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EDUCATION PROGRAM – HOLYOKE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

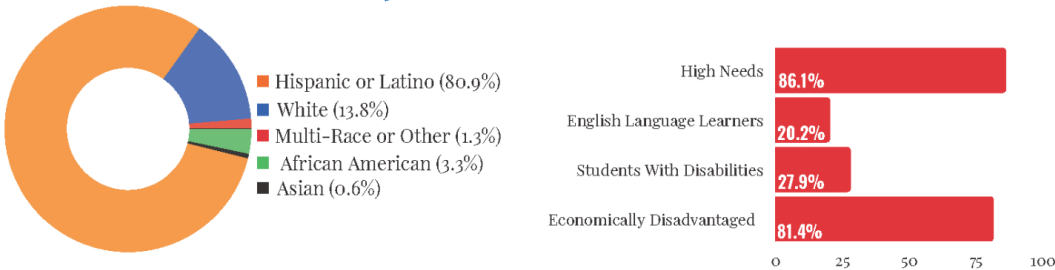
The Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) currently provides education for students in preschool through 12th grade across 12 schools (11 elementary/middle schools and one high school across 3 campuses). We also have a Transitions program for students with disabilities beyond 12th grade to prepare them for adulthood. In addition to school-based programs, HPS offers before and after school programs, vacation academies, summer school, enrichment programs, and athletic opportunities.

A snapshot of the district follows.

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A PATHWAY FOR EVERY STUDENT



5,153 STUDENTS



COMMUNITY

40,117
Residents



78% of school-age residents attend HPS

Racial breakdown

Hispanic or Latino – **53.9%**
White – **41.3%**
African American – **4.5%**
Other/Multi Race – **0.3%**

40%

Home ownership rate

SCHOOLS

Grades Pre K–12



12 schools

4

Schools met state targets*

52%

Substantial progress toward targets*

Pathways

3 schools with dual language
3 high school academies
9 career technical education programs

\$17 Million invested
in school infrastructure



OUTCOMES

72.2%

Graduation rate

3.4%

Dropout rate

24%

Grade 3 students reading at/above grade level*

45.6%

Students completing MassCore*

45%

Students in advanced coursework*

23.7%

Chronic absenteeism*

92.3%

Attendance rate*

26%

Teachers of color

For more information scan the QR code to access our website



NOTE: *Some data is from 2019 due to limited 2020-21 data and opportunities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The District has some unique challenges. It is a Gateway City and has historically been home to immigrants and more recently, migrants from Puerto Rico. Following is a summary of some key statistics:

	Holyoke	State
First Language not English	36.8%	23.9%
English Learner	19.1%	11.0%
Students with Disabilities	28.6%	18.9%
High Needs	90%	55.6%
Low Income	86.5%	43.8%

Source: 2021-22 [DESE Selected Populations Report](#)

In addition to the high needs of the student population, the District contends with fluctuations in enrollment from month to month and year to year. Combined with the changing nature of education itself, the key requirement for middle school educational spaces is “flexibility.” Spaces, groups of spaces, and the technology and infrastructure that enable their use, must be highly reconfigurable and flexible. Physical spaces must be capable of being used for multiple functions: smaller scale group meeting space is a critical need because it can be used for a wide range of uses, including teacher collaboration, tiered teaching, family meetings, student collaboration, counseling and student supports. Classrooms must be capable of transformation for exploration in different curricula, and public gathering spaces must provide opportunities for presentation, performance and community meetings for groups of all sizes.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015, HPS was placed into receivership. The current Receiver, Mr. Anthony Soto, who has been a part of the district since 2016, has embarked on an inclusive process to develop an updated strategic plan for Holyoke Public Schools, which falls within the turnaround plan boundaries. Below is the draft strategic plan, as of May 23, 2022. It will be finalized by mid-June 2022 and available on the HPS website.

Vision: HPS is a high-performing school system where students reach their full potential, educators inspire, families are partners, and the community thrives.

Mission: Through an equitable, high quality education and trusting relationships, all Holyoke students develop the skills and access the opportunities to graduate high school ready for life, career, and college.

Equity Commitments:

- We intentionally build a community that is anti-racist, inclusive, and culturally responsive.
- We ensure that students, families, and staff get the support they need to be successful.
- We seek out and incorporate the voices of those impacted, with a commitment to include those who have been excluded in the past.
- We promote access and inclusion for all students, staff, and families.
- We respect, embrace and honor the diversity of our students, families, staff, and community.
- We reflect on our own behavior to minimize harm to others.
- We create a culture of acceptance and empathy so that everyone feels valued and is able to contribute to our community's success.

Core Values/Beliefs:

- Students are at the center of everything we do.
- Every child can and will learn.
- School is a joyful place of discovery, support, and belonging.
- Students and staff hold high expectations of themselves and each other.
- Trusting relationships lead to successful partnerships.
- Our equity commitments are enacted in our daily work.

Priority Areas:

- **Early Literacy:** Ensuring ALL students in grades PreK-3 read at grade-level.
- **Learning Experiences:** Ensuring schools are equipped to provide rigorous, culturally responsive instruction to ALL students.
- **Inclusion:** Providing differentiated, in-classroom supports so that students with diverse learning needs thrive.
- **Whole Child:** Providing students' access to social emotional learning, mental health supports and opportunities to explore their passions..
- **Educator Development:** Growing and retaining a talented, diverse staff.

