

Regular Meeting of the
Holyoke School Committee

Date: 11-15-2021

Place: Virtual Via Zoom,
SC Members In Person @ Fifield Room

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Holyoke, Massachusetts

MEETING NOTICE

Governor Baker signed a bill into law on June 16, 2021, allowing public bodies to hold remote meetings through April 22, 2022.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER 28 OF THE ACTS OF 2009, SECTIONS 17-20 (FORMERLY SECTION 23B OF CHAPTER 39) OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, THAT A **REGULAR MEETING** OF THE HOLYOKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD AT **6:00 PM ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2021.**

THE PUBLIC CAN ACCESS THIS MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBINAR HERE:

<https://hps-holyoke-ma-us.zoom.us/j/85266232176?pwd=ci9tWEs3cG81SkQxdXZrWW5GenBXQT09> (Spanish Interpretation will be available).

HOLYOKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AGENDA ATTACHED

CITY OF HOLYOKE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE AGENDA

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2021

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Via zoom webinar, School Committee Members in person @ Fifield Room

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

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

2. STUDENT SHOWCASE -

- a. Unified Sports Team
- b. M.A.S.S certificate presentation - Jacqueline Jourdain

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (via the remote link above)

Members of the public wishing to submit public comments can email sagarcia@hps.holyoke.ma.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Monday, November 15, 2021. Comments will either be displayed or read during the meeting.

4. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

a. Student Reports

- HHS-North - Samantha Brennan
- HHS-Dean - Shyanne Hall

b. Presentations

- Ghost Boys Presentation
- Holyoke Ethnic Studies Presentation

c. Superintendent/Receiver Reports

- Dual Language Task Force
- Behavior Update
- Covid-19 Update

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Regular Meeting Minutes

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- 9-27-2021

Recommendation: That the School Committee vote to approve the minutes of meetings

5. ONGOING BUSINESS

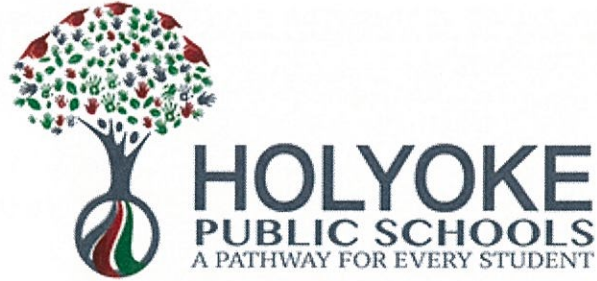
- a. Dean Property Transfer

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. 11/16 DPAC Meeting - 6-7 P.M.
- b. 11/18 SEPAC Meeting - 6-7 P.M.
- c. 11/18-11/20 HHS Theater Company presents LOW BUDGET HIGH SCHOOL PLAY 7-9 P.M.

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

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



School Committee Meeting
Superintendent/Receiver Report
November 15, 2021

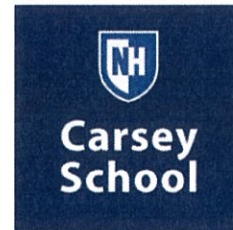
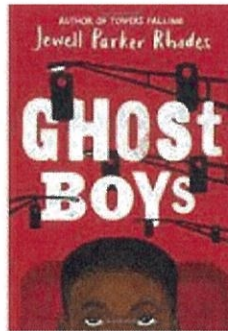
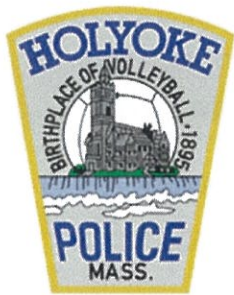
Ghost Boys

The Holyoke Public Schools, in partnership with the Holyoke Police Department, are engaging our middle school students in a powerful learning experience focused on social justice topics such as: racism, telling one's stories, police brutality, bullying, empathy, and how a community can partner together to collaboratively and positively create healing and social change. On November 17, 2021, Holyoke Public Schools students in middle school will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion with their classmates and a member of the police force that serves our community. Professionals from the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy will facilitate these discussions with the support of a specially designed protocol.

