11
Math	May 3 -June 11
STE	June 1- June 11

During the April 20th Board of Education meeting, the Board voted to modify the Competency Determination for the class of 2022 (this year's 11 Grade students) so that they will no longer be required to pass the MCAS in ELA or Math in order to graduate. Grade 11 students may still take the MCAS in order to qualify for scholarships (the Adams Scholarship/ Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery with Distinction Award).

Both Holyoke High School campuses will be hosting in-person MCAS tests for 10th graders the week of May 3. ELA will run on May 3 and 4, Mathematics on May 5 and 6. Sophomores who do not choose to sit for the exams will have asynchronous learning during the testing sessions. Juniors who choose to take the exams this spring will take the exams between May 10 and June 11. Dates are TBD depending on DESE guidance regarding the high school return to in-person teaching and learning. Opportunity Academy students will sit for MCAS exams the week of May 17, within their personalized learning program.

Graduation/ End of Year Activities Update

After multiple conversations and discussions with students, families, and staff, a whole school survey of students and staff, and deliberations by the HHS Graduation Task Force it has been decided that Dean and North campus will host separate graduations and senior events (as well as some cross campus celebrations too). The decision to separate the graduations was based on student survey data and was reviewed by the Graduation and Year End Activities task force. See data below.

Dean Graduation Survey Data

Respondents	# of Respondents	% In favor of Separate
Seniors	33 (89% of seniors)	73%
Non Seniors (9-11th)	125	69%
Faculty and Staff Dean	23	96%

North Campus Survey Data

Respondents	# of respondents	% in favor of separate
Seniors	66 (25% of Seniors)	71%
Non Seniors (9-11th)	79	58%
Faculty and Staff North	22	55%

The changes recognize and respect that while the North and Dean campuses are one school, the two campuses have distinct cultures, traditions, and dynamics. We know how important graduation and senior events are in the life and culture of a school and its families, and believe these changes celebrate the unique and shared accomplishments of each campus's seniors and their families.

Below are the following recommendations that were suggested in regards to changes in Holyoke High School's graduation and senior events:

- Separate Graduations for the Dean and North campuses.
 - Dean Campus graduation will be Friday, June 4 at 5:30 pm
 - North Campus graduation will be June 6 at 1:00 pm
- Each campus will have a separate Class Day.
- Seniors from both campuses would participate in a graduation car parade on May 23, with a route that will pass both the Dean and North campuses.
- Seniors from both campuses will participate in the Gary Rome car incentive.
- Seniors from both campuses will be eligible for any non-campus specific scholarships and awards.
- Both campuses will produce a campus-specific senior yearbook, led by student editors and staff support.
- Students who complete their graduation requirements within our Opportunity Academy will graduate with the campus from which they were referred for OA.
- Based upon DESE and BOH recommendations, there will be no Prom or Senior Night this year.

All dates and times for graduation related events can be found in the appendix.

Middle School Building Project

We are absolutely thrilled that on April 14th the MSBA reviewed our Statement of Interest (SOI) and invited us into the Eligibility Period. As you know, Holyoke had an amazing representation at that meeting. Thank you so much to all who attended! Senator John Velis, Representative Pat Duffy, Acting Mayor Terry Murphy, and Acting Superintendent Anthony Soto spoke on behalf of their project and shared their appreciation. City Councilors Todd McGee, Rebecca Lisi, Mike Sullivan, Peter Tallman; School Committee Members Mildred Lefebvre and Devin Sheehan; BESE Board member Mike Moriarity; HPS Staff Whitney Anderson and Erin Linville; and our project consultants Margaret Wood and Dorrie Brooks all joined.

There were a few factors that contributed to MSBA inviting us into the Eligibility Period. We want to thank former Mayor Morse and the City's financial advisor Cinder McNerney for providing financial statements that showed that the City can afford one new school building within the current debt schedule. We also want to thank the twelve City Councilors who voted on April 6th in favor of a resolution that the Holyoke City Council endorses the plan to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to build one middle school for 550 students and has received information from the City of Holyoke financial advisors indicating that the city has the capacity to finance the construction. One additional City Councilor was unable to be present for the vote.

Following the MSBA board meeting, Mayor Murphy received a Board Action Letter that indicated the Eligibility Period will formally commence on August 2, 2021, and conclude on April 29, 2022.

There are so many reasons we are excited about the potential of a new middle school building in Holyoke. A new building will allow us to:

- Continue moving towards a model of distinct elementary and middle schools, so that students can have a customized learning experience for their age level
- Continue to expand unique programs, such as the dual language program
- Plan for structural and financial sustainability
- Update our portfolio of schools so that more students have access to buildings conducive for learning in the 21st century

We are looking forward to engaging with you and our community over the next few years to solicit input on this important project! Please reach out to us at any time to discuss this project.

- Anthony Soto, Acting Superintendent/Receiver: 413.896.2399
- Erin Linville, HPS Chief of Strategy (project lead): 312.415.1864
- Whitney Anderson, HPS Facilities Administrator: 413.519.4613

COVID-19 Update

Since the start of the school year on (9/14, through 3/3,1 HPS has had 507 cumulative positive cases. This includes 379 remote students, 36 in-person students, 19 remote staff, and 73 in-person staff. Holyoke’s COVID status returned to “Red” on Thursday, April 8th, after six weeks in the “Yellow.”