Strategic Initiatives, aligned to each Priority Area:

- **Early Literacy: Ensuring ALL students in grades PreK-3 read at grade-level.**
 - Create and implement an early literacy plan that includes high-quality curriculum, effective teacher strategies and development of deep early literacy knowledge.
 - Maximize the impact of instructional leadership roles (e.g., Principals, Advanced Teachers) who provide direct instructional support to teachers.
 - Create data systems to support successful implementation of early literacy instruction and monitor student progress.
- **Learning Experiences: Ensuring schools are equipped to provide rigorous, culturally responsive instruction to ALL students.**
 - Define what rigorous, culturally responsive grade-level instruction looks like across

- grades and content areas and support educators in meeting this vision.
 - Redesign school schedules to build in sufficient time for (1) core content, (2) targeted instruction & enrichment, (3) social emotional learning, and (4) teacher collaboration/planning.
 - Reorganize schools into distinct elementary and middle schools, redraw school boundary lines, and continue to grow the dual language program.
 - Align the work and approach of central office departments focused on student learning to accelerate the effectiveness of support to schools.
- **Inclusion: Providing differentiated, in-classroom supports so that students with diverse learning needs thrive.**
 - Establish a district-wide vision for and team-based approach to inclusionary practice to support students who have unique learning needs (ELs, SWDs, and others).
 - Accelerate job-embedded support for educators to understand, meet, and scaffold for students to reach grade-level expectations.
 - Build trusting relationships with families, educators, and students around how to meet the unique needs of every child.
- **Whole Child: Providing students' access to social emotional learning, mental health supports, and opportunities to explore their passions.**
 - Develop a cohesive plan to increase access to and quality of social emotional learning (SEL) throughout the school day.
 - Connecting students with school-based supports and community providers to meet their mental health needs.
 - Partner with staff, families and the community to ensure students experience positive relationships, mentorship, and access opportunities to explore their interests.
- **Educator Development: Growing and retaining a talented, diverse staff.**
 - Continue to develop career pathways for educators that diversify the teaching staff, create differentiated roles (e.g., Associate Teacher), and provide financial support to people pursuing additional credentials.
 - Strengthen our commitment to equity and anti-racism by providing training for all staff members and re-establishing the equity task force.
 - Provide educators with professional development, job-embedded coaching, and dedicated time for team collaboration and planning.

HISTORY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL REDESIGN

As you can see, the successful establishment of distinct elementary and middle schools is a key component of the HPS strategic plan. The move towards distinct elementary and middle has been considered following significant community input since 2016.

In 2016, HPS, with the support and assistance of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), hired STV Group to conduct a facility audit of the District's educational facilities. HPS also hired Education Resource Strategies (ERS) to assist the district in developing a series of strategies for the future rethinking of the HPS portfolio. These experiences offered a unique opportunity to re-examine the HPS facilities to reflect on the educational vision and to extensively engage the community around these strategies. After meeting with all elementary and middle school teams, hosting four community sessions, reviewing more than 200 facility survey responses, reviewing the culture and climate survey results from all stakeholders last year, and analyzing 20+ school portfolio scenarios, the following emerged in 2017 as high priorities for portfolio design and grade reconfiguration:

- Moving the system towards a PreK-5, 6-8 middle school, and 9-12 reconfiguration
- Closing the facilities that scored the lowest on the Facilities Review ("STV" Report)
- Ensuring equity of access and resources
- Designating a Pre-K center to specialize resources for early learning, as well as having the opportunity to expand preschool seats (*Note: It's since been determined that neighborhood PreK is best for Holyoke because it keeps PreK more accessible to more families*)
- Ensuring middle schools are a "best fit" size – large enough to allow for meaningful teacher collaboration and a uniquely "middle school" student experience, yet small enough to promote strong relationships
- Continuing to expand unique programs, such as the dual language and P3 (personalized learning) programs (*Note: The P3 pilot has since been discontinued.*)
- Planning for structural and financial sustainability

HPS pursued this plan, with incremental changes that included:

- Establishing two new middle school options: Veritas Prep Holyoke and Holyoke STEM (*note: Veritas Prep Holyoke was operated by a non-profit partner, and the partnership concludes as of June 30, 2022; in SY22-23, the school becomes Holyoke Middle.*)
- Transitioning E.N. White, Kelly, Morgan and Donahue to elementary schools
- Continuing to grow the dual language program at Metcalf and in other schools
- Expanding the number of PreK seats
- Pursuing the building of two new middle schools of 550-students each (*Note: The financing mechanism failed to get approval in November 2019, so Holyoke is now pursuing one middle school building for 550 students*)

The decision to fully move to distinct elementary and middle schools, regardless of if/when a new middle school will be built, by fall 2023 was unanimously supported by the Holyoke School Committee in January 2022.

SCHOOL PORTFOLIO: CURRENT AND FUTURE

While the incremental change approach was able to move Holyoke forward, the district is currently in a situation where:

- The current school portfolio consists of many different grade configurations (9 configurations across 11 schools)
- A school size average that is below state and national averages for elementary and middle school.

Over time, HPS plans to reduce the number of grade configurations and increase the average size of school. The current and future grade configurations in HPS are below.

Current (SY21-22) HPS Grade Configurations:

Holyoke High School	North Campus	Dean Campus	Opportunity Academy	> One school on three campuses	
PK-7/8	Metcalf School Grades PK-7	McMahon School Grades PK-8	Sullivan School Grades PK-8		
Middle School	Peck School Grades 4-8	Veritas Prep Grades 5-8	STEM Academy Grades 6-8		
Elementary School	Kelly School Grades PK-4	E.N. White School Grades PK-5	Lawrence School Grades PK-3	Donahue School Grades PK-5, 8	Morgan School Grades PK-4

Future (estimated SY26-27) HPS Grade Configurations:

Holyoke High School Grades 9-12	North Campus	Dean Campus	Opportunity Academy	>	One school on three campuses	
Middle School Grades 6-8	Middle School #1	Middle School #2				
Elementary School Grades PK-5	Elementary School #1	Elementary School #2	Elementary School #3	Elementary School #4	Elementary School #5	Elementary School #6
Likely One School Will Close	Specific School TBD					

