



Holyoke Public Schools Employee Handbook 2025-2026 school year

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WELCOME TO HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We are so glad you are here. As a staff member at Holyoke Public Schools, you are an important member of a dedicated team of people who have a diverse set of skills, experiences, and backgrounds. While our respective roles and responsibilities are varied, be assured we always work collaboratively to achieve excellence in education for the children, families, and community of Holyoke.

You are joining a big family. HPS serves nearly 5,000 students in 11 schools/campuses and employs nearly 1,300 people. While we don't always see each other everyday, we are connected through our shared commitment to our students and to our vision to be **a high-performing school system where students reach their full potential, educators inspire, families are partners, and the community thrives.**

HPS is making [great progress](#) since the District was placed into receivership by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in spring 2015. Select achievements include:

- The graduation rate continues to increase, most recently to 77.1%, including significant increases for students who are English Learners and students with disabilities. This is the highest rate on record.
- Our graduates are obtaining certifications and recognitions. During receivership, 400 students have graduated as part of the [Early College Program](#), 95 students have earned the [Seal of Biliteracy](#), and even more students are earning industry-recognized credentials.
- Nearly 900 students in grades PreK-10 are enrolled in the [dual language English/Spanish program](#), representing more than 25% of students in grades PreK-8 and including nearly 50 high school students.
- Access to PreK has nearly doubled. Nearly 500 young learners are enrolled in either half- or full-day early-learning programs.
- More than half of grade 11 and 12 students are enrolled in advanced coursework, leading to students earning college credit while in high school.
- The new Peck Middle School will open for 550 students and 100 staff members in August.
- Over \$130+ million has been invested into upgrading our facilities so that students have access to a safe, supportive learning environment.

The Employee Handbook is intended to support staff members to learn and understand the culture, rules, and expectations of HPS as an employer. The [Staff Essentials Intranet site](#) and [Human Resources](#) webpage has many resources, including the updated collective bargaining agreements. This handbook represents a snapshot in time. Our policies, benefits, and rules may change in the future as circumstances, employment legislation, and economic conditions require. Should that happen, you and your colleagues will be notified of any changes and how they may impact you. And, as always, please contact your supervisor or our HR team if you have any questions.

Juntos Podemos! Together We Can!



Superintendent Anthony Soto

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I. About this Handbook

HPS periodically reviews its rules, policies and operating procedures. Information contained in this document is, therefore, subject to change at any time.

This document is intended as a guide and is not intended to provide all necessary information regarding your employment with HPS. You will receive additional employment information from District or school staff from time to time, which may be provided through written, electronic, in-person and/or telephonic communications.

This handbook provides highlights of some benefits offered to HPS employees. More detailed information is provided in specific benefit plan documents.

The policies and practices contained in this handbook are designed to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Should there ever be a conflict between the contents of this handbook and those laws and regulations, the laws and regulations will govern. In addition, in the event of a conflict between this handbook and the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement will prevail as to the employees covered by that agreement.

Unless a collective bargaining agreement or individual employment agreement provides otherwise, employees are employees at-will with no specific term of employment. Accordingly, they or the District may end the employment relationship without cause or notice.

NOTE: Receipt of this document does not create an employment agreement or contract with you. If you are offered an employment opportunity with Holyoke Public Schools, you will be provided an official employment agreement or contract that provides the title, salary/wages, start date, and other terms of your employment offer.

Please read this handbook carefully. Should you have any questions, please contact the Human Resource Department.

II. About Us

Holyoke Public Schools Overview

Holyoke Public Schools is a PreK-12 public school District with 11 schools/campuses serving nearly 5,000 students, of whom 80 percent are Latino/Latina. We employ nearly 1,300 people who together educate and support a richly diverse community of learners. We are committed to recruiting and retaining top-quality educators who believe all children can and will learn and who strive daily to make school a joyful place of discovery, support, and belonging.

HPS operates six elementary schools serving students in grades PreK-5, two middle schools for students in grades 6-8, one high school with three campuses for students in grades 9-12, and a transitions program for students ages 18-22. The HPS profile can be viewed on the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website](#).

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Core 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 for themselves and each other.
- Trusting relationships lead to successful partnerships.
- Our equity commitments are enacted in our daily work.

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.

Strategic Priorities

Holyoke Public Schools' five strategic priorities are essential for the District to achieve its vision:

- **Early Literacy:** Ensuring all students in grades PreK-3 read at grade-level.
- **Learning Experience:** Ensuring schools provide rigorous, culturally responsive instruction in all content areas 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.



Please visit the [strategic plan](#) webpage to read the full strategic plan, which was first released in summer 2022, and hear about our progress so far.

III. Contact Information

Schools' contact information is on the [Schools webpage](#). Here is the [directory of Central Office staff](#). The [organizational chart](#) that can be found on the HPS website.

Important Points of Contact

If you need information about...	Contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Background Check CORI/Fingerprinting <input type="checkbox"/> Licensure <input type="checkbox"/> Leave Request <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Assistance Program <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Verification <input type="checkbox"/> TalentEd: Records <input type="checkbox"/> Global Compliance Network (GCN) <input type="checkbox"/> New hire paperwork and personnel files	Human Resource Contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Maria Borrás, 413-534-2000 Ext: 1504 <i>Morgan, Dean, Holyoke High, Superintendent's Office, Turnaround, Academics, Peck, Academics</i> • Maximillian Pacheco, 413-534-2000 x1601 <i>Donahue, Kelly, Lawrence, McMahon, EN White, Pupil Services, DE&I/FACE, Sullivan, Pupil Services</i> • Sebastian Murphy, 413-534-2000 x1502 <i>Summer School, Finance & Operations/Facilities, Technology/Data</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Health, Dental, Vision Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Flex Spending Accounts /Dependent Care <input type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Workers Compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment	Human Resources Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits • Pat Murdza, 413-534-2000 x1505 • Maddie Sanabria, 413-2000 x1503
<input type="checkbox"/> TalentEd: Recruit & Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Job postings and applications	Director of Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christie Elman, 413-657-6386 celman@hps.holyoke.ma.us
<input type="checkbox"/> Earnings verification <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement <input type="checkbox"/> Deductions <input type="checkbox"/> Paycheck/ Direct Deposit <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Self Service (ESS)	Payroll Analysts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • payroll@hps.holyoke.ma.us (Main Email) • Nichole Tobin, 413-534-2000 ext. 1620 • Matthew Ramcke 413-534-2000 ext. 1621
<input type="checkbox"/> School Registration/Family Resources <input type="checkbox"/> New Student Enrollment or Transportation	Director of Enrollment and Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrollment@hps.holyoke.ma.us • transportation@hps.holyoke.ma.us • Rebecca Lamb, Director, 413-512-5304
<input type="checkbox"/> SchoolBrains (SY25) Access (PowerSchool SY26) <input type="checkbox"/> TeachPoint: Ed Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Clever Issues	Director of Data Analytics and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dataservices@hps.holyoke.ma.us • Jenny Malave, Executive Director, 413-512-5354
<input type="checkbox"/> eSped	Director of Special Education Compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alessandra Graziani, 413-512-5311 agraziani@hps.holyoke.ma.us

IV. Holyoke Community

Overview

[Holyoke](#) is an exciting community with a rich cultural history, a dynamic business sector, and a wide variety of recreational, social, and educational opportunities. The best way to learn about our proud city is to experience it. You can hike, bird watch, ice skate and more at [Mount Tom State Reservation](#) or the [Ashley Reservoir](#). If rowing or paddling is more your speed, you will delight in the beautiful waters of the [Connecticut River](#). There's lots of shopping to do at [Holyoke Mall at Ingleside](#), which each year draws 20 million visitors. Culinary delights abound in Holyoke and all around the valley, with a wide variety of cultural cuisines represented to appeal to a wide range of tastes and preferences. Across the river in South Hadley, you will find the lovely [Village Commons](#). While there you can do some shopping, have a bite, sip a latte, see a movie or have a massage! A short trek over the mountain lands you in Easthampton. With a quaint downtown area, Easthampton boasts an array of local music, craft breweries and hidden gems. For music, try the [Marigold Theater](#) or [Luthier's Co-Op](#).

Other activities are available throughout the year. You can also view [dinosaur footprints at the Connecticut River Valley Trackways](#), enjoy the annual [Fiestas Patronales](#) in August and [St. Patrick's Day Parade](#) in March, and take a ride on the historic merry-go-round at [Holyoke Heritage State Park](#).

If you plan to travel while on a break from your work at HPS, we are centrally located with Bradley International Airport within a 30-minute drive. Boston is 90 minutes to the east by car, and New York City is four hours by train or three hours by car.

Holyoke developed in the 19th Century as the nation's first planned industrial community, at one time boasting the greatest paper production in the world. Many artifacts of the city's pioneering engineering machinery are still on display and in use today, making Holyoke a unique living museum ahead of the curve in the 21st century. To learn more, check out the city's website page devoted to [Holyoke's fascinating history](#). The city offers an attractive blend of both urban living and natural serenity, including numerous mill sites, as well as a collection of parks, historic sites, and recreation destinations. What else would you expect from the [Birthplace of Volleyball](#)?

