

Holyoke STEM Academy

**Scholar & Family
Handbook
2018-2019**

**1045 Main Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
413-534-2072**

August 28, 2018

Dear Founding Scholars, Parents, Guardians and Families,

Welcome to the Holyoke STEM Academy community. The Holyoke STEM Academy is co-located with Holyoke High School on the Dean campus. Both schools are part of Holyoke Public Schools. In our education community, scholars learn and grow and together. We have separate educational programs yet share common spaces. We are all committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment. All scholars, staff, families and guests are expected to uphold the core values and to follow the rules that are established for the welfare of the entire school community as outlined in the Holyoke Public School Student Code of Conduct.

In addition, this handbook outlines information that is specific for scholars and families of Holyoke STEM Academy. The information in complements the Holyoke Student Code of Conduct. The information in this handbook is compiled to help scholars and their families acclimate and become an integral part of our school community. This handbook includes information regarding the scope of the school programs and activities offered. In addition, it has been designed to provide scholars with information necessary to have a successful school year.

We urge scholars to participate in extracurricular activities, be it as part of our intramural sports teams or afterschool programming in the arts or science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It is our intent to provide activities and increase their opportunities for learning to enrich the whole scholar and provide them with a well-rounded educational experience.

The Holyoke STEM Academy desires to build and sustain a reputation for high-performance, and responsiveness. We look forward to scholars joining us in building rich traditions as we work towards this vision. Please refer to this handbook when questions or problems arise. If you cannot find the answer here, please contact the school. We look forward to this school year and the opportunity to support your scholar's academic, social and emotional growth.

Respectfully,

Ms. KatieAnne DeMars, Principal
Holyoke STEM Academy

Table of Contents

Vision

- Student profile
- Learning philosophy

Academic Program

Attendance

Behavior Expectations: ROCKS

Dress Code

Grading

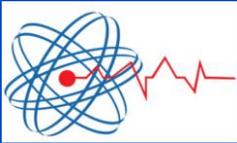
Family and Community Partnerships

Technology

**** Scholar - Family - School Compact ****

Holyoke STEM Academy Vision

Holyoke STEM Academy is a high-performing, innovative, and responsive school where all scholars are passionate learners, resilient problem-solvers, and effective communicators. Holyoke STEM Academy scholars will be successful in high school and able to compete in an ever-changing world.



Holyoke STEM Academy 8th Grade Profile

Effective Communicators

- I can write with precision, clarity, and coherence appropriate to the task and audience
- I can read, write, listen, and speak clearly for a variety of audiences, in a number of different situations, using multiple formats
- I can increase my self-efficacy by advocating for my learning needs

Resilient Problem-solvers

- I can analyze and evaluate information critically and effectively
- I can create multiple potential solutions to challenges and opportunities
- I can effectively adapt knowledge and skills to new challenges and environments

Passionate Learners

- I can create original works that demonstrate a thoughtful and reflective approach
- I can use obstacles and setbacks as opportunities to reflect, learn, and improve
- I can acquire, assess, and integrate information across disciplines

Global Citizens

- I can demonstrate kindness and empathy to the people in my community
- I can disagree respectfully and calmly express my viewpoint using evidence
- I can acknowledge and respect the perspectives of people from different backgrounds

Academic Program

A Scholar's Schedule

All Holyoke STEM Academy Scholars have an academy schedule composed of seven course sections daily. The course and related curriculum is listed below.

Course	Structure
English Language Arts	Reading Comprehension Expeditionary Learning
Writing/Ethnic Studies	ThinkCerca - Social Studies Units Ethnic Studies / Holyoke Public Schools Curriculum Units
Mathematics	Workshop Model using Illustrative Math
Science	5E Workshop Model using STEMscopes
Specials	Physical Education units Music education units
Acceleration	English Language Arts - iXL Mathematics - iXL Science - Everfi

6th, 7th and 8th grade scholars are teamed with grade level teachers who collaborate across the day to provide responsive instruction. Sixth grade scholars move in cohorts of scholars. 7th and 8th grade scholars move independently from class to class. Below is a sample schedule. For each scholar, times, schedule and course offerings may vary.

Time	Minutes	Monday - Friday
------	---------	-----------------

7:45-8:15	10 minutes	Breakfast in the classroom & Advisory
8:15-9:25	70 minutes	English Language Arts - Reading
9:25-10:35	70 minutes	Writing / Ethnic Studies
10:35-11:25	50 minutes	Specials
11:25-11:55	30 minutes	Lunch & Recess
11:55-1:05	70 minutes	Science
1:05-2:15	70 minutes	Math
2:15-2:45	30 minutes	Acceleration Block
2:45-2:50	5 minutes	Dismissal

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of concepts taught in the classroom. They are encouraged and supported. Only children receiving family permission and exhibiting responsible behaviors may go on field trips. Families are often asked to serve as chaperones for field trips, and their assistance is truly appreciated. The purpose of a family volunteer on a field trip is to actively supervise scholars assigned to them, so younger children may not attend. Families will be notified if they are selected for the field trip and will be given specific information regarding their role in the supervision process, as well as any pertinent information about the scholars assigned to them.