Summary Chart by Year

	Today	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2026? (After a new middle school is built - date is an estimate)
# of Schools	12	12	10 (estimate*)	9 (estimate*)
# of Grade Configurations	9	6	3	3
# of Schools in each Grade Configuration	PreK-3: 1 school PreK-4: 2 schools PreK-5: 1 school PreK-5, 8: 1 school PreK-7: 1 school PreK-8: 2 schools 4-8: 1 school 5-8: 1 school 6-8: 1 school 9-12: 1 school, 3 campuses	PreK-3: 1 school PreK-5: 4 schools PreK-8: 3 schools 4-8: 1 school 6-8: 2 schools 9-12: 1 school, 3 campuses	PreK-5: 6 schools 6-8: 3 schools 9-12: 1 school, 3 campuses	PreK-5: 6 schools 6-8: 2 schools 9-12: 1 school, 3 campuses
Avg Enrollment: Schools with Elementary Enrollment	371 (MA: 412) (USA: 453) Note: Drops to 329 if including only the students in elem school	273 (underestimated due to PK & K registrations TBD)	475	475
Avg Enrollment: Schools with predominantly Middle Enrollment	306 (MA: 595) (USA: 575) Note: Drops to 186 if including only the students in elem school	185	333	550

*The number of schools will be informed by a community input process on grade reconfiguration and rezoning that is taking place from May - October 2022.

This change to distinct elementary and middle schools and a reduction of the total number of schools sets the foundation so that all of our schools can:

- **Better prepare students academically and socially.** A robust elementary or middle school experience must have high quality learning experiences, be focused on students' developmental ages and be appropriately resourced to ensure student success. Such experiences empower students with choice and the ability to excel in high school and beyond.
- **Ensure continuity for dual language and special education programming.** Enrollment and educational programming must be strategically placed within the physical footprint of our school buildings, providing effective support for students to improve learning.
- **Be more equitable.** Students and schools must have equitable access to resources and opportunities on our path to becoming an anti-racist and culturally responsive district.
- **Dedicate resources to instruction, not operations.** Resources must be spent wisely, maximizing dollars dedicated to student learning and support, and where investments can be sustained over time.

More information on the history of these changes can be found on the [middle school redesign webpage](#).

HPS has established a Rezoning Task Force that is in the process of developing recommendations to present to the Superintendent on how to approach rezoning. Working with the Rezoning Task Force and Rezoning Working Group and following two public meetings on the topic, the leading guidelines, as of late May 2022, are below. Please note, these will be updated based on further community input and leadership discussion to be finalized in June 2022.

Most Important

- Ensure equitable access to special programs
- Design schools that put student needs first & prioritizes money spent on instruction

Next Important

- Balance student demographics across schools
- Ensure program continuity from elementary to middle school
- Ensure safe walking routes
- Ensure efficient use of space and stable enrollment

Least Important

- Have neighborhood schools
- Minimize the impact of families
- Minimize transportation costs

After the analysis and community discussion concludes in October 2022, HPS will release a plan in November 2022. The plan will include:

- Which schools are open and their grade configurations
 - Which school buildings close and when
- The school leader at each school
- The zone map
- The process and timeline for staff reassignment.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

All HPS students deserve experiences tailored to their respective developmental stages as they progress from elementary school towards high school. In 2021, following the study of historical efforts at HPS, internal data, best practices in middle level education and outreach via focus groups, interviews and surveys, a 16-member middle grades collaborative study team made recommendations for strengthening the middle school experience for all students.

Recommended Middle School Vision: HPS middle schools equip students with the skills and experiences to excel academically and socially in high school and beyond.

Most Important Guiding Beliefs, grounded in AMLE's (American Middle Level Educators) [16 Characteristics of Effective Middle Schools](#).

- Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning to drive academic growth.
- Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.
- Students engage in applied learning and activities inside and outside the classroom.
- The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.
- Adults value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them.

The recommendations on the middle school experience included:

Academic Recommendations

- Ensuring readiness for MassCore (a state-recommended program of study intended to align high school coursework with college and workforce expectations) through high quality curriculum and instruction.
 - In particular, the schedule needs to allow for accelerated learning in Math and ELA especially, without compromising a well-rounded curriculum
- Provide **exposure to enrichment opportunities and career pathways** within core curriculum and advisory
 - World/heritage languages for students outside of the dual language was a leading request. People also requested arts, music, STEM, theater, consumer sciences, and financial literacy. It also included exposure to the career vocational technical education (CVTE) programming at Holyoke High Dean Campus.

Social Emotional Learning Recommendations

- Implementing an advisory period to support this development and offer opportunities for personal and career exploration.
 - The team acknowledged that implementing an advisory period well requires a strong curriculum as well as time to internalize the curriculum. This should not be a study hall.
- Embed social emotional learning across the curriculum — not separate.
- Prioritize and protect time and space dedicated to mental health in schools.
- Partner with community agencies to augment services provided in schools.
- Note: Although this wasn't included from the MGCST, the feedback on a middle school building in 2017-2019 also requested the building bridge family-to-school connections, particularly as a way to provide support to students/families with more significant needs.

Equity Recommendations

- Ensures all students have a rigorous academic experience so they can take advantage of opportunities in high school and beyond.
- Support specialty programming and exposure to a variety of enrichment, while recognizing that students need to make choices.
- Balance the number and needs of special populations (e.g. SPED, EL) across schools
- Ensure all stakeholder voices are heard and represented.

Operational Recommendations

- Develop and implement a plan for middle schools now that works with/without a new school building.
- Ensure enough students per grade/school to allow for class and programming variety
- Ensure time for educator collaboration.
- Identify smart, efficient, sufficient, sustainable staffing levels that work for mid-sized middle schools.
- Offer continuity of programming from elementary to middle school.
- Utilize previous middle school building work as a starting point in order to save time and money on the new project.