Education thrives in the Pioneer Valley. Holyoke is at the center of New England's Knowledge Corridor, which extends from the Vermont border to just below Hartford, CT. There are [15 colleges and universities within 25 miles of Holyoke](#) that provide a wide range of educational opportunities for HPS employees and students. They also help provide skilled graduates to meet the hiring needs of local employers, as does [Holyoke High School's Dean Campus](#), which partners with area businesses to train and supply skilled workers through customized technical training programs. Dean's training programs include [Advanced Manufacturing](#), [Auto Collision](#), [Carpentry](#), [Cosmetology](#), [Culinary Arts](#), [Diesel Technology](#), [Electrical](#), [Health Assisting](#), and Programming and Web Development.

Local organizations work together through [the Cooperating Colleges of Greater Springfield](#), an educational consortium of the eight public and private colleges in the Greater Springfield area. The organization was founded in 1971 to foster sharing of programs, talents, facilities, and educational resources while retaining the initiative and vitality of independent institutions.

Did you know? Holyoke is ahead of the curve when it comes to "Green Energy." [The city was built on harnessing](#)

[the power of the water of the Connecticut River](#), and that practice continues today through a municipally run dam. In 1847, merchant investors began construction of a dam and canal system along the Connecticut River. Utilizing a natural 57-foot drop in the river, these investors constructed a granite dam and multi-level canal system. With this construction came an elaborate complex of mills and housing for workers, which evolved into the city of today. While many of the historic mills and industries are now gone, a number of structures have been maintained through preservation and revitalization efforts.

Today, two-thirds of the electricity produced by [Holyoke Gas & Electric](#) is derived from non-greenhouse gas producing, renewable hydroelectric generation resources. With growing consumer interest in sustainable energy practices, Holyoke's hydroelectric production capacity is more than just an environmental decision—it makes good business sense.

Family Involvement and Participation

Family involvement is both encouraged and highly valued throughout the District. Each school has a Site Council composed of family and faculty representatives who work with school leadership on schoolwide projects and initiatives and provide feedback on school policies and spending plans. Every campus has a Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Coordinator whose work focuses on helping families support their children's success in school.

Facilitating Communication with Families

Effective communication is key for building strong partnerships with families. Here's how:

- Interact frequently; relationships develop over time and through multiple connections.
- Show you care with your actions as well as your words.
- Even when you have a challenging message to deliver, start with something positive or encouraging and then build support and understanding from there.
- Always speak in plain language, avoid educational jargon, and provide context and background information as appropriate.
- Offer resources and tools to help families support and track learning at home.
- Encourage families to expand their children's horizons by suggesting new avenues, activities, and opportunities for exploration.
- Maintain professional boundaries, privacy, and confidentiality in all your communications.

Language Access

The Language Access Team coordinates translation (written) and interpretation (oral) services in the District to support school-home communications and comply with regulations. Visit the [Language Access webpage](#) for detailed information on language services guidelines, turnaround time, and resources available. General inquiries can be emailed to translator@hps.holyoke.ma.us.

Translation of essential documents include, but are not limited to: District and school policies, emergency information, registration and enrollment forms, health and safety information, student permission forms, disciplinary letters, family handbooks and fact sheets, transitional planning, information regarding access to functions or activities, report cards, and program-specific information. Essential documents must be translated by a professional translator.

Interpreting services can be provided for a variety of meetings. Only qualified professional interpreters can provide interpretation services for any meetings. Bilingual staff who have graduated from the Interpreter Preparation Program are the only staff members in a school building who are authorized to interpret in general parent -teacher conferences. All meetings that have a direct legal implication such as special education meetings, meetings related to suspensions, bullying and investigation, medical conversations, 504 Plan meetings, and more must be coordinated by the Office of Language Access and interpreted by a professional interpreter. For unannounced meetings, the On-demand Interpreting Service is available. Information on how to access this service is posted on the Language Access webpage.

The District's Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators are also available to support teachers and staff in their communication with families with limited English. FACE coordinators are skilled in interpretation as they have graduated from the HPS Interpreter Preparation Program.

Intercultural Communication

When communicating with a student, family member, or colleague with limited English proficiency, there could be cultural and linguistic barriers. A more culturally competent interaction is an interaction where parties with differing cultural backgrounds can communicate and engage fully and meaningfully.

- Nothing is better or worse; it's just different.
- Meaning matters more than grammatical correctness.
- One's own cultural views affect the way one interacts with others.
- Use direct eye contact to help establish trust.

V. Equal Employment Opportunity and Statement of Non-Discrimination

HPS is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, military status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected class under federal, state or local law.

This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all aspects of employment, including recruiting, hiring, job assignments, promotions, working conditions, scheduling, benefits, wages and salaries, disciplinary action, and termination.

HPS will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination. All employees are expected to cooperate fully in implementing this policy. In particular, any employee or applicant who believes that any other employee of HPS may have violated the Equal Employment Opportunity policy should immediately report the potential violation to their HR Generalist.

VI. Americans with Disabilities Act / Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

HPS complies with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and with state disability laws. This means that HPS will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities—defined as a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits them in one or more major life activities and who can perform the essential functions of a position, with or without a reasonable accommodation—in any phase of the employment relationship including application for employment, hiring, promotions and/or advancement opportunities, termination, compensation, training and any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. HPS will meet federal and state requirements to provide reasonable accommodations for an employee’s or applicant’s known disability unless it can be demonstrated that the requested accommodation is unreasonable or would pose an undue hardship for the District.

To request reasonable accommodations, HPS encourages individuals with disabilities to contact their HR Generalist and arrange for a meeting to discuss what accommodations could be made to enable the employee to perform the essential job functions. HPS will evaluate the employee’s request and expeditiously communicate the decision regarding the request to the employee.

VII. Beginning Employment

Employment Documentation

HPS uses TalentEd: Records, an electronic onboarding and personnel data system. Once a candidate has been recommended for hire, HPS will send an email with a contingent offer and checklist to begin the onboarding process. Once their personnel files are complete, employees can access them at any time.

Criminal Background Check

It shall be the [policy](#) of the District that, as required by law, a state and national fingerprint criminal background check will be conducted to determine the suitability of full- or part-time current and prospective school employees who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School employees shall include, but not be limited to any teacher, apprentice, intern, student teacher, or individuals in similar positions who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The school committee shall only obtain a fingerprint background check for current and prospective employees for whom the school committee has direct hiring authority. In the case of an individual directly hired by a school committee, the chair of the school committee shall review the results of the national criminal history check. The superintendent shall also obtain a state and national fingerprint background check for any individual who regularly provides school-related transportation to children. The school committee, superintendent, or principal will obtain a state and national fingerprint criminal background check for any subcontractor or laborer commissioned by the school committee, school or employed by the city or town to perform work on school grounds, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The school committee, superintendent, or principal, as appropriate, may obtain a state and national fingerprint criminal background check for any volunteer, who performs work on school grounds who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Educator/Administrator Certification

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71 § 38G, no person shall be eligible for employment as a teacher unless they are appropriately certified by the Commissioner of Education or they have been granted a temporary waiver of such certification. Employees are responsible for maintaining active and appropriate certification for their position and are responsible for keeping their current information on file with the HR Department.

When recruitment efforts have been exhausted for appropriately licensed candidates, the District may request a [waiver](#) for candidates that are on a path to become a licensed educator but have not yet met the state requirements. Such waivers are valid for no more than one school year, and the candidate must demonstrate by May 1st that they are making [continuous progress](#) toward becoming appropriately licensed for the position held.

Additionally, pursuant to the Massachusetts Education of English Learners regulations, 603 CMR 14.07, core academic teachers and administrators are required to have the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement. Those who have not obtained an SEI Endorsement are required to earn it within the first year of employment. When resources allow, the District may make efforts to offer an annual cost-free option for educators that do not have this endorsement.

These requirements are conditions of employment.

Staff Orientation and New Teacher Induction

To provide strong support systems and to prepare our workforce for success, the District offers an all-staff orientation, as well as a teacher induction and mentoring program.

New Staff Orientation: To provide a robust on-boarding system, HPS holds a New Staff Orientation day for all newly hired employees in late August. The annual orientation introduces staff to the District, including:

- Introduction to HPS mission, vision, core beliefs, equity commitments and strategy
- Review of Holyoke History and key landmarks/geographical features
- Review of Key information/resources for new staff
- Participation in team building with staff and colleagues in the District and within their building

Teachers-Induction and Mentoring: All educators who are new to teaching and/or educators who do not hold a professional license and have not previously met induction and mentoring requirements set forth in [603 CMR 7.00](#) are required to attend HPS's Induction and Mentoring Program.