Middle Schools teachers and Instructional coaches chose this novel for its thoughtful attention and emotional themes; racism, telling one's stories, police brutality, bullying, empathy, and understanding. Students have found themselves relating to and inspired by the main character's (Jerome) journey to understand social injustice; this curriculum will help students build connections between Jerome's story and the injustices they witness in their own lives.

Ghost Boys

Purpose: To inspire our students to experience the power of story to heal and connect us as we strive to improve ourselves and our world.



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The choice of the Bearing Witness unit - from Harvard's STARI curriculum - with the anchor text, *Ghost Boys*, manifests values of the Holyoke Public Schools, including:

1. Our students are at the center of our curriculum as evidenced by a thoughtfully chosen, responsive curriculum that promotes learning rigorous content knowledge and skills while engaging in authentically relevant themes.
2. Our stories matter as evidenced by the summative goal for students to produce a multi-genre Public Narrative (Story of Self-Us-Now).
3. Literature - and the feelings evoked and the thoughts provoked - deepens our understanding of ourselves and our world as evidenced by our capacity to have an empathetic response while simultaneously participating in challenging, sometimes courageous, discussion and debate.

Reading and responding to *Ghost Boys* provides our students with the opportunity to use literature as a guide as they explore issues of income inequality, historical injustices, systemic racism, and bias. A goal of this book - like our classes - is to inspire our students to experience the power of story to heal and to connect us as we strive to improve ourselves and our world.

Holyoke Ethnic Studies

ES Department would like to present the program- **PENDING RECEIPT OF INFO FROM HOLYOKE ETHNIC STUDIES.**

I met with the former Ethnic Studies Department Head, and have scheduled a regular monthly check in to discuss how Ethnic Studies Programming is going. Some concerns have come up and I am working with our team to mitigate some of the concerns that have been raised.

- Lack of teacher support - ES teachers have expressed the level of support has gone down for them. This is consistent with what I have been hearing from teachers at other schools and outside of the ES program. Therefore, this is not an Ethnic Studies program issue but rather what all teachers (in Holyoke and across the nation) are dealing with due to the difficulties of teaching full time in person during a pandemic and increased staffing shortages due to absences etc.
 - Teachers are encouraged to reach out to their Expert Teachers / Instructional Coaches for support- all school buildings have at least two coaches.
 - ES Department Head can be used as a support
 - Teachers can also contact the Director of their content area (i.e. ELA/Social Students Sue Hucul, Math Tara Brandt)
- ES Department Head overwhelmed - This is consistent with what I have been hearing from all of our teachers. Again, this is not an Ethnic Studies program issue- this is a broad issue across all departments felt by all teachers.
 - We did free up an additional period so the ES department head has three free periods a day to support her instructional planning as well as her dept. head duties.
- Dual Enrollment Opportunities with UMASS have not been established yet this year - The high school Advanced Learning Team (Rigali, Barreto, and Gillis) will meet with the former Ethnic Studies Dept. Head so that we can make the connection with UMASS and ensure that this opportunity is available for our students again this year.
- After School Program opportunities have gone away - I have asked our Director of Extended Learning to discuss with Dana what these opportunities were and then work out a plan to ensure students have access to these or other opportunities that we can offer our students.
- ES Department Head at Dean Campus not allowed to go to the North Campus on their PD days - We have worked with both principals to ensure that ES teachers can coordinate schedules and either get together at the North Campus or have the North Campus teachers come to the Dean Campus

I will continue to meet with Dana monthly to address her concerns and work with my team to address topics that are brought up. Furthermore, Valerie Annear meets monthly with the current ES dept. head to support curricular and programmatic goals. I look forward to being invited to a future Community Advisory Board meeting soon.