Watch the [School Committee presentation](#) to learn more. Or, read the presentation in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

CLASS SIZE POLICIES

HPS and the Holyoke Teachers Association recognize that class size is an important factor in a quality education. Enrollment in HPS can fluctuate significantly as a function of the impact of natural disasters such as Hurricane Maria, the economic climate in Puerto Rico, and the impact of local charter schools. The goal of the new middle schools is to create strong, collaborative and inclusive grade level teams that provide personalized learning environments with a high degree of flexibility to address class size changes. Traditionally middle school class sizes have ranged from 18-28 for regular education. For the purposes of this project, the class size has been calculated to be 22-23, with four classrooms creating teams of 90 students. This allows for flexibility in class

size, based on the District’s history of fluctuating enrollment. The number of required classrooms for a single middle school based on current enrollment for 550 students is as follows:

Grade 6	(2) teams of 90 students (180 total)	4 Classrooms each	8 classrooms total
Grade 7	(2) teams of 90 students (180 total)	4 Classrooms each	8 classrooms total
Grade 8	(2) teams of 90 students (180 total)	4 Classrooms each	8 classrooms total
Total classrooms to serve 550 students (includes 6 science classrooms):			24 classrooms

CURRICULUM

HPS follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for all content areas including: English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Health and Wellness, Science and Technology, History and Social Science, and Fine Arts. The proposed school design allows for dedicated space for each content area.

SCHOOL SCHEDULING METHOD

The creation of new middle schools provides an important opportunity to create school schedules that are grounded in the specific needs of our middle grade students and teachers. In Holyoke, there are three key requirements: sufficient daily time for strong core instruction, flexible daily time for programming intervention, regular collaborative time for staff to improve instruction and meet student needs. Following are key components of the schedule:

- The school day is seven hours and five minutes long.
- The proposed schedule will have six daily blocks, with approximately one hour of instructional time in each.
- Four daily periods will be devoted to core academics (English, Social Studies, Math, and Science).
- One daily period will be devoted to structured intervention and acceleration, allowing for necessary Tier II academic interventions and targeted small group instruction.
- One daily period will provide students with health, wellness, and enrichment opportunities. Students will rotate through classes such as visual art, music, drama, physical education, STEM, and world language.
- Classes will operate on a five day cycle.

This proposed schedule meets the needs of Holyoke students by providing a strong core academic program, daily flexible intervention time, and regular common planning time for teachers.

Following is a sample schedule, with three minutes of transition between periods:

Period	Minutes	Time	Class
Entry	10	8:20 - 8:30	Entry (Before School)
BIC/Homeroom	10	8:30 - 8:40	Breakfast in the Classroom & Homeroom (same as 1st period class)
1	59	8:40 - 9:39	English
Passing	3	9:39 - 9:42	
2	59	9:42 - 10:41	Social Studies
Passing	3	10:41 - 10:44	
3	59	10:44 - 11:43	Rotating Enrichment by Quarter (e.g. PE, Art, Music, World Language, Drama, STEM, etc.)
Passing	3	11:43 - 11:46	
Lunch	23	11:46 - 12:09	Lunch
Passing	3	12:09 - 12:12	
4	59	12:12 - 1:11	Intervention (ESL, C Grid, Acceleration) & Advisory/SEL
Passing	3	1:11 - 1:14	
5	59	1:14 - 2:13	Math
Passing	3	2:13 - 2:15	
6	59	2:16 - 3:15	Science
Dismissal	10	3:15 - 3:25	Dismissal (After School)

Appropriate space for these special areas of instruction is essential.

- Instructional space for physical education includes: a full-size gym with a high school sized basketball court and a smaller multi-purpose space that will support alternative activities, such as yoga, weight lifting, and adaptive physical education.
- Instructional space for Music includes: the Band/Chorus room, with space for electronic keyboards/pianos.
- Instructional space for Visual Arts includes: the Art Classroom (plus kiln room).
- Instructional Space for Engineering & Design: project-based and multi-use learning area.
- Instructional space for Drama includes: the Stage, which can be used both for presentation or other opportunities for students to express themselves and for classroom usage, provided appropriate space separation or sound proofing is possible.
- Health will be taught in a grade-level Science classroom.

We would like to work with the architect/designer to ensure that: 1) dedicated spaces have the right balance of specialization to meet the intended needs and flexibility so that they can be used for multiple purposes, 2) the proposed space matches the schedule to ensure reasonable utilization throughout the school day, and 3) proposed spaces maximize likelihood for being reimbursement-eligible and when not or if needed, an inclusive deliberate discussion occurs so that the best decision can be made.

A few important notes:

- The school will be used for vacation academies (during February and April break) and summer school.
- The school may be used for adult education or enrichment activities.
- Students not in need of any intervention would have access to increased enrichment.
- Advisory is part of the intervention block.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

The new middle school model will be based on:

- **Preparation for the expectations and opportunities of high school**, so that students are ready to learn, can access grade level learning, and have some exposure to career vocational technical education programming and high school academies.
- **Collaboration**, providing a strong team teaching model and a curriculum that emphasizes engagement and student collaboration.
- **Access to Interventions and Social Emotional Learning**, which are fully embedded in the structure of the school day.

Preparation for the expectations and opportunities of high school. Each grade level team will include teachers in: Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, English as a Second Language Learners, and Special Education, and the teams will be on a wing and floor to create a smaller learning environment. The teams are responsible for ensuring that students develop the mindset, skills, and content in middle school to be ready for high school. Every student will have access daily to core content in Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science and intervention/acceleration. Holyoke has an emphasis on providing in-classroom supports and small group differentiated instruction, so there is sufficient space for multiple educators in each classroom and adjacent small group space. Students will also have exposure to the CVTE programming and academies in high school, so that they can make an informed decision about their high school campus of choice.