Year 1: Any teacher that is in their first year of teaching (as defined by DESE) is *required* to take part in our New Teacher Induction Program. The first year has three parts:

- 1) Summer Institute held mid-August;
- 2) Weekly/Bi-Weekly Individualized Observation/Coaching/Feedback;
- 3) Additional Professional Learning Opportunities targeted for those new to the profession

The New Teacher Induction Summer Institute is designed to orient new teachers to HPS and the District's instructional approaches and resources, support teachers to establish safe and effective learning environments, and teambuild with colleagues. In addition to the required August Summer Institute, new teachers are encouraged to complete the Fall Series and/or the February Reboot institute, for which they will be provided a stipend.

Year 2 & 3: Each year teachers are required by DESE to participate in 25 hours of "mentoring" activities. Evidence of participation in these activities is tracked via records maintained by the individual teacher. HPS will provide professional learning sessions each year to serve toward those required hours and will provide a valuable opportunity to come together with other teachers who are on a similar career path.

Completion of the 1st year Induction and the 2nd/3rd year "mentoring" activities (with proper documentation) will allow new teachers to apply for their Professional license with DESE.

VIII. General Employment Policies and Practices

Expectations

All employees are expected to demonstrate a professional, cooperative, knowledgeable, and courteous demeanor in all interactions with students, families, colleagues, and community members.

All employees are expected to follow general and specific work and employment guidelines, carry out instructions and directions appropriately as issued by supervisors or administrators, and perform job responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. Employees are expected to have consistent attendance, arriving on time and adhering to designated start and end times for work, breaks, lunch, prep periods, etc. Employees are advised that District telephones, supplies, equipment and services—including Internet access—are for professional use. Excessive personal calls or use of supplies, services, or equipment for personal reasons are not allowed.

Employee Evaluations

The District will evaluate employees through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides staff with feedback intended to provide professional growth opportunities in both knowledge and skills aligned to their career path and position held within the District. Staff can, at minimum, expect to receive an annual end-of-year evaluation; the evaluation period runs from July through June. Typically, 12-month staff can expect to receive their annual evaluation on or around July 15, while 10-month staff can expect their end-of-year evaluation on or around the last day of school.

Employees should schedule time with their evaluator within the first three to four weeks of employment to review the evaluation tool and expectations and to determine goals for the evaluation cycle. Goals are expected to be rigorous and impactful; all goals must be aligned to District, department, and/or school priorities and approved by the employees' supervisor or designee.

Each group of employees will be given an evaluation tool that is aligned to their job duties/function. This tool will be used in conjunction with each employee's job description. At the end of the evaluation cycle, and when expectations are met, the supervisor may recommend an appropriate pay increase for the following fiscal year based on the District's guidance. All recommended pay increases are subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Dress Code

Work attire should reflect the professional responsibilities of an employee's position, with concern for safety, hygiene, neatness, cleanliness, and projecting positive role models for students. Supervisors may exercise reasonable discretion to determine the appropriateness of an employee's appearance; employees who do not meet a professional standard may be sent home to change their clothing without pay.

Staff Identification and Visitor Badges

In order to maintain a safe learning environment for everyone, all staff are expected to wear their HPS identification badges in a visible manner at all times. All visitors should visibly wear a visitor's badge at all times while in our schools. All staff should stop and politely question any adult without a badge in any of our schools and remind them they need to wear identification or badges at all times while in our schools. Any visitor without a badge should be directed to return to the front office to obtain a badge. Staff should immediately alert the front office if a visitor fails to produce a badge and does not return to the front office when directed.

Business & Operations

The quality of the District's educational programs are dependent on the effective, efficient management of allocated funds. Achievement of the District's purposes can best be achieved through excellent fiscal management. The Business Operations Manual establishes fiscal and operational procedures to promote excellent fiscal management. The latest version of the manual can be found [here](#). The manual includes procedures outlining business activities such as purchasing, staff travel reimbursements, field trips, time entry, etc... All employees are expected to follow the procedures outlined in the manual.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Holyoke Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where all students can achieve the highest academic standards. Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation are prohibited in the Holyoke Public Schools. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying by any individual against any student regardless of legal status. In consultation with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community, we have developed this Plan to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Each principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan in their building. The HPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan can be found [here](#).

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Holyoke Public Schools is committed to maintaining an environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy/ pregnancy- related condition, genetic information, military status, or age in accordance with all state and federal nondiscrimination laws. Discrimination or harassment by administrators, staff, students, vendors, and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is prohibited. The Holyoke Public Schools requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students, and members of the school community. You can find our full HPS Harassment Policy [here](#).

Responsibilities of Staff with Regards to Reports of Bullying and Harassment

Staff have a legal responsibility to immediately report bullying of students and/or discriminatory harassment of either students or staff that the staff member witnesses or becomes aware of. Reports may be made to their supervisor, the school principal, and, for matters involving fellow staff members, the Human Resources Department. Reports of harassment may also be made directly to a District Civil Rights Coordinator. Once a staff member becomes aware that a student has been bullied or harassed, or of the harassment of a fellow staff member, the District is deemed to be on notice of that behavior and is required by law and District policy to take prompt and adequate steps to address it. The District can fulfill these responsibilities only when staff promptly report bullying and /or harassment of which they become aware. . Retaliation for reporting incidents of harassment or cooperating with the investigation thereof is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Drug Free Policy

In accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the administration has established a Drug Free Workplace Policy that affects all employees. The use, possession, distribution, sale, or being under the influence of illegal substances, marijuana, and/or alcoholic beverages are prohibited at all times on all district campuses, at all school-sponsored activities off-campus, or during work time. Further, the Educational Reform Law prohibits the use of any tobacco products within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or on school buses by any individual including school personnel. Any violation of this policy by staff shall be referred to the appropriate supervisor. For the complete policy, please visit this [link](#).

Child Abuse and Neglect

Any school official or employee shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as required by the M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A.

- All school personnel are mandated reporters.
- If school personnel have reasonable cause to suspect physical or emotional abuse, or substantial risk of harm/neglect of a child under 18, they must follow MA [Department of Children and Families \(DCF\) Section 51A](#) reporting requirements.
- All teachers, school nurses, administrators, and support staff are required to report suspected cases of child abuse. All staff will report suspicion of child abuse to DCF AND the building principal. The principal will report the incident to the superintendent and ensure DCF has been notified. A written report on the appropriate form shall be filed with the DCF within 48 hours of the initial call. Section 51A forms are available on the employee staff site.

Student Safety

Teachers and other staff members are reminded that a primary concern is the continuous well-being and safety of children in our charge. All staff should observe, but not be limited to, the following expectations:

- Assume your assigned teaching or other responsibilities punctually.
- Never leave students unattended. Teachers must be in the classroom or greeting students at the door upon entrance.
- Provide alert supervision at all times.

- Report immediately to the building principal any dangerous or potentially dangerous conditions. Follow up verbal reports in writing.

Security Cameras

Holyoke Public Schools utilizes security cameras with recording capability in most common areas of all school buildings to ensure the safety and security of students, staff and school facilities.

Physical Restraint of Students

HPS seeks to foster a safe and positive learning environment for all students. The district's Physical Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures sets forth the procedures for compliance with relevant state laws and regulations concerning physical restraint prevention and behavior support of students. The superintendent mandates compliance with these regulations at all times. Nothing within these regulations shall be construed to interfere with the responsibility of the District to maintain a safe school setting, in accordance with Massachusetts' Laws and Regulations; 603 CMR 46.00.

Requirements for the Use of Physical Restraint

HPS shall abide by the provisions of 603 CMR 46.00, which regulates the use of physical restraint with students in publicly funded elementary and secondary education programs. HPS developed its physical restraint prevention and behavior support procedures in compliance with 603 CMR 46.04, which shall be annually reviewed, provided to school staff, and made available to parents.

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations and as a last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School staff shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Physical Restraint Policy and/or Administrative Procedures and Guidelines shall not be construed as limiting the protections afforded to publicly funded students under other federal and state laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services.

Additionally, the regulations at 603 CMR 46.00 and the District's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures do not preclude any teacher, employee or agent of a public education program from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. 603 CMR. 46.01(3).

Each staff member will be trained annually regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal or designee will arrange training to occur within the first month each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

ArxED/Required Training

New this year, the District uses the ArxED Academy to manage many of the employees' required annual trainings. The trainings can be accessed via this [LINK](#). All employees will be provided an online account to access required training sessions. The required training sessions must be completed within the first 30 days of employment, or annually by October 1, whichever is later. Required trainings should take approximately 1 hour. These include topics such as:

- Mandated Reporter
- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- Prevention of Discrimination & Harassment
- Civil Rights
- Bullying Prevention & Intervention
- Prevention of Physical Restraint & Restraint Requirements
- Requirements of Special Education
- Student Records
- Annual Suicide Prevention
- Food Allergy
- Anaphylaxis
- Bloodborne Pathogens

There may be additional training requirements outside of ArxED Academy. Certain positions may have additional requirements as determined by their supervisor, Massachusetts General Law, or other governing bodies. For example, DESE-certified staff are required to complete a two-hour suicide prevention training every two years.

Additionally, at the start of each school year, staff are required to review all applicable policies referenced in the annual training.

Conflict of Interest: New public employees must complete this [training](#) within 30 days of beginning public service, and every two years thereafter. Upon completing the training, employees should print out the completion certificate and keep a copy for themselves.