School Supplies

The school will distribute to each scholar a Holyoke STEM Academy planner to keep track of assignments and due dates. The school will also provide one identification (ID) card and one lanyard.

Attendance

Given the fast pace and high rigor of Holyoke STEM Academy's curriculum, consistent daily attendance is expected and required. Scholars will need to be at school to be successful. The goal is for each student to exceed 95% attendance, which means missing 9 or fewer days of school per year! Missing a school day at STEM may have a detrimental effect on a scholars' learning.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school. Please do not allow your child to miss a day of school except for serious illness. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time.

All scholar's absences, including illness, suspension, appointments, vacations, excessive incomplete days, etc. count as absences. Exceptions are made for court-mandated appearances with proper documentation and religious observances.

Scholars who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission.

In order to help ensure that scholars do not exceed 10 absences, Holyoke STEM Academy has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- At 3 scholar's absences, we will contact the family in writing.
- At 7 scholar's absences (or five absences within the first academic quarter), Holyoke STEM Academy's administration will require a meeting with the scholars' family, attendance officer, and counselor during which an Attendance Contract will be established aimed at ensuring attendance patterns improve.
- At 10 scholar's absences, we will require a family meeting to discuss what steps can be done to ensure scholar will be in school each day.

Tardies

Late scholars must check in at the main office before reporting to class. Scholars must arrive prior to 11:00am on Monday-Friday. Scholars who arrive after 11:00am on Monday- Friday are marked as a full-day absence unless the scholars returns to school with a note from a medical or legal professional.

Early Dismissals

Scholars leaving early must check in with the main office before leaving. Scholars are responsible for all classes missed.

For their own safety, scholars must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated emergency contact person in order to be dismissed prior to 2:50pm.

Behavior Expectations

“ROCKS”

Holyoke STEM Academy holds members of the school community—scholars, families, and staff—to the highest standards. To provide the very best education for Holyoke STEM Academy scholars, all of us must work together to create an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence. To create this environment, we must collectively and consistently ensure that Holyoke STEM Academy scholars meet five basics, but critical, expectations:

Be Respectful

Show Respect to Your Self, Classmates, Teachers, and Your School.

Be On Task

Stay organized, Maximize your time, Complete assigned work, Follow All Directions and Procedures

Be Collaborative

Listen, Participate, Volunteer, Look at the Speaker, and Ask Insightful Questions

Be Kind

Respect everyone’s voice, Invite others to join, Use appropriate language

Be Safe

Keep hands to yourself, Respect others space and property

These expectations, known collectively as “**ROCKS**,” forms the basis of our school-wide discipline system called PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support). “**ROCKS**” focuses on helping each scholar learn to take responsibility for his or her behavior choices and expects each scholar to demonstrate appropriate school behaviors consistently. “**ROCKS**” aligns to the expectations of the Holyoke Public Schools Student Code of Conduct.

Information is available on the district’s website (www.hps.holyoke.k12.ma.us) under documents and forms for the following HPS policies:

- **Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy**
- **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation**

Dress Code

Holyoke STEM Academy has a dress code. The dress code applies during all school days and all school-sponsored events.

Specifically, we have instituted a dress code for the following reasons:

- to foster a sense of school identity and community;
- to prepare scholars for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations and employers will have;
- to ensure that our scholars focus on learning instead of clothing;
- to ensure school safety and security by making the presence of visitors/outside immediately apparent.

Mandatory Items

Each scholar must wear the following item(s):

- Navy blue, maroon, black or white collared plain short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo-style shirt or a Holyoke STEM Academy t-shirt
- A Holyoke STEM Academy sweatshirt/hoodie may be worn on top of the navy blue, maroon, black or white collared plain short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo-style shirt or Holyoke STEM Academy t-shirt, if desired
- Athletic shoes appropriate for the gymnasium and outdoor field during physical education class
- An identification card provided by Holyoke STEM Academy on a lanyard

Purchasing of Clothing

Families may purchase all uniform items at the store of their choice except the Holyoke STEM Academy logo wear.

Holyoke STEM Academy logo t-shirts and sweatshirts are available for purchase only through the school office. Order forms are available at the office and at school events. It is anticipated that new a style will be available on an annual basis.

Enforcement of Dress Code Policy

Scholars will not attend class unless they are in the proper uniform and will complete academic work in the office. Not following the dress code may result in disciplinary consequences. Parents/guardians of scholars who are not in dress code will be asked to bring the proper attire to school.

