

# Professional Development Plan 2006-2007



**Dr. Eduardo B. Carballo**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

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# HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Professional development in the Holyoke Public Schools has been refocused in response to the school district being declared underperforming. The *Turn-Around-Plan* was created and the Holyoke Public Schools entered into a partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Education and America's Choice. Through the Turn-Around-Plan and the partnerships, a systemic professional development plan has been developed. This plan identifies the required professional development based on analyses of assessment data and the needs of ELL, SPED, and district initiatives. The goal of professional development in these areas is to ensure that the District and its schools will make AYP goals. The Holyoke Public Schools professional development activities prepare and support educators to help all students have equal opportunities to achieve high standards of learning and development.

Professional development opportunities reflect the Holyoke Public Schools' priorities which encompass curriculum frameworks learning standards and are structured in a manner which:

- focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;
- respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacities of teachers, principals, and others in the school community;
- reflects best available practices in teaching, learning, and leadership;
- enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- are connected to the District and the School Improvement Plans;
- are connected to the Holyoke Public Schools budgeted priorities;
- the content covered is aligned with the learning standards;
- are evaluated ultimately on the basis of impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement as demonstrated on student performance outcomes, standardized tests, writing prompts, etc.

The charge for Holyoke educators is to create a school environment where all students are able to meet the standards created by Education Reform, while contributing their strengths, multiple intelligences, distinct points of view, and special interests in order to support the development of a community of learners. The administration of the Holyoke Public Schools recognizes that ongoing high quality professional development is essential in order to support teachers and administrators as they take on the challenges set forth by education reform. They need models and contexts in which thoughtful investigation of teaching is possible, where alternative instructional strategies are proposed, discussed, tried, and assessed, and where such efforts are encouraged and supported. They need to meet regularly to consider pedagogical problems and issues that arise as they work together to craft learning environments where all students can succeed.

Professional Learning Communities have been established in our schools to guide teachers and administrative leaders on how best to serve the needs of students by focusing on standards based curriculum, student performance outcomes and data analysis to continuously assess how students are doing. Teachers working cohesively will inherently determine how best to deliver instruction which drives the professional development thereby improving student learning. Literacy Coaches and Math Coaches serve as further support to guide this process. For this reason, curriculum and professional development in Holyoke are intertwined, with each supportive of and responsive to the other. Professional development activities are not offered as a single event, but rather are embedded in the ongoing day-to-day work of educators during the school year.

The pattern of academic rigor and success in a safe and secure learning environment is well established in the Holyoke Public Schools. Every step has been taken to ensure that each and every classroom is a place where all students experience powerful learning.

## **I. VISION STATEMENT**

*The vision of the Holyoke Public Schools is that every student will graduate from high school ready for college success without remediation and for success as a worker and citizen in a global society.*

## **II. MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Holyoke Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities for all students to reach their potential in a safe, secure, healthy learning environment while valuing diversity and promoting responsible citizenship.*

## **III. DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT GOALS**

- ❖ To implement curriculum so that it meets the needs of a diverse student population;
- ❖ To expand the effective use of technology to enhance and support teaching, learning, and management functions;
- ❖ To provide adequate, well-maintained, healthy, and safe facilities for use by students, staff, and community;
- ❖ To provide the opportunity for all Holyoke Public Schools' students to become proficient in English;
- ❖ To assure that every position is staffed by highly qualified personnel who are motivated and focused on Holyoke students' academic success;
- ❖ To assure that schools are striving to meet their yearly progress indicators as required by the Massachusetts Department of Education;
- ❖ To develop and implement an internal and external communication process that is effective and continuous.