Please visit the State Ethics Commission [website](#) for more information regarding the ethics of accepting gifts, receiving payment for school-related events, political involvement, etc. As of the writing of this employee handbook, the general guidance is: *The acceptance of gifts worth \$50 or more by school personnel in a calendar year when the gift is given because of the position they hold, or because of some action the recipient could take or has taken in his or her public role, violates the conflict of interest law. Acceptance of gifts worth less than \$50, while not prohibited by the conflict of interest law, may require a written public disclosure to be made. Information related to restrictions on public school teachers is available at [State Ethics Commission Issues](#)* [Reminder About Restrictions on Public School Teachers | Mass.gov](#).

Distribution of Non-School Literature Policy

Holyoke Public Schools generally does not permit the distribution of flyers or other non-school sponsored literature to students if a fee is charged for any referenced services or events. However, the Director of Communications may be able to help secure an exception if the participation fee is \$5 or less, or if fee waivers or scholarships are offered based on financial need.

Advance written authorization must be granted before HPS will post or distribute any information from outside organizations to students or their families, based on the following process:

- Only materials from school-related, non-profit organizations will be considered for approval.
- Such materials must be approved or disapproved each time distribution is requested.
- An exact copy of the materials to be posted or distributed in both English and Spanish should be emailed to Superintendent's Executive Assistant [Shaena Gubala](#), along with specific details about the intended audience and the requested method for posting or distributing.
- Organizations should allow at least five business days for approval or denial.
- If the request is approved, the District will provide a formal Letter of Permission that the requesting organization can share with the appropriate school or Communications staff responsible for posting or distributing the approved materials.
- Organizations are responsible for copying, bundling, and delivering any approved materials to schools for distribution.
- All flyers to be posted/distributed must include the following disclaimer:
The *(Insert program name)* is not a program or event sponsored by the Holyoke Public Schools. The District has neither reviewed nor approved the program, personnel, activities, or organizations announced in this flier. Permission to post/distribute this flier should not be considered a recommendation or endorsement by the District. Although the posting/distribution of this information has received District approval, the District does not assume responsibility for the content or activities described herein.

This information reflects [School Committee Policy File: KHC – DISTRIBUTION OF FLYERS](#)

IX. Employee Schedule/Hours

School Operational Plans

The School Operational Plans (SOPs) are linked on each school's webpage, which can be accessed from this [webpage](#). The SOPs detail many of the working conditions at each school, including staff work hours, important dates, and expectations for lesson planning and other topics.

School Hours

The school hours are posted on the District's [calendar webpage](#).

District Calendar and Upcoming Events

The [annual district calendar](#) is released each spring for the coming school year. Upcoming events are regularly posted, as well.

Telecommuting

Although Holyoke Public Schools remains an in-person organization, we recognize that certain staff have a desire to telecommute for various personal and professional reasons. Telecommuting is a work arrangement that allows employees to work from home (or at some other offsite location) for some of their regularly scheduled work hours.

Although not all jobs can be performed satisfactorily from other locations, Holyoke Public Schools recognizes that, in some cases, telecommuting arrangements can provide a mutually beneficial option for both the District and employees. Telecommuting is intended to support employees in finding work-life harmony and is a workplace wellness strategy - not an employee right. This is a benefit primarily intended for year-round employees who do not have as much flexibility in their annual schedule as do 10-month employees.

The Telecommuting Program description, including eligibility and rules, can be found [here](#).

X. Communication

HPS Logo, Letterhead, Templates

We have created templates aligned with our district branding for logos, memo templates, presentations, brochures, agendas, handouts, flyers, and letters in the folder. This folder is located on the [Staff Intranet](#) under [Communications](#). Note: The folder uses View settings, so you will need to download the files or use the *File, Make a Copy* option in Google to customize the files for your needs.

We expect all staff to use these materials, which contain our tagline of “Juntos Podemos | Together We Can” at the bottom. The consistency of our brand expression is essential to reinforce our mission, vision, values, goals, and initiatives.

Reporting General Problems/Concerns

When possible, if an employee has a conflict with a colleague, the employee should try to directly resolve the conflict with their colleague. If that is not possible, or the employee does not feel comfortable doing so, the employee should follow the established “chain of command” for any matter that requires administrative attention. Complaints should go first to the direct supervisor. If that complaint or problem is not resolved, it should go to the principal of the building or the director of the program. If it is not resolved by the building principal, the next place to go is the school supervisor or human resource generalist. For example, if an employee has an issue with a supervisor, he or she is entitled to take it “up the chain” to the next supervisor. Employees should understand that it is not proper protocol to skip over the “chain of command” unless there had been no resolution at each of the other levels in the “chain of command” and/or there is an issue involving the supervisor that requires such a “skip.”

School Cancellations and Delays

Occasionally, school schedules are adjusted because of inclement weather, especially snow and ice, but sometimes for other reasons too, such as extreme wind chill or wind, or heating or water emergencies. You can find more information about our cancellations, delays, and early release protocols [here](#).

Changes in school schedules caused by weather or other circumstances will be posted on the [District website](#) as a news story and as an alert banner at the top of every page, as well as on the District's [Facebook](#) page. Families and staff will be alerted via texts, phone calls, and emails through the District's messaging system. HPS also releases information about changes in school schedules to [Western Mass News](#), [WWLP Channel 22](#), and [MassLive](#).

The Superintendent will begin the planning process as far in advance as feasible, in consultation with area superintendents, facilities staff, etc. to make an informed decision.

Target decision times (may vary based on circumstances):

- DAY-BEFORE DECISIONS:
 - By 7 p.m. for any changes to the following day's school or district schedule.

- DAY-OF DECISIONS:
 - By 5:15 a.m. for any changes to that day's school or district schedule.
 - By 10 a.m. for early release/after-school decisions that day.

When school is delayed, we ask staff to arrive as soon as they safely can. While students may arrive one or two hours later than their usual time, some will arrive sooner. Therefore, we need to ensure our schools are properly staffed and ready for students as they arrive.

There are differences between school closures and district closure, as noted here:

SCHOOL CLOSURE:

Employees in the following categories are NOT required to report to work:

- Assistant Principals, Deans, and other employees represented by the HEA
- Teachers
- School nurses
- Substitute teachers
- Cafeteria workers
- Paraeducators (Teacher Aides, LPN's, Health Assistants, Behavior Interventionists)
- Connections after school staff and volunteers
- Any other staff whose annual work schedule coincides with the teacher's annual work schedule
- Tutors

When schools are closed, employees in the following categories ARE required to report to work:

- Principals
- Non-union administrators, including those on contracts limited to a certain number of days
- Clerical employees
- Facilities and plant operations (custodians, trades) staff
- Non-represented employees
- Central office non-union administrative support staff
- Technicians

Employees who are eligible for telework can request permission to telework, in accordance with the [HPS Telework program](#). Employees are still expected to communicate with their supervisor to get permission to telework and to waive the requirement of three days advance notice. Supervisors will still need to meet minimum staffing levels to meet the department/district needs.

DISTRICT CLOSURE:

There may be rare occasions when the entire district is closed and that only "essential employees"—custodians, craftspeople, and central maintenance staff—will report to work. The district will provide employees with cancellation messages, and will post information on the District website and share with [WesternMass News](#), [Channel 22](#), [NECN](#), and [Masslive](#). During a district closure, all staff are expected to be available as needed to their supervisor and colleagues, and staff who are able to work remotely are expected to do so or use appropriate accrued time off.

WEATHER LEAVE:

In the event that the appropriate school personnel report to work on a school closure day as required, but later in the day are released from work, then those employees may code those un-worked regular hours as "weather leave" and will be paid for those hours as weather leave.

However, employees who are expected to report to work on a school closure day but fail to do so may *not* use the "weather leave" code for those un-worked hours. Instead, the type of leave coded for their time will be determined by their supervisor in accordance with regular leave policies.

Please contact the Human Resource Office if you have any further questions.

XI. Compensation

Compensation: Salaries

The vision of the HPS compensation system is to retain, attract, and reward great educators and staff.

HPS has a performance-based compensation system that contains a career path for educators and compensates employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student outcomes.

Employees represented by a collective bargaining unit should consult those agreements for compensation information. The agreements can be found on the [Human Resources webpage](#).

Payroll Information

HPS may require direct deposit of employee paychecks. Employees with approved Direct Deposit will be issued an electronic pay stub through [Munis: Employee Self Service](#) (ESS). ([HPS ESS Guidebook](#)) Employees will receive a password-protected email when the paystub is available (which is typically 24-48 hours in advance). Live checks are available for pickup on Thursdays of payroll weeks any time after 8 a.m.. Employees should expect to receive 1-2 live checks after submitting their Direct Deposit information.

Employees are expected to regularly check their pay stubs to ensure accuracy in pay including but not limited to base pay, supplemental pay, and all deductions. This is particularly important at the start of the year after pay increases have been implemented and/or when an employee makes changes to their method of payment (i.e. when an employee changes from 22 pays to 26 pays). Errors should be reported to the Payroll Department at payroll@hps.holyoke.ma.us immediately. See the examples below on how to check the base pay for accuracy. If the gross pay does not match the calculation, contact the Payroll Department.