Dual Language Task Force Update

The district's Dual Language Task Force (DLTF) was established last winter. The goal of the task force is to develop a long-range strategic plan for the development, strengthening, and expansion of the HPS Dual Language program. The task force meets monthly with district and school administrators and instructional

leaders. We have partnered with consultants from the Multistate Association for Bilingual Education (MABE) to facilitate this work.

The DLTF determined 7 goals the team would work to meet. This year's work is focused on 1. Middle school expansion and 2. Program and Language Allocation Models across all grade levels. This year's focus is on PK-8 program models. However, the DLTF and district leaders will work on developing/outlining the high school opportunities starting next year so that our rising 9th graders in the Fall of 2023 will have course options to support continued advanced language development.

The subcommittee currently working on Middle School Expansion has the current goals:

- Develop a middle school staffing model, language allocation plan and vision
- Develop middle school yearly expansion plan and action steps

In order to meet goals, team members engage in a variety of activities and actions

- Subcommittee group members meet weekly/biweekly
- Members conduct research on their own
- Share ideas within subcommittee
- Engage in book study
- Research and visiting other models across New England

Current research findings show that there is no whole school dual language middle school in RI, CT, MA or ME. There are **4 middle schools with Dual Language strands** within a school in CT and MA. In all of these middle schools, there are 3 or more elementary DLE programs that feed into the middle school strand program.

- Windham Middle School, Windham, CT
- Framingham Walsh Middle School, Framingham, MA
- Fuller Middle School, Framingham, MA
- Burncoat Middle School, Worcester, MA

There are **7 whole school Dual Language K-8 programs** in MA and CT.

- Hurley School, Boston MA
- East Somerville Community School, Somerville MA (strand)
- Sarah Greenwood School, Boston MA
- Hernandez School Boston MA
- Amigos School, Cambridge, MA
- Christopher Columbus Family Academy, New Haven, CT
- John C. Daniels Interdistrict Magnet School, New Haven, CT

Currently the DLTF is in the analyze phase of the work. Group members are weighing the pros and cons of the different models while keeping the district equity commitments at the center of decision-making, visiting other schools, discussing implications for staffing, schedules, course of study and language

allocation, how to best support English Learners w/in DL, extracurricular activities, and opportunities for SEL integration.

In January the task force will create opportunities to share and receive feedback from current and future dual language families and community members by holding school-based meetings across the district. The DLTF will share their decision with the Superintendent for final approval by the end of the year.

Behavior Update

This year has been an incredibly difficult year for many of our students and staff. Staff and students have reported an increased amount of behavior issues. Most of these concerns have been brought up at the Middle School and High School levels. Students are struggling to adjust to in person learning and socializing in school with their peers after not being in person fully for over 18 months.

We want the Committee to know what existing supports we have in place as well as new measures we have taken to support students and staff during these difficult times.

Things we had already started this year:

- We have increased counseling positions supports this current year and made sure that every school has an adjustment counselor
- We have implemented a new curriculum called TRAILS that each school is required to deliver. Schools have been given autonomy on how to deliver this curriculum and our Director of SEL is in the process of tracking the progress of each schools implementation
- Every K-8 school has either PBIS or some student incentive program to promote productive and positive social behavior
- We have 2 Behavior Support Specialists supporting our schools and they have done up to 60 observations and consults providing feedback to school behavior support teams to strengthen their support
- We have the BRYT program at Peck, Sullivan, Lawrence, HHS North Campus, and Kelly.
- For staff we have an Employee Assistance Program that they can take advantage of

Additional supports added since the start of the school year

- At HHS North Campus we have added an additional Assistant Principal, Adjustment Counselor, and Student Support Coordinator. The assistant principal helps to backfill the administrative position previously held by Dr. Mahoney.
- There were 4 district wide behavior support paras that had been vacant all year and we have deployed these positions to schools instead of using a Districtwide support model. This means that McMahon, Sullivan, STEM, and HHS North all received an additional behavior support para position
- All behavior support para's across the District are receiving a stipend of \$4,000