## **IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

- ❖ The professional development program will provide training to teachers and staff necessary for improved learning, enabling all students to attain proficiency and to graduate.
- ❖ The professional development program will foster research and standards based teaching, learning, and assessment strategies.
- ❖ The professional development program will create learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
- ❖ The professional development program will increase the ability of the district's leadership, teachers, and staff to prepare all students to meet the competencies of all required Massachusetts assessment tests and use data to inform decisions.
- ❖ The professional development program will support the leadership, teachers, and staff in analyzing assessments. This analysis will help to determine the areas in which students need increased academic support to be successful in meeting state standards.
- ❖ The professional development program will support instructional leaders.
- ❖ The professional development program will address the following priority areas: Educational Equity for Diverse Learners; Literacy and Numeracy Skills Development for All; Content Area Competency; Curriculum Frameworks Implementation and Alignment; Data Informed Decision Making; Safe and Drug Free Schools; Integration of Educational Technology across the Curriculum; and Increased Graduation Rates.

## V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES (2006-2007)

The Holyoke Public Schools professional development program has priority areas that must be addressed in order to engage students in a comprehensive learning experience providing a foundation from which the individuals' intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential can be fully realized. Those areas are:

- ❖ Educational Equity for Diverse Learners;
- ❖ Literacy and Numeracy Development for All;
- ❖ Content Area Competency;
- ❖ Curriculum Frameworks Implementation, Alignment, Integration of Student Performance Standards and Linking Content Standards to Student Performance Standards;
- ❖ Data Informed Decision Making;
- ❖ Safe and Drug Free Schools;
- ❖ Integration of Educational Technology across the Curriculum;
- ❖ Increased Graduation Rates.

These areas as well as the activities that follow are in line with The Massachusetts Department of Education Professional Development Plan which encourages districts and professional development providers to focus their staff development resources on expanding educators' knowledge of subject matter; increasing teachers' knowledge of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment; and analyzing and reducing the gap between goals for student achievement and students' actual progress. High quality professional development in the Holyoke Public Schools will be measured by data analysis, job-embedded, sustained, rigorous and cumulative, and directly linked to what teachers do in their classrooms.

The Holyoke Public Schools believes that the most effective way to improve the achievement of all its students is to improve the quality of teaching. No effort to improve the quality of education for all students, especially for the most disadvantaged, can succeed unless it changes the way in which teachers teach and students learn. Professional development around data has been analyzed by members of the Curriculum Department and Data Team, MIS Supervisor, and Data Coordinator who share this information with Principals, building based Professional Learning Communities and School Leadership Teams to assist in analyzing their school's data. This type of support provides the dialogue, self study, and analysis needed to expand academic growth. This process aides in the evaluation of staff development and ensures that quality programs and strategies are recognized and encouraged to grow. The district has made every effort to ensure adequate funding has been allocated for high quality professional development.

Effective professional development will make the connection between subject matter and pedagogy. It will expand teachers' repertoire of research-based instructional methods to teach content and help students master and apply new skills. Building based and systemic professional development will create opportunities for collaborative planning, development of classroom assessment skills, and connecting teachers to other professionals within and beyond their schools. Currently, school schedules allow for common planning time incorporated into the school day including Professional Learning Community cluster teams, curriculum map development, data analysis, grade level and vertical team meetings.

Professional Learning Communities in each of our schools will facilitate high quality professional development setting clear, high standards for the learning of all students and then focus on the changes in practice required to achieve student-learning goals. The District believes that all staff, including district and building administration as well as teachers, is accountable for student achievement. All school improvement plans have been reviewed to ascertain that they focus on student learning and specify effective methods for reaching these goals.

## **Priority 1: Educational Equity for Diverse Learners**

The Holyoke Public Schools craft learning environments to support English language acquisition (ELA), backgrounds and cultures of all students, diverse learning styles, and multiple forms of assessments including student projects and portfolios. Professional development is ongoing to support these learning environments as indicated in the following initiatives.