Teacher Examples: Please use the [2025-26 Default Calendar](#) to determine the *# of Days Actually Worked* and the [Payroll Schedule](#) for the *# of Pays*. (Mid-year hires always follow the 22 pay schedule.)

Full Year Teacher:

- $\text{Annual Salary} / \# \text{ of Pays} = \text{Biweekly Gross Pay}$
- Example PK-8 Novice Teacher with 26 pay periods: $\$51,000 / 26 = \$1,961.53$
- Example PK-8 Novice Teacher with 22 pay periods: $\$51,000 / 22 = \$2,318.18$

Pro-rated PK-8 Teacher who starts on Sept 26:

- $(\text{Annual Salary} \times (\# \text{ of Days Actually Worked} / 188)) / \# \text{ of Pays} = \text{Biweekly Gross Pay}$
- Example PK-8 Novice Teacher who starts on Sept 26:
 - $(\$51,000 \times (161 / 188)) / 19 = \$2,298.71$
 - $(\$43,675.53) / 19 = \$2,298.71$

Paraeducator Examples: Please use the [2025-26 Default Calendar](#) to determine the # of Days Worked and the [Payroll Schedule](#) for the # of Pays. (Paraeducators always follow the 22 pay schedule.)

Full Year Paraeducator:

- $(\text{Hourly Rate} * \text{Hours per Day} * \text{\# Days Worked per Year}) / 22 = \text{Biweekly Gross Pay}$
- Example PK-8 Para Hourly Rate of \$18.50:
 - $(\$18.50 * 7.5 \text{ hrs/day} * 196) / 22 = \$1,236.14$
 - $(\$27,195) / 22 = \$1,236.14$

Pro-rated PK-8 Paraeducator:

- $(\text{Hourly Rate} * \text{Hours per Day} * \text{Days Worked per Year}) / \text{\# of Pays} = \text{Biweekly Gross Pay}$
- Example PK-8 Para Hourly Rate of \$18.50 who starts on Sept 25th:
 - $(\$18.50 * 7.5 \text{ hrs/day} * 169) / 19 = \$1,234.14$
 - $(\$23,448.75) / 19 = \$1,234.14$

Pro-rated HS Paraeducator:

- $(\text{Hourly Rate} * \text{Hours per Day} * \text{Days Worked per Year}) / \text{\# of Pay Periods} = \text{Biweekly Gross Pay}$
- Example HS Para Hourly Rate of \$18.50 who starts on Sept 25th:
 - $(\$18.50 * 7 \text{ hrs/day} * 169) / 19 = \$1,151.87$
 - $(\$21,885.50) / 19 = \$1,151.87$

XII. Benefits

Employees who are members of a union or have an individual employment contract shall reference their agreement to determine the leave benefits available to them. All other employees who are regularly scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week are eligible to receive the following benefits, which shall not apply to seasonal, per diem, temporary, emergency employees, or employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 20 hours per week.

A. LEAVES OF ABSENCES

Holidays

The district recognizes the following holidays and shall be closed for general business on these days:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| • <i>Independence Day / 4th of July</i> | • <i>Native American Heritage Day/</i> | • <i>Presidents' Day</i> |
| • <i>Labor Day</i> | <i>Day after Thanksgiving</i> | • <i>Good Friday</i> |
| • <i>Indigenous People's Day</i> | • <i>Christmas Day</i> | • <i>Patriot's Day</i> |
| • <i>Veterans Day</i> | • <i>New Year's Day</i> | • <i>Memorial Day</i> |
| • <i>Thanksgiving Day</i> | • <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i> | • <i>Juneteenth</i> |

Holidays occurring on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday; holidays occurring on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Employees who work in full-time, 12-month positions shall be entitled to their regular compensation for all holidays listed above. To be eligible for such compensation, the employee must work the business day preceding and following the holiday or must be pre-approved (in writing) to use available vacation, personal, or incentive time. Employees who use sick time immediately preceding or following may be eligible to receive holiday pay provided the individual has submitted appropriate documentation from their medical provider to their supervisor and/or the HR Department.

On occasion, a supervisor may deem it necessary for an employee to work on a holiday in order to meet organizational needs. Non-exempt employees who are required to work on a holiday will be compensated for both the hours worked and the holiday pay or will be compensated for the hours worked and granted another paid day off to be scheduled within 30 days of the holiday.

Vacation

HPS believes that vacation leave is an important and valuable benefit to the employees and the District. Employees are encouraged and expected to use their annual vacation leave time. HPS strives to provide a professional environment in which employees are given the autonomy to plan, in consultation with their supervisors, when to use their vacation time. Employees also have the responsibility to ensure that they plan absences to have minimal impact on the work of their department.

Vacation time is accrued monthly from July 1- June 30 and will be posted on the last day of the month. The monthly accrual is equal to 1/12 of the annual vacation allotment; such accruals shall be posted on the last day

of the month. Eligible employees shall accrue vacation time based upon the length of continuous employment as of the benefit eligibility date as follows:

- <5 years: 10 days
- At least 5 years: 15 days
- At least 10 year: 20 days
- 20+ years: 25 days

Employees who are eligible for vacation under these rules and who separate from employment, shall be paid any accrued but unused vacation time as of their date of separation. Please read the full [HPS Vacation Policy](#) for a full understanding of the vacation time benefit.

Personal Leave

Unless otherwise stated in your contract, the District provides its employees with three personal days per year between September and August to meet personal and individual needs. Personal days must be approved 24 hours in advance, except in cases of emergency as determined by the District.

No personal days may be taken during the first six months of employment. You may not carry over unused personal days. Employees are not paid for unused personal days. Personal days may only be taken in full or one-half day increments.

Sick Leave

Sick leave days are for use when an employee has a bona fide sickness, preventing them from reporting for and performing the employee's duties. Employees will accrue their sick time monthly from July-June for a maximum of 10 days per year. Sick leave may accumulate up to a maximum of 150 days and is not transferable.

Up to three (3) days of accrued sick leave may be used for the illness of a member of the employee's immediate family who resides in the same household. The Superintendent or their designee reserves the right to require reasonable documentation of said family illness. Family illness days taken under this provision shall count as sick leave days and shall be deducted from sick leave accumulation and usage.

In the event that an employee uses the equivalent of three sick leave days or fewer during the course of the school year (inclusive of all days charged to the accrual balance), the employee would be granted one additional personal leave day at the start of the following academic year. Personal days that have been approved in advance will not count against the three sick leave days. This benefit will be prorated for all part-time employees and mid-year hires that are employed prior to March 15. Employees hired after March 15 will not be eligible for this benefit until the following year.

Upon separation of employment, employees are not paid for any unused sick time.

Sick Leave Abuse

Paid sick leave is an important benefit for employees; however, abuse of sick leave is detrimental to the students of Holyoke and the District. While recognizing that only a small fraction of employees may abuse sick leave, no abuse of sick leave will be tolerated or condoned.

A supervisor may meet with an employee to discuss concerns about unusual sick leave usage. When, in the opinion of the District, sick leave is being abused, an employee shall be notified of such suspected abuse, and after such notification, the employee may be required to provide a medical certification to justify any future absences, after three consecutive days of absence or a pattern of suspicious absences, as determined by the District.

Approved Leave of Absence: Pay

During an approved leave of absence, appropriate accrued time must be used prior to taking unpaid time. As the default model and in the following order:

- **Accrued and Available Sick Time:** If applicable and in accordance with the policy, accrued sick time would typically be used first. This is usually reserved for instances where the absence is due to the employee's own illness and/or non-routine medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the workday or for the illness of an immediate family member living in the employee's household.
- **Accrued and Available Personal Time:** Following sick time, accrued personal days would be used. Personal days are often granted for personal reasons that do not fall under sick leave, such as family events or personal appointments.
- **Accrued and Available Vacation Time:** If there is any remaining leave needed after sick and personal time have been exhausted, accrued vacation time would be utilized.

Incentive days will *not* automatically be used, and the employee must make a request in writing to payroll in order to use available days in accordance with the policy.

The Superintendent or their designee may, at their discretion, approve an exception. Employees who wish to be considered for an exception must make a request in writing *prior* to using the time.

Approved Leave of Absence: Reporting Time

Employees are expected to follow the daily absence/ call-out procedures outlined by their supervisor until HR has received all appropriate documentation and the individual has received a written approval of the leave of absence. Once a written approval letter is received, the time will automatically be entered for all leaves taken consecutively; intermittent leaves will need to continue following the daily call out procedures for the duration of their approved leave.

Incentive Days

Effective July 1, 2023, HPS introduced Incentive Days for all non-bargaining 12-month employees who work at least 28 hours/week, year-round. Incentive days are paid time off that may be used during set periods of time; employees may request to use incentive days during the following periods: the week in which the 4th of July holiday occurs, December Break, February Break, and/or April Break. Incentive day requests outside of these weeks will not be approved. Please read the [Incentive Days](#) policy for more details including eligibility. (Please note: Incentive days are not available to employees with individual employment contracts or working under a collective bargaining unit unless covered in the agreement.)