Emergency Response

Crisis Plan

Scheduled fire drills, bus evacuations and lockdown drills are held throughout the school year as part of the Holyoke STEM Academy Safe Schools Plan. All staff members have instructions on emergency procedures. Instructions are posted in each classroom and in key locations throughout the building indicating how to exit the building when necessitated by an emergency. Drills are regularly conducted to practice emergency procedures. There will be no release of scholars in the event of an emergency until the situation is resolved as determined by the principal.

Grading

Grading Practices- Formal Assessments:

1. Formal assessments will account for 65% of the scholar's grade. These assessments include a variety of assignments such as tests, major quizzes, and projects.
2. Scholars in classes that meet every day will be given a minimum of Six (6) formal grades each quarter. During lab experience, scholars will receive at least one (1) formal assessment.
3. Additional practice will be provided for scholars who do not achieve initial mastery (73%). This practice may include; increased iXL time, extra learning assignment, writing assignment, teacher made review, test corrections with explanations, tutoring, etc.

Grading Practices- Informal Assessments:

1. Informal assessments will account for 35% of the scholar's grade. These assessments include a variety of assignments such as classwork, activator, notebook checks, exit tickets, mini quizzes, homework, and class participation.
2. Scholars in classes that meet every day will be given a minimum of fifteen (15) informal grades each quarter. Scholars in classes that meet every other day will be given a minimum of ten (10) informal grades each quarter. During lab experience, scholars will receive at least five (5) informal assessments.

Make Up Work:

1. A scholar who misses homework assignments or other assignments or due dates because of absences, whether excused or unexcused, will be allowed to make up the work. Arrangements for completing the work should be made within five (5) school days of the date of the scholar's return to school and include a schedule for completion of the work. Scholars must initiate the contact with the teacher.
2. Teachers will be allowed 24 hours to provide make up work.

Late Work:

1. Homework and other assignments will be accepted, even if turned in after the designated date.
2. Scholars will receive an initial score of zero (0) for an assignment or assessment on which he/she made no attempt or which is missing.
3. Credit for late work shall be awarded according to the following guidelines:
 - a. If the scholar was present in class on the due date, the work will be penalized 5% per school day
 - b. If the scholar was not present in class on the due date because of an excused/unexcused absence, full credit will be given for the completed work

Homework Expectations

Homework is an essential component of Holyoke STEM Academy's academic program. Scholars have up to three daily responsibilities related to homework:

- Track all homework assignments using the grade specific organizational system.
- Complete all homework assignments to the high standards set forth by the school.
- Read independently for 25 minutes

All homework assignments are collected each day by core content teachers.

Parent and Community Partnerships

Scholar-Led Conferences/Home Visits

Conferences and home visits will be scheduled by Teachers and Counselors. If you would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, send an email or send a written note to school with your child.

A conference offers a special opportunity to share information about a scholar. The best conferences end with both the family and teacher feeling they have learned something about the child and with a clear action plan of how to best support the child going forward. Conferences can be scheduled anytime throughout the school year. However, specific days are set aside annually for all families to meet with their child's teacher either at school or in their homes.

School Site Council/Design Team

The Site Council's purpose is to identify and provide for areas of improvement and enrichment in the existing educational program. The Site Council is composed of equal representation from the faculty and the parent community, and meets throughout the school year for the ongoing design of Holyoke STEM Academy. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend any of the Site Council meetings. Further inquiries about the program are always welcome.

Visitor Guidelines

All visitors, including parents and guardians, must check in at the office when entering Holyoke STEM Academy School. For the safety of your children, we need to account for every individual in the building. Classes begin at 7:45 am. Scholars arriving at school tardy, or being dismissed early, will be dropped off or picked up in the school office rather than the scholars' classroom. We love having families involved in school, but we must honor the rest of the scholars' academic time with minimal interruptions.

Technology

Cell Phones

Scholars who choose to bring a cell phone or other electronic mobile devices to school do so at their own discretion and the school does not accept responsibility for the security of such items that are brought onto school grounds.

Furthermore, all mobile devices shall remain off and out of sight during the school day. Failure to do so will result in the device being confiscated through the end of the school day and consequences will be issued in accordance with Holyoke STEM Academy's Code of Conduct. Repeat offenses will require a parent or guardian to come to the school to retrieve a confiscated item and may result in high level consequences.

Parent Volunteers

Holyoke STEM Academy recognizes the valuable contributions family and community make to scholars and schools. We welcome volunteers and recognize them as an integral part to our school's success. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your child's teacher or the main school office.

Miscellaneous Notes

Birthdays

Classroom birthday celebrations are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. If the teacher chooses to allow birthday treats, please follow the guidelines below. Families are to communicate with the teacher before sending treats so that any allergies can be discussed and the time and manner of delivery of the treats can be decided.