Holyoke COVID-19 Health Metrics

	Feb. 25	Mar. 4	Mar. 11	Mar. 18	Mar. 25	Apr. 1	Apr. 8	Apr. 15
Case Count (14 days)	225	214	201	160	153	211	299	283
Number of daily COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents over a two-week period	39.5	37.6	35.3	28.1	26.9	37.1	44.6	49.0
Test positivity rate over a two-week period (% positive COVID-19 tests out of all tests conducted)	4.42%	4.29%	3.86%	3.42%	3.42%	4.33%	5.42%	5.59%
Percent Positivity	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	No Change	Higher	Higher	Higher

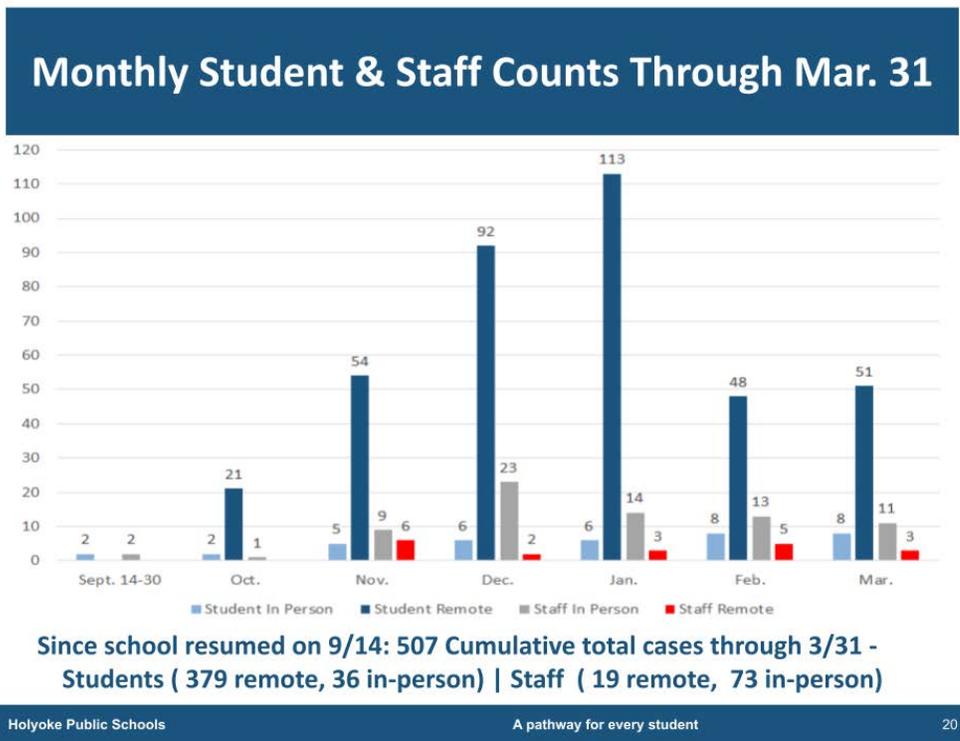
Source: Mass.gov Weekly Public Health Reports

Holyoke’s designation has been red for 2 weeks now. Total case counts by month include:

- September (14-30): 3 cases
- October: 24 cases
- November: 74 cases
- December: 123 cases
- January: 136 cases
- February: 74 cases
- March: 73 cases.

March’s 73 total cases include 59 students (51 remote, and 8 in-person) and 14 staff (3 remote, and 11 in-person). From 4/1 through 4/20, HPS has had 72 cases. As of the report of April 15, the case count for the prior 14 days is **283** cases. The average daily incidence rate is **9.0/100,000**, and the percent positivity is **5.59%**.

See the chart below for the monthly student and staff counts through March 31st.



Other Health-Related Updates:

- The second of two COVID-Vaccine Clinics sponsored by Holyoke Health Center/HPS Nurses will be held on Saturday, April 24 from 8:00 a.m. until 6 p.m. at Dean Technical High School Gymnasium. The first clinic, held in March, was extremely successful, vaccinating just under 600 individuals. Our Acting Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto, School Committee member Devin Sheehan, and Congressman Richard Neil were in attendance.
- Following our second COVID vaccine clinic, nursing will be sending out a COVID-vaccine staff survey.
- Counselors district-wide will be offered the *Youth Mental Health First Aid Training* course through our Healthy Schools Grant program in collaboration with DESE and Pinnacle Partners. Nurses participated in this well-respected training earlier this year and now counselors district-wide will be participating in this important training. Supporting our students' and families' social emotional and mental health needs is needed now more than ever due to the additional pressures related to the ongoing pandemic.
- HPS School Nurses are conducting symptomatic rapid testing district wide.
- HPS Pool Testing began on April 5th with HHSN, Dean Campus, and Transitions program.
 - Pool testing intends to identify infected individuals before they develop symptoms or to identify infected individuals who may not develop symptoms so that measures can be taken to prevent further spread.

Appendix

- **Graduation & Senior Events**

- Cross Campus:

- Senior car parade, May 23, 9 am-12 pm
- Gary Rome Car Give away, May 23 (post car parade)
- Lawn Signs, Distributed to both campuses on Friday, May 14
- Senior Banners, Pictures on April 28 from 1-6 pm, Banners hung on North and Dean campuses by 5/22

- Dean Campus

- HHS Dean Tech Beautification Day, May 8th, 9:00 - 12:00
- Cap And Gown Day, May 22, 11:00 - 2:00
- Markiyon Memorial Tree Planting Ceremony, June 1st, 3:30 - 4:30 (Limited to family event)
- Breakfast and Class Day, June 2 time TBD
- Barbecue and Rehearsal, June 3 from 11:00-2:00
- Graduation, June 4, 5:30 pm

- North Campus

- Graduation, June 6, 1:00 pm
- Graduation Rehearsal, TBD
- Class Day, June 4 (Breakfast from 9:30-10:30, Class Day from 10:45-12:00)
- Cap and Gown Day, May 15 from 11:00-2:00