- **Data-Informed Instructional Decision Making** continues to be a District priority. Complying with the mandates of “No Child Left Behind” and providing the best possible education for all of our students requires the District to examine all data at its disposal to gain deeper insight into curriculum and instruction, standardized test scores, and classroom work. The District needs to examine larger-scale patterns to develop strategies for systemic improvement of its schools’ ability to serve all learners. The goal of this initiative is to increase the capacity of the system to collect and understand data. Members of the District Leadership Team and School Leadership Teams have met and will continue to meet regularly to discuss and analyze data. To further support analyzing data, the District received a *Data Warehousing Grant* from the Massachusetts Department of Education. Once established, this warehouse will provide district leaders, program directors, principals, guidance counselors, and teachers with quick and easy access to important and accurate student assessment data in order to more effectively deliver instruction to students and to evaluate the efficacy of established programs.
- **Differentiated Instruction** to meet the needs of all students is critical to improved achievement. True differentiation requires that all learners vary in their readiness, interests, and learning profiles. The Holyoke Public Schools will provide professional development in integrating differentiated instruction with backwards mapping (Understanding by Design) to help teachers set up classrooms where everyone works towards essential understandings and skills utilizing differentiated content, processes, and products. Teachers will be provided with tools for standards based unit planning model and participants will learn how specific learning disabilities impact performance.
- **English Language Acquisition** continues to be explicitly addressed in a variety of activities. The Holyoke Public Schools is dedicated to high quality education for all students. Over one-half of our students’ first language is not English and many children with varying degrees of English proficiency participate in all our classrooms. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; teachers with English Language Learners in their classrooms teach sheltered English immersion. The laws and regulations for teaching public school English Language Learners require content teachers to shelter instruction for their English Language Learners. To do so, teachers must complete professional development training in four requisite categories:

Category 1: Second Language Learning and Teaching

Category 2: Sheltering Content and Instruction

Category 3: Assessment of Speaking and Listening

Category 4: Teaching Reading and Writing to Limited English Proficient Students

It is our responsibility as professionals to provide the effective education our students deserve. Since a percentage of our student population does not speak English as its primary language, the district goal is to provide the opportunity for all staff to complete the required categories of training.

## Priority 2: Literacy and Numeracy Development for All

The primary goal of the Holyoke Public Schools is that all children graduate from high school ready for college success without remediation and for success as a worker and citizen in a global society. In an effort to prepare our students for graduation, the Holyoke Public Schools is in its second year of implementing the America's Choice School Design which is a K-12 comprehensive school reform model designed by the National Center of Education and the Economy. America's Choice focuses on raising academic achievement by providing rigorous standards-based curriculum and safety nets for all students. The goal of America's Choice is to make sure that all but the most severely handicapped students reach benchmarked standards of achievement in ELA and mathematics by the time they graduate. Teachers receive ongoing professional development in Readers and Writers Workshop and Math Workshop from America's Choice consultants in the form of modeling, coaching and technical assistance in addition to receiving support from the District's Literacy and Math Coaches and *professional learning communities*.

### Literacy Development

- **Readers & Writers Workshop** is the literacy program being used by the Holyoke Public Schools in grades K-8 with exceptions in grades K-3 Reading First and John Silber Schools (Kelly, Lawrence, White, and Morgan Schools). It is a balanced literacy approach which encompasses all modalities: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In the workshop model an explicit mini-lesson is taught and the students are given large blocks of time during the work period to practice the skills and strategies presented. The students work towards mastery of skills and demonstrate the applied mastery in their reading and writing.  
The curriculum maps for the *Readers & Writers Workshop* are generated based on the America's Choice author and genre studies, the New Performance Standards, and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The maps are written by district personnel and training in the maps is done by district personnel, America's Choice consultants, and building based literacy coaches. Building-based Literacy Coaches provide on-going professional development to teachers and assist with the daily implementation of the literacy program.
- **Ramp-Up Literacy** is a safety net program for middle and high school students two years behind grade level designed to identify and fill in their knowledge and bring them to grade level. *Ramp-Up Literacy* is a comprehensive system that trains teachers with best practices in reading acquisition, building schools' capacity to improve adolescent literacy in middle schools and high schools.
- **English Language Development (ELD)** classes have been developed for Beginning and Early Intermediate English language learners (ELLs) in grades 4-8. Typically, the ELD class is a modified Readers and Writers Workshop specifically designed for ELLs who do not have the necessary English proficiency for success in mainstream ELA classes with support. The ELD class is taught by a licensed ESL teacher and is based on the America's Choice Readers and Writers Workshop model, designed with the *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*, and institutes best practices for teaching beginning ELL students.
- **Reading First** is a comprehensive reading program to ensure that all children achieve grade level reading by the end of third grade. Reading First is in its third year of implementation at Kelly School, Lawrence School, and White School. The John Silber Program (Baystate Readers) is implemented at Morgan School. The Reading First program engages students in high quality classroom experiences starting in kindergarten, with safety nets and appropriate texts at students' instructional level, ongoing assessments and interventions and, the monitoring of student progress, school leadership and community involvement. Reading interventions are in place