Bereavement

In cases of death of near relatives—spouse/partner, parents, siblings, children, or other relatives residing in the same household—employees shall be allowed absence of not more than five (5) *calendar* days in succession *immediately following the day of the death*, which shall not be charged against the annual and accumulated sick leave, and of three (3) *calendar* days in case of death of a parent-in-law, and of one (1) *calendar* day in cases of death of the following relatives whose place of residence is elsewhere than in the same household: sibling-in-law, child-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandparent, or grandchildren.

The Superintendent may at their discretion, grant additional bereavement days, but the granting of such additional days shall in no event cause the total to exceed five (5) work days.

Religious Holiday

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, M.G.L. c. 151B, EEOC, MCAD and all other applicable regulations, employees who require and are approved for time-off for a religious holiday may use personal and/or vacation time.

Absence Without Pay

An employee may submit an unpaid time-off request for the reasons stated above when there are no accrual balances available to the employee for such reasons, or other extenuating circumstances not covered above. However, this time may only be taken when the negative impact is none or limited, with the approval of the employee's supervisor. Approvals will be granted on a limited case-by-case basis. Time cannot be taken unpaid in order to save benefit time accruals. Employees cannot borrow against anticipated benefit time accruals.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

See [Department of Labor Fact Sheet](#).

Policy Statement: HPS will provide a job-protected leave of absence under the FMLA for the reasons described below. To be eligible for leave under this policy, an employee must have been on the District payroll for a total of 12 months in the past seven years and have actually worked for HPS at least 1,250 hours during the preceding 12-month period preceding the leave.

An eligible employee may be entitled to FMLA leave for any of the following reasons:

1. For the birth of a child and to care for the newborn during the first 12 months after birth;
2. For adoption or foster care of a child during the first 12 months after placement;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent with a serious health condition. A "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement includes an incapacity of more than three full calendar days and two visits to a health care provider or one visit to a health care provider and a continuing regimen of care; an incapacity caused by pregnancy or prenatal visits, a chronic or permanent or long-term conditions; or absences due to multiple treatments. Other situations may meet the definition of a serious health condition;
4. Because of the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of your position, including incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth; or
5. Any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of a call or order to active duty). A "qualifying exigency" includes:
 - Short-notice deployment (limited to seven calendar days from date notified of deployment);
 - Military events and related activities;
 - Childcare and school activities;
 - Financial and legal arrangements;
 - Counseling;
 - Rest and recuperation (limited to 15 days of FMLA leave);
 - Post-deployment activities;
 - Parental care; and
 - Additional activities, only as mutually agreed to by the employee and HPS.

Special leave entitlement relating to an employee's family member in the Armed Forces ([Department of Labor Fact Sheet](#)):

A spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may request up to 26 work weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. A covered service member is:

- A current member of the Armed Forces, (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves,) who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that renders or may render the service member medically unfit to perform their duties for which he or she, the service member, is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list; or
- A veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for a covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for serious illness or injury.

THE FMLA DEFINITIONS FOR “SERIOUS ILLNESS OR INJURY” FOR CURRENT SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS ARE DISTINCT FROM THE FMLA DEFINITION OF “SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION.”

Use of Leave

The leave may be taken in one block of 12 weeks, or if required, employees may take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedules (select days or hours, for example) when medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member or a covered service member, because of the employee’s own serious health condition, or due to a qualifying exigency. Employees are entitled to twelve 12 weeks of FMLA leave per rolling calendar year. Employees needing intermittent leave for planned medical treatment must make reasonable efforts to schedule the leave so as to not unduly disrupt HPS’s operations.

When applicable, FMLA leave will run concurrent with other leaves.

Note: Married couples who are both employed by HPS are eligible for an aggregate of 12 weeks, not 12 weeks per employee, when the reason for the leave is the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition. This “spousal limitation” does not apply, however, if the leave is for a serious health condition of the employee, the employee’s spouse or child.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must give a 30-day advance notice before the leave begins if the leave is foreseeable. Such notice should be provided to the Human Resource Department. If the need for the leave is not foreseeable, HPS should be notified as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the situation and generally must comply with the District’s normal call-in procedures for an absence or tardiness.

Employees must provide sufficient information for HPS to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Once a leave is approved, employees also must inform HPS if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

During the leave period, the employee will be responsible for contributions to all benefit plans in the same amount as if they were actively working. An employee’s failure to comply with the District’s FMLA leave procedures can be grounds for delaying or denying an employee’s request for FMLA-qualifying leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Employees requesting leave will be advised whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, HPS will provide notice of any additional information the employee needs to provide, as well as the employee’s rights and responsibilities under FMLA. If the employee is not eligible for the leave, HPS will inform the employee and provide a reason for their ineligibility. The employee will also be informed if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave to be counted against the employee’s leave entitlement, if possible.

Use of Sick Time

Leaves of absence which qualify under the FMLA generally will be unpaid. In order to use paid benefit time

during an approved FMLA leave, employees must comply with the normal paid leave policies of HPS. Earned and accrued sick time must be used during an approved leave prior to taking any unpaid leave.

Benefits and Protections

Employees will be restored to the same or equivalent position after an FMLA leave, except in certain cases where the person has been designated as a “key employee” or where employment would not have continued had the employee not been on leave.

When returning from FMLA leave for the employee’s own serious health condition, HPS may request the employee provide a “fitness for duty” note from the attending medical provider before being restored to the same or equivalent position.

Unlawful Acts and Enforcement

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the FMLA; or discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

An employee may file a complaint with the US Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. (DOL contact information is: 1-866-487-9243; TTY 1-877-889-5627; www.wagehour.dol.gov). FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

If you have any questions, concerns, or disputes with this policy, you must contact the Chief Human Resources Officer in writing.

Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

HPS complies with all aspects of the [Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#). This means HPS employees and applicants will not be discriminated against with respect to pregnancy or pregnancy- related conditions (which includes post-pregnancy conditions such as the need to express breast milk for a nursing child). HPS will not refuse to hire a pregnant applicant or an applicant with a pregnancy- related condition because of the pregnancy or pregnancy- related condition (provided the applicant can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation), nor will HPS deny any employment opportunity or take adverse action against an employee because of the employee’s pregnancy, pregnancy- related condition, or request for reasonable accommodation.

Employees and applicants affected by pregnancy or pregnancy- related conditions are entitled to reasonable accommodations required to allow them to perform the essential functions of the position involved. Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments that allow an employee or job applicant to perform the essential functions of the job while pregnant or experiencing pregnancy- related conditions that can be provided without undue hardship to HPS.

Individuals affected by their pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions should contact the Chief of Human Resources to request a reasonable accommodation. Upon receipt of a request, HPS will meet with the employee to discuss reasonable accommodations that may enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the employee’s job. HPS will discuss and evaluate reasonable accommodation requests and communicate the

decision regarding the request to the employee. HPS will not require a pregnant employee to accept a particular accommodation, including a leave of absence, if another reasonable accommodation would enable the employee to perform the essential job functions without undue hardship. HPS may require documentation of the need for accommodation. No documentation will be required for more frequent restroom, food or water breaks; seating; limits on lifting no more than 20 lbs.; and/or private, non-restroom space for expressing breast milk.

HPS prohibits all forms of discrimination and retaliation against any individual for requesting or receiving an accommodation pursuant to this policy. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated or retaliated against in violation of this policy should report it to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Parental Leave

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 149, § 105D, HPS provides parental leave to employees under the following conditions:

To be eligible for parental leave, a full-time female or male employee, as defined by the Massachusetts Parental Leave Act, must have completed three full consecutive months. If eligible, the employee may be granted leave under this policy for the following purposes:

- Giving birth, or
- Adopting a child under 18 years of age (under 23 years of age in the case of a child who is physically or mentally disabled).

Leave under this policy shall not exceed eight weeks per birth or adoption. If two employees of HPS take leave for the birth or placement of the same child, such leave shall be for no longer than a combined eight weeks.

To the extent available, the employee may at their option utilize any accrued vacation to cover all or part of parental leave. Otherwise, such leave is unpaid.

This leave may run concurrently with any other leave where permitted by state and federal law, e.g., leave under the FMLA. Taking parental leave shall not affect the employee's right to benefits for which he/she was eligible as of the date leave commenced. During parental leave, benefits will accrue to the extent they accrue during other leaves of absence.

An employee is expected to provide their HR Generalist at least two weeks' notice of the date of their anticipated departure from work and date of return. If, for reasons beyond the employee's control, two weeks' notice cannot be provided, the employee shall provide as much notice as is practicable.

Upon return from parental leave, the employee ordinarily shall be restored to their previous position, or a position similar with regard to status, pay and seniority. Such restoration may not occur if other employees of equal length of service and status, in the same or similar positions, have been laid off due to economic conditions or other changes in operations. In that situation, the employee on parental leave shall retain preferential consideration for re-employment in another position to which the employee may be entitled as of the date of leave.