Collaboration. Each grade level team team will include teachers in: Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, English as a Second Language, and Special Education. The physical structure/layout for each team will support collaboration by providing:

- Small group meeting room for teacher collaboration and tiered intervention
- Clustered classroom arrangement around a common, central space with access to a dedicated project area
- Furniture that supports student and teacher collaboration

Grade levels are clustered to allow teams of teachers to work with their cohort of students. A smaller, more personalized learning environment is created within such clusters, which also

promotes a strong sense of teachers taking responsibility for all students in a cohort, and helps to ensure that no students feel anonymous. In addition to supporting a strong sense of community and allowing teachers to get to know their students well, clustering grade levels promotes collaboration. Proximity and visual connection matter.

Access to Interventions and Social Emotional Learning. Each academic team will have access to small group meeting space within the team's academic space for tiered teaching, counseling, intervention and teacher/family meetings. This teacher space supports child study teams and is near clusters to facilitate discussions of how best to support students.

Other spaces in the building that will support interventions include:

- School and Adjustment Counselor offices
- Space available for itinerant services such as occupational, physical and speech therapy
- The medical and counseling suite
- The Parent/Family Center
- Administrative meeting space
- Special Education conference room
- Staffed testing room per floor

INSTRUCTIONAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

HPS believes that all learners should be provided differentiated forms of instruction and recognizes that all students learn in different ways, rates, and timeframes. HPS is committed to continually adapting its staffing support, instructional methodologies, and assessment practices to meet student needs. Staff provides tiered levels of instruction to all students.

- Tier one – Strong core instruction of grade level standards/curriculum.
- Tier two – Access to small group systematic implementation of high quality, research-based academic and social/emotional interventions.
- Tier three – Access to intensive systematic implementation of high quality, research-based academic and social/emotional intervention, usually at the individualized level.

Teachers will support students through a variety of teaching models: co-teaching, team teaching, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individualized instruction. There is shared responsibility among the staff for all students' success. Teachers will be provided with administrative support, an academic coach, and a conference room on each floor to enable productive team communication and collaboration, as well as access to additional support staff for students, such as counselors and interventionists, to meet student needs.

Grade level classrooms will ideally be organized by floor and divided into two clusters per grade. This close proximity is critical in order to achieve communication and collaboration for a variety of grouping methods in grade level teams. General education, special education, literacy and math specialists, and ESL teachers will collaborate to provide tiered instruction in the inclusive

environment. Grouping and regrouping will occur within classrooms and among grade level classrooms. In addition to grouping grades by floor, new furniture that can be easily and flexibly moved and arranged will allow for individualization of instruction within teaching spaces.

Pull out instruction near to or within the cluster is to be provided for students who require it, based on their personalized instructional needs within tier two and tier three programming. Small group meeting spaces throughout the building provide opportunity for this collaboration and personalized intervention. If a student demonstrates academic and/or social/emotional/behavioral concerns despite application of Response to Intervention (RTI) procedures, the teacher refers the student to the Child Study Team (CST). The CST supports teachers implementing additional strategies.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

The role of technology and digital learning continues to evolve quickly. Generally speaking, we want to provide sufficient access to mobile technology so that learning can happen throughout the building in the flexible spaces that have been designed. The new middle building will be a wireless environment where each student has access to a device for digital collaboration. Our mantra will be “learn anywhere,” utilizing technology to facilitate meaningful student learning in spaces beyond the walls of the classroom. In this spirit, we are interested in exploring the use of flatscreen TVs around the building to project digital content, facilitate interactive teaching, and allow our educators to innovate and flexibly adjust their teaching practice. It is also our interest to utilize voice amplification systems both for hearing impaired students and the many English learners who benefit from clearly articulated and enunciated language as part of their learning experience. We may also want to explore technology that allows us to hear students' discussions when recording teacher lessons for professional learning purposes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As was noted in the introduction, approximately 28.6% of HPS's students have diagnosed disabilities. When Holyoke was pursuing two new middle schools, we wrote comprehensively about all the special education spaces that would be needed across both middle schools. Now, we recognize that about 50% of the students with disabilities in the district will be in this new middle school building, whereas the other 50% will be in another middle school building. Most students with disabilities spend most of their time in the general education setting, although some students in need of more intensive support are served in one of the following programs:

- **Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP)** The TIP Program is designed for students in grades K-12, who are identified through the Special Education Process with a primary diagnosis of Emotional Disability (as defined by federal guidelines 34 CFR 300.7) A student being considered for the TIP program has consistently demonstrated significant and pervasive social/emotional and behavioral deficits that impact overall psychological health and academic and social functioning over an extended period of time.

- **Applied Behavioral Learning Program (ABL)**. The ABL Program serves students in grades PK-8 with a primary diagnosis of severe autism. All students in the program are intellectually impaired, and some have additional secondary disabilities as well. Students transitioning to high school will either access the RISE Program, Functional Program, or Inclusion based program, with consultation from a BCBA/Autism Specialist and other services, per IEP.
- **Reaching Individual Self Efficacy (RISE)**. The RISE Program students in grades K-12 with a primary diagnosis of severe developmental delay, intellectual impairment or a combination of other related disabilities. The primary focus of this program is to provide individually modified CORE curricula and functional / adaptive skills in order to limit the impacts of significant disabilities. In turn, this will ensure achievement of individuals' greatest level of independence with the most impactful outcome.
- **Students with Health Impairments and Needs of Exception (SHINE)**. The SHINE Program, located at Sullivan (K-3), Peck (4-8), and Holyoke High School North Campus, services students who present with complex medical/developmental disabilities, highly complicated learning profiles, and educational needs that require a significant degree of program coordination and service.
- **Functional Academic Program**. The Functional Academic Program, located at Veritas and Holyoke High School-North Campus, services students in grades 5-12 who are identified as requiring a highly modified curriculum that focuses on life skills. The Functional Academic Program provides a modified curriculum for students within a small group setting with a slower pacing than that of the inclusive setting.