from Grades K-3 in the areas of Language for Learning, Language for Thinking, Reading Mastery, English/ESL Support and Reading Fluency Coach a computer assisted intervention. Reading First professional development is required in the areas of administration and scoring of assessments, interventions, language and comprehension development, brain research, and differentiated instruction.

- **Read 180** is a systematic reading intervention program for older struggling readers. READ 180 is implemented at Kelly School, White School, Sullivan School, Donahue School, Holyoke Alternative Program, Latency Program, Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High School. The scientific research base of this program uses individual student's performance data to adjust and differentiate the path of student instruction, gives the teacher the power to track and analyze student performance at every step using software that continually monitors and adjusts the level of instruction. The program is built on an instructional model that fosters daily student-teacher interaction through whole-group, small-group and one-on-one instruction. A comprehensive in-service program as well as opportunities for ongoing professional development help foster and sustain best practices.

### **Numeracy Development**

- **Workshop Model** is a three-phase instructional workshop model used to deliver instruction in all math classrooms in grades K-8. In the initial phase, *Launch or Opening* – the teacher states the problem, introduces new ideas, clarifies definitions, reviews old concepts, and connects to past experiences without lowering the challenge of the task. During the second phase, *Explore or Work Time* – students work independently or in small groups to gather data, share ideas, look for patterns, and make conjectures. In the final phase, *Summary or Closing* – the students present and discuss their solutions as well as the strategies they used as the teacher guides them to reach the mathematical goal of the class and connect their new understanding to prior knowledge. Teachers have had opportunities for training on the workshop model made available to them through district initiatives, America's Choice On-Grade Level Training, CMP Training from Lesley University and Pearson Learning, and Math Investigations Training from Hampshire Educational Collaborative.
- **Curriculum Maps for K–8** are being designed to ensure that students are exposed to a rigorous curriculum in every school and every grade, and to have consistent instruction and assessment throughout the District. The District's expectation is for students to successfully meet the Massachusetts Mathematics Standards and to score at the proficient range on the MCAS test in mathematics. In order to facilitate this, teachers are required to follow the curriculum maps. The successful implementation of these maps requires teachers to work through the project and problems prior to planning their lessons. The Math Coaches and other district personnel were trained in curriculum mapping by America's Choice Consultants, became the principle architects of the documents, and are now providing professional development to the grade level teachers as the first of these maps are available.
- **Math Investigations in Number Sense, Data, and Space (MI)** is a student-centered, inquiry-based program based on how children best learn. It is designed to help all elementary children understand the fundamental ideas of numbers, arithmetic, geometry, data, measurement, and algebraic thinking. *MI* is designed to encourage students to reason mathematically, develop problem solving strategies, and represent their thinking using models and graphs, and communicate their thinking as outlined in the Principles and Standards for Mathematics from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Students explore the central topics in-depth through a series of investigations as they are actively engaged in working to solve larger mathematical problems. Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC) has been the primary provider for professional development in Math Investigations by working directly with

designated schools and offering workshops in the summer. The Math Support Specialist, District Coaches, and Consultants provide technical assistance to teachers.