- Treats are to be store bought and prepackaged in individual servings needing no cutting (e.g., cupcakes, individual cookies, or other prepackaged individual snacks)
- Nutrition and ingredient label must be on the item(s) due to scholars with allergy issues
- Soft drinks are not permitted
- Treats must not contain peanuts or peanut products due peanut allergies
- Treats will only be served at the end of the lunch period or at the end of the school day
- Balloons, candles, flowers, party favors, goody bags, or any other items that disrupt instruction are not permitted
- Birthday party invitations are not to be distributed at school

Non-Essential Items

Scholars should not to bring non-essential items of value to school – monetary or otherwise – since they cannot be securely stored. Although Holyoke STEM Academy prides itself on being very safe, the school does not accept responsibility for any missing items of value. Scholars who bring inappropriate items to school, including but not limited to toys, iPods, electronic tablets, CD players, and laser pointers, will have such items confiscated. A parent or guardian must come to the school to retrieve the confiscated items, as scholars may not retrieve confiscated items themselves.

2018-2019 Holyoke STEM Academy Scholar - Family - School Compact

As members of Holyoke STEM Academy community, we are part of a team. To achieve our vision of scholar success in high school, college and beyond, we must work together. We all must have a full and clear understanding of the responsibilities of the members of this team. The Holyoke STEM Academy – Scholar – Family Contract spells out the most important responsibilities.

On behalf of scholar _____ we commit to ...

Scholar's Commitment

1. I understand that my education is important. Being a scholar is my job. I will always work, think and behave in the best way I know how. I commit to being a passionate learner.
2. If I need help, I will ask for it. If I can give help, I will give it. I won't criticize other scholars.
3. I will come to school and ready to learn by 7:45am with all homework completed..
4. If I need to miss class or school, I will ask for and make up all assignments. I will stay after school if/when I am required to do so.
5. I will wear the proper uniform every day and remain in uniform throughout the day.
6. I will listen to directions. I will read and re-read directions before asking for help. If I cannot solve the problem myself, I will raise my hand and ask for help. I will help my classmates if they need help. I will not make excuses. I will be honest with my teachers and myself. I will strive to be a resilient problem-solver.
7. If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions. I will do the right thing, even when no one is watching.
8. I will advocate for myself both in the classroom and within the school community. I will become an effective communicator.

Scholar's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian's Commitment

1. I will ensure that my scholar comes to school every day on time. I will do my best to schedule important appointments for out of school time.
2. I will send my child in proper dress code every day. If my child arrives out of uniform, I'll arrange for a family member to bring proper attire.
3. I agree to work as part of a team for the academic success & behavioral growth of my child. I will communicate in a respectful tone including to my own scholar as well as other

adults and scholars. I will return phone calls, review & sign documentation sent home including progress reports & report cards.

4. I will attend student-led conferences and parent/guardian-teacher meetings about my child. I or a member of my family will participate in scholar showcase events across the year
5. I will provide a place at home for my child to complete homework and study. I will help my scholar study for tests/quizzes as I am able, give them support when they need help and praise when they do well.
6. My scholar and I will discuss the Holyoke Student Code of Conduct. If my scholar's behavior requires it, I will come to school immediately. I commit to partnering with the school staff to address behavior concerns and will participate in any required hearings. If out of school suspension is mandated, I will remove my child from the building until my child has fulfilled the terms of his/her suspension and participate in the required re-entry meeting upon completion of suspension.
7. I understand that the school follows a strict bullying prevention and intervention plan and if my child violates that plan s/he will be subject to the consequences stated in that plan.
8. I will bring concerns about my child's experience at the Holyoke STEM Academy to the classroom teacher or a member of the leadership team in a timely fashion.

Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Holyoke STEM Academy's Commitment

1. We will work tirelessly to ensure that our scholars get the excellent education they deserve. We will neither make nor accept excuses.
2. We will work to offer scholars extra help and support, and always offer our scholars the best we have. We will be student-centered.
3. We will encourage and respect every scholar. We will listen to scholars and their needs. We will not tolerate scholars disrespecting each other.
4. We will teach and enforce Holyoke STEM Academy's ROCKS values consistently and fairly. We will communicate with families when scholars fail to meet expectations just as when they exceed expectations.
5. We will communicate regularly with families about their scholar's progress and make ourselves available in person and on the phone. We will return parent phone calls and emails within 24 hours.
6. We will assign quality homework to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
7. We will always work to provide a safe learning environment. We will always work to protect the safety, dignity and rights of all individuals.
8. We will continue to innovate and add new programs and experience throughout this year and over the course of years to come in response to the needs of our community.

School Representative's Signature: _____ Date: _____