Other special education programs that serve middle school-aged students are:

- **Speech Therapy**. Students are serviced in small groups to receive required speech therapy services. One space per 550 enrollment.
- **Occupational and Physical Therapy**. OT/PT requires a large classroom that can support a variety of exercise equipment (swings, bicycles, etc) for large motor skills, as well as tables and other support equipment for small motor and sensory skill development and practice. Ideally, the two therapies will have separate rooms, with physical therapy needing the larger space. Therapists are scheduled all day long.
- **Learning Center (Resource Room)**. For tiered intervention. This space needs access to computers and will be located near the project learning room(s). It is a roughly 500sf space, one per grade.
- **Social Skills group**. This program can be serviced in the Resource Room or other available half size classroom spaces.
- **Autism Specialist**: A dedicated office; 1 specialist for 550 pupils; 2 for 1,100.
- **Adaptive PE**. Specialized PE for a subset of students. It will be met by scheduling use of the fitness room or by use of the partitioned gym or science/health classroom depending on activity type.

- **Safe Room.** This room would have no lock and would be adjacent to the TIP classrooms.
Sensory Room. This room provides space for therapeutic services to students. It is located near the ABL (autism) classroom
- **Small group pull-out tutoring.** Intervention spaces are needed for a wide variety of tutoring, coaching, and one on one instruction.
- **Therapist offices.** Therapy services are provided to students who exhibit or express a wide variety of psychological needs, including many students with individual educational plans. These services are outsourced to a private provider, and require offices with acoustic privacy that are accessible away from public or common view.

A Special Education team leader’s office will be provided for each school near the front office with space for a small table for meetings of up to six people. This office also will be located near a conference room to support team coordination of IEPs.

Inclusion is a key goal for the new middle school program. This educational model challenges schools to meet the needs of all students by educating learners with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers. In order to facilitate the collaboration of teachers and support staff serving students with special needs, these programs will be divided equitably between the two 550 student schools.

DIVISION OF SPECIAL ED SPACES PER 550 MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Holyoke is currently in the midst of a special initiative to move to distinct elementary and middle schools and redraw school boundary lines for fall 2023. The decision on which schools will be elementary or middle schools and the programs associated with each school will be made and announced by November 2022. The chart below shows the split between two middle schools that was anticipated for the previous education plan. Holyoke has modeled out six different scenarios with the division of which programs would be in which school. Holyoke will share these with any architect/designer and is willing to adapt its needs based on what’s available before releasing the final plan in November 2022. The specificity of the six different scenarios could be confusing if written into this plan and Holyoke would prefer to talk through the options with the designer/architect, rather than writing them in this plan.

School 1:	School 2(Peck):
1 SHINE CR, 1200 sf (with toilet) (on ground fl)	1 RISE CR, 1200 sf (w/toilet)
1 ABL or Autism CR (900 sf+ toilet)	2 nd ABL or Autism
3 TIP, ¾ size CR (700) (1/grade)	2 Functional CRs: 1 for daily living skills w/apps & W,D, 700sf; + 1 other standard CR.
3 Safe rooms, 70 sf	3 - 70 sf storage rooms for SPED materials
1 TIP director’s office (150 sf)	1 Specialist’s office (150 sf)
1 Speech 150 sf	1 Speech, 150 sf

1 500sf for PT	1 500sf PT
1 1000sf OT (w/toilet)	1 1000sf for OT (w/toilet)
3 Resource Rooms, 1 per grade, 450 sf	3 Resource Rooms, 1 per grade, 450 sf
1 Autism office, near ABL CR	1 Autism office, near ABL CR
2 pull out small group rooms, 170 sf per cluster**	2 pull out sm grp rms, 170sf per cluster**
1 SpEd Team Leader office, 150 sf	1 SpEd Team Leader office, 150 sf
1 SpEd conf room, 12 people, 350 sf	1 SpEd conf room, 12 people, 350sf
3 Therapists offices	3 Therapists offices
Use of Fitness room for Adaptive P.E.	Use of Fitness room for Adaptive P.E.

** (also used by regular ed.)

MEDIA CENTER

The purpose of the Media Center/Library is to increase access to literacy and support students and staff by providing a rich variety of materials and technology to enhance curricular needs, plan intentional lessons and foster peer collaboration.

The Media Center will be the hub of next generation learning, which will require individuals to be comfortable toggling between modes of receiving, synthesizing, and communicating information continuously. It will provide access to text, both digital and print, and be used for collaboration for students and staff and parents. It will be a space where students can either collaborate or work on their own. Ideally, the educator who staffs the Media Center will be a media specialist whose primary focus is to support teachers with the integration of technology into instruction, both within the Media Center and in the classroom. Additionally, they will work with students both inside and outside of the classroom to be discerning consumers of content and information. In a community that has limited exposure to literacy access, the Media Center will be a hub for both hands-on and digital literacy tools.

Consistent with these goals, the Media Center is located close to the main entry in a highly visible and centralized location. The physical characteristics of the space that will enable these goals are: inclusion of comfortable and mobile furnishings, substantial IT and power infrastructure, an instruction and demonstration area, rolling shelving for books, and a resource desk for the media specialist and views to the outdoors and student terrace.

VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

The role of the proposed spaces for the Visual Arts is to create spaces where students have an opportunity to bring a variety of skills and interests to the learning process, and to engage students in different modes of learning and expression. These spaces are also key to

encompassing every aspect of the individual – academic, social, emotional, cultural and physical – in cross-disciplinary activities. Within the Visual Arts spaces students will:

- Develop increasingly sophisticated creative strategies, skills and habits of mind through artistic practices
- Apply design literacy to a wide variety of traditional and new media
- Explore a wide range of notions about the meaning and purpose of visual art
- Form a broader knowledge and understanding of their rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage through art

There will be a large art room, a dedicated space for students to innovate and express their talents. The curriculum will be based on the curriculum frameworks for visual art programs and connect to the core academic content. The space will be provided with substantial material storage areas, two utility sinks, drying racks and an adjacent kiln room.

The visual arts program may also use the Design Studio which the school envisions as a classroom dedicated to the exploration of digital arts and STEAM projects. This room, like the media center, will include greater power and IT capacity. Individual workstations will encircle a studio/circle space. Additional wall storage will secure digital audio and camera equipment available for student use and provide pin up space for student work.

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM

The Performing Arts provides an opportunity to collaborate, engage and encourage the expression and development of skills and interests. Both the Visual Arts and the Performing Arts are critical to providing students with an opportunity to express ideas and emotions they cannot express in language alone. This is particularly important in Holyoke where many students are developing a second language and emerging in their confidence to communicate with their peers and educators. The Performing Arts Program in the new Holyoke middle schools will focus on music and drama, which will expose and prepare students to the High School's strong instrumental music and drama programs. The new spaces will enable the District to revitalize the middle school instrumental program, and to have stronger ensembles: at the middle school level, there is currently no adequate space to practice. This currently occurs in hallways, closets, and partial classrooms. As part of the middle school curriculum, students will learn to:

- Sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Read and notate music written in standard notation
- Play instruments, alone and with others, to perform a varied repertoire of music
- Improvise, compose, and arrange music
- Analyze their own music and music of others

The proposed spaces will include a well-equipped band room with instrument storage and flexible choral risers, two adjacent practice rooms, and adjacency to the stage, which will include a folding wall that can separate it from the cafeteria and make it into a useful ensemble practice space. We

want to ensure adequate soundproofing so that music can occur without disrupting other classrooms.

Students will also be exposed to Theater Arts, including acting, reading and writing scripts, directing, technical skills for theatrical production, and the development of skills to critically respond to theatrical works. Drama and Theatre Arts provide an avenue to develop cognitive abilities that complement study in other disciplines, develops creative thinking and builds confidence in public speaking and performance. Communication between peers is accelerated as students are exposed to theater as a group activity, and the experience for students to collaborate and display leadership. We have an award-winning drama program and new academy at Holyoke High School to which we want to build a strong pipeline from the middle schools.

The Stage off the Cafeteria will be outfitted with an adequate sound and lighting system to support and enable the success of the program. Critically, spaces are being provided throughout the school for public speaking, performance, and presentations. The Cognitive Center (also referred to as design lab or voc tech space) on the first floor provides a smaller environment for less formal presentations. The Project Areas on each floor provide additional space for these types of functions.

In conclusion, the goal for both the Visual and the Performing Arts is to create spaces for a child to go deep in the arts. Some students find their “voice” while studying the arts. Creative expression builds self-confidence and is particularly critical for EL students whose language skills may be holding them back in other academic areas. The experience of collaboration in the arts can define a middle school student’s growing sense of independence and interdependence.

MEDICAL CLINIC

As noted elsewhere, many HPS students have very high social and emotional needs. Many students are growing up in poverty, and a significant number are homeless. We believe that serving their physical and emotional needs will improve their ability to focus on their studies, as well as help us build supportive and trusting bonds. The District currently contracts with a local health care provider (River Valley Consulting) for supplemental mental health and wellness services to meet the medical and psychological care needs of its economically disadvantaged student body. Meeting the student health needs within the school reduces absenteeism significantly.

In the 2018 education plan, and subsequent designs, the District estimates need for space for an outside nurse practitioner and three rotating mental health counselors. The spaces will be designed for combined efficiency with the nurse’s suite and adjacency to the guidance suite so that conference rooms, appliances, and counseling rooms can be shared. Since space dedicated to outside contractors is not reimbursable, Holyoke wants to work with the architect/designer to maximize reimbursable space while meeting student needs. Additionally, given the impact of COVID-19 in the past few years, this is another space to examine closely to make sure it meets the

most current needs of a medical clinic and remains flexible to varying unanticipated needs in the future.

This consultant is currently provided space adjacent to the school nurse's suite at both Peck and Holyoke High School North Campus. Records, exam rooms and offices are kept separate, but reception, toilets, and support spaces such as laundry are shared. The clinical space will include an additional medical suite and three office spaces for therapy services. The medical suite will share toilet facilities with the nurse's office and will share showers and a washer and dryer with the parent's center available to support families that may be homeless or in crisis.

TEACHER COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strong middle schools rest on a foundation of staff collaboration and ongoing learning. Our schedule and our physical space must be developed to support strong team collaboration in support of students and families, strong department collaboration in support of ongoing curriculum development, and strong professional learning in support of continuous instructional improvement. Our proposal includes flexible and varied spaces within each school building that will support our adult learning and collaboration as well as regular small group student interventions.

Each grade level floor area will include a teacher planning space to support collaboration and teacher meetings. Larger assemblies of staff will take place in the media center or the design lab, both of which are capable of flexible configuration and technology-based presentations to support adult learning and information delivery. In the event of a need for all staff to meet, the cafeteria/commons will be designed to support presentations and large group instruction.