- **Connected Math Project 2 (CMP2)** is a researched based program that is being used for middle school mathematics instruction. The overarching goal of CMP2 is that all students will be able to reason and communicate proficiently in mathematics. *CMP* helps students develop an understanding of important concepts, skills, procedures, and ways of thinking and reasoning in number sense, measurement, geometry, algebra, probability and statistics. The concepts are embedded in engaging problems students explore individually, in a small group, or with a whole class. The problems presented over time give students practice with important concepts, related skills, and algorithms. A three-phased workshop model that supports problem centered instruction is used to deliver the curriculum in these classes. Teachers have had opportunities for training in *CMP2* made available to them through District initiatives, America's Choice On-Grade Level Training, and CMP Training from Lesley University and Pearson Learning.
- **RAMP-UP Math & Algebra** for grades 6 & 9 is designed to help those students who are two grade levels behind in mathematics. It is a research based approach that enables students to catch up with their peers. Its focus is on the mathematics that student must understand in order to succeed in college and in the workplace. Ramp-Up uses the math workshop model to provide students with a higher level of concentration in mathematics and algebra. Students have time to read, discuss, and explore strategies and answers. America's Choice Math Consultants provide professional development during the summer and throughout the school year and in-class technical assistance to teachers assigned to Ramp-Up classes.
- **Navigator** is an intervention program that focuses on student mastery of critical concepts, skills, and problem solving. It targets specific gaps and misconceptions about key concepts students need to master to be successful in advanced mathematics. Navigator quickly builds up students' knowledge and essential skills with more time and targeted instruction. Pre-and post-tests and interim checkpoints enable teachers to target instruction to students' individual profiles and to prepare them for success. Guidance and support for teachers is available by the Districts Math Coaches who have received training on Navigator from America's Choice Consultants.
- **Larson Math** is a software tutorial and assessment program that provides coverage of math standards. Larson Math is used as a *safety net* to reinforce, extend and assess students' learning. It guides students as they master and apply math skills and problem solving techniques. There are three elements of instruction of the program: Skill component, where students have the opportunity to practice what they have learned; Problem-solving component, where students connect their learning to real world situations; and Writing component, where students answer open-ended questions.
- **Mathematics and Science Partnership Project** is a partnership with Lesley University, University of Massachusetts – Boston, Mass Insight Educational Foundation and the Massachusetts Department of Education. The focus of the course is to improve teacher mathematics content knowledge, and is designed to satisfy the MA requirements for professional licensure and/or HOUSSE plans in elementary and middle school mathematics. Over three years, each teacher-participant will complete a nine-course program of study, which can lead to an Advanced Professional Certificate or Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction, with a Specialization in Elementary of Middle School mathematics. All courses will emphasize strong mathematics content, and include historical notes related to the mathematical ideas. Additionally, participants will engage in examining student work as they strive towards understanding how such evidence can inform instructional decisions. Thirty Holyoke Public School teachers are enrolled in this course.

### **Priority 3: Content Area Competency Curriculum Frameworks**

The Holyoke Public Schools offers *Professional Development Program of Activities, Recertification Program* to its educators in content specific areas aimed not only to improve the depth of understanding in the content area, but also to ensure that the necessary professional development meet the highly qualified standards. In addition, educators are in the process of reviewing the Sciences and Social Studies Frameworks and Standards in preparation for professional development in curriculum alignment and development of curriculum maps based on student performance, state standards, and state students performance standards.

- **Science and Technology/Engineering**

- The Holyoke Public Schools was awarded a two year grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) from 2006 through 2008. Fifth grade science teachers from Morgan School, White School, Kelly School, Donahue School, and Sullivan School are provided four consecutive days of in-class professional development linking science with the arts. The Enchanted Circle Theater and the Holyoke Public Schools' Academic Science Coordinator offer a combination of scientific observations, hands-on experimentation, poetry, movement and dramatic techniques supporting different learning styles will be used to model new pedagogy and content with the teachers as active partners and learners.
- The Holyoke Public Schools is partnered with PV STEMNET Pipeline Middle School Science, Technology/Engineering and Mathematics Partnership and Title IIB Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership Program (MMSP) in an effort to offer high quality professional development to middle school teachers and high school teachers.
- The Holyoke Public Schools continues to be a partner of the PV STEMNET Pipeline Middle School Science, Technology/Engineering and the Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership (MMSP). In the summer of 2007, PV STEMNET will offer a new series of MMSP and PV STEMNET courses/programs in mathematics and science for elementary and middle school educators. Participating teachers are completing the original three year MMSP (2004 – 2007) course offerings. These course offerings support and prepare teachers to achieve highly-qualified status and to take the MTEL.

