

Holyoke STEM Academy

**Student & Family
Handbook
2020-2021**

**1045 Main Street
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Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year!

I would like to personally extend a gracious welcome to all of our students, families and community members of STEM Academy. I am thrilled, humbled and honored to lead this innovating and emerging school. The Holyoke STEM Academy is co-located with Holyoke High School South on the Dean campus. In our educational community, middle and high school students learn and grow together. We have separate educational programs yet share common spaces.

At STEM we take pride in building a community of engaged learners who strive to reach their potential. As Principal, I look forward to working with all of our dedicated educators and staff members who are committed to creating a kind, safe, anti-racist and nurturing environment where students are expected to be responsible for their learning both academically and socially.

We have every reason to believe that this year is certainly going to be memorable and promises to be amazing as we continue to provide academic experiences for our students that are rigorous, relevant, and help them build their learning capacity while making real-world connections. As Principal, it is important to me that everyone who steps through our doors- teachers, students and parents-are excited to be here! This attitude enables us to meet the daily challenges of academic excellence in a positive, fun, and nurturing environment.

In my opinion, there is nothing more important than having a strong home and school connection. By having a strong joint appreciation for common expectations and common understandings our consistent message allows for children to have the opportunity to thrive in any setting. I encourage everyone to get involved in any number of opportunities that are offered at any level you are comfortable with. Let's create positive relationships and together we can and will create an amazing middle school experience for our children.

I look forward to working with everyone as we create a community, create an identity, create school spirit, develop technological skills and an appreciation for science and the arts but most importantly help every STEM student meet their goals and grow as a productive citizen and as a learner.

Let's have a great year!!

Regards,

Sal J. Canata, III
Principal

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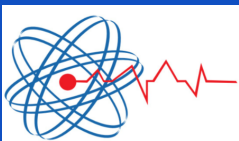
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Holyoke STEM Academy Vision

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



Holyoke STEM Academy 8th Grade Profile

Effective Communicators

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

Resilient Problem-solvers

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

Passionate Learners

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

Global Citizens

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

Mission Statement

Holyoke STEM Academy strives to be;

*A community that is anti-racist, safe, and inclusive,
A community that holds high standards for teaching and learning,
A community that values all voices, cultures, and perspectives,
A community that builds moral character and global citizenship,
A community that supports taking academic risks and chasing personal excellence,
A community that grows together, as a **family**.
A community that R.O.C.K.S! - Respectful, OnTask, Collaborative, Kind, Safe*

Academic Program

A Student Schedule

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

Course	Structure
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English Language Arts	Writing Reading Comprehension Expeditionary Learning
Ethnic Studies	Social Studies Units Ethnic Studies / Holyoke Public Schools Curriculum Units
Mathematics	Workshop Model using Illustrative Math
Science	5E Workshop Model using STEMscopes (PLTW)
Specials	Physical Education units Music education units STEM
Power Up	Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC)

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

Time	Minutes	Monday - Friday
7:45-7:58	13 minutes	Breakfast in the classroom & Advisory
8:00-8:45	45 minutes	English Language Arts - Reading/Writing (90 minute block)
8:47-9:32	45 minutes	ELA
9:34-10:19	45 minutes	Specials (PE, Music, STEM)
10:20-11:35	1:15 minutes	Lunch & Recess
11:38-12:23	45 minutes	Science
12:25-1:10	45 minutes	Math (90 minute Block)
1:12-1:57	45 minutes	Math
2:00-2:45	45 minutes	Ethnic Studies

***Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic we will act according to guidelines set forth by the district for the following:**

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of concepts taught in the classroom. They are encouraged

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

School Supplies

STEM Academy is a one to one technology school. All students are given an iPad for school use. Incoming sixth grade and new parents/ guardians and students are required to complete an iPad Academy (further information will be sent to families).

Attendance

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

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

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

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

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

- At 3 student absences, we will contact the family in writing.
- At 7 student absences (or five absences within the first academic quarter), Holyoke STEM Academy's administration will require a meeting with the students' family, attendance officer, and counselor during which an

Attendance Contract will be established aimed at ensuring attendance patterns improve.