For the full Massachusetts parental leave guideline act, please click [here](#).

Domestic Violence Leave

Leave is available to an employee who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or kidnapping (or who has a family member who is a victim) and who needs time to seek medical care, counselling, victim services or legal assistance; to secure housing; to appear in civil or criminal court proceedings; or to address other issues directly related to abusive behavior against the employee or a family member of the employee.

HPS provides up to 15 days of unpaid leave per calendar year to any employee who is the victim of domestic violence or the family member of a victim of domestic violence.

To be eligible for this leave, the employee must have exhausted all sick leave and vacation time. Advance notice of the need for this leave must be submitted to the Chief Human Resources Officer unless the leave is necessitated by an imminent threat to health or safety of the employee or the employee's family member. In the case of unscheduled leave, an employee (or employee's representative) must notify HPS within three 3 work days that the leave was taken or is being taken pursuant to the law. HPS will not take negative action against the employee for an unscheduled absence if within 30 days from the unauthorized absence, the employee provides sufficient documentation evidencing the need for the leave.

An employee who takes Domestic Violence Leave is entitled to restoration of their original position or an equivalent position upon returning from such leave. The taking of leave under this policy shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the date on which the leave is taken.

Any employee seeking this leave must also provide documentation showing that the employee or the employee's family member was the victim of domestic violence.

All information related to the employee's Domestic Violence Leave shall be kept confidential by HPS and shall not be disclosed, except to the extent that disclosure is requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee; ordered to be released by a court of competent jurisdiction; otherwise required by applicable federal or state law; required in the course of an investigation authorized by law enforcement, including, but not limited to, an investigation by the attorney general; or necessary to protect the safety of the employee or others employed at the workplace.

HPS will not coerce, interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of, or any attempt to exercise, any rights provided in this Domestic Violence Leave policy or make leave requested or taken hereunder contingent upon whether the victim maintains contact with the alleged abuser. HPS will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under this Domestic Violence Leave policy. Please contact your HR Generalist for more information.

Military Leave

HPS abides by USERRA and all other applicable laws.

Small Necessities Leave Act

Employees who have worked for HPS for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months preceding the leave may take up to a total of 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period, to engage in the following:

- Participation in their child's elementary or secondary school activity directly related to the educational advancement of their child, such as parent-teacher conferences or interviewing for a new school; or,
- Accompanying son or daughter to routine medical/dental appointment; or,
- Accompanying an elderly relative to routine medical/dental or professional services appointments related to the elder's care. An elderly relative is defined as an individual 60 years or older related to the employee by blood or marriage.

The relevant 12-month period for use of Small Necessities Leave is the 12 month period preceding the leave.

Please consult your supervisor for further information or if you wish to request this leave. You may be required to present appropriate documentation to support your need for this leave. If the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide HPS with at least seven days prior notice. If the leave is not foreseeable, notice as soon as practical is required. The request for leave must be in writing.

Jury Duty

Employees summoned for jury duty will receive their regular wages for the first three days. Thereafter, employees summoned for jury duty are granted unpaid leave in order to serve. Employees should make arrangements with their supervisor as soon as they receive a summons. HPS reserves the right to request proof of jury service issued by the court upon return. Employees are expected to work/return to work during the days they are serving on a jury as the court schedule permits.

B. Insurance

Eligible employees will have 30 days from the start of their employment to complete their benefit enrollment forms. This includes providing the required supporting documents for dependent coverage. Employees who do not enroll in their first 30 days will have the option to enroll again during the spring, open enrollment period or if they have a qualifying event (such as loss of coverage, marriage, birth of a child, etc.). Benefit cycles run July 1st-June 30th. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for a summary of offerings. (Please note that you can select any one or all options.)

In addition to the insurances summarized, we offer options for Flexible Spending Accounts and Dependent Care through TASC. These options must be selected annually.

Newly hired employees will be provided all enrollment forms and details regarding the benefits through TalentEd: Records. If you have any questions, please contact benefits@hps.holyoke.ma.us.

XIII. Teaching and Learning

Instructional Resources

The key documents that inform the overall expectations and provide resources to support high quality instruction in HPS are:

- [HPS Executive Summary](#) is an overview of the strategic plan and instructional foci.
 - If and when access is restricted to embedded links, it means that the document is intended for school and district leaders.
- [Arc of the Year](#) is an overview of focus areas throughout the year. It includes many supporting resources.
 - If and when access is restricted to embedded links, it means that the document is intended for school and district leaders.
- [MA Curriculum Frameworks](#)
- [2025-2026 PK-12 HPS Approved Curriculum](#)

Educators should also read their school-specific School Improvement Plans (SIPs), which the school leaders can share.

XIV. Professional Development

Purpose

The purpose of professional development (PD) is to contribute to the life-long process of continuous learning, professional growth, and teaching effectiveness to improve learning outcomes for students.

District-wide Professional Development (PD)

During the school year, there are multiple full days for PreK-12 teachers dedicated to professional learning. Educators will engage in both district and school-based professional development on these days; all PD is aligned to the HPS Strategic Priorities. A year-long professional development listing by position is shared with all educators at the start of the school year to support educators in understanding their own positional learning trajectories.

School-Level Professional Development

Each school has the opportunity to utilize staff collaboration time to target professional learning around specific school goals tied to District Instructional Strategies as articulated in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Principals and school-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) will communicate specific PD targets and calendars, considering a balance of time reserved for staff, department, and grade-level meetings. Staff can contact their principal to view the School Improvement Plan.

Job-Embedded Professional Development

The Supervision/Evaluation System fosters frequent classroom visits and feedback so teachers have continuous dialogue with a school or district administrator around effective instructional practices. District leaders, school leaders, and Expert Teachers will provide ongoing coaching and classroom support as teachers implement teaching strategies and refine their craft. Grade-level and content-area Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams create a collaborative community, in which educators work together to strengthen teacher practice that will lead to improved student outcomes.

Evaluation System

The [Holyoke Public Schools Educator Evaluation System for Teachers](#) serves to guide the work that will make the District's mission, vision, values and strategies come to life for the students, families, and educators of HPS. [TeachPoint](#) is our online tool for managing the HPS Educator Evaluation Cycle.

Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Professional Development Requirements

The SEI Endorsement requirement is at the center of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's RETELL initiative to transform the teaching and learning of English Learners (ELs), also known as Multilingual Learners (MLs), across the Commonwealth.

- All incumbent core academic teachers of ELs (ELA, Math, Science, Humanities or Special Education) must earn a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement; and
- All incumbent principals/assistant principals and supervisors/directors who evaluate core academic teachers of ELs must earn an SEI Administrator Endorsement.

Whether or not an educator has been required to obtain the SEI Endorsement, under recertification regulations, every public school educator in the Commonwealth must earn 15 PDPs addressing the needs of English learners and 15 PDPs in effective schooling for students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles in each re-licensure cycle.

Tracking Professional Learning and Professional Development Points (PDPs)

- The district provides [TeachPoint](#) as a tool for managing and tracking professional development.
- It is the educator's responsibility to register for professional learning in TeachPoint, to complete feedback in TeachPoint following participation in PD, and to keep track of their PDPs.
- PDPs are awarded automatically through TeachPoint after the facilitator confirms the educator's attendance, and after the educator completes the feedback in TeachPoint.
- The district does not manage individual educator PDPs.

Use the [Important Points of Contact](#) to find out how to get access to TeachPoint.

XV. Technology

Purpose

The HPS Technology Department's purpose is to provide reliable, up-to-date and integrated technology to support and facilitate teaching, learning, and the delivery of services. For more information, please visit the Technology section of the [Staff Essentials page](#). (Staff Essentials → Staff Resource Center → Technology)

Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy

The Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy is intended to create a safe working and learning environment for staff and students.

- Internet and computer access through HPS is a privilege. Staff access may be limited or revoked by school officials at any time if this privilege is abused or violates acceptable use.
- The network is provided for staff to conduct educational research and support educational endeavors. Staff engaged in unacceptable use of the Internet will also be subject to disciplinary action.
- HPS maintains tools that block access to many inappropriate sites. The filtering software, however, cannot ensure that all inappropriate sites are blocked. Ultimately it is the responsibility of staff to ensure they are in compliance with the acceptable use policy.
- Staff are expected to abide by all student data privacy laws and may not share student data outside of HPS without written consent of a parent/guardian
- Staff should have no expectation of privacy in the use of computers and the Internet provided by HPS.
 - Pursuant to local, state, and federal laws, school officials may provide access to staff files and records to law enforcement authorities;
 - All files will be subject to HPS's Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy (stated here) and local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- Staff are expected to adhere to HPS's Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy (stated here).

Acceptable uses of HPS-provided technology devices and internet include:

- Using email for educational purposes and Holyoke Public Schools business;
- Abiding by generally accepted rules of network etiquette including but not limited to being polite and courteous, using appropriate language, and respecting the privacy of the work of others,
- Documenting and obeying copyright laws;
- Reporting misuse of the Internet to appropriate authorities;
- Using technology resources to ensure fair access to all staff and students;
- Using computing and communications facilities in a manner consistent with local, state, and federal laws and policies; and
- Notifying appropriate authorities if there is a problem with your computer.