- **History and Social Sciences**

- The Holyoke Public Schools collaborates with Historic Deerfield and Hampshire Education Collaborative to inform and encourage its educators to participate in the workshops, seminars and courses offered in American History during the school year and summer.
- Teachers will continue to participate in summer institutes offered through the Donahue Institute at UMASS focusing on U.S. History. In addition, teachers will be offered professional development opportunities via WGBY and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

- **Health**

- The Holyoke Public Schools Health Curriculum has been aligned to the Comprehensive Health Frameworks, Strands, and Standards. The Holyoke Public Schools continues to use the Michigan Model materials to supplement the current Second Step (Violence Prevention Program, Grades K-6) health program and materials directly related to preventative drug/tobacco/alcohol activities offered in Grades 7-12. Physical Education Teachers and Health Teachers continue to receive professional development in the areas of substance abuse prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, healthy nutrition and fitness, community based resources for students and their families, etc. Safe and Drug Free Schools aide in supporting health and physical education staff in carrying out the mission of wellness and safety.

**Priority 4: Curriculum Frameworks Implementation, Alignment, Integration of Student Performance Standards and Linking Content Standards to Student Performance Standards**

The Holyoke Public Schools focuses on achievement for all students while reflecting the principles of the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning and Curriculum Frameworks. The curriculum development process of creating alignments, curriculum maps, evidence of students' work and students' performance standards fosters professional development that supports the district in moving forward in integration of all academic programs in a manner that stresses high expectations and high achievement for all students.

- As part of the national accreditation process from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) the Holyoke Public Schools and Westfield State College offers "Implementing a Standards Based Early Childhood Model" course to early childhood staff, both PreK and Kindergarten as part of the self study process. Creating High Quality Early Childhood Models is designed to explore how the growth and development of young children is impacted by developmentally appropriate curriculum. Emphasis is placed on using NAEYC criteria as a vehicle to inform and improve instructional practice. Curriculum and assessment is linked to national and state standards as well as NAEYC recommendations.

Kindergarten curriculum committees continue to develop and refine Literacy and Numeracy curriculum maps using the workshop model in The First Thirty Days, Personal Narrative, Author Study and Math Investigations creating a forum for ongoing professional development within and outside of the committee

- One of the District's primary initiatives with its turn-around partner, America's Choice, was to continue its focus on developing and revising Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Maps as discussed in Priority 2 working with curriculum coordinators, district literacy and math coaches, and technical assistance from America's Choice consultants. Student work and performance expectations have been built into the curriculum maps and aligned to state standards. The curriculum maps were disseminated to principals and school leadership teams for feedback and revision. Once revisions were made, maps were rolled out to classroom teachers who begin implementing the curriculum with assistance from district coaches, curriculum coordinators and America's Choice consultants. The Holyoke Public Schools will continue to provide professional development and technical assistance around Literacy and Numeracy initiatives.
- Science and Social Studies curriculum will be aligned to the state standards and curriculum maps will be developed as part of one of the many District initiatives to have all curricula aligned and maps in place for effective implementation.

### **Priority 5: Data Informed Decision Making**

The Holyoke Public Schools uses an array of assessments to determine areas in need of instructional improvement. Research has determined that there are three types of assessment data which provide the best basis for making important decisions about student learning – classroom, district, and state. Each serves a unique purpose individually, and collectively, they allow the best decisions to be made on behalf of students. Professional development is ongoing as The Curriculum Teams, District Data Coordinator, Management Information Supervisor, and the Data Team analyze and disseminate the following data: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), GRADE, DIBELS, MEPA, MCAS, QRI4, SRI, and district writing prompts.