In allocating our resources over the next few years, we are firmly committed to investing in the development of our teachers. As an urban district in turnaround, we currently have a high turnover rate of educators and thus have many new and inexperienced teachers who need tremendous support. In order to provide these educators with the guidance they deserve, we believe that all of our buildings should have school-based coaching. These coaches should be non-evaluative, content based and have middle school experience in order to offer meaningful feedback to teachers. Given the size of our two middle schools, our current formula for allocating coaches (1 per 250 students) would result in two positions for each school (Math and English Language Arts coaches). It is important that there is space for them as close as possible to the teaching clusters and an ability to meet with teachers regularly. This will allow them to more effectively plan with, model for, and provide input to educators in proximity to where instruction is delivered in the schools.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

HPS provides bus transportation for students in grades 6-8 residing more than 1.5 walking miles from their districted school. All students in grades 6-8 who live less than 1.5 miles from their school are responsible for their own transportation unless they have an IEP and meet the

transportation criteria. The District does make exceptions for students whose needs are “safety” related. The District is currently studying the potential impact of the proposed middle schools on current school zones and transportation routes.

Special education transportation services are separate from regular bus transportation. The District currently employs 22 vans and 27 mini-buses to transport students who qualify for special assistance.

We will implement the district’s entry and dismissal policies to ensure safe systems and adequate timing. Many students walk or bicycle to school or families park on local streets and walk to the school with students. School staff provide safety and supervision on school property during arrival and dismissal times. The City’s Police Department provides crossing guards in the vicinity of the school.

FUNCTIONAL AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ADJACENCIES

Functional and spatial relationships and adjacencies are the key to the successful design of the new facility. This section addresses specifically the educational importance of their adjacencies.

The ability to collaborate and establish a successful school-wide culture is based on the relationship of students, teachers and spaces. Grades 6, 7, and 8 will each occupy a floor or dedicated wing of a new facility, enabling a total of 180 students to be together in a size more conducive to community building. Each classroom in the school is viewed as a part of a team that includes adjacent classrooms and spaces for small group work, tiered instruction, presentation, and individual tutoring. At the grade level, there will be a shared project area to allow for hands-on activities and longer duration projects.

At the school-wide level, there will be communal spaces for eating (assuming two to three lunch services per day), physical education (including gymnasium and fitness room), presentation (many of the enrichments spaces), creating (art room), building (project-based learning), performing (stage), and for receiving support services.

The new school will provide a more welcoming main office and community arrival space that greets students and families in the morning, as well as an orderly end-of-the day dismissal. The learning commons, a public amphitheater of comfortable furnishings and flexible presentation technology adjacent to the media center and design lab, will offer an inviting gathering space at the heart of the school.

To foster the goal of involving families in their children’s education, and to invite them to continue their active learning, a Parents/Family Center room is included near the main entry. This space will invite parents to find a comfortable place to learn about what is going on in the school, with resources such as computers, shared literature, refreshments, and access to Administrative, Guidance, and Health Suite offices. The parent space will be adjacent to the guidance spaces and

the medical suite to enable easy, secure and appropriate access for parents coming to the school to meet with guidance, academic or medical staff.

SHINE and OT/PT spaces will be located near the medical suite to support the needs of students who may require clinical support.

A common assembly space for all students, staff and families to gather and celebrate learning is deemed critical by the District. This space will do double duty as a functional dining facility and venue for performances. This main assembly space will be designed and acoustically treated to allow it to be used for community events as well.

Major spaces supporting physical education (Gym and Exercise Room) and project-based learning labs/classrooms are also to be intentionally located away from the grade level clusters and closer to the common assembly space so that they can support a rich offering of afterschool social, academic, artistic, and athletic activities. This more publicly accessible area of the school will be designed to allow maximum visual and camera-based supervision, and will be constructed of robust materials to sustain its heavier use.

Holyoke is in the top quartile of Massachusetts school communities suffering high asthma rates and related absentee rates. Outdoor spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning, and assembly are critical to the future HPS Middle as a matter of equity and environmental justice. At the Peck site the available woodlands and adjacent parkland provide park-like opportunities, but attention to designing functional and appealing outdoor learning spaces is necessary to be sure spaces are well-utilized by students and easily supervised by staff.

Outdoor spaces will also be designed to enable community use of amenities during after school hours in order to enrich the surrounding neighborhoods and develop positive relationships to the schools.

It is also important to note that the school will be used for vacation academies (during February and April break) and summer school.

We would also like to work with the architect/designer to ensure that gender inclusivity, bi-lingualism and anti-racism is woven into the physical lay-out, inclusive of space, signage and visuals, in the school.

SECURITY AND VISUAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The ongoing impact of school and community violence is very much on the mind of the District and the City of Holyoke. The creation of new school buildings with safe and controllable entries is a very desirable aspect of new school construction. Each new middle school and site will be designed to provide a safe environment within the City. Design components will include:

- Safe bus access systems that do not interfere with drop and pickup traffic
- Safe pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists coming from varied directions to the school

- Safe recess grounds and playing fields that can be supervised by staff and protected from traffic
- Safe staff and visitor parking
- Video intercom and access control of the main entrance
- Access control of all exterior doors
- Safe and controlled access for deliveries
- Safe and appropriate access to the perimeter of the building and outdoor spaces
- Safe access to the main office for visitors without allowing immediate access to the rest of the building
- Video surveillance throughout the building
- Motion/vandalism detection at ground floor spaces
- Enhanced impact resistance at entry vestibule
- Badging system for visitors and staff

FINAL STATEMENT OF INTENTION

In conclusion, the theme that weaves through the entirety of this Educational Program is flexibility. Flexibility is a core requirement for the design of new middle school space because:

- The proposed middle school program is new and will evolve as the District's Middle School Redesign progresses.
- The District has a high needs population and fluctuating enrollment.
- The City of Holyoke is in a period of reinvention and redevelopment.
- Middle school education itself is changing as the future of education itself evolves.