Unacceptable uses of HPS-provided technology devices and internet includes but is not limited to:

- Providing private or personal information about yourself or others;
- Viewing or sending obscene or patently offensive material;
- Accessing another person's file or account without permission;
- Providing the employee password to other staff or students;

- Moving or unplugging computers and/or other devices without permission;
- Eating or drinking without appropriate care and safeguards (e.g. lid on water bottle) near or around technology; and
- Violating the Holyoke Public Schools' Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy (stated here), including but not limited to engaging in racial or other forms of unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, hazing, plagiarism, cheating, or interfering with the rights of reproduction or transmission of material that is protected.

The student's [Internet and Computer Acceptable Use and Safety Guidance](#) is also available for staff review and is similar to the above policy.

Social Media

Holyoke Public Schools has established a [Social Networking Websites Policy](#) and [Social Media Guidelines](#) that staff are expected to read and follow. Expectations for employees are included in these guidelines, and specific portions are also provided below.

HPS recognizes that employees use social media both personally and professionally. HPS reminds employees they are role models for students and have an obligation to protect the confidentiality of students' personally identifiable information at all times. Employees are required to treat social media as an extension of the classroom and/or professional workspace. Use of social media for professional purposes is limited to matters that fall within the scope of an employee's job responsibilities.

Employees are permitted to create and maintain "professional/personal" accounts for the sole purpose of sharing content related to their schools and the District, but they must abide by the guidelines contained here, and they may not include non-education related content on these accounts. Personal content unrelated to education should be posted elsewhere to keep the distinction between professional and personal. Any content presented in English must also be presented in human-translated Spanish on these professional/personal accounts.

Employees must never post photos, videos or other content about students on their own personal accounts and may only post on their professional accounts if the students' parent/guardian has not opted them out. This prohibition includes photos where you believe you have obscured students' identities by covering or blurring their faces. Posting information that is critical of one or more students, whether or not they are referenced by name or any other identifying information, is never permitted.

HPS employees **are permitted** to communicate with students through Class Dojo, Clever, or similar electronic communication platforms adopted by their schools only about matters that reasonably pertain to instruction or educational or extra-curricular programs.

HPS employees **are not permitted** to interact with students on social media sites. **Exception:** Employees may communicate via social media with relatives, the children of friends, friends of the employee's children, and members or participants in the same civic, social, or religious organizations when the primary relationship is formed outside of the school setting, but still only with prior permission from the child's parents or guardians.

Additional considerations:

- Employees are strongly encouraged to use caution when creating, forwarding, or reposting social media posts on their personal social media accounts/pages that relate to school or district matters. Employees should assume that their identity as an employee is either known or easy to reveal. Posts that reflect negatively on the employee, school, or district or that relate in any way to students are prohibited unless protected by law.
- Only authorized district staff are permitted to post information on social media sites related to crisis/emergent situations or other matters that may affect the safety, security, and/or continuity of school operations, or about unexpected delays/unplanned closures. Once such information has been posted by the District, schools and individual employees may then share the District's content.
- Non-authorized employees should refrain from posting information, asking questions, or seeking information about emergency situations through social media so as to avoid spreading rumors or sharing sensitive information.

Consequences for blatant disregard of HPS social media guidelines

Anyone who blatantly disregards the District's social media guidelines could lose access to the District's social media accounts and/or may face possible disciplinary or legal consequences depending upon the circumstances.

HPS employees who have questions or are uncertain how to adhere to the District's social media guidelines are encouraged to seek training or further guidance from the Communications Department. Email communications@hps.holyoke.ma.us or call 413-493-1605 for assistance.

PowerSchool

HPS is migrating from School Brains to PowerSchool as our student information system for SY26. This system stores student and staff demographics, attendance, discipline, and scheduling data. If you are a teacher, your PowerSchool login also provides access to your classes, schedule, and gradebook. All staff will have the opportunity to learn more about PowerSchool via in person trainings and through asynchronous training assigned to them on [PD+](#). If you have any questions about your PowerSchool access, please contact dataservices@hps.holyoke.ma.us, or Jenny Malave, Executive Director of Technology and Data Systems, jmalave@hps.holyoke.ma.us

Data Systems

For more information on data systems used by HPS, please see the [Data Services website](#).

Email

Please note that all email sent and received through HPS's email system is district property and can be monitored at any time.

XVI. Other

Employee Assistance Program

Holyoke Public Schools believes the health and well being of all our employees is of critical importance. The District has a comprehensive employee assistance program (EAP) services that is available for our employees and their families. We have contracted with Espyr, an independent firm, to provide this service. ESPYR has a solid reputation for providing exceptional services, and outstanding customer service and support.

The EAP offers many services to employees including:

- 24/7 access to services
- A large variety of on-line resources and programs
- No-cost counseling and referral services. Up to 5 sessions of counseling per issue.
- Work/Life services including no-cost consultations with attorneys, financial professionals, child and eldercare services specialists and others

The EAP program is free and confidential, with your right to privacy protected within the bounds of the law. The EAP will not disclose to us who uses the program, so we will not be aware you are using the services unless you choose to inform us.

Staff can access the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (password: hpseap). Staff may also call (800) 869-0276.

Transfer

HPS uses TalentEd: Recruit & Hire to post jobs that are available or may become available. Upon completion of an application on TalentEd, employees may be considered for transfer to a different school, position or department. Certain contractual provisions apply.

Resignation or Retirement

Employees are expected to provide a minimum of 30 days written notice to their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department when resigning from their position. Additionally, employees are encouraged to stay through the end of the school year, given the direct impact that the resignation may have on student learning.

Employees who are retiring are expected to give a minimum of 90 days written notice to their supervisor and the Human Resource Department. Additionally, in a separate notification, they should notify the Board of their Retirement Plan in which he or she is enrolled well in advance of the anticipated date of retirement to assure that any pension payments and insurance benefits due will be coordinated to avoid gaps in income or insurance coverage.

Timekeeping

HPS uses TimeClock Plus, an electronic time and attendance system. (TCP can be accessed via the [Staff Essentials webpage](#).) Employees are expected to maintain accurate records of time in the system and are expected to approve their time weekly. Violations of Timekeeping Policy and Procedures are seen as egregious offenses and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If you have any questions or issues with Timeclock Plus, please notify your supervisor and email payroll@hps.holyoke.ma.us immediately.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Except where the regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals or organizations other than the parent/legal guardian, eligible student (18 or over) and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent/legal guardian or eligible student (18 or over). School systems are required to provide for the security and confidentiality of student school records. Under these laws, the school principal or their designee is responsible for the privacy and physical security of all student records maintained in the school and any computerized systems employed are electronically secure.

All information and data contained in or added to the student record shall be limited to information relevant to the educational needs of the student. Information and data added to the temporary record shall include the name, signature, and position of the person who is the source of the information, and the date of entry into the record. Standardized group test results that are added to the temporary record need only include the name of the test and/or publisher, and date of testing. Screening and Assessment Records are accessible by the screening team, the child's teacher, any specialists involved in the assessment process (testing or implementation of services), and the school principal. Screening and assessment results are used to identify areas where a student may need additional testing, intervention, or other support services that will assist in the learning process.

Field Trips

All field trips are planned, facilitated, and funded at the school level. Field trips are experiences that enrich academic learning in the classroom.

Field Trip Procedures

The field trip procedures are expected to be followed. Please read the [field trip procedures](#) for more detailed information, which is also summarized below.

Approval Process and Timeline

All field trip requests must be submitted using the [Traversa Online Portal](#). Planning and approvals must follow the timeline and steps outlined below. These deadlines represent the **minimum required lead times**. Staff are strongly encouraged to begin planning **as early as possible** to avoid delays or scheduling issues.

- **At least 60 days in advance:** The *Field Trip Request and Approval Form* must be completed and signed by the appropriate school-level staff (e.g., Principal, DMO) and submitted in the Traversa Portal.
- **At least 30 days in advance:** All requisitions related to the trip, including those for transportation, nursing services, and any other associated costs, must be submitted.
- **At least 2 weeks in advance:** The staff member organizing the trip must request transportation through [Traversa Online Portal](#).

Note: These timeframes are not flexible. Failure to meet these minimum deadlines may result in the denial or postponement of the field trip.

Additional Approvals

Trips that include **overnight accommodations, out-of-state travel**, or extend **beyond 11:59 p.m.** require approval from the **Superintendent** and then additional approval from the **School Committee**. The school **cannot** make any financial commitments (e.g. hotels, airline tickets, event tickets, etc) for the field trip until after School **Committee** approval is received. Therefore, we strongly recommend that overnight and out-of-state travel requests be submitted well in advance (e.g. 120 days or more).

Equity and Access

Families may choose not to have their child participate in a field trip. To ensure equity in curriculum and instruction, students not attending a field trip must be provided with an alternative educational program that offers similar learning outcomes. Schools are responsible for planning and delivering this alternative programming.