- Classroom assessment, while allowing the opportunity to evaluate the progress of students, is difficult to aggregate. Teachers at the same grade level are likely to use different types of assessments, making it difficult to make decisions about a grade level or about a specific school. However, the largest amount of information about a student is gathered from classroom observation and assessment. Student work and performance expectations have been built into the curriculum maps and aligned with state standards.
- Continuous district assessment, such as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), fills the data gap between classroom assessment and state assessment. The information gathered from these assessments can be aggregated to make decisions about resource allocations, professional development planning, program analysis, and to gain a better understanding of the probability of students passing the state's high stakes exam. This type of formative assessment provides a key indicator which summative assessment is unable to provide – growth. When growth information is used, a district can see which programs are making a difference for students and can focus efforts on those programs which are working.
- High-stakes state exams (MCAS) determine whether students have mastered grade level standards. For students who are not meeting standards based on their test score, state tests provide little information about the individual student and are not instructionally informative. State tests do offer a view of how all students are doing throughout the district in relation to state standards, and they provide scores that make comparisons easy and may help guide district decisions. Members of the District leadership and school leadership meet regularly to discuss and analyze data.
- All of the schools in the district analyze assessment results in order to evaluate curriculum, improve instruction and enhance student academic achievement. Principals, along with their building based leadership teams, use the results of assessments to establish annual goals for improvement by their students. Classroom teachers utilize assessment results, not only to evaluate their instruction, but to determine what concepts need to be reinforced and to utilize flexible grouping practices in order to more effectively address and target identified student academic needs. This kind of the professional development is ongoing and strongly supported by the District.

### **Priority 6: Safe and Drug Free Schools**

The Holyoke Public Schools Curriculum Department is responsible for overseeing the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. In addition to our regulatory role in monitoring for federal compliance, our greater role is to provide technical assistance, support, professional development, curriculum and resources for individual building and district needs to maintain healthy students and safe schools. Technical assistance via the various methods of professional development can be provided via e-mail, phone, on site consultation/presentation and can be requested by contacting our office for any relevant issue.

Data compiled for the 2006-2007 Safe and Drug Free grant indicated that there has been a significant increase in violent behavior at all grades and at all levels. These incidents include fighting, bullying, and gang related negative activities. To address these trends, the District has been and will continue to offer workshops to all staff that are related to providing safe schools and learning environments, anger management, and anti-gang initiatives. The district will offer training to all health staff to explore new supplemental programs that are more aligned with violence prevention and safety issues so that Michigan Model activities and new program activities can be combined.

### **Priority 7: Integration of Educational Technology across the Curriculum**

The Holyoke Public Schools uses technology to deliver instruction, aide in research, assess students' works, increase educator productivity and manage student information. Library Media Specialists support educators in assisting them how to access subscription online databases pertaining to academic research in a manner that is accurate, complete and efficient. Instructional Technology Specialists support educators by using the School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart as the guiding tool to improve and learn new uses of technology. Library Media Specialists and Instructional Technology Specialists provide ongoing professional development both formally and informally to meet the needs as defined by the curriculum. Technology tools available to educators to help drive instruction and assess student learning are computers, Tablet PCs, SmartBoards, LCD projectors and multimedia carts, projection systems, etc.

Channel 12 is the District's education channel and delivers Annenberg CPB, NASA Science Files and NASA Connect. Additionally, programming about our schools and curriculum is kept current to inform and educate the community at large.

Our students are the benefactors of this aggressive professional development plan. Educators in the Holyoke Public Schools are working diligently to ensure that each and every student is at the center of high quality instruction resulting in student retention, every school making Adequate Yearly Progress, and all students graduating in 2014 in the proficient/advanced category. This is and will continue to be the result of systemic and building based professional development delivered in a manner which is consistent throughout the District yet unique to each school. Experts in Literacy and Numeracy provide the technical assistance, high quality, and research based professional development needed to assist the District to graduate students who are ready for college success without remediation and for success as a worker and citizen in a global society.