- Our Director of SEL will be creating a clear picture of what Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports exist at every school so that the community and families can easily understand what our SEL and behavior support efforts are by school.
- We have asked all parents and teachers to review the student handbook so that students understand basic expectations and potential consequences for violating them
- I have asked the Teacher Advisory Group to survey their peers on SEL and behavior supports that exist in their school communities. We asked them to specify what are we doing that we should continue to build on? What are we doing that we should stop doing? What are we not doing that we need to start doing?
- HPS “Pathway to Kindness” challenge is something we are working on this month to promote kindness and respect. Nominations can be submitted on social media using the handle #BeKindHPS
- Wellness package
 - Wellness weekend day off on 11/12
 - Half day on 12/10
 - Wednesday before Thanksgiving off for 12 month staff
 - \$125 and \$50 stipend for all
 - All principals asked to give half of the school based PD time back to teachers so that they can use that time for planning and collaboration

This issue around behavioral and SEL supports has emerged as one of the most important things that HPS needs to solve after listening to many of our Entry Plan stakeholder comments. We have some things in place but need to strengthen them everywhere so that teachers spend less time on this and have more time to elevate instruction for students.

COVID 19 Update

As of our most recent report to DESE, on 11/3, we had 267 students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19. Regarding the number of cases resulting in possible transmission to another HPS student/staff, we have had 32 incidents, 29 of them being students and 3 staff members. Over the past two weeks, we have had 19 student cases and 3 staff cases for a total of 22 cases.

We had a small related cluster of COVID-positive cases at Donahue School during the first week of November. There were four students and one staff member who were found to be positive. These individuals had been identified as close contacts and the situation was being monitored by the school’s nurse. The Board of Health was consulted and DESE was notified, and the classroom was shut down and will re-open on November 15th.

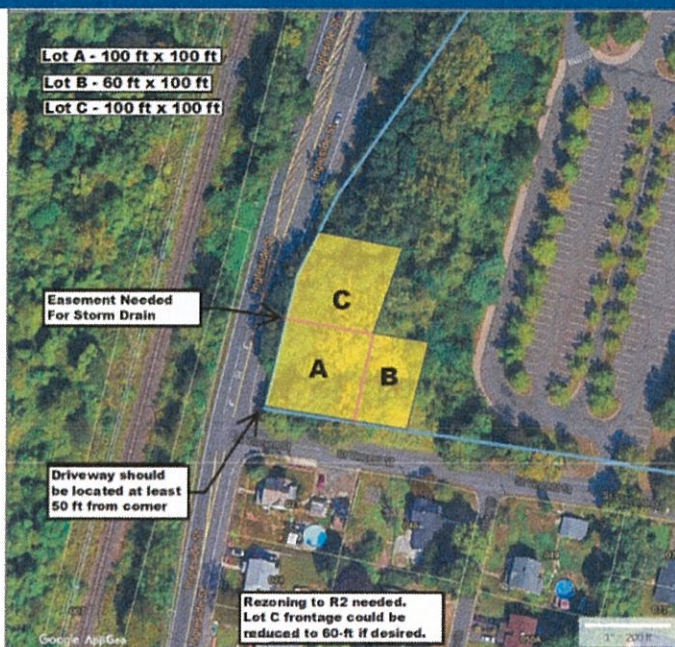
The [CDC has recommended that children ages 5-11 get vaccinated against COVID-19](#). We are recommending that families talk with their child’s pediatrician about the vaccine. Holyoke Public Schools

is collaborating with Holyoke Health Center to offer FREE and convenient COVID-19 vaccines for students and their families and we are currently working on the details.

The flu shot is especially critical during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the overall impact of respiratory illness in our schools and community, protect vulnerable people from severe illness, and decrease the overall burden on the healthcare system. We have offered flu shot clinics across the district for our staff members in our school buildings and Central Supply/Central Office. We have notified families through our Blackboard Connect system, the Holyoke Update, and through our nurses, the importance of protecting themselves and their families from the flu.

St. Vincent Property Update

St. Vincent Property/Dean Update



Information to be shared from committee members in regarding the transfer of the property on St. Vincent.