- At 10 student absences, we will require a family meeting to discuss what steps can be done to ensure the student will be in school each day.

Tardies

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

Early Dismissals

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

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

Behavior Expectations

“ROCKS”

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

Be Respectful

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

Be On Task

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

Be Collaborative

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

Be Kind

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

Be Safe

Keep hands to yourself, Respect others space and property

These expectations, known collectively as “**ROCKS**,” forms the basis of our school-wide discipline system called PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support).

“**ROCKS**” focuses on helping each student learn to take responsibility for his or her behavior choices and expects each student to demonstrate appropriate school behaviors consistently. “**ROCKS**” aligns to the expectations of the Holyoke Public Schools Student Code of Conduct.

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

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

Dress Code Guidelines

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

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

- To foster a sense of school identity and community;
- To prepare students for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations and employers will have;
- To ensure that our students focus on learning instead of clothing.

Each student must wear the following item(s):

- Appropriate shoes/sneakers (No slides or flip flops)
- Appropriate Tops and bottoms (No tanks or t-shirts, pajamas)
- Appropriate outerwear (No hoodies, hats)
- Athletic shoes appropriate for the gymnasium and outdoor field during physical education class
- An identification card provided by Holyoke STEM Academy on a lanyard

Enforcement of Dress Code Guidelines

Students will not attend class unless they are dressed appropriately and will complete academic work in the Student Support office. Not following the dress code guidelines may result in disciplinary consequences.

Parents/guardians of students who are not appropriately will be asked to bring the proper attire to school.

Purchasing of STEM Gear:

Information TBD

Emergency Response

Crisis Plan

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

Grading

Grading Practices: Formal and Informal Assessments:

1. Grading practices are made up of Formal and Informal Assessments including, but not limited to; tests, quizzes, classwork, and homework.
2. Teachers will inform parents/guardians of their specific guidelines and practices.

Make Up Work:

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

Late Work:

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

Homework Expectations

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

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

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

Parent and Community Partnerships

Student-Led Conferences/Home Visits

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

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

School Site Council/Design Team

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

Visitor Guidelines

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

Technology

Cell Phones

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

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

Parent Volunteers

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

Miscellaneous Notes

Birthdays

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

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

Non-Essential Items

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

2020-2021 Holyoke STEM Academy Student - Family - School Compact

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

On behalf of scholar _____ we commit to ...

Student's Commitment

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

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian's Commitment

1. I will ensure that my child comes to school every day on time. I will do my best to schedule important appointments for out of school time.
2. I will send my child in proper dress code guidelines every day. If my child arrives outside of the school guidelines, I'll arrange for a family member to bring proper attire.
3. I agree to work as part of a team for the academic success & behavioral growth of my child. I will communicate in a respectful tone including to my own child as well as other adults and students. I will return phone calls, review & sign documentation sent home including progress reports & report cards.
4. I will attend student-led conferences and parent/guardian-teacher meetings about my child. I or a member of my family will participate in student showcase events across the year.
5. I will provide a place at home for my child to complete homework and study. I will help my child study for tests/quizzes as I am able, give them support when they need help and praise when they do well.
6. My child and I will discuss the Holyoke Student Code of Conduct. If my child's behavior requires it, I will come to school immediately. I commit to partnering with the school staff to address behavior concerns and will participate in any required hearings. If out of school suspension is mandated, I will remove my child from the building until my child has fulfilled the terms of his/her suspension and participate in the required re-entry meeting upon completion of suspension.
7. I understand that the school follows a strict bullying prevention and intervention plan and if my child violates that plan s/he will be subject to the consequences stated in that plan.
8. I will bring concerns about my child's experience at the Holyoke STEM Academy to the classroom teacher or a member of the leadership team in a timely fashion.

Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Holyoke STEM Academy's Commitment

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

School Representative's Signature: _____ Date:
