



Holyoke Public Schools Review

Executive Order 393

Education Management Accountability Board Report
December 2000

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
III. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND FINDINGS	9
1. OVERVIEW	9
2. ENROLLMENT	11
3. SCHOOL BUDGET PROCESS	15
4. TOTAL SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES	16
5. COMPLIANCE WITH SPENDING REQUIREMENTS	19
6. STAFFING – FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) TRENDS	22
7. TEACHER COMPENSATION	24
8. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION	28
9. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICE EXPENDITURES	31
10. ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING	33
11. REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES	33
12. MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL PRACTICES	33
13. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	38
14. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS	40
15. STUDENT LEARNING TIME	41
16. COURSE LOAD AND CLASS SIZES	42
17. TECHNOLOGY	43
18. MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	45
19. HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITATION	46
20. TEST SCORES	47
21. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	53
22. GRADE 3 TRANSIENCY	55
23. DROPOUT AND TRUANCY	56
IV. EMPLOYEE SURVEY	57
V. SUPERINTENDENT’S STATEMENT - EDUCATION REFORM	59
VI. APPENDIX	60

I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993 has three major goals: to increase student achievement; to achieve adequate funding for all local and regional school districts over a seven-year period; and to bring equity to local taxation efforts based on a community's ability to pay. In February 1997, the Governor issued Executive Order 393 to evaluate the education reform program that was nearing the end of its fourth year. In FY99, Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Ch. 70 state aid for education reached \$2.6 billion. With an investment of this magnitude in the Commonwealth's schools, it is critical to "review, investigate and report on the expenditures of funds by school districts, including regional school districts, consistent with the goals of improving student achievement." To that end, Executive Order 393 established the Education Management Accountability Board (EMAB).

The Secretary of Administration and Finance, serving as chief of staff to the EMAB, selected a team of auditors from the Department of Revenue's (DOR) Division of Local Services (DLS) to conduct the school district reviews. DOR's Director of Accounts is the chief investigator with authority to examine municipal and school department accounts and transactions pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, §§45 and 46A. The reviews are conducted in consultation with the State Auditor and the Commissioner of Education.

The audit team began the review of Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) in March 2000, and completed it in July 2000. As part of this review, the audit team conducted a confidential survey of employees of the school district and included the results in this report. School officials cooperated fully with the audit team.

The Executive Summary includes some of the more significant observations and findings of the review of HPS's operations. When possible, the audit team has identified and presented best practices, which may be adapted by other school districts. The report discusses all results, best practices and deficiencies, and recommendations in greater detail in the "General Conditions and Findings" section.

II. Executive Summary

HPS has made limited progress in achieving some key education reform goals. The district has not fully taking advantage of some of primary management benefits provided by education reform. The district does not have a formal strategic plan in place. Administrator's salary increases are minimally based on the evaluation process. The district has had difficulty in attracting certified and capable teachers especially in the areas of special education and bilingual education. This is of particular importance in Holyoke because of the large majority of Latino students and importance of HPS' transitional bilingual education program (26 percent of students in FY99).

HPS has aligned the district curriculum to the state frameworks. The importance of reading and writing skills has been stressed in recent years. The district has invested heavily in new textbooks, technology and supply materials to support the teaching efforts in the new curriculum. Test scores remain below state averages although encouraging improvements have been shown in fourth grade MCAS scores. However, the district has not developed an official plan for dealing with 10th grade students who fail the MCAS exam.

The major obstacles impeding educational success in Holyoke are the combination of the city being a low income, urban community with an extremely high non-English speaking and transient population. One of HPS' biggest challenges is educating students who come from very diverse backgrounds often with limited understanding of their primary language. This is further complicated by high rate of transience in the community. The educational process is often interrupted and restarted as students move out of the district and return several times during their educational years.

In FY99, HPS had a student population of 7,614 students and had \$71.6 million in total district expenditures. Since FY94, HPS has been below total foundation budget in each year, and no key area spending target was met in any year except for the books and equipment target, which was met in all years. The foundation budget is a target level of spending designed to ensure a quality level of education in each school district. DOE determines a foundation budget by using several factors and by including an annual adjustment for inflation. All school districts are expected to meet their total foundation budget by FY00. The district has exceeded net school spending in each year. Net school spending is the amount a school district must spend for the support of public education including certain expenditures made by the municipality on behalf of the local school district. It does not include expenditures for certain classes of long-term debt service, school lunches, community services, fixed assets and student transportation. It also does not include tuition revenue. HPS' actual local contribution to net school spending remained the same between FY94 and FY99, while the state contribution increased by \$23.4 million. Per pupil spending for day programs increased by 29.8 percent as enrollment decreased by less than 1 percent. During this time, HPS per pupil spending for day programs increased from 101 percent of the state average to 126 percent.

Some progress has also been made in other areas. School improvement plans do address certain components as required by law. The district's professional development plan is revised and updated annually. Course selections are varied and well attended.

OVERVIEW [Section 1]

- Holyoke's 1998 population was 40,964, down 6.3 percent from 1990, due to a reduction in multi-family housing units.
- The city of Holyoke has operated under a Federal consent decree since 1980. This decree mandated Holyoke to desegregate the schools in an effort to provide an equal educational opportunity for minority students.
- Student safety is a concern in the HPS. HPS uses several strategies to ensure the safety of its students, such as identification badges for all high school and middle school students, locked entrances with intercoms and doorbells, and a program conducted with the local police department to determine whether the schools are complying with entry procedures.

ENROLLMENT [Section 2]

- HPS' total enrollment percentage increase between FY90 and FY98 was 2.4 percent and was well below the state average for that time period.
- HPS' foundation enrollment increase for FY93 to FY98 was 0.43 percent, categorizing it as a low growth community.
- In verifying the accuracy of headcount data shown in the October 1, 1999 individual school reports to the October 1, 1999 district foundation enrollment report, the audit team noted discrepancies between the two reports, possibly attributed to the timing of the preparation of each report.
- The FY99 foundation enrollment calculation contains two errors.

SCHOOL BUDGET PROCESS [Section 3]

- The Assistant to the Superintendent prepares the budget for presentation to the finance committee of the school committee. Once approved by the finance committee a public hearing is held and the school committee as a whole vote the budget final.
- Except in the area of books and equipment, HPS does not appear to consider the foundation budget for certain key areas (see section 5). The DOE has recently indicated that they will enforce the law requiring school districts that do not spend at foundation for these areas to explain their reasons for not doing so. Penalties may be levied against school districts.

TOTAL SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES [Section 4]

- Total school district expenditures for FY99 were \$71.6 million, or 53.8 percent higher than in FY93.
- HPS' per pupil spending as a percentage of the state average has been increasing since FY94. In FY99 out of 328 districts reported by DOE, HPS' per pupil spending for total day programs was 56th statewide.

COMPLIANCE WITH SPENDING REQUIREMENTS [Section 5]

- HPS has been below foundation budget since FY94. Budgeted FY00 net school spending is 120 percent of the FY00 foundation budget.
- Expenditures did not reach foundation budget for any of the key areas, except books and equipment, which reached foundation in FY95 to FY99.
- HPS exceeded or met the net school spending requirement in every fiscal year from FY94 to FY99.
- Holyoke's local contribution to actual net school spending remained the same while state aid increased by \$23.4 million. During the same time period, the local share decreased to 6 percent of actual net school spending while state aid increased to 94 percent.

STAFFING – FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) TRENDS [Section 6]

- Between FY93 and FY99, the total number of FTE teachers increased by 59 or 9.5 percent, from 621 to 680. During this same time, the all students/all FTE teacher ratio decreased from 11.8:1 to 11.2:1. This ratio is lower than the FY99 state average of 13.8:1. HPS' FY99 all student/all non-SPED, ESL and Bilingual teacher ratio of 16.5:1 is also below the state average of 17.7:1.

TEACHER COMPENSATION [Section 7]

- Between FY93 and FY99, expenditures for salaries rose \$16.8 million or 71.7 percent. Total teaching salaries rose 8.3 million or 45.9 percent, reflecting additional spending for new staff as well as pay raises in teachers' contracts. Union contracted annual raises plus step increases for teachers have increased by 56 percent from 1993 to 1999. The district FY98 average teacher salary as reported to DOE of \$40,165 was \$3,886 or 9.7 percent lower than the state average of \$44,051.
- HPS teachers worked the 1999/2000 school year without a contract. A new collective bargaining agreement between the teachers union and the city has been agreed upon.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION [Section 8]

- HPS SPED participation rate was 20.5 percent in FY99.
- HPS TBE enrollment represented 26 percent of the total enrollment in FY99, while the mainstreamed percentage was 10.7 percent in FY99. HPS analyzed the four-year

movement of TBE students who were in grades 4, 6, and 9 and found averages of 29.6 percent being mainstreamed, 27.6 percent still enrolled in the TBE program and 38 percent withdrawn from HPS.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICE EXPENDITURES [Section 9]

- Between FY93 and FY99, expenditures for textbooks and other instructional equipment increased \$3.6 million or 646 percent. Expenditures for textbooks alone rose \$1.1 million or 1,526 percent during this same time. HPS has used these increases in spending to completely realign the district textbooks and other instructional supplies with the new curriculum.

ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING [Section 10]

- The audit team was satisfied that the expenditure reports were generally accurate.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES [Section 11]

- The audit team was satisfied that proper controls exist over procurement and expenditure of funds.

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL PRACTICES [Section 12]

- Currently, HPS has no formal strategic plan.
- Poor record keeping concerning administrative contracts was evident. Some administrative contracts were not renewed in a timely fashion.
- Many principal vacancies have been filled for more than one year with interim principals.
- Administrators' salaries are enhanced by both a standard percentage increase and a merit based incentive package based on the Baldrich Scale. The combination of these two elements involves a very comprehensive review process that is not fully reflected in evaluation instrument.
- Principals do not have formal yearly goals set for them.
- Fifteen of the 27 teachers removed since education reform began were removed due to a lack of proper teacher certification.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT [Section 13]

- The district's professional development plan is current and comprehensive, with a wide variety of course offerings, which are well attended.
- HPS did not meet minimum legal spending requirements for FY97 and FY98. HPS administration indicates that spending for FY98 exceeded the amount noted on the EOY report, and that a new EOY report was filed with the DOE. The DOE has no record of a revision in this area.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS [Section 14]

- School improvement plans are consistent in format among the HPS schools. They contain all of the elements required by law. They incorporate the district-wide goals with individualized objectives for the accomplishment of those goals. Plans also include the person responsible for the objective and timeframe for completion. Plans are updated annually, with ongoing goals carried forward.

STUDENT LEARNING TIME [Section 15]

- HPS met DOE's time requirement of 990 hours per year for high schools, and 900 hours per year for middle and elementary schools.

COURSE LOAD AND CLASS SIZE [Section 16]

- The Holyoke School Committee has no formal policy for class sizes.
- Core class sizes at Holyoke High School range from 18.6 to 21.5. Elementary class sizes range from 18.5 to 22.6.

TECHNOLOGY [Section 17]

- Overall technology spending has exceeded the technology plan goals.
- The DOE approved HPS' five-year technology plan in August of 1997. As of June 1, 2000 HPS has 1,857 computers of which 1,612 are instructional computers. HPS averages 4.7 students per computer.

MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT [Section 18]

- A school facilities master plan was prepared in April 1998. Currently, HPS is reviewing the three options presented in the plan to alleviate prospective overcrowding at the middle school level.
- At the Maurice A. Donohue School, lack of storage space is a problem. Excess supplies were being stored in the hallways in great quantities. At the John J. Lynch Middle School, second floor ceiling tiles were in extremely poor condition and the boys' bathroom was in need of modernization and repair.

HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITATION [Section 19]

- Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High Schools are both accredited.

TEST SCORES [Section 20]

- HPS test scores are below the state average. MCAS scores for 1999 and 2000 improved for grade 4, but all scores were still below the state average.
- HPS is in the process of implementing a retention policy for third grade and a transition policy for eighth grade. Students identified as scoring lower than the 25th percentile rank on the TerraNova or Supera test will be affected by these new policies.
- MEAP reading scores show a significant improvement from 1992 to 1996 with an increase of 70 points.
- There is no remediation plan for 10th grade students who fail the MCAS exam.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT [Section 21]

- HPS curriculum is not completely aligned with the state frameworks. The areas of math, science and language arts were aligned between FY97 and FY99. The areas of social studies, world language, arts, health, and computer literacy are in progress. This late implementation of the frameworks may be one factor contributing to the negligible improvement in MCAS scores to date.

GRADE THREE TRANSIENCY [Section 22]

- HPS has an unstable population with a 21.3 percent transiency rate as measured by the 1999 3rd grade Iowa reading test.
- HPS has students who are moving in and out of the district several times during the school year.

DROPOUT AND TRUANCY [Section 23]

- HPS dropout rate for FY97 was 9.8 percent, significantly higher than the state average of 3.4 percent.

SURVEY RESULTS

- Approximately 850 questionnaires were delivered to school staff and 291 responses were received and tabulated. This is a response rate of 34 percent.

Audit Recommendations

1. The district should implement procedures to ensure that instructions for the Individual School Report and the Foundation Enrollment form are adhered to annually. This should include the dating of the data used to prepare the reports. [page 14]
2. The district has implemented a process to verify foundation enrollment reports sent to the DOE. The audit team strongly encourages the use of this verification process. [page 14]

3. In the future HPS should file a report with the Commissioner of Education's office as required by law stating its reasons for not meeting the foundation budget target levels in any of the key areas noted in the chart above. [page 21]
4. The audit team suggests that HPS develop a district policy for gathering and recording data to ensure that continuity exists on a yearly basis regardless of who completes the report for the district. [page 24]
5. The audit team suggests that the district implement procedures to ensure that detailed supporting documentation be maintained. [page 29]
6. HPS needs to improve its record keeping in regards to contractual documentation. All terms of employment should be documented and signed. [page 38]
7. Sufficient funds should be budgeted and spent on professional development to meet DOE minimum spending requirements. [page 39]
8. School improvement plans should be submitted to the school committee for approval in a more timely manner. [page 41]
9. The audit team recommends that HPS should develop a process for remediation of 10th grade students who have failed the MCAS exam. [page 50]

Auditee's Response

The audit team held an exit conference with the Superintendent and his staff on August 31, 2000. The team invited HPS to suggest specific technical corrections and make a formal written response to the report by September 8, 2000.

Review Scope

In preparation for the school district reviews, the audit team held meetings with officials from DOE, the State Auditor's Office and other statewide organizations and read published reports on educational and financial issues to prepare for the school district reviews.

The audit team met with the private audit firm that conducts financial audits of the city. DOE provided data including the EOY reports, foundation budgets, and statewide comparative data. The DOR's Division of Local Services Municipal Data Bank provided demographic information, community profiles and overall state aid data. While on site, the audit team interviewed officials including, but not limited to the school committee chairman, the Superintendent, the Business Manager, and all principals. Documents reviewed included vendor and personnel contracts, invoices, payroll data, statistics on students and teachers as well as test results and reports submitted to DOE.

In keeping with the goals set out by the EMAB, the school district review was designed to determine whether or not basic financial goals related to education reform have been met. The audit team gathered data related to performance such as test scores, student to teacher ratios and class sizes to show results and operational trends. However, this report does not intend to present a definitive opinion regarding the quality of education in HPS, or its successes or failures in meeting particular education reform goals. Rather, it

is intended to present a relevant summary of data to the EMAB for evaluation and comparison purposes.

The focus of this review was on operational issues. It did not encompass all of the tests that are normally part of a year-end financial audit such as: review of internal controls; cash reconciliation of accounts; testing compliance with purchasing and expenditure laws and regulations; and generally accepted accounting principles. The audit team tested financial transactions on a limited basis only. The audit team also excluded federal grants, state grants, except for Equal Education Opportunity (EEO) and Per Pupil Education Aid, revolving accounts and student activity accounts. The audit team did not test statistical data relating to enrollment, test scores and other measures of achievement. This report is intended for the information and use of EMAB and HPS. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

III. General Conditions and Findings

1. Overview

Holyoke is classified as an urbanized center. It has a 1998 population of 40,964, down 1.2 percent from 1996 and down 6.3 percent from 1990, due to a reduction in multi-family housing units. The city of Holyoke is located 90 miles west of Boston and 34 miles north of Hartford. Westfield, Southampton and Easthampton border Holyoke. The Chicopee River separates it from South Hadley and Chicopee.

Historically, Holyoke was known for its textile manufacturing and, most importantly, for its paper manufacturing. Holyoke is known as “the Paper City,” and at one time the city had twenty-five operating paper mills. From 1885 to 1920 due to the growth of industry in Holyoke, immigrants came to the city in great numbers. The city grew from a population of 4,600 to over 60,000 causing crowded housing conditions. The development of a canal system allowed for the manufacture of other items as well, such as steam pumps, blank books, silk items, bicycles and trolleys. Holyoke is also known as the birthplace of volleyball.

Today, the largest private employers in Holyoke are the Holyoke Mall at Ingleside, employing about 3,000 people, and the Holyoke Hospital, employing about 1,000 people. Holyoke has experienced a steadily declining unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in 1991 was 12.4 percent and it declined to 4.8 percent in 1999. This is still above the State rate of 3.2 percent.

A mayor and a fifteen-member city council govern the city of Holyoke. The mayor serves as the ex-officio chairman of the school committee. The Superintendent was appointed interim Superintendent in May 1992 and Superintendent in July 1993. Previously he was the Director of Special Education for the district. The Assistant to the Superintendent for Financial Management and Operations was appointed in October 1994. As of the audit

date, HPS consists of one early childhood center, one elementary school (grades K-2), seven elementary schools (grades K-5), three middle schools (grades 6-8), an alternative middle school for behavioral concerns (grades 6-9), one high school (grades 9-12), and one vocational high school (grades 8-12).

Charts 1-1 and 1-2 show some key economic and demographic statistics for Holyoke and HPS.

Chart 1-1

**City of Holyoke
Economic Data**

1998 Population	40,964	FY99 Tax Levy	\$28,616,298
1989 Per Capita Income	\$11,088	FY99 Levy Limit	\$31,830,313
FY99 Residential Tax Rate	\$15.86	FY99 Levy Ceiling	\$31,830,313
FY99 Average Single Family Tax	\$1,495	FY99 State Aid	\$71,518,746
FY99 Avg. Assessed Value		FY99 State Aid as a	
Per Single Family	\$94,269	Percent of Revenue	62.8%
1996 Average Unemployment Rate	6.4%	7/1/99 Free Cash	\$5,568,355

Note: Data provided by DI S.

Chart 1-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
Demographic Data 1998/99**

1999	HPS	State	1998	HPS	State
<u>Race/Ethnicity:</u>					
White	26.9%	77.1%	% Attending Private School	12.8%	10.0%
Minority	73.1%	23.0%	High School Drop-Out Rate	6.0%	3.4%
Limited English Proficiency	26.0%	4.7%	<u>Plan of Graduates:</u>		
Special Education	17.7%	16.6%	4 Year College	27.2%	53.2%
Eligible for Free/Reduced			2 Year College	26.5%	18.6%
Priced Lunch	72.4%	25.8%	Work	29.0%	16.2%

Note: Data provided by DOE.

The city of Holyoke has operated under a Federal consent decree since 1980. This decree mandated Holyoke to desegregate the schools in an effort to provide an equal educational opportunity for minority students. This resulted in the elimination of neighborhood schools. Upon enrolling a child in school, parents are asked to provide a list of their three top choices of schools in the district. Every effort is made to accommodate their top choice. Once placed, the student is guaranteed enrollment in that school until academic completion at that school. The Superintendent indicates that this ruling makes managing enrollment particularly difficult, because since 1980, the racial minority (Latinos) has become the majority.

As with most urban communities, student safety is a major concern. HPS takes many steps to ensure a safe and secure school environment. The audit team noted that all schools are locked and most have security cameras at points of entry. All middle and high school students and faculty are required to wear school identification badges. Visitors are required to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass at the main office. Weekly locker searches are done randomly at all middle and high schools. Additionally, periodic tests are conducted in conjunction with the Holyoke police department (HPD). During these exercises plainclothed members of the HPD attempt to gain access into the school without being detained. The results of these exercises are communicated to the Superintendent for evaluation of individual school security.

2. Enrollment

Several measures may be used to report actual student enrollment. This audit uses actual and projected student headcount and also foundation enrollment, both as of October 1. Projected enrollment is reviewed by the audit team to determine reasonableness in methodology and use in school construction or in academic decision making. HPS' projected student enrollments are calculated by the Parent Information Center.

Headcount: Actual and Projected

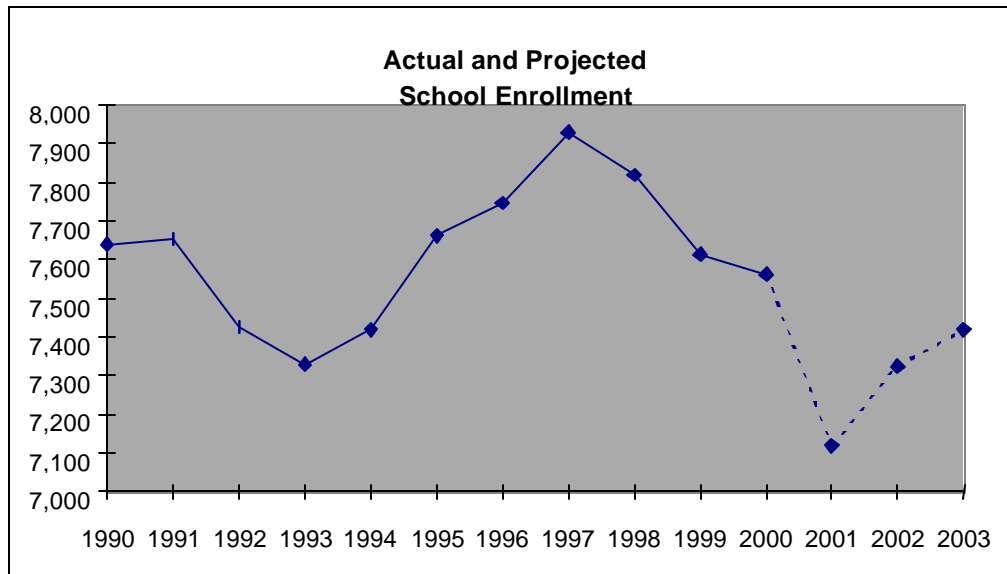
Headcount is based upon students enrolled at each school as annually reported to DOE on the Individual School Reports.

Chart 2-1 illustrates HPS' actual and projected student enrollment trend from October 1, 1989 to October 1, 2002.

Wide fluctuations in enrollment are due to several factors combined. The transience of the population, demolition of buildings, and movement of the population to other surrounding communities all contribute to variations in the student population.

Chart 2-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Actual and Projected Student Enrollment
School Years 1989/90 to 2002/03**



Note: Enrollment as of October 1st. Years are in fiscal years. Data obtained from HPS.

A solid line represents actual enrollment; a dotted line represents projected enrollment.

Chart 2-2 illustrates HPS' actual and projected student enrollment as well as percentage distribution by grade level for selected school years from October 1, 1989 to October 1, 2002. The chart indicates:

- HPS' total enrollment percentage increase between FY90 and FY98 was well below the state average.
- HPS projects a 1.9 percent overall decrease from FY00 to FY03. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projects that the Massachusetts K-12 enrollment will increase by three percent from FY99 to FY04, and then peak and remain fairly stable. DOE's K-12 enrollment projections agree with NCES's pattern.
- HPS projects high school enrollment to increase through FY03. DOE's high school enrollment projections agree with this pattern.

Chart 2-2

Holyoke Public Schools**Actual/Projected Student Enrollment and Percentage Distribution**

School Year	Elementary School				Middle School		High School		Tuitioned Out		Total Enrollment	
	Pre K/K	%	1 - 5	%	6 - 8	%	9 - 12	%	Ungr	%	K - 12	%
89-90	726	9.5%	3,189	41.7%	1,572	20.6%	1,764	23.1%	389	5.1%	7,640	100%
91-92	654	8.8%	3,053	41.1%	1,605	21.6%	1,777	23.9%	336	4.5%	7,425	100%
92-93	770	10.5%	2,899	39.5%	1,615	22.0%	1,842	25.1%	204	2.8%	7,330	100%
94-95	788	10.3%	3,093	40.4%	1,715	22.4%	1,878	24.5%	190	2.5%	7,664	100%
96-97	818	10.3%	3,156	39.8%	1,687	21.3%	2,044	25.8%	225	2.8%	7,930	100%
98-99	654	8.6%	3,078	40.4%	1,725	22.7%	2,048	26.9%	109	1.4%	7,614	100%
99-00	761	10.1%	2,916	38.6%	1,713	22.7%	2,066	27.3%	106	1.4%	7,562	100%
00-01	550	7.7%	2,828	39.7%	1,677	23.6%	1,889	26.5%	176	2.5%	7,120	100%
01-02	550	7.5%	2,841	38.8%	1,653	22.6%	2,106	28.7%	176	2.4%	7,326	100%
02-03	550	7.4%	2,817	38.0%	1,693	22.8%	2,183	29.4%	176	2.4%	7,419	100%
HPS 90-98 % Change	11.4%	-	-2.3%	-	7.4%	-	15.0%	-	-	-	2.4%	-
State 89-98 % Change	20.7%	-	22.1%	-	21.8%	-	2.8%	-	-	-	15.1%	-
HPS 00-03 % Change	-27.7%	-	-3.4%	-	-1.2%	-	5.7%	-	-	-	-1.9%	-

Note: Data obtained from HPS. Tuitioned out/ungraded students represent SPED as projected by the district.

Foundation Enrollment

Foundation enrollment is based upon students for whom the district is financially responsible. It is used in the calculation of each district's required spending on its own students and amount of chapter 70 state aid each district receives to assist with the cost.

According to DOE, statewide foundation enrollment increased by 14 percent between FY93 and FY99. DOE determined that above average and high foundation enrollment growth communities are concentrated along route I-495, west and north of the Boston metropolitan area, yet also appear in a few communities on Cape Cod and in western Massachusetts.

By apportioning regional, choice and charter school students back to their member communities, DOE categorized foundation enrollment growth levels as shown in *Chart 2-3*. On this basis, HPS' foundation enrollment increase from 7,678 in FY93 to 7,711 in FY99, or by 0.43 percent, categorizes it as a low growth community.

*Chart 2-3***Massachusetts Foundation Enrollment**

Growth Level Category	Cities/Towns	Percent
Decreasing	44	13%
Low (0% to 10%)	101	29%
Average (10% to 20%)	102	29%
Above Average (20% to 30%)	64	18%
High (Over 30%)	40	11%

Note: Data obtained from DOE

Finding

In verifying the accuracy of headcount data shown in the October 1, 1999 Individual School Reports to the October 1, 1999 district Foundation Enrollment Report, the audit team noted discrepancies between the two reports, possibly attributed to the timing of the preparation of each report.

Recommendation 1

The district should implement procedures to ensure that instructions for the Individual School Report and the Foundation Enrollment form are adhered to annually. This should include the dating of the data used to prepare the reports.

Finding

The FY99 foundation enrollment calculation contains the following two errors:

- The number of students at the Dean Technical High School was double-counted, in error, by the district. This was reported by the HPS Superintendent to the DOE in a memo dated February 18, 1999. This resulted in an excess of funding received by the district from the state.
- A miscommunication between the district and the DOE resulted in the kindergarten program at HPS as being half-day. This resulted in a fifty percent reduction in the state funding received by the district for kindergarten students.

Recommendation 2

The district has implemented a process to verify foundation enrollment reports sent to the DOE. The audit team strongly encourages the use of this verification process.

3. School Budget Process

This section examines the school budget development process and the school committee's budget review process to determine how financial and educational decisions are made, and how some of the goals and objectives of education reform are considered.

School Budget Development

HPS prepares its budget using individual cost centers. These cost centers are equivalent to the different schools in the district. At HPS the budget process begins in late winter, early spring. The school principals submit to the Assistant to the Superintendent for Financial Management and Operations their requests for textbooks, supplies, additional personnel, and capital improvements. The Assistant to the Superintendent, along with the purchasing department, uses the requests for supplies in order to obtain supply bids, which result in the budget for supplies.

School Budget Review

In March, the Assistant to the Superintendent reviews the above items with the finance committee and any modifications to these items are made. The Assistant to the Superintendent then includes these amounts in the individual cost center budgets. Budgets for existing personnel are prepared by the Assistant to the Superintendent.

In April, once the budget for each cost center is established, it is presented individually to the finance committee. After all cost centers are reviewed, the entire budget for HPS is summarized and presented for approval to the finance committee by the Assistant to the Superintendent in June. At this time the finance committee may call for a public hearing, at which time the entire school committee will vote and approve the budget. Later, if the district receives additional state aid, the school committee votes its expenditure.

The budget is set up on MUNIS and a report is issued to each cost center on a monthly basis. This report is separated into two categories, which include expenses and personnel. Also, at any time a building principal may go into MUNIS and review the status of their budget by line item. The Assistant to the Superintendent must approve any transfer of funds between lines in an individual cost center and there are no transfers allowed between different cost centers.

Certain Goals and Objectives

As of FY99, HPS has not met foundation budget. Key area foundation budget categories are not considered in the budget process. The audit team has found that not providing for the foundation budget in the key areas is not uncommon in districts throughout the state. Foundation budgeting and net school spending will be discussed in section 5 of this audit. It was indicated to the audit team that HPS budgets the minimum legal spending requirement for professional development. Although this may be true, *Chart 13-1* of this

audit indicates that actual professional development spending is less than the minimum legal spending requirement in FY97 and FY98. This will be further discussed in section 13 of this report.

4. Total School District Expenditures

Total school district expenditures include expenditures by the school committee and by the municipality for school purposes as reported in the DOE end-of-year report. This section reviews spending in total, by function, by program and by per pupil. Spending includes FY93 per pupil aid and EEOG revenues in total. One measure of per pupil spending calculated and reported by DOE is presented for comparison purposes. The audit team reviewed spending factors but not student FTE's or methodologies used in DOE's calculations.

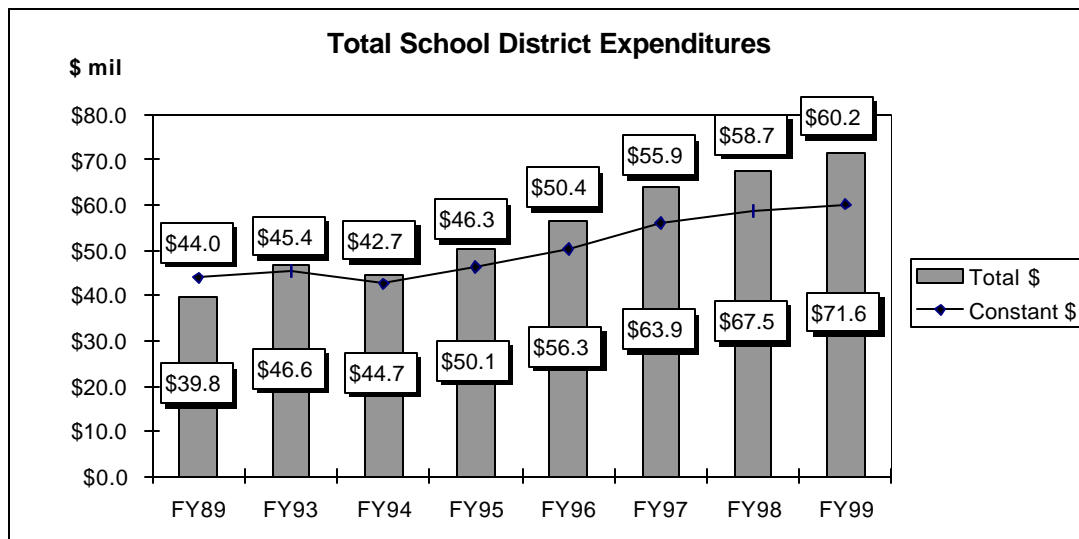
Total Spending

Chart 4-1 illustrates HPS' total school district expenditure trend in both actual and constant dollars for FY89 and for FY93 to FY99. In constant dollars, where FY92 is set at 100, the chart illustrates how expenditures fared with respect to inflation over time.

Chart 4-1

Holyoke Public Schools

Total School District Expenditures in Actual and Constant Dollars FY89 and FY93-FY99



Note: Data obtained from HPS. Numbers in bars represent actual \$ and above bars, constant dollars.

Spending By Function

Chart 4-2 illustrates in summary total school district expenditures by function and by percentage distribution for selected fiscal years. *Appendix A-1* provides the detail for this chart. The chart indicates a reduction in municipal service expenditures between FY93 and FY99. A review of the appendix indicates that this was primarily due to a reduction in debt service for school projects.

Chart 4-2

Holyoke Public Schools

Total School District Expenditures By Function

(in thousands of dollars) and By Percentage Distribution

	FY93		FY95		FY97		FY99		FY93 - FY99	
		% of Total							\$ Diff.	% Diff.
Instructional Services	\$10,184	21.9%	\$28,990	\$37,937	\$43,294	60.5%	\$33,110	325.1%		
Other Services	\$8,431	18.1%	\$11,643	\$15,418	\$17,512	24.5%	\$9,081	107.7%		
Municipal Services	\$14,812	31.8%	\$9,511	\$10,579	\$10,798	15.1%	-\$4,014	-27.1%		
FY93 Per Pupil Aid	\$743	1.6%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	-\$743	-100.0%		
EEOG	\$12,396	26.6%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	-\$12,396	-100.0%		
Total School District:	\$46,566	100.0%	\$50,145	\$63,934	\$71,604	100.0%	\$25,038	53.8%		

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Spending By Program

Chart 4-3 illustrates in summary total school district expenditures by program and percentage distribution for selected fiscal years. *Appendix A-2* provides the detail for this chart. The chart indicates that the largest dollar and percent increases between FY93 and FY99 were in regular education. DOE end-of-year reports show that the majority of the regular education increase was in instructional services, mainly teaching. Undistributed expenditures are those not reported by program.

Chart 4-3

Holyoke Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures By Program
(in thousands of dollars) and By Percent Distribution

	% FY93 FY93		FY95 FY97		% FY99 FY99		FY93 - FY99 \$ Diff % Diff	
School and Municipal:								
Regular Education	\$6,310	13.5%	\$13,711	\$16,926	\$20,538	28.7%	\$14,229	225.5%
Special Education	\$3,981	8.5%	\$7,764	\$10,609	\$11,378	15.9%	\$7,398	185.8%
Bilingual	\$1,360	2.9%	\$6,778	\$8,056	\$8,040	11.2%	\$6,680	491.1%
Other	\$1,466	3.1%	\$2,422	\$2,390	\$4,083	5.7%	\$2,617	178.5%
Undistributed	\$20,311	43.6%	\$19,470	\$25,952	\$27,564	38.5%	\$7,253	35.7%
Total:	\$33,427	71.8%	\$50,145	\$63,934	\$71,604	100.0%	\$38,176	114.2%
FY93 Per Pupil Aid	\$743	1.6%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	-\$743	-100.0%
EEOG	\$12,396	26.6%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	-\$12,396	-100.0%
Total School District:	\$46,566	100.0%	\$50,145	\$63,934	\$71,604	100.0%	\$25,038	53.8%

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Per Pupil Spending

DOE annually calculates per pupil spending based upon programmatic costs and total average membership in FTE's reported on the end-of-year reports. Certain expenditures and school choice tuition is excluded. Regular day programs are those where students receive a general course of instruction. Special education programs are for students whose educational needs cannot be satisfied in a regular day program. Bilingual programs are for students whose primary language is other than English. Total day costs are the sum of all programmatic costs.

Chart 4-4 shows DOE's calculation of per pupil spending for regular, special education, bilingual education and total day programs. Note that HPS per pupil spending, as a percentage of the state average, has been generally increasing since FY94. In FY99, out of 328 districts reported by DOE, HPS' total day program per pupil spending was 56th statewide. As total school district expenditures increased from FY94 to FY99, so too has total enrollment; however this increase is well below the state average. This combination of factors and calculation methodologies has resulted in HPS' per pupil spending on total day programs to increase from 101 percent to 126 percent of the state average.

Chart 4-4

**Holyoke Public Schools
Per Pupil Spending - Day Program**

Fiscal Year	Regular Day			Special Education			Bilingual Education		
	HPS	State Avg.	HPS % of State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS % of State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS % of State Avg.
FY94	\$4,811	\$4,369	110%	\$7,398	\$7,666	97%	\$4,308	\$5,539	78%
FY95	\$5,268	\$4,528	116%	\$7,536	\$8,241	91%	\$4,865	\$5,994	81%
FY96	\$6,049	\$4,737	128%	\$8,155	\$8,873	92%	\$5,322	\$6,380	83%
FY97	\$6,005	\$4,933	122%	\$9,216	\$9,391	98%	\$5,699	\$6,518	87%
FY98	\$6,511	\$5,221	125%	\$10,618	\$9,873	108%	\$6,412	\$7,106	90%
FY99	\$7,465	\$5,481	136%	\$10,738	\$10,502	102%	\$6,963	\$7,430	94%

Fiscal Year	Occupational Day			Total Day		
	HPS	State Avg.	HPS % of State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS % of State Avg.
FY94	\$4,477	\$7,843	57%	\$5,274	\$5,235	101%
FY95	\$4,874	\$8,173	60%	\$5,866	\$5,468	107%
FY96	\$5,457	\$8,468	64%	\$6,595	\$5,750	115%
FY97	\$6,993	\$8,013	87%	\$6,892	\$6,015	115%
FY98	\$9,013	\$9,052	100%	\$7,804	\$6,361	123%
FY99	\$8,293	\$9,415	88%	\$8,454	\$6,684	126%

Note: Data provided by DOE and HPS.

5. Compliance with Spending Requirements

Pursuant to education reform, DOE determines a required school spending target, or foundation budget, and an annual school spending requirement, or net school spending, for each school district. In addition, the law requires action on the part of a district when certain spending amounts are not met. This section determines compliance with these requirements. One measure of per pupil spending reported by DOE is presented for comparison purposes.

Foundation Budget

The foundation budget is a target level of spending designed to ensure a quality level of education in each school district. DOE determines a foundation budget by using several factors and by including an annual adjustment for inflation. All school districts are expected to meet their total foundation budget by FY00.

Chart 5-1 illustrates that HPS was below the foundation budget from FY94 to FY99. Although not presented in this chart, HPS budgeted to exceed its FY00 total foundation budget by 20 percent.

Chart 5-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Meeting Total Foundation Budget Target
(in millions of dollars)**

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
Foundation Budget Target	\$50.3	\$50.9	\$55.7	\$55.5	\$59.2	\$62.3
Required NSS as % of Foundation	72.6%	81.1%	82.4%	89.7%	91.9%	96.4%
Actual NSS as % of Foundation	73.0%	82.2%	85.2%	99.1%	99.6%	96.4%

Note: Data obtained from DOE and HPS. Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

The foundation budget also establishes spending targets by grade and program. These targets are intended as guidelines only and are not binding on school districts. To encourage an appropriate level of spending, M.G.L. Ch.70, §9 requires a school district to report to the Commissioner of Education's office (COE) when it has failed to meet the spending target in any one of four key functional areas: professional development, books and instructional equipment, expanded programs and extraordinary maintenance.

Finding

According to *Chart 5-2*, expenditures did not reach foundation budget for any of the categories in any fiscal year except for books and equipment, which met the target in all years. HPS did not file a report with the Commissioner's office as required by law for these fiscal years stating its reasons for not meeting these levels nor did DOE direct HPS to submit such report. *Appendix C* provides the detail for this chart.

Chart 5-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
Meeting Foundation Budget Target for Key Areas
(by percentage)**

	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
Professional Development	43.2%	35.1%	31.9%	15.4%	77.7%
Books and Equipment	148.0%	232.2%	318.0%	179.2%	194.6%
Expanded Program	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Extraordinary Maintenance	8.8%	31.2%	40.0%	85.4%	43.1%

Note: Data obtained from DOE

Recommendation 3

In the future HPS should file a report with the DOE's office as required by law stating its reasons for not meeting the foundation budget target levels in any of the key areas noted in the chart above.

Net School Spending

Net school spending is the amount a school district must spend for the support of public education including certain expenditures made by the municipality on behalf of the local school district. It does not include expenditures for certain classes of long-term debt service, school lunches, community services, fixed assets and student transportation. It also does not include tuition revenue.

Chart 5-3 illustrates that HPS exceeded the actual net school spending requirement in every fiscal year from FY94 to FY99.

Chart 5-3

Holyoke Public Schools Meeting Net School Spending (in millions of dollars)

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
Required Net School Spending	\$36.5	\$41.3	\$45.8	\$49.8	\$54.4	\$60.0
Actual Net School Spending	\$36.7	\$41.9	\$47.5	\$55.0	\$58.9	\$60.1
<u>Actual as Percentage of Required</u>	<u>100.5%</u>	<u>101.5%</u>	<u>103.7%</u>	<u>110.4%</u>	<u>108.3%</u>	<u>100.2%</u>

Note: Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

A district's net school spending requirement is the sum of the school district's minimum local contribution and chapter 70 state aid. Local and regional school districts must provide at least 95 percent of the net school spending requirement. As illustrated in *Chart 5-4*, Holyoke's local contribution to actual net school spending remained the same while state aid increased by \$23.4 million. During the same time period, the local share decreased to 6 percent of actual net school spending while state aid increased to 94 percent.

Chart 5-4

Holyoke Public Schools
Local and State Contributions to Actual Net School Spending
(in millions of dollars)

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
Actual Net School Spending	\$36.7	\$41.9	\$47.5	\$55.0	\$58.9	\$60.1
Actual Local Contribution \$	\$3.6	\$4.6	\$4.9	\$8.7	\$8.0	\$3.6
Actual State Contribution \$	\$33.1	\$37.2	\$42.5	\$46.3	\$50.9	\$56.5
Actual Local Contribution %	9.8%	11.0%	10.4%	15.8%	13.5%	6.0%
State Contribution %	90.2%	89.0%	89.6%	84.2%	86.5%	94.0%

Note: Data obtained from DOE and HPS. Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

Per Pupil Actual Net School Spending

Chart 5-5 illustrates HPS' and the state's actual net school spending in actual and constant (1992) dollars on a per student basis. Actual net school spending is calculated by DOE.

Chart 5-5

Holyoke Public Schools
Actual Net School Spending Per Student
Actual and Constant (1992=100) Dollars

		FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY94 to FY99 Change
HPS	in Actual \$	\$6,037	\$6,543	\$7,266	\$8,062	\$8,637	\$7,835	29.8%
	in 1992 \$	\$5,755	\$6,053	\$6,575	\$7,135	\$7,576	\$8,234	43.1%
State	in Actual \$	\$5,533	\$5,832	\$6,076	\$6,359	\$6,667	\$6,995	26.4%
	in 1992 \$	\$5,280	\$5,390	\$5,440	\$5,563	\$5,797	\$5,878	11.3%

Note: Data obtained from DOE.

6. Staffing – Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Trends

This section reviews staffing trends at the district and classroom levels. Data is from October 1 School System Summary Reports submitted annually to DOE. This report includes district employees on the payroll as of October 1. Teachers are categorized according to their assignments regardless of certification.

Chart 6-1 illustrates HPS' staffing in FTE's for three selected fiscal years. According to the chart, HPS increased teacher FTE's from FY93 to FY99 by 59 or 9.5 percent. Student

enrollment during the same period increased by about 3 percent. The largest increase in staffing occurred in the area of instructional assistants, this was the result a HPS need to hire many more SPED paraprofessionals. The district's inclusion policy coupled increasing SPED enrollment necessitated a large increase in SPED support staff.

Chart 6-1

Holyoke Public Schools Staffing Trends in Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

	Total FTEs	Teachers	Teachers as % of Total FTEs	Instruct. Assists.	Administrators	All Others
FY90	1,250.0	621.0	49.7%	220.0	52.0	357.0
FY93	1,097.0	621.0	56.6%	228.0	29.0	219.0
FY99	1,397.0	680.0	48.7%	455.0	46.0	216.0
FY93-99	300.0	59.0		227.0	17.0	-3.0
Incr. / Decr.	27.3%	9.5%		99.6%	58.6%	-1.4%

Note: Data obtained from HPS. FTEs may not add due to rounding.

Chart 6-2 provides information on teacher FTE's and percentage distribution by discipline for three selected fiscal years. Appendix B provides the detail for this chart.

Holyoke Public Schools FTE Teachers and Percentage Distributions By Discipline

Discipline	FY90	% FY90	FY93	% FY93	FY99	% FY99	FY93 - FY99 Diff.	% Diff
Certain Core Subjects	98.0	15.8%	88.0	14.2%	98.0	14.4%	10.0	11.4%
Art and Music	13.0	2.1%	16.0	2.6%	29.0	4.3%	13.0	81.3%
Health / Phys. Ed.	20.0	3.2%	16.0	2.6%	35.0	5.1%	19.0	118.8%
SPED	44.0	7.1%	71.5	11.5%	82.0	12.1%	10.5	14.7%
Bilingual/ESL	171.0	27.5%	170.5	27.5%	136.0	20.0%	(34.5)	-20.2%
Elementary	144.0	23.2%	123.0	19.8%	178.0	26.2%	55.0	44.7%
Reading	37.0	6.0%	37.0	6.0%	21.0	3.1%	(16.0)	-43.2%
Foreign Language	16.0	2.6%	8.0	1.3%	19.0	2.8%	11.0	137.5%
Business	22.0	3.5%	20.0	3.2%	11.0	1.6%	(9.0)	-45.0%
Distributive Education	41.0	6.6%	48.0	7.7%	50.0	7.4%	2.0	4.2%
Other	15.0	2.4%	23.0	3.7%	21.0	3.1%	(2.0)	-8.7%
Total	621.0	100.0%	621.0	100.0%	680.0	100.0%	59.0	9.5%

Note: Data obtained from HPS. Core subjects included here are English, math, the sciences and social studies. Foreign language includes french, spanish, german, latin and others. Percent change may not calculate due to rounding.

Chart 6-2

Chart 6-3 provides information on students per FTE teacher for HPS and statewide. This chart does not represent class size. Course load and class size is detailed in Section 16.

*Chart 6-3***Holyoke Public Schools
Students Per FTE Teacher**

	FY90	FY93	FY99
All Students / All FTE Teachers	12.3	11.8	11.2
All Students / All FTE Teachers - State Average	14.1	15.1	N/A
All Students / All Non-SPED, ESL & Bilingual FTE Teachers	18.8	19.3	16.5
All Students / All Non-SPED, ESL & Bilingual Teachers - State Avg.	17.7	19.2	N/A
<u>All Students / All Non-SPED, ESL & Bilingual FTE Teachers</u>			
Kindergarten & Elementary (K-5)	29.1	30.7	20.2
Middle & High (6-12)	13.1	13.8	13.9

Note: Data obtained from HPS and DOE.

Finding

The audit team experienced difficulty in confirming the accuracy of data on School System Summary Reports because HPS does not have a consistent policy for gathering and recording data from year to year.

Recommendation 4

The audit team suggests that HPS develop a district policy for gathering and recording data to ensure that continuity exists on a yearly basis regardless of who completes the report for the district.

7. Teacher Compensation

Expenditures for salary levels are reviewed to determine how the district has increased expenditures for teachers and how teaching salaries have increased as a result of collective bargaining agreements.

Chart 7-1 indicates how school salaries have increased in comparison to total school district expenditures. The increase in total salaries has been distributed equally between teachers and non-teaching personnel such as administrators, para-professionals, clerical and custodial staff.

Chart 7-1

Holyoke Public Schools
Salary Expenditures Compared to Total School District Expenditures
(in millions of dollars)

	FY89	FY93	FY95	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY93 - FY99	
							\$ Incr. / Decr.	% Incr. / Decr.
Total School District Expenditures	\$39.8	\$46.6	\$50.1	\$63.9	\$67.5	\$71.6	\$25.0	53.8%
Total Salaries	\$24.6	\$23.5	\$28.4	\$34.0	\$39.1	\$40.3	\$16.8	71.7%
as % of Total Expenditures	61.7%	50.4%	56.6%	53.1%	57.9%	56.3%	67.2%	
Teaching Salaries	\$16.5	\$18.0	\$20.4	\$23.7	\$26.5	\$26.3	\$8.3	45.9%
as % of Total Salaries	67.2%	76.7%	71.7%	69.8%	67.7%	65.2%	49.2%	
Non-Teaching Salaries	\$8.1	\$5.5	\$8.1	\$10.3	\$12.6	\$14.0	\$8.6	156.7%
as % of Total Salaries	32.8%	23.3%	28.3%	30.2%	32.3%	34.8%	50.8%	

Note: Data obtained from end-of-year reports provided by HPS and DOE. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Chart 7-2 shows the average teacher's salary in the district and how it compares to the overall state average for teacher's salaries as reported by the DOE. HPS' average teacher salary has been below the state average throughout the 1990s with a greater variance in recent years. Average teacher salary calculations do not include teacher positions funded by grants. The average teacher salary for grant funded teaching positions in HPS for FY99 was \$40,594. The majority of these positions are from title one grants.

Chart 7-2

Holyoke Public Schools
Average Salary Comparison

	FY89	FY93	FY95	FY97	FY98	FY99
Average Salary per FTE	\$27,576	\$36,300	\$34,436	\$38,718	\$40,165	\$37,380
State Average	N/A	\$38,681	\$40,718	\$42,874	\$44,051	N/A

Note: Data obtained from DOE and HPS

HPS teachers worked the 1999/2000 school year without a contract. Teachers were compensated at the 1998/99 salary rates, which was the final year of the previously expired contract. The teacher bargaining union and city agreed to a new three year contract, although the contract remained unsigned as of completion of the audit. The contract included a retroactive salary increase of three percent plus \$500 increase on all steps for teachers with a master's degree, master's plus thirty or a Ph.D. The new contract runs through FY02.

During the course of the audit, the audit team computed a different average teacher salary for 1993 than the \$31,835 reported by DOE. This discrepancy may have been attributed to the existence of Equal Educational Opportunity Grant (EEOG) monies received by the

district in 1993. The audit team attempted to reconcile this matter with the district and DOE, but due to technical barriers at DOE posed by the age of the material, the audit team was unable to determine the exact cause of this difference.

Chart 7-2a shows the amount above or below a standard three percent increase teachers received between FY93 and FY99 taking into account the cost of new positions created. The chart indicates that actual salary expenses were less than expected assuming a three percent inflation rate. Cost savings in staffing may have been realized by hiring replacement teachers at less than the average salary of those retiring and/or resigning.

Chart 7-2a

**Holyoke Public Schools
Salary Expenditures
Estimated Cost of New Positions and Salary Increases
(in millions of dollars)**

	FY93	FY99	% of Cum. Incr.
Total Teaching Salary Exp.	\$18.0	\$26.3	
Cumulative Increase from FY93		\$8.3	100%
Est. Cost of 3% Inflationary Increase		\$3.5	42%
Est. FY93-FY98 Cost of New Positions		\$7.2	87%
Subtotal		\$10.7	129%
Est. Amount above 3% Annual Increase		-\$2.4	-29%

Note: Analysis based on data obtained from HPS

Chart 7-2b indicates increases due to annual contracts and step increases between 1993 and 1999.

Chart 7-2b

**Holyoke Public Schools
Teachers Salaries - Step and Contract Percent Increases**

Period	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Annual Contract Increase	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	6.4%	3.0%	24.4%
Step Increase	4.8%	4.8%	4.5%	4.5%	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	31.6%
Total	7.8%	7.8%	7.5%	7.5%	7.2%	10.7%	7.4%	56.0%

Note: Data obtained from HPS.

HPS has four salary lanes. Lane one, bachelor's degree, had nine steps until FY95 when a tenth step was added. Lanes two, three and four, master's degree, master's degree

plus 30 and Ph. D., had ten steps until FY95 when an eleventh step was added. Beginning in FY96 HPS also added a “superstep” for teachers with 25 years experience in the district.

Chart 7-3

Holyoke Public Schools

Teaching Staff

Step/Degree Summary - Selected Years

	FY93 Base Pay		FY99 Base Pay			FY93-99 % Change	
	Step	Base Pay	Step	Base Pay			
		BA		BA	MA		
Teacher A	9	\$32,814	10	\$41,491	\$44,500	26.4%	35.6%
Teacher B	4	\$25,180	10	\$41,491	\$44,500	64.8%	76.7%
Teacher C	1	\$22,712	7	\$35,832	\$37,448	57.8%	64.9%
		MA		MA	MA + 30	MA	MA +30
Teacher A	10	\$35,193	11	\$44,500	\$46,400	26.4%	31.8%
Teacher B	5	\$26,480	11	\$44,500	\$46,400	68.1%	75.2%
Teacher C	1	\$22,877	7	\$33,628	\$35,236	47.0%	54.0%

Note: HPS has 4 salary lanes: BA - Bachelor's degree, MA - Master's degree, MA+30, and Ph. D.
 From FY93 through FY94 salary lanes had 10 steps except for BA which had nine steps. FY95 through FY99 had 11 salary steps except for BA which had 10 steps.
 Data provided by HPS

Chart 7-4

Holyoke Public Schools

Teaching Salary Schedules

Comparison of FY93 through FY99 Salary Schedules

Salary Lane	Initial Entry Level						
	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
BA	\$22,712	\$23,393	\$24,097	\$24,820	\$25,565	\$27,204	\$28,020
MA	\$22,877	\$23,563	\$24,270	\$24,998	\$25,748	\$27,399	\$28,221
MA + 30	\$24,184	\$24,910	\$25,657	\$26,427	\$27,220	\$28,966	\$29,835
Ph. D	\$25,478	\$26,242	\$27,029	\$27,840	\$28,675	\$30,515	\$31,430
Salary Lane	Highest Level						
	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
BA	\$32,814	\$33,798	\$35,682	\$36,752	\$38,355	\$41,283	\$42,991
MA	\$35,193	\$36,249	\$38,269	\$39,417	\$41,100	\$44,204	\$46,000
MA + 30	\$36,695	\$37,796	\$39,903	\$41,100	\$42,833	\$46,049	\$47,900
Ph. D	\$38,209	\$39,355	\$41,549	\$42,795	\$44,579	\$47,906	\$49,813

Note: HPS has 4 salary lanes: BA - Bachelor's degree, MA - Master's degree, MA+30, and Ph. D.
 For FY93 through FY94 salary lanes had 10 steps except for BA which had nine steps. FY95 through FY99 salary lanes had 11 steps except for BA which had 10 steps. Beginning in FY97 HPS added a

8. Special Education and Transitional Bilingual Education

Special Education (SPED)

HPS had a SPED participation rate of 20.5 percent in school year 1999. The Director of Special Education attributes a substantial portion of the increased SPED enrollment to stronger evaluation capabilities made possible by staff additions. The increase in SPED staff has also allowed the department to develop student individual education plans (IEP's) in a more timely and comprehensive manner. The additional support staff the district has added has greatly benefited the district's inclusion plan, which has helped to reduce the 1999 percentage of students who are substantially separate to a recent low of 17.9. HPS participates in the Raising Individual Self-Efficiency (RISE) program.

Chart 8-1

Holyoke Public Schools SPED Enrollment

School Year Ending	Total Enrollment	Total SPED	SPED as % of Total	Substantially Separated	Substantially Separated as % of SPED
1993	7,330	1229	16.8%	279	22.7%
1995	7,664	1260	16.4%	274	21.7%
1997	7,930	1334	16.8%	311	23.3%
1999	7,614	1562	20.5%	280	17.9%

Note: Data obtained from HPS

According to *Chart 8-2*, the increase in SPED costs from FY93 to FY99 was \$8.1 million or 163.5 percent while the increase in total district expenditures for the same time period was \$20.3 million or 69 percent. SPED cost increased partly due to the increase in inclusion facilitators, which increased from one to four over the past four years, also there were two additional assessment positions. Additionally, HPS has had to rent a facility in a neighboring community for some SPED students.

Chart 8-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
Total SPED Expenditures
(in thousands of dollars)**

	FY93	FY95	FY97	FY99	FY93-FY99	
					\$ Incr. / Decr.	% Incr. / Decr.
SPED Program	\$4,340	\$5,564	\$9,195	\$11,476	\$7,136	164.4%
SPED Transportation	\$612	\$933	\$1,160	\$1,573	\$961	157.1%
Total SPED	\$4,952	\$6,496	\$10,355	\$13,049	\$8,097	163.5%

Note: Data obtained from DOE

Finding

The audit team had difficulty in verifying the 1998 SPED enrollment figures. The district could not supply auditors with the actual student database used to prepare the October 1, 1998 Report.

Recommendation 5

The audit team suggests that the district implement procedures to ensure that detailed supporting documentation be maintained.

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)

TBE was first offered by HPS in the mid 1970's. HPS has implemented a five-step program for the TBE program. Students enrolled in HPS' TBE program are assigned to one of five steps based on oral language proficiency, academic proficiency, and past schooling experience. The steps are as follows:

1. All academic subjects are taught in the native language and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.
2. Students have a program that includes an expansion of ESL; instruction to include a focus on English literacy skills, math instruction is in English and Spanish Language Arts.
3. Students have a schedule that includes English as a second language and ESL transitional content courses.
4. Students might have a schedule that includes English as a second language, ESL transitional courses and mainstream courses.
5. Students will be assigned to a mainstream homeroom and their entire program is in English in the mainstream.

All TBE student programs are reviewed and updated semiannually. The transition of students in and out of the TBE program can be done by parental request or through the formal process of using the transition form. The transition form provides information regarding student achievement as it relates to standardized testing, annual English assessment, and report cards. Included are comments of all teachers who are involved with students. Each school building has a transition team consisting of a TBE teacher, an ESL teacher, a mainstream teacher, the assigned language assessment teacher and a building administrator.

A majority of students enrolled in the K to 6 program are enrolled in self-contained Spanish/English bilingual classrooms. Students are grouped heterogeneously by grade level with a bilingual and/or ESL teacher, who are responsible for instruction in their native language and English for all subject areas. Instructional aids are used if the class size is over 18 students.

Transitional classrooms are offered for students in grades 1 to 6 who are orally English proficient, but have not yet attained the desired proficiency in reading and writing in English. In these classes, students are grouped homogeneously within a self-contained ESL classroom for intensive English language development in all the academic language and content-area subjects. At the secondary level, transitional courses are provided by a bilingual or ESL teacher, with English being the language of instruction, along with Spanish support when needed.

There are students who speak languages other than Spanish who because of the small numbers, are not provided with full bilingual program services. Students speaking Portuguese, Mandarin, Indian, Korean and Polish are among the language groups served by HPS' TBE department. These students are enrolled in a mainstream class and native language tutors are provided. These students are also pulled out for ESL instruction.

Chart 8-3

**Holyoke Public Schools
Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)
(from October report)**

School Year Ending	Enrollment All Students	Enrollment in TBE	TBE %	Number of Students Mainstreamed	TBE % Mainstreamed
1995	7,664	2291	30%	169	7.4%
1996	7,746	2314	30%	150	6.5%
1997	7,930	2237	28%	214	9.6%
1998	7,820	2089	27%	283	13.5%
1999	7,614	1993	26%	214	10.7%

Note: Data obtained from HPS.

The TBE program has a goal of mainstreaming students. *Chart 8-3* indicates the TBE enrollment and the number of students mainstreamed each year over the past five years.

The district could not supply mainstream data for the early 90's. During FY99, 624 students left the TBE program. Of these students, 44 represented parental requests for their child to be mainstreamed.

TBE students represent 26 percent of HPS' total enrollment in FY99. Approximately 71 percent of the students in the district indicate Spanish as their first language. TBE expenditures were at \$7.5 million in FY93 and at \$8.4 million for FY99, an increase of \$900,000. TBE expenditures represented 14 percent of the HPS expenditures for FY99.

9. Textbooks and Other Instructional Service Expenditures

This section reviews instructional service expenditures by grade level for selected years. These expenditures include textbooks, supplies, technology, and other activities involving the teaching of students and exclude salaries.

Chart 9-1 details other instructional service expenditures by grade level for selected years, the portion of textbook expenditures and annual per student expenditures.

Chart 9-1 Holyoke Public Schools
Textbooks and Other Instructional Service Expenditures
(in thousands of dollars)

	FY93	FY95	FY97	FY99	FY93 - FY99	
					\$ Incr.	% Incr.
High School	\$37	\$412	\$495	\$643	\$605	1631.4%
Middle School	\$50	\$512	\$515	\$688	\$638	1269.0%
Elementary	\$93	\$1,001	\$1,010	\$1,199	\$1,106	1192.5%
SPED	\$373	\$665	\$884	\$715	\$343	91.9%
Bilingual	N/A	\$300	\$1,037	\$238	N/A	N/A
Occupational Day	N/A	\$143	\$241	\$641	N/A	N/A
Total	\$553	\$3,033	\$4,182	\$4,124	\$3,571	645.9%
Textbooks Only	\$70	\$633	\$1,682	\$1,132	\$1,062	1526.0%
Other Expenditures	\$483	\$2,400	\$2,501	\$2,992	\$2,509	519.1%
Textbooks / Student	\$9	\$83	\$212	\$149	\$139	1465.4%
Exp / Student	\$66	\$313	\$315	\$393	\$327	496.1%

Note: Data obtained from HPS and DOE. Elementary includes kindergarten and preschool.

Textbooks are updated within HPS' five-year curriculum process, which is currently in its first five-year cycle. The Director of Curriculum oversees the textbook selection process on the elementary level, while the department heads make high school textbook decisions. The director of curriculum and the department heads share middle school textbook responsibilities. A committee made up of grade and subject specific teachers, review all editions submitted by available publishers and choose the most appropriate textbooks. Textbooks must meet all curriculum frameworks and preference is given to textbooks that have an accompanying Spanish edition because the district has such a large bilingual program. Generally, HPS has been replacing one or two subjects per year in each cluster (elementary, middle and high school). High school textbooks are paid for from individual department budgets, while middle school and elementary textbooks are funded through individual school budgets.

The Superintendent stated that textbook and supply expenditures have been high in recent years because the district has had to replace all textbooks to comply with the new curriculum frameworks. Multiple use textbooks are purchased whenever possible so that students spend a maximum amount of time in mainstream classrooms.

Several HPS administrators told the audit team that the district loses a large number of textbooks each year because students often leave the district without returning their books. This combined with lost and damaged textbooks are a great expense to the district. Replacement textbooks are ordered yearly by building principals or department heads.

10. Accounting and Reporting

The audit team traced a sample of expenditures reported to DOE by HPS to its accounting and budget records. Overall, the audit team was satisfied that the expenditure reports were generally an accurate representation of HPS expenditures. The audit team was satisfied that adequate safeguards exist for proper internal controls.

11. Review of Expenditures

The audit team completed a review of all HPS' paid invoices from the beginning of FY99 through June of FY00. Interviews were conducted with the HPS Assistant Superintendent, City Auditor and the CPA firm. The audit team found that proper controls exist to ensure the procurement, approval and expenditure of funds.

12. Management and Personnel Practices

The purpose of this section is to review the Superintendent's management style and practices, as well as the hiring and payrolls pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 41 §§41 and 56.

Management Style and Practices

Currently, HPS has no formal strategic plan in place. However, the district has received a DOE grant to develop a strategic plan, which they hope to have in place for school year 2000/01. A 35 member strategic planning committee made up of community members, parents, school committee members, HPS administrators and special interest advocates has been formed to develop four goals that will guide the district into the future. The plan is intended to be for five years with a review after year three.

In the absence of a strategic plan HPS developed a district philosophy, mission statement and seven goals in 1992. The Superintendent states that this approach was taken instead of a strategic plan because the district wanted to resolve issues such as receiving accreditation for both high schools, updating the desegregation plan and implementing education reform initiatives before undertaking the process of developing a strategic plan. Typically, a district would use the strategic plan to guide it through activities of this nature. The Superintendent meets semi-monthly with his "cabinet" (administrative team), which includes the Assistant to the Superintendent for Financial Management and Operations, all central office directors, the parent coordinator, and some principals. These meetings are to discuss district issues, business and strategy. The Superintendent also holds monthly meetings with principals by cluster (grade level). These meetings are to keep the Superintendent apprised of what is happening in the schools and to discuss common district issues as group with instruction and input from the Superintendent.

The Holyoke school committee has ten members, two are elected at-large, seven are elected from city wards and the mayor, who is the ex-officio chairman. The full school committee meets twice per month. The Superintendent and assistant to the

superintendent for business, attend all meetings. Other administrators are required to attend meetings only when their particular program or school is on the agenda. The school committee also has six subcommittees made up of three members, with one serving as the subcommittee chair, that meet once per month or more if needed. The school committee sets the district's annual goals in January of every year after the election of the vice-chairman.

Hiring Process

Teaching vacancies are posted in HPS school buildings for internal transfer candidates, as well as in regional, statewide and local Latino newspapers for external candidates. Vacancies have also been advertised in the *San Juan Star*, a major Puerto Rican newspaper, and also on the HPS website. The human resource director reviews all resumes and completed applications and compiles a database with each candidate's qualifications, certifications and professional information. Principals are given a listing of applicants provided by the director of human resources. Principals interview candidates from the list and must complete an interview report form on all interviewees. The interview report form rates the candidate in several areas, addresses strengths and weaknesses, and gives a hiring recommendation (yes, no, or yes with reservation). Interviews are often conducted with the cooperation from department heads, program directors and/or assistant principals depending on the principal. Finally, a "recommendation to the Superintendent" form is sent to human resources and the Superintendent. The form names the preferred candidate with qualifications and reasons to hire, as well as the names of all other candidates interviewed or paper screened for the position. The Superintendent decides to accept or reject the candidate and the human resource director and assistant to the superintendent for business verify that the position is within the budget. The teacher is sent a letter from human resources offering the position.

HPS principal vacancies are advertised in regional and statewide newspapers. An initial search committee made up of administrators and principals does a paper screening to eliminate candidates that do not meet essential criteria (i.e. certification). Candidates are scored individually by each committee member based on their credentials. The committee chair, who is selected by the Superintendent, tabulates scores. Interviews are offered to the top scoring candidates. All internal candidates that meet the essential criteria are offered an interview.

A larger committee that includes administrators, principals, parents, school council members and community advocates does the interviewing. The semi-finalists are also given a written test that requires them to answer questions based on management style and legal issues facing a principal. The final step is an individual public interview where questions are asked by selected community members, members of the school council, school committee members, as well as advocates from the bilingual, chapter one and SPED groups. The Superintendent makes the final decision but does consider input from others involved in the process.

The audit team examined the contracts of the district's 11 individually contracted principals and the Superintendent. Most principal contracts were for three years, some

were for two years, and one was for one year. The one-year principal contract expired on 6/30/99, and that principal worked the 1999/2000 school year without a contract.

The audit team found the documentation regarding the Superintendent's contract was difficult to attain. The Superintendent's contract that was provided to the audit team by the district was for five years from 1993 to 1998. In addition, the district submitted an amendment to that contract the covered the two years of 1998 to 2000. The Superintendent and Director of Human Resources both confirmed that the Superintendent has been given a further extension of that contract by the school committee, but no documentation appears to exist detailing the agreement at the time of the audit. The Superintendent's salary is set yearly by the school committee and is tied to his evaluation.

Other central office administrators, including the Assistant to the Superintendent for Financial Management and Operations, the Director of Curriculum and the Director of Human Resources have no contract or administrative union. Their services are maintained by decision of the Superintendent and the school committee. They have no administrative union or individual contracts. Benefits are the same as contracted administrators (principals) receive and salary enhancement is generally the same percentage as the teachers receive.

HPS has made a practice of using interim principals in recent years. Usually assistant principals have filled the role of interim principal. At the beginning of school year 1999/2000 there were four interim principals in Holyoke including a middle school and high school principal. Three of the four interim principals held interim status for over one calendar year, with one of them acting as an interim principal for over two and a half years. The Superintendent explained that this resulted from a possibility that the district would be closing an elementary school. It was decided that the district did not want to have an extra principal under contract if a school was closed. When questioned by the audit team the Superintendent also stated that one-year contracts were not considered as a short-term solution to this problem.

The decision has been made to keep all schools open, and subsequently all principals have been hired as fulltime principals, although contracts have not yet been drafted or signed as of the completion of audit field work.

Evaluation Process – Principals and Administrators

HPS uses a comprehensive evaluation system for principals. Principals receive both a standard cost-of-living increase and are eligible for a smaller merit based salary enhancement component. The cost-of-living increase that principals receive is generally in line with the percentage received by HPS teachers.

The Superintendent uses a variety of information sources in the evaluation process, including school improvement plans, progress reports, school visits, input from department heads and program directors, principal completed teacher evaluations, Department of Public Health reports and standardized test scores (MCAS and Terra Nova/Supera).

However, principals are not given formal annual goals. Principals are responsible for building goals set in the school improvement plans and for the district's goals set by the school committee.

After reviewing all the information the Superintendent creates a fairly simple document that rates the principal's performance on a scale of one to five according to the *Principles of Effective Leadership* as developed by DOE. The evaluation form has 93 elements with six sections that the principal is scored on. Each subsection has a small area for praise, criticism and comments. There is also a short paragraph or so of summative comments on the last page of the form. Principals are required to sign their evaluation, although their signature does not represent agreement with the evaluation. Principals are allowed to attach a response to their evaluation.

The audit team reviewed a sample of evaluations for school year 1998/99. The audit team noted that the Superintendent didn't always support poorly scored sections with comments or instructions. The Superintendent responded to the audit team by stating that explanations were given verbally over a lengthy meeting that occurs between the Superintendent and the principal. The audit team suggests that in the future HPS needs to have better documentation of administrators' strengths and particularly their weaknesses with suggestions for remediation.

For the merit based portion of the evaluation, principals are required to submit a personal evaluation based on the Baldrich Scale, which includes seven areas of management including school performance, which the Superintendent judges based on standardized test scores (MCAS and Terra Nova/Supera). This document can be very large and comprehensive depending on the principal. The Superintendent reviews the packet (some principals include supporting documentation) and attaches a score. The score represents the percent of the allotted merit based dollar figure available to each principal, which has been \$1,500 for each of the three years this system has been used.

The audit team noted that because of the comprehensive nature of the evaluation system with the inclusion of multiple variables including test scores, and the relatively small amount of merit incentive (\$1,500) that the evaluations are not as effective as possible. Principals receiving outstanding evaluations earned little more than principals receiving poor evaluations because of the small range available and the numerous factors considered. The audit team suggests that HPS consider increasing the amount of money available in the merit system and removing the standard increase portion of salary enhancement. Merit based salary increased for principals based on 1998/99 evaluations ranging from \$810 to \$1,170 with an average increase of \$1,008.

The audit team noted that principal evaluations generally are not completed until after January or February of the following school year because of the inclusions of MCAS test data that is not returned to the districts until November.

The school committee evaluates the Superintendent. Each member of the committee scores the Superintendent individually based on his performance and his year-end report of district issues and progress towards the school committee's goals. The chairman of the personnel subcommittee and the vice-chairman of the school committee prepare a very detailed report. The audit team believes the Superintendent's evaluation document is superior evaluation tool compared to the evaluation document used for the principals. The audit team further recommends that HPS review the evaluation tool for principals in an effort to develop a more detailed and useful document similar to the Superintendent's evaluation tool.

Evaluation Process - Teachers

HPS teachers without professional status must be observed twice prior to Christmas each year. Professional status teachers are observed every other year, these are also to be completed by Christmas. Formal evaluations based on DOE's *Seven Principles of Effective Teaching* must be completed by March 1. Evaluations are written by principals, although assistant principals are involved in the observation process. Principals have to indicate if they are recommending a teacher without professional status for contract renewal in the evaluation.

Teachers who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation or have areas of concern have a "corrective action plan" developed. The teacher and principal jointly design the plan.

The audit team reviewed a sample of evaluations from each school for school year 1998/99. Although principals have on-going training in evaluating staff and use a common evaluation instrument, the quality and depth of the evaluations vary. For 1998/99, 412 teachers were evaluated. Of these, 128 were teachers without professional status. Since education reform, HPS has removed 27 teachers, including 15 who were removed because of a lack of certification in the courses they taught.

Finding

HPS lacks contractual documentation for central office senior administrators. The Assistant Superintendent and program directors have no defined terms and length of employment, benefits, rights or salary provisions. The Superintendent contract has not been consistently documented or signed over the term of his employment.

Recommendation 6

HPS needs to improve its record keeping in regards to contractual documentation. All terms of employment should be documented and signed.

13. Professional Development Program

DOE requires school systems to prepare a professional development plan, to update and revise it annually and to meet minimum spending requirements for professional development.

HPS has a current professional development plan dated August 1999, for the 1999/2000 school year. This plan outlines the district's philosophy regarding professional development, the various avenues through which professional development will be offered in the district, and the budget for the professional development program. Throughout the year a "catalog" is distributed describing various courses being offered. This catalog contains registration forms which may be completed and then sent to the Curriculum Director.

Chart 13-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Expenditures for Professional Development
(in whole dollars)**

	Professional Development	Minimum Spending Requirement	Total Spent as % of Requirement
FY94	\$0	N/A	N/A
FY95	\$365,037	\$180,525	202.2%
FY96	\$326,125	\$191,425	170.4%
FY97	\$293,708	\$381,150	77.1%
FY98	\$151,226	\$585,000	25.9%
FY99	\$814,300	\$771,100	105.6%

Note: Data obtained from HPS and DOE. FY99 foundation enrollment numbers per DOE were adjusted for this chart to reflect full-day kindergarten and overcounting of students by HPS.

Finding

HPS did not meet minimum spending requirements for FY97 and FY98. HPS administration indicates that spending for FY98 exceeded the amount noted on the EOY report, and that a new EOY report was filed with the DOE. The DOE has no record of a revision in this area. As of the exit conference date, the Superintendent indicated that a letter with supporting documentation was sent to the DOE supporting a revised professional development spending amount for FY98. The revised amount indicated in

the letter dated August 29, 2000 was \$673,214. This is in excess of the minimum spending requirement. The audit team did not audit this amount and expresses no opinion as to its accuracy.

Recommendation 7

Sufficient funds should be budgeted and spent on professional development to meet DOE minimum spending requirements.

The Curriculum Director maintains a database of all courses offered, the number of individuals who attended and the number of PDP's the attendee will earn. This database is further able to show the names of the individuals who attended each course.

The audit team reviewed the courses offered at HPS for the FY99/00 school year. The auditors noted that some of the courses offered addressed issues of violence prevention, bilingual education issues, racial diversity, curriculum frameworks, and other challenges facing students in the HPS. The auditors also noted high levels of participation in course offerings.

Chart 13-2

Holyoke Public Schools
Selected Professional Development Offerings 1999/00

<u>Title</u>	<u>PDPs</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Meeting the Needs of All Learners: IDEA and Section 504	6	393
Classroom Practices for Students with Attentional Issues	3	84
Sexual Harassment	3	34
What Outside Influences Impact Students in the Holyoke Classroom	3	141
Assistive Technology Tools: An Overview	3	51
Math Games to Improve Problem Solving	3	47
Teaching to Learning Style	3	31
Early Literacy Course: Fall 1999	45	30
Precautions and Common Health Problems Among Adolescents	3	53
Behavior Management Skills	3	29
Educating Individuals from Special Populations in Voc. Tech.	3	47
Self-Control Curriculum	3	56
Helping Children Acquire Literacy	3	49
Bilingual Language Acquisition	3	28
Capturing Your Curriculum in the Web	45	28
The Teacher's Role in Implementing Section 504	3	49
Guided Imagery for Violence Prevention	3	45
Inquiry-Based Science to Meet the Needs of All Learners	3	32
Developing Mathematical Ideas - Network Summer Institute	24	24
Introduction to History Alive! Engaging All Learners	3	25
Spanish Intensive Summer Institute	30	24
Instructional Support Skills	3	24
Graphic Organizers to Improve Comprehensive Writing	3	41
Internet Training	8	97

Note: Information obtained from HPS.

14. School Improvement Plans

M.G.L. Chapter 71, §59C mandates that each school must have a school council, which must develop a school improvement plan and update it annually. The plan must contain ten specific elements indicated in the law and other elements as the principal determines appropriate.

The audit team reviewed HPS school improvement plans. This review included plans for the high school, the vocational high school, the three middle schools, the seven elementary schools, and the early childhood school. All of the plans reviewed contained the elements required by law. The contents of the plans were consistent among all of the schools in that they all contained the seven district goals, individual school objectives used to achieve these goals, person(s) responsible for the objectives, timeframe for accomplishment, and methods to measure achievement. Plans were

found to be extremely comprehensive and complete, most in the twenty to forty page ranges containing very detailed objectives. There was evidence of strong central office guidance while allowing some flexibility regarding format. The plans are “living documents” containing both long and short-term objectives. They are updated annually.

There is a thorough process for determining the accomplishment of each plan. Each school submits, in writing to the Superintendent, an evaluation of the level of accomplishment of each goal. There are five levels of accomplishment ranging from “no extent” to “very great extent.” The principals present these evaluations to the school committee annually.

Finding

The school improvement plans for FY00 and the follow-up reports on the prior year plans were not submitted to the school committee for approval until February 1, 2000. This is five months after the start of the school year.

Recommendation 8

School improvement plans should be submitted to the school committee for approval in a more timely manner.

15. Student Learning Time

Time and learning standards refer to the amount of time students are expected to spend in school, measured by the number of minutes or hours in a school day and the number of days in the school year. As of September 1997, DOE requires 990 instruction hours per year for the high schools. For junior high and middle schools, the requirement is either 990 hours or 900 hours based on the decision of the school committee. For the elementary schools, the requirement is 900 hours, and the requirement for kindergarten is 425 hours. The school year remains at 180 days per year.

As shown in *Chart 15-1*, HPS' time and learning plan exceeds these standards by 27 hours for Holyoke High School, 20 hours for Dean Technical High School, 42 hours for the middle schools, 28 hours for the elementary schools, and 487 hours for kindergarten. HPS has had full day kindergarten since FY94.

Chart 15-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Student Learning Time**

	1995/96 HPS Standard Hours Per Year	DOE Req. Hours Per Year	1998/99 HPS Standard Hours Per Year
High School	998	990	1017
Dean Technical School	1042	990	1010
Middle School	999	900	1032
Elementary School	905	900	928
Kindergarten	900	425	912

Note: Data obtained from HPS.

16. Course Load and Class Sizes

Course load reflects the number of students that each teacher is responsible for teaching during a school year. This number is significant because it not only represents the number of students a teacher works with on a daily basis, but the number of assignments, tests and/or papers the teacher is responsible for grading. Class size is important because research shows the value of lowering class size on student learning. DOE notes that students attending smaller classes in early grades make more rapid educational progress than students in larger classes.

Chart 16-1 shows the average class size at the elementary schools.

Chart 16-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Elementary Class Size
School Year 1999/00**

Grade	Classes	Students	Average Class Size	Classes 24+	Grade	Classes	Students	Average Class Size	Classes 24+
K	27	593	22.0	6	Grade 3	26	588	22.6	5
Grade 1	28	519	18.5	0	Grade 4	28	548	19.6	0
Grade 2	30	623	20.8	0	Grade 5	29	592	20.4	0

Note: Data obtained from HPS

Chart 16-2 shows the teacher course load and average enrollment per section of Holyoke High School teachers for the four core subjects during the 1999/00 school year.

Secondary school teachers in HPS are contractually guaranteed a minimum of one preparation period per day. Department heads are contractually assured an additional free period for addressing department-related business and issues.

The Holyoke School Committee does not have a formal policy for class size.

Chart 16-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
Holyoke High School Teacher Course Load
1999/00 School Year**

			Students/	Sections/ Enrollment/ Secs. With			
Core Subs.	Students	Teachers	Teacher	Sections	Teacher	Section	>25 students
English	1484	17	87.3	69	4.1	21.5	9
Math	1286	14	91.9	69	4.9	18.6	7
Science	1604	16	100.3	76	4.8	21.1	17
Soc. Studies	1134	12	94.5	56	4.7	20.3	10

Note: Data obtained from HPS. Data is from Holyoke High School only, and does not include teachers at Dean Technical high school.

17. Technology

DOE approved HPS' technology plan on August 21, 1997. Overall, HPS has been accomplishing the goals of the technology plan. HPS has an Educational Technology Advisory Committee comprised of faculty, parents, business leaders and a school committee member. This committee meets three times a year and is very active in overseeing the technology plan as well as giving guidance to the technology director. The district is in the process of hiring a network administrator, which is part of the technology plan. The plan calls for a position of a WEB master, which is yet to be filled.

Chart 17-1 shows HPS technology spending over the past four years. Overall technology spending has exceeded the technology plan budget.

Chart 17-1

**Holyoke Public Schools
Technology Expenditures**

	Administrative Technology	Instructional Technology	Professional Development	Maintenance Support	Networking	Total
FY99 Total Spending	\$ 274,207	\$ 809,723	\$ 137,397	\$ 128,693	\$ 349,052	\$ 1,699,073
FY98 Total Spending	\$ 51,957	\$ 202,440	\$ 14,261	\$ 109,366	\$ 57,240	\$ 435,264
FY97 Total Spending	\$ 449,999	\$2,115,765	\$ 82,928	\$ 76,535	\$ 487,483	\$3,212,710
FY96 Total Spending	\$ 95,057	\$1,435,703	N/A	\$ 5,562	N/A	\$2,157,219

Note: Data obtained from DOE Technology Expenditures Worksheets. FY96 total spending total includes principal and capital spending of \$620,897.

The Educational Technology Department (ETD) consists of a director, secretary, and instructional technology specialist for each building, as well as a computer technician for the district. The computer technician is responsible for repairs and installations throughout the district. The instructional technology specialists assist in installations and are responsible for maintenance. The ETD is responsible for purchasing all of the district's technology. A detailed inventory of all the district technology is maintained by the ETD on a Microsoft Access database.

All school buildings are Internet accessible, and HPS is in the final stage of wiring all the classrooms for the Internet, as well as a wide area network (WAN) and a local area network (LAN). In FY99, the district completed running fiber optics to every building and every classroom in the district. However, a few classrooms are still not equipped with a computer, but every school has a computer lab. Computers are available to students after school with the necessary staff to help students. HPS has policies in place for both students and teachers in relation to the use of computers as well as the use of the Internet. HPS uses filtering software to screen out objectionable sites and material.

Chart 17-2 shows HPS current computer inventory as well as the 1997 total computer inventory. HPS purchased 290 instructional computers and 14 administrative computers during the FY00 school year.

Chart 17-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
Computer Inventory as of June 1, 2000**

Computer	Total	Percent	1997
Instructional	1,612	87%	
Administrative	245	13%	
Total All Category	1,857		1,526
Students per Computer	4.7		5.1

Note: Data obtained from HPS, 1997 represents first year of the technology

18. Maintenance and Capital Improvement

The purpose of this section is to review how HPS maintains its facilities to ensure a safe, healthy educational environment and how the district plans for future facility needs. In this review, the audit team visited five elementary schools, all three middle schools and both high schools.

Maintenance and Site Visits

The audit team visited ten of the HPS' fifteen schools. During these visits the team noted that at the Maurice A. Donohue School, lack of storage space is a problem. Excess supplies were being stored in the hallways in great quantities. At the John J. Lynch Middle School, the audit team noted that second floor ceiling tiles were in extremely poor condition and the boys' bathroom was in need of modernization and repair. Generally, the school buildings were in adequate repair and the grounds well maintained.

Capital Improvements

The School Facilities Master Plan and Capital Asset Assessment, dated April 1998 was prepared by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC).

The plan consists of a statement of the problem, three master plan options, and criteria for selection and additional considerations.

In April 1997, NESDEC presented a report on projected enrollments for the next ten years in the HPS. In June 1997 NESDEC was engaged to develop a long-range school facility plan.

According to the study, the projected enrollment of the high school is well below its current capacity. The most critical need is at the middle school level. Elementary enrollment is projected to decline.

The study identified three options for increasing the capacity at the middle school level and the estimated cost of each option. The study noted that Holyoke was eligible for a 90 percent reimbursement and the estimated cost was net of this reimbursement. The first option called for the building of a 400-student middle school. The estimated cost was \$10.6 million. The second option called for the addition of 10 elementary classrooms and construction of a 715-student middle school. The estimated cost was \$20.68 million. The third option called for the construction of a 500-student elementary school. Conversion of a middle school to an elementary school. Conversion of an elementary school to the central office and construction of two 500 student middle schools. The cost of this option was \$38 million.

The most costly option is identified as the most educationally favorable and gives HPS the most options. There were other considerations such as the requirement for bilingual classes to have a maximum size of 18 students. One of the criteria was to have additional classrooms at the elementary for specific purposes, such as special education.

One of the problems in Holyoke is the consent decree for desegregation. This influences the capital planning process because it requires a certain number of students at a certain number of schools. When planning capital improvements several interest groups are represented, the desegregation representatives, the special education advocates and other groups.

19. High School Accreditation

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has accredited both Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High School.

After the district submitted a special progress report Holyoke High School received full accreditation on October 8, 1999. Previously, the school had been on warning status for issues involving the standard for accreditation on administration, faculty and staff support, curriculum, assessment of student learning, and school performance.

In April 1999, the NEASC Commission on Technical and Career Institutions voted to continue the accreditation of Dean Technical High School, which is based on the evaluation committee recommendations. The evaluation committee had the following recommendations.

- The school has begun to improve its electronic infrastructure (voice, data, and media). Much remains to be done, however, which should build upon the school and city's educational technology plan.
- Clearly, once the electronic infrastructure is in place, a change will be required in the teaching and learning culture of the school. Thus the Commission urges consideration of a plan to integrate the opportunity for electronic delivery of teaching and learning the overall curriculum of the school.
- Efforts should continue to attract and employ an ethnically diverse staff to better reflect the demographics of the student body.
- The school department should work with the school to develop a plan to streamline purchasing procedures through the central office and the city administration.

20. Test Scores

MCAS scores did show improvement in grade 4 scores for 1999 and 2000, but overall the scores were significantly below the state average.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Tests

MCAS is the statewide assessment program given annually to grades 4, 8, and 10. It measures performance of students, schools, and districts on learning standards contained in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and fulfills the requirements of education reform. This assessment program serves two purposes:

- measuring performance of students and schools against established state standards; and,
- improving effective classroom instruction by providing feedback about instruction and modeling assessment approaches for classroom use.

MCAS scores are reported according to performance levels that describe student performance in relation to established state standards. Students earn a separate performance level of Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Failing based on their total scaled score for each test completed. There is no overall classification of student performance across content areas. School, district and state levels are reported by performance levels.

On March 14, 2000 the DOE selected eight middle schools with low MCAS performance for review. HPS' Lynch Middle School was selected.

Chart 20-1 reflects performance level percentages for all HPS students in tested grades.

Chart 20-1

Holyoke Public Schools
1998, 1999 and 2000 MCAS Test Scores
Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level

Grade	Subject	Year	Average Scaled Score	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improve- ment	Failing (Tested)	Failing (Absent)
Grade 4	English Lang. Arts	2000	223	0	6	56	38	0
		1999	222	0	4	54	41	0
		1998	220	0	3	49	48	0
	Mathematics	2000	222	2	12	37	48	0
		1999	222	3	8	42	48	0
		1998	216	1	5	27	67	0
	Science and Technology	2000	228	3	26	41	30	0
		1999	226	2	15	53	30	0
		1998	222	0	13	40	47	0
Grade 8	English Lang. Arts	2000	222	0	22	32	39	7
		1999	224	0	19	40	40	1
		1998	223	0	17	41	40	1
	Mathematics	2000	209	1	5	12	78	5
		1999	208	0	4	14	77	5
		1998	208	1	5	9	83	2
	Science and Technology	2000	210	1	7	14	73	5
		1999	207	0	3	13	81	3
		1998	210	0	6	15	78	2
	History	2000	208	0	1	15	78	5
		1999	209	0	1	14	82	3
		1998	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 10	English Lang. Arts	2000	215	1	10	26	56	7
		1999	216	1	12	25	58	4
		1998	219	1	15	33	48	3
	Mathematics	2000	211	3	4	16	71	6
		1999	208	1	5	12	78	5
		1998	210	0	6	16	75	3
	Science and Technology	2000	215	0	9	26	56	9
		1999	215	0	9	24	62	5
		1998	215	0	6	28	63	3

Note: Data provided by DOE

Chart 20-2 provides district and state MCAS average scaled scores.

Chart 20-2

**Holyoke Public Schools
MCAS Test Scores
Average Scaled Scores**

All Students	1998 District	1998 State	Point Diff.	1999 District	1999 State	Point Diff.	2000 District	2000 State	Point Diff.
Grade 4:									
English Language Arts	220	230	-10	222	231	-9	223	231	-8
Mathematics	216	234	-18	222	235	-13	222	235	-13
Science & Technology	222	238	-16	226	240	-14	228	241	-13
Grade 8:									
English Language Arts	223	237	-14	224	238	-14	222	240	-18
Mathematics	208	227	-19	208	226	-18	209	228	-19
Science & Technology	210	225	-15	207	224	-17	210	228	-18
History	N/A	N/A	N/A	209	221	-12	208	221	-13
Grade 10:									
English Language Arts	219	230	-11	216	229	-13	215	229	-14
Mathematics	210	222	-12	208	222	-14	211	228	-17
Science & Technology	215	225	-10	215	226	-11	215	226	-11
Total Score	1943	2068	-125	2157	2292	-135	2163	2307	-144
Total Score (excluding History)	1943	2068	-125	1948	2071	-123	1955	2086	-131

Note: Data provided by DOE

Holyoke High School has redesigned the structure of the final exams so that they more closely resemble the MCAS exam. Exams will be 75 percent standardized questions which are developed at the departmental level and the remaining 25 percent will be customized questions developed by the student's classroom teacher. By streamlining the exams, HPS is allowing teachers more opportunity to develop questions that reflect typical MCAS style questions.

For FY00 Holyoke High School is planning to offer an incentive based reward for students scoring at the of needs improvement or better on the MCAS test. Those students will have the option of forgoing their midterm exam the following year in any subject that scored needs improvement or better. The audit team believes that the threshold for this type of reward is set too low. Students should be required to score at a level higher than needs improvement to receive such a benefit.

HPS analyzed the mathematical course experience that students taking MCAS in FY00 have had. The district found that approximately 50 percent of the students were currently taking math courses that were below the 10th grade MCAS test levels. As a solution HPS has attempted to have students "double-up" on math courses as a way of trying to expose these students to more grade level math. Dean Technical High School students are participating in the "High Schools That Work Program" which blends academic and vocational education. Ninth graders are working on strengthening their English and math skills while in shop class. To accomplish this a member of the English department is working with a vocational teacher during shop class to improve students writing skills.

Finding

HPS has no formal MCAS remediation plan for 10th grade students who fail the exam.

Recommendation 9

The audit team recommends that HPS should develop a process for remediation of 10th grade students who have failed the MCAS exam.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

SAT scores have been below the state average for four consecutive years.

Chart 20-3

Holyoke Public Schools Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Results

SAT Content Areas	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999	
	HPS	State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.	HPS	State Avg.
Verbal	467	430	460	507	481	508	482	502	476	504
Math	450	477	442	504	464	508	475	502	463	505
Total	917	907	902	1011	945	1016	957	1004	939	1009
HPS - % of State Avg.	101.1%		89.2%		93.0%		95.3%		93.1%	

Note: Data obtained from HPS and DOE. Data does not reflect Dean Technical High School.

Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

MEAP was the state's educational testing program from 1988 to 1996. It reported scores in two ways: scaled scores, which range from 1000 to 1600, and proficiency levels that were reported as percentage of students in each proficiency. Level 1 was the lowest; level 2 was considered the "passing grade" level, while levels 3 and 4 constituted the more advanced levels of skills.

According to *Chart 20-4*, there were increases made in levels 2, 3 and 4 when 1996 eighth grade MEAP scores are compared to 1992 fourth grade MEAP scores. This measures the same class of students.

Chart 20-4

**MEAP Proficiency Scores
1992 and 1996 Fourth and Eighth Grades**

Fourth Grade	1992			1996		
	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4
Reading	79%	14%	7%	76%	20%	3%
Mathematics	80%	15%	5%	71%	25%	3%
Science	87%	8%	6%	73%	27%	0%
Social Studies	85%	10%	5%	83%	14%	4%
Eighth Grade	1992			1996		
	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4
Reading	68%	18%	14%	63%	24%	14%
Mathematics	70%	15%	14%	69%	25%	7%
Science	74%	14%	12%	73%	20%	6%
Social Studies	78%	11%	11%	66%	25%	10%

Note: Data provided by DOE and HPS. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The MEAP scores for all grades tested are shown in *Appendix D*.

According to *Chart 20-5*, MEAP reading scores show a significant improvement from 1992 to 1996 in fourth grade reading, although scores were significantly below the state average. The scores for the fourth grade students are particularly significant, because by 1996, these students had experienced education reform initiatives in the early stages of formal education. The greatest impact of education reform should initially be seen in the performance of these students.

*Chart 20-5***MEAP Reading Scores - 4th Grade- 1988 Scores from 1090 - 1220
Selected Districts**

District	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	Change 1992 - 1996
Holyoke	1090	1000	1050	1080	1120	70
Lawrence	1100	1100	1140	1220	1210	70
Chelsea	1110	1100	1170	1140	1110	-60
Boston	1150	1130	1170	1180	1180	10
Fall River	1160	1190	1220	1260	1270	50
Somerville	1200	1200	1260	1300	1290	30
New Bedford	1200	1220	1270	1320	1270	0
Cambridge	1200	1220	1240	1260	1230	-10
Lowell	1200	1210	1220	1210	1180	-40
Chicopee	1210	1240	1250	1270	1270	20
Lynn	1210	1200	1230	1230	1240	10
Brockton	1220	1220	1210	1220	1200	-10
State Average	1300	1310	1330	1300	1350	20

Note: A significant change in a score is considered to be 50 points in either direction.

Iowa Tests

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa tests) for the third grade was administered throughout Massachusetts in the spring of 1999. Results were categorized by students tested under routine conditions, students with disabilities tested under non-routine conditions and students with limited English proficiency.

The Iowa Test of Educational Development, also referred to as the Massachusetts Grade 10 Achievement Test, was also administered in the spring of 1997. It tested seven different areas of skills including reading, quantitative thinking and social studies. Scores were based on a national sample of students who took the test. HPS 10th graders scored at the 47th percentile compared to the national sample. HPS performance compares to scores as high as the 89th percentile and as low as the 28th percentile for other Massachusetts school districts.

According to *Chart 20-6*, district Iowa test results show the HPS students scored between 44 percent and 48 percent in the proficient or advanced reading comprehension performance categories for the years shown.

Chart 20-6

Holyoke Public Schools
Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Reading Percentile Rank			Reading Comprehension Performance			
	HPS	State	Pre Reader	Basic Reader	Proficient Reader	Advanced Reader
1997	35%	65%	17%	37%	39%	5%
1998	36%	64%	16%	36%	37%	8%
1999	46%	69%	10%	35%	32%	16%

Data provided by DOE. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Other Tests

In FY99, HPS began administering the TerraNova and Supera, the Spanish version of the TerraNova, tests because the district felt that these tests were multiple assessment tests with open-ended questions that most closely approached the state MCAS test. TerraNova tests are given to second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth graders in April. Prior to FY99, HPS used the Student Needs Assessment Profile Test (SNAP) to identify strengths and weaknesses of students and the California Achievement Test was used as a diagnostic test.

HPS is in the process of implementing a transition/retention policy for students in grades 3 and 8. Parents have received letters during the past two years advising them of a new policy. Students scoring lower than the 25th percentile rank on the spring TerraNova or Supera test will be identified for possible inclusion into the transition/retention program. Grade 3 students will be retained in the third grade and will have to attend a summer reading program. If the student achieves an average score as measured by a standardized achievement test, the student may be considered eligible for promotion to grade 4. Grade 8 students will have the option of staying back or entering a transition program in ninth grade. Students participating in the transition program must attend a six week, 60 hour summer reading program, attend double blocks of English and math, and attend an after school enrichment program. Students are assisted in grant-funded programs of summer school and after school programs. The program requirements for grade 8 transition students are the same at Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High School.

21. Curriculum Development

For each of the curriculum areas which have been revised at the HPS, basically the same process has been followed. This has resulted in the development of comprehensive curriculum guides, all of which follow the same format and address the subject area from grades K through 12.

The process began in 1994, before there was a curriculum director.

The district formed an extensive committee to evaluate where HPS math curriculum was in relation to the state math frameworks. Over eighty individuals participated in this review. These eighty participants included K-12 faculty, SPED, and Bilingual Education faculty. The chairman of the math department served as the chairman of this committee.

Based on the review and recommendations of the original committee, a smaller committee of about nine individuals wrote the final draft of the new math curriculum guide, which was implemented in the 1996/97 school year. This implementation included the purchase of new materials and text consistent with the revised frameworks.

Each of the curriculum guides includes a K-12 proficiency chart which references each of the curriculum strands and the level of proficiency each student expected to attain at each of the grade levels (I – Introduce, R – Reinforce, P – Proficiency Expected). Following this chart is the Grade Level Instructional Plan. This document shows the learning standard, strand number, and what level of proficiency is expected. It also gives examples of performance assessment tasks for each strand. Further, this information is presented in outline form at the end of the curriculum guide.

The following are the areas of the State curriculum frameworks which have been implemented at HPS and the year of implementation:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| • Mathematics | FY96/97 |
| • Science | FY98/99 |
| • Language Arts | FY98/99 |

Social Studies will be implemented in FY00/01. The district is also in the process of aligning world language, arts, health, and computer literacy.

HPS' process to align curriculum and create new curriculum guides has been extremely thorough and has resulted in comprehensive curriculum guides. The process was extremely labor-intensive given the bilingual considerations to be addressed. Given the timing of completion of these guides due to the noted considerations, MCAS scores may not currently reflect improvement that may result over time.

Along with the implementation of the frameworks, extensive professional development opportunities are available to the faculty in order to support their delivery of these frameworks.

HPS ensures the delivery of these frameworks in the classroom in several ways. The principal of the school routinely reviews teacher plan books. Also, teacher evaluations include use of new curriculum in the classroom.

22. Grade 3 Transiency

Student transiency is generally defined as the percentage of students who enter and/or leave the system after the first day of school. Transiency poses an educational problem because students may lose the benefit of a sequential and coherent school program as they move from school to school.

According to *Chart 22-1*, of the 14 communities of similar population to Holyoke, HPS has a relatively high transiency percentage, 21.3 percent, which is above the statewide average of 20.4 percent. HPS has a relatively low stable population percent of grade 3 students who attended HPS in grades 1, 2 and 3. This stability percentage, 78.7 percent, is below the statewide average of 79.6 percent. HPS has students who are moving in and out of the district several times during the school year.

Chart 22-1

Transiency and Stability - 3rd Grade

Selected Communities

Student Population Participating in the 1999 Iowa 3rd Grade Reading Test

Community	Stable Population	Total Population	Stable Population Percent	Transiency Percent
Arlington	289	322	89.8%	10.2%
Pittsfield	418	484	86.4%	13.6%
Fall River	794	924	85.9%	14.1%
Woburn	329	399	82.5%	17.5%
Attleboro	449	552	81.3%	18.7%
Brockton	1,042	1,285	81.1%	18.9%
Lynn	778	960	81.0%	19.0%
Methuen	391	487	80.3%	19.7%
Everett	274	345	79.4%	20.6%
Beverly	276	349	79.1%	20.9%
Holyoke	248	315	78.7%	21.3%
Fitchburg	306	397	77.1%	22.9%
Chicopee	359	467	76.9%	23.1%
Greenfield	125	166	75.3%	24.7%
Westfield	325	441	73.7%	26.3%
Statewide	54,239	68,103	79.6%	20.4%

Note: Student population includes only students tested under "routine" conditions. Data obtained from DOE's 1999 Iowa Grade 3 reading test summary results

23. Dropout and Truancy

HPS ties attendance to promotion to the subsequent grade. Students with more than 20 absences in grades K through 5 are not promoted, students in grades 6 through 8 may not miss more than 21 days, and students in grades 9 through 12 may not miss more than 14 days without risking retention. In regards to truancy when a student is absent for three consecutive days without permission, the school notifies the assistant attendance officer assigned to the particular school. The assistant attendance officer will contact a parent/legal guardian by phone or in writing to inform them of the unexcused absences. Generally, when a student is out for between five to seven days HPS contacts an agency, such as Project Rebound, Care Center, Enlace de Familia, Nueva Esperanza, or the Teen Center, which deals primarily with pregnant teenagers and their needs. Also every secondary school in HPS has a police officer assigned.

Every school in the HPS has an administrator who monitors attendance of students in the building. The district has an attendance officer with assistants. Over the past four years HPS average attendance rate has been 91 percent, with a low of 89.5 percent in FY99 and a high of 92 percent in FY96.

In the spring of 1998, the Superintendent established a district wide committee to review both attendance and tardiness policy. Progress made in this area is attributed to the committee's work and the following:

- A strong outreach program, which includes home visits and parents coming to school.
- An attendance officer who works with the MA Department of Social Services, probation officers, the courts, the diversion program, and teen clinic.
- The SCORE mediation program which is funded through the District Attorney's office, which resolves problems before they erupt into situations which result in suspensions.
- A parent and parenting teen caseworker, who is funded through a grant.
- An after school tutoring program which is staffed by teachers four days a week for 45 minutes with extended library hours after school.
- A revised attendance policy which reduced the number of absences to earn promotion from 18 days to 14 days.

However, HPS' dropout rate for FY97 of 9.8 percent is significantly higher than the state average, as shown in *Chart 23-1*.

Chart 23-1

**High School Dropout Rates
Selected Communities
FY93 - FY97**

Community	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97
Salem	6.5%	4.7%	5.3%	5.9%	6.3%
Beverly	2.9%	6.3%	6.1%	6.6%	5.5%
Billerica	0.8%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%
Attleboro	6.5%	6.8%	7.9%	5.9%	5.0%
Leominster	5.4%	4.5%	4.8%	5.0%	4.0%
Fitchburg	3.4%	3.2%	2.0%	2.9%	1.6%
Methuen	5.3%	4.0%	1.1%	3.0%	4.1%
Holyoke	8.3%	9.5%	8.3%	5.5%	9.8%
Revere	3.9%	4.5%	3.7%	3.6%	2.5%
Arlington	0.8%	2.1%	1.6%	1.2%	1.7%
Barnstable	3.8%	5.5%	5.1%	6.4%	5.3%
Pittsfield	6.4%	6.5%	5.2%	7.0%	6.0%
Plymouth		1.7%	1.7%	2.8%	5.3%
Peabody	3.0%	4.4%	3.8%	3.8%	5.7%
Taunton	6.7%	3.6%	2.2%	3.2%	2.3%
Average These Communities	4.2%	4.6%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
Median These Communities	4.6%	4.5%	3.8%	3.8%	5.0%
State Average	3.5%	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	3.4%

Note: Data provided by DOE

IV. Employee Survey

The audit team conducted a confidential survey of all employees of HPS to provide a forum for teachers and staff to express their opinions on education in HPS. Approximately 850 questionnaires were delivered to school staff and 291 responses were received and tabulated, a response rate of 34.25 percent. Areas covered by the survey include:

1. education reform;
2. education goals and objectives;
3. curriculum;
4. planning;
5. communications and mission statements;
6. budget process;
7. professional development;
8. supplies;
9. facilities; and
10. computers and other education technology.

Appendix E shows the teachers' answers to the survey questions. The Superintendent also received a summary of responses.

The survey results indicated that education reform is a high priority in HPS. Eighty percent of the teachers are familiar with the issues of Education Reform and 79 percent feel that they have a clear understanding of the way in which these issues pertain to their own jobs.

While 81 percent of the teachers feel that the Education Reform issues are addressed in school-based plans, 79 percent feel that the issues are considered in the districts planning. Eighty-five percent of the teachers feel that the school district is taking positive steps to improve education and there are 74 percent who hold a positive view of the specific programs that have been put into place to improve the students in any academic weakness that they may have.

Teachers feel very strongly that the curriculum is in-line with the state frameworks (92 percent), although only 53 percent feel that this curriculum will improve the students' test scores in their school. When it comes to the curriculum itself, 64 percent of the teachers feel that the content of the curriculum does not impact the test scores of students as much as how a subject is taught by a teacher. Seventy-six percent of teachers believe that their curriculum is challenging and is tied to preparing students for life after secondary school. Also, 75 percent of teachers said that there is a coherent, on-going effort within the district to keep the curriculum current with evolving trends and best practices in pedagogy and educational research.

When asked about the communications between the teachers and the district administrators only 37 percent felt that they knew what was going on in the district. Seventy-nine percent of the teachers were aware of a mission statement in place for their school district and 89 percent know of a mission statement for their school. When asked if these mission statements were applied in the operations of the school and the teaching of the students, 55 percent of teachers agreed.

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers feel that they understand how the budget process impacts their department. The survey also indicates that when it comes to the budget for HPS only 21 percent feel that it is fair and equitable. Twenty-three percent feel that the budgetary needs are solicited and adequately addressed in the budget process. Only 36 percent of the teachers feel that once the budget is approved and implemented the allocation and use of the funds will match the publicly stated purpose.

Teachers feel that there is an adequate professional development program in their school (70 percent). Seventy-one percent feel that the program is designed to meet school needs and that it is tied to the new frameworks and assessments. Eighty-three percent of teachers participated in the professional development program in 1997/98.

Eighty-seven percent of the teachers feel that they generally received sufficient and appropriate basic educational supplies to do their job. Forty-one percent of the teachers feel that the process for obtaining supplies and materials is effective, time sensitive and responsive to their classroom needs.

The majority (57 percent) of the teachers feel that the state of the school facilities, the classrooms, labs and other teaching rooms are in good to excellent condition. Seventy percent of the teachers agreed that the school administration makes an effort to provide a clean and safe working environment.

Sixty-eight percent of the teachers feel that the usage of computers and other technological tools are a significant part of the management practices at the school. Even though 70 percent of teachers said that they have a school computer provided for and dedicated for their usage, sixty-seven percent said that the number of computers available is not sufficient for the number of students. Sixty-nine percent of teachers do feel that there are computers available for and used on a regular basis by students.

V. Superintendent's Statement - Education Reform

As part of this review, the Superintendent was asked to submit a brief statement expressing his point of view with respect to three areas:

1. school district progress and education reform since 1993;
2. barriers to education reform; and
3. plans over the next three to five years.

The Superintendent's statement is included in *Appendix F*.

VI. APPENDIX

Appendix A-1	Total School District Expenditures by Function
Appendix A-2	Total School District Expenditures by Program and Percentage Distribution
Appendix B	FTE Teachers by Discipline
Appendix C	Net School Spending by Foundation Budget Categories FY95, FY96, FY99 - Table
Appendix C1 - 2	Net School Spending by Foundation Budget Categories FY95, FY96, FY99 – Graph
Appendix D	Mass. Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)
Appendix E	Employee Survey Results
Appendix F	Superintendent's Statement on Education Reform Accomplishments, Barriers and Goals
Appendix G	Auditee's Response

Holyoke Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures By Function
(in thousands of dollars)

	FY93	% of Total	FY95	FY97	FY99	% of Total	FY93 - FY99	
							\$ Diff	% Diff
Instructional Services:								
Supervisory	\$417	1%	\$507	\$1,206	\$1,731	2%	\$1,314	315.4%
Principal	\$581	1%	\$1,772	\$2,425	\$3,319	5%	\$2,738	471.5%
Principal Technology	\$0	0%	\$0	\$289	\$70	0%	\$70	100.0%
Teaching	\$7,954	17%	\$22,702	\$27,005	\$31,327	44%	\$23,373	293.9%
Prof. Devel.	\$0	0%	\$355	\$294	\$814	1%	\$814	100.0%
Textbooks	\$70	0%	\$633	\$1,682	\$1,132	2%	\$1,062	1526.0%
Instructional Technology	\$0	0%	\$690	\$2,116	\$749	1%	\$749	100.0%
Educational Media	\$87	0%	\$240	\$382	\$453	1%	\$367	422.2%
Guidance & Psychology	\$1,076	2%	\$2,093	\$2,539	\$3,698	5%	\$2,621	243.6%
Subtotal:	\$10,184	22%	\$28,990	\$37,937	\$43,294	60%	\$33,110	325.1%
Other Services:								
Athletics	\$115	0%	\$358	\$379	\$439	1%	\$324	281.4%
Student Body Activities	\$25	0%	\$54	\$191	\$490	1%	\$466	1887.9%
Attendance	\$43	0%	\$208	\$267	\$114	0%	\$71	162.7%
Health (inc. non-public)	\$34	0%	\$107	\$102	\$217	0%	\$184	547.6%
General Administration	\$268	1%	\$465	\$1,073	\$448	1%	\$180	67.2%
Administrative Support	\$385	1%	\$456	\$254	\$1,375	2%	\$990	257.0%
Admin. Technology	\$0	0%	\$0	\$161	\$271	0%	\$271	100.0%
Employee Benefits Admin.	\$0	0%	\$11	\$22	\$25	0%	\$25	100.0%
Operations and Maint.	\$3,359	7%	\$4,155	\$5,243	\$5,896	8%	\$2,537	75.5%
Food Service	\$0	0%	\$0	\$22	\$16	0%	\$16	100.0%
Insurance	\$63	0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$63	-100.0%
Extraordinary Maint.	\$0	0%	\$144	\$712	\$857	1%	\$857	100.0%
Recreation	\$31	0%	\$34	\$62	\$0	0%	-\$31	-100.0%
Networking & Telecomm.	\$0	0%	\$0	\$564	\$178	0%	\$178	100.0%
Pupil Transportation (inc. non-public)	\$1,810	4%	\$2,020	\$2,591	\$3,119	4%	\$1,309	72.3%
Civic Activities	\$0	0%	\$17	\$10	\$44	0%	\$44	100.0%
Rental Lease	\$351	1%	\$195	\$224	\$280	0%	-\$71	-20.3%
Purchase of Equipment	\$0	0%	\$381	\$364	\$426	1%	\$426	100.0%
Pymts. To Other Districts	\$1,758	4%	\$2,031	\$2,898	\$2,977	4%	\$1,218	69.3%
Employee Benefits	\$189	0%	\$1,008	\$281	\$342	0%	\$153	80.7%
Subtotal:	\$8,431	18%	\$11,643	\$15,418	\$17,512	24%	\$9,081	107.7%
Total School Committee								
Expend. By Function:	\$18,615	40%	\$40,634	\$53,355	\$60,806	85%	\$42,190	226.6%

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Holyoke Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures By Function
(in thousands of dollars)

	FY93	% of Total	FY95	FY97	FY99	% of Total	FY93 - FY99	
							\$ Diff	% Diff
Municipal Expenditures:								
Educational Media Services	\$253	1%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$253	-100.0%
Health Services	\$0	0%	\$324	\$546	\$568	1%	\$568	100.0%
Administrative Support	\$225	0%	\$329	\$344	\$303	0%	\$77	34.2%
General Administration	\$261	1%	\$13	\$53	\$0	0%	-\$261	-100.0%
Employee Benefits Admin.	\$0	0%	\$85	\$101	\$212	0%	\$212	100.0%
Oper. & Maint. of Plant	\$1,983	4%	\$235	\$211	\$226	0%	-\$1,756	-88.6%
Civic Activities	\$3	0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$3	-100.0%
Recreation	\$45	0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$45	-100.0%
Insurance	\$0	0%	\$2,314	\$2,769	\$3,107	4%	\$3,107	100.0%
Employee Benefits	\$639	1%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$639	-100.0%
Retirement	\$0	0%	\$697	\$788	\$759	1%	\$759	100.0%
Debt Service	\$11,404	24%	\$5,515	\$5,716	\$5,536	8%	-\$5,867	-51.5%
Pymts. To Other Districts	\$0	0%	\$0	\$51	\$87	0%	\$87	100.0%
Total Municipal Expend:	\$14,812	32%	\$9,511	\$10,579	\$10,798	15%	-\$4,014	-27.1%
FY93 Per Pupil Aid	\$743	2%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$743	-100.0%
EEOG	\$12,396	27%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	-\$12,396	-100.0%
Total School District Expend. By Function:	\$46,566	100%	\$50,145	\$63,934	\$71,604	100%	\$25,038	53.8%

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Holyoke Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures
By Program (in thousands of dollars) and By Percentage Distribution

	\$ FY93	% FY93	\$ FY95	% FY95	\$ FY97	% FY97	\$ FY99	% FY99	FY93 - FY99 \$ Diff % Diff.	
Instructional:										
Regular Day	\$5,092	10.9%	12,848	25.6%	15,781	24.7%	18,989	26.5%	\$13,897	272.9%
Special Education	\$1,601	3.4%	4,813	9.6%	6,204	9.7%	6,776	9.5%	\$5,175	323.2%
Bilingual	\$1,360	2.9%	6,778	13.5%	8,056	12.6%	8,040	11.2%	\$6,680	491.1%
Occ. Ed., Adult Ed., Expanded	\$1,464	3.1%	2,185	4.4%	2,390	3.7%	4,083	5.7%	\$2,620	178.9%
Undistributed	\$668	1.4%	2,366	4.7%	5,505	8.6%	5,406	7.6%	\$4,739	709.9%
Subtotal Instructional:	\$10,184	21.9%	28,990	57.8%	37,937	59.3%	43,294	60.5%	\$33,110	325.1%
Other Services:										
Regular Day	\$1,218	2.6%	863	1.7%	1,094	1.7%	1,481	2.1%	\$263	21.6%
Special Education	\$2,380	5.1%	2,950	5.9%	4,405	6.9%	4,584	6.4%	\$2,205	92.7%
Occ. Ed., Adult Ed., Expanded	\$2.27	0.0%	238	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-\$2	-100.0%
Undistributed	\$4,831.38	10.4%	7,592	15.1%	9,920	15.5%	11,446	16.0%	\$6,615	136.9%
Subtotal Other Services:	\$8,431	18.1%	\$11,643	23.2%	\$15,418	24.1%	17,512	24.5%	\$9,081	107.7%
Total School Expenditures:										
Regular Day	\$6,310	13.5%	\$13,711	27.3%	\$16,874	26.4%	20,470	28.6%	\$14,160	224.4%
Special Education	\$3,981	8.5%	\$7,764	15.5%	\$10,609	16.6%	11,360	15.9%	\$7,380	185.4%
Bilingual	\$1,360	2.9%	\$6,778	13.5%	\$8,056	12.6%	8,040	11.2%	\$6,680	491.1%
Occ. Ed., Adult Ed., Expanded	\$1,466	3.1%	\$2,422	4.8%	\$2,390	3.7%	4,083	5.7%	\$2,617	178.5%
Undistributed	\$5,499	11.8%	\$9,959	19.9%	\$15,425	24.1%	16,852	23.5%	\$11,353	206.5%
Total School Expenditures:	\$18,615	40.0%	\$40,634	81.0%	\$53,355	83.5%	60,806	84.9%	\$42,190	226.6%

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE

Holyoke Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures
By Program (in thousands of dollars) and By Percentage Distribution

	\$ FY93	% FY93	\$ FY95	% FY93	\$ FY97	% FY93	\$ FY99	% FY93	FY93 - FY99 \$ Diff	% Diff.
Municipal:										
Regular Day	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$51	0.1%	68	0.1%	\$68	100.0%
Special Education	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	18	0.0%	\$18	100.0%
Undistributed	\$14,812	31.8%	\$9,511	19.0%	\$10,527	16.5%	10,711	15.0%	-\$4,101	-27.7%
Total Municipal:	\$14,812	31.8%	\$9,511	19.0%	\$10,579	16.5%	10,798	15.1%	-\$4,014	-27.1%
School and Municipal Expenditures:										
Regular Day	\$6,310	13.5%	\$13,711	27.3%	\$16,926	26.5%	20,538	28.7%	\$14,229	225.5%
Special Education	\$3,981	8.5%	\$7,764	15.5%	\$10,609	16.6%	11,378	15.9%	\$7,398	185.8%
Bilingual	\$1,360	2.9%	\$6,778	13.5%	\$8,056	12.6%	8,040	11.2%	\$6,680	491.1%
Occ. Ed., Adult Ed., Expanded	\$1,466	3.1%	\$2,422	4.8%	\$2,390	3.7%	4,083	5.7%	\$2,617	178.5%
Undistributed	\$20,311	43.6%	\$19,470	38.8%	\$25,952	40.6%	27,564	38.5%	\$7,253	35.7%
Total School and Municipal:	\$33,427	71.8%	\$50,145	100.0%	\$63,934	100.0%	71,604	100.0%	\$38,176	114.2%
FY93 Per Pupil Aid	\$743	1.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	-\$743	-100.0%
EEOG	\$12,396	26.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	-\$12,396	-100.0%
Total School District Expenditures By Program	\$46,566	100.0%	\$50,145	100.0%	\$63,934	100.0%	71,604	100.0%	\$25,038	53.8%

Note: Data provided by HPS and DOE.

**Holyoke Public Schools
FTE Teachers By Discipline**

Selected Disciplines	FY90	FY93	FY99	FY90 - FY93		FY93 - FY99		FY90-FY99	
				Incr.	% Incr.	Incr.	% Incr.	Incr.	% Incr.
Early Childhood	1.0	2.0	11.0	1.0	100.0%	3.0	150.0%	10.0	1000%
Elementary	144.0	123.0	178.0	(21.0)	-15%	55.0	45%	34.0	24%
Middle (Generalist)	0.0	9.0	2.0	9.0	N/A	(7.0)	-78%	2.0	N/A
English	32.0	28.0	24.0	(4.0)	-13%	(4.0)	-14%	(8.0)	-25%
French	3.0	2.5	4.0	(0.5)	-17%	1.5	60%	1.0	33%
German	1.0	0.0	1.0	(1.0)	-100%	1.0	N/A	0.0	0%
Spanish	9.0	4.5	10.0	(4.5)	-50%	5.5	122%	1.0	11%
Other Modern Languages	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	N/A	3.0	N/A	3.0	N/A
Latin	3.0	1.0	1.0	(2.0)	-67%	0.0	0%	(2.0)	-67%
History	9.0	7.0	11.0	(2.0)	-22%	4.0	57%	2.0	22%
Social Studies	11.0	11.0	18.0	0.0	0%	7.0	64%	7.0	64%
Biology	6.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	0%
Chemistry	5.0	2.0	3.0	(3.0)	-60%	1.0	50%	(2.0)	-40%
Earth Science	2.0	0.0	0.0	(2.0)	-100%	0.0	N/A	(2.0)	-100%
General Science	6.0	11.0	14.0	5.0	83%	3.0	27%	8.0	133%
Mathematics	26.0	22.0	20.0	(4.0)	-15%	(2.0)	-9%	(6.0)	-23%
Physics	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	0%	1.0	100%	1.0	100%
Art	7.0	10.0	13.0	3.0	43%	3.0	30%	6.0	86%
Music	6.0	6.0	16.0	0.0	0%	10.0	167%	10.0	167%
Reading	37.0	37.0	21.0	0.0	0%	(16.0)	-43%	(16.0)	-43%
Speech	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	N/A	0.0	0%	1.0	N/A
Health	5.0	0.0	8.0	(5.0)	-100%	8.0	N/A	3.0	60%
Physical Education	1.0	0.0	12.0	(1.0)	-100%	12.0	N/A	11.0	1100%
Health & Physical Education	14.0	16.0	15.0	2.0	14%	(1.0)	-6%	1.0	7%
Business	20.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0%	(10.0)	-50%	(10.0)	-50%
Business Management	2.0	0.0	1.0	(2.0)	-100%	1.0	N/A	(1.0)	-50%
Home Economics	8.0	7.0	7.0	(1.0)	-13%	0.0	0%	(1.0)	-13%
Industrial Arts	6.0	4.0	0.0	(2.0)	-33%	(4.0)	-100%	(6.0)	-100%
SPED	44.0	71.5	82.0	27.5	63%	10.5	15%	38.0	86%
Bilingual/ESL	171.0	170.5	136.0	(0.5)	-0.3%	(34.5)	-20.2%	(35.0)	-20%
Distributive Education	41.0	48.0	50.0	7.0	17.1%	2.0	4.2%	9.0	22%

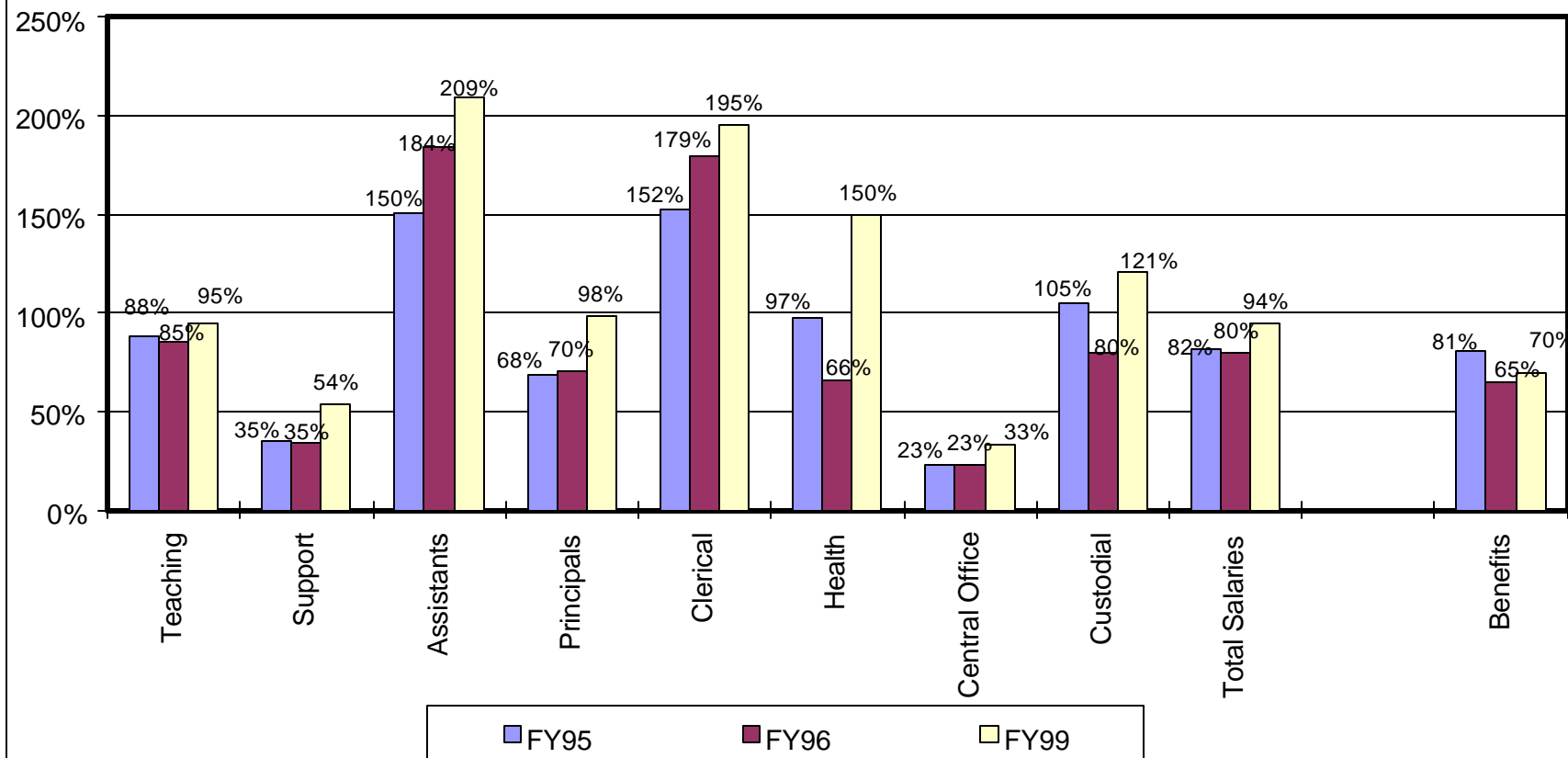
Note: Data obtained from October 1 School System Summary Reports.

Holyoke Public Schools
Net School Spending According to Foundation Budget Categories
(in thousands of dollars)

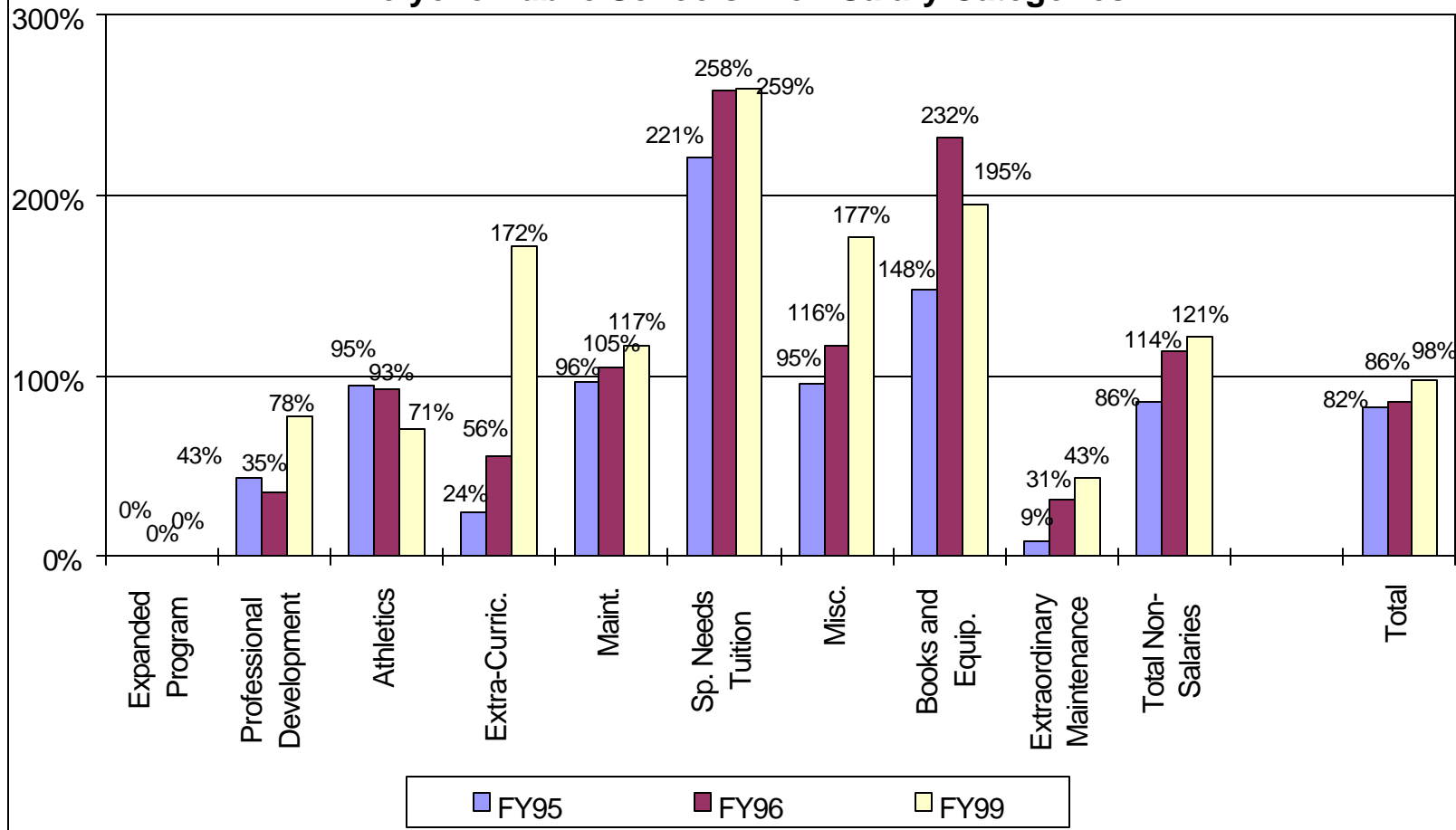
	Reported Expenditures			Foundation Budget			Variance		
	FY95	FY96	FY99	FY95	FY96	FY99	Expend. over(under) Foundation		
							FY95	FY96	FY99
Teaching Salaries	\$20,702	\$22,085	\$27,304	\$23,482	\$25,943	\$28,730	(\$2,779)	(\$3,858)	(\$1,426)
Support Salaries	\$1,645	\$1,739	\$3,011	\$4,710	\$5,038	\$5,567	(\$3,065)	(\$3,298)	(\$2,557)
Assistants' Salaries	\$1,246	\$1,719	\$2,032	\$828	\$932	\$973	\$419	\$787	\$1,059
Principals' Salaries	\$1,001	\$1,106	\$1,827	\$1,464	\$1,575	\$1,857	(\$463)	(\$469)	(\$31)
Clerical Salaries	\$1,332	\$1,703	\$2,145	\$876	\$949	\$1,100	\$456	\$754	\$1,045
Health Salaries	\$326	\$243	\$619	\$335	\$368	\$413	(\$10)	(\$125)	\$207
Central Office Salaries	\$324	\$359	\$591	\$1,422	\$1,541	\$1,783	(\$1,098)	(\$1,182)	(\$1,193)
Custodial Salaries	<u>\$1,942</u>	<u>\$1,626</u>	<u>\$2,723</u>	<u>\$1,855</u>	<u>\$2,038</u>	<u>\$2,256</u>	<u>\$87</u>	<u>(\$413)</u>	<u>\$466</u>
Total Salaries	\$28,518	\$30,580	\$40,251	\$34,970	\$38,385	\$42,680	(\$6,453)	(\$7,805)	(\$2,429)
Benefits	\$3,935	\$3,486	\$4,112	\$4,857	\$5,343	\$5,909	(\$922)	(\$1,856)	(\$1,796)
Expanded Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,537	\$1,567	\$1,638	(\$1,537)	(\$1,567)	(\$1,638)
Professional Development	\$365	\$326	\$799	\$846	\$929	\$1,029	(\$481)	(\$603)	(\$230)
Athletics	\$358	\$347	\$439	\$377	\$373	\$618	(\$19)	(\$26)	(\$180)
Extra-Curricular	\$54	\$131	\$507	\$223	\$234	\$295	(\$169)	(\$102)	\$213
Maintenance	\$2,423	\$2,906	\$3,577	\$2,518	\$2,767	\$3,056	(\$95)	\$139	\$521
Special Needs Tuition	\$2,020	\$2,554	\$2,995	\$913	\$990	\$1,156	\$1,107	\$1,563	\$1,839
Miscellaneous	\$680	\$899	\$1,585	\$713	\$773	\$895	(\$33)	\$126	\$691
Books and Equipment	\$3,450	\$5,833	\$5,861	\$2,331	\$2,513	\$3,011	\$1,119	\$3,320	\$2,850
Extraordinary Maintenance	<u>\$143</u>	<u>\$559</u>	<u>\$856</u>	<u>\$1,632</u>	<u>\$1,794</u>	<u>\$1,986</u>	<u>(\$1,489)</u>	<u>(\$1,235)</u>	<u>(\$1,129)</u>
Total Non-Salaries	\$9,494	\$13,555	\$16,619	\$11,090	\$11,939	\$13,683	(\$1,597)	\$1,616	\$2,936
Total	\$41,946	\$47,622	\$60,983	\$50,918	\$55,667	\$62,272	(\$8,972)	(\$8,045)	(\$1,289)
Revenues							\$0	\$0	\$0
Net School Spending	<u>\$41,946</u>	<u>\$47,622</u>	<u>\$60,983</u>	<u>\$50,918</u>	<u>\$55,667</u>	<u>\$62,272</u>	<u>(\$8,972)</u>	<u>(\$8,045)</u>	<u>(\$1,289)</u>

Note: Data obtained from DOE and HPS. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Spending as a Percentage of the Foundation Budget Holyoke Public Schools: Salaries and Benefits



**Spending as a Percentage of the Foundation Budget
Holyoke Public Schools: Non-Salary Categories**



Holyoke Public Schools
Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Scores

	Grade	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1988-96 Change	1996 State Average	1996 HPS Over/(Under) State Avg.
Reading									
	4	1090	1000	1050	1080	1120	30	1350	-230
	8	1090	1120	1080	1090	1170	80	1380	-210
	10	NA	NA	NA	1140	1190		1310	-120
Math									
	4	1060	1060	1100	1080	1140	80	1330	-190
	8	1130	1140	1130	1110	1140	10	1330	-190
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1160	1190		1310	-120
Science									
	4	1070	1030	1060	1090	1150	80	1360	-210
	8	1110	1120	1090	1060	1110	0	1330	-220
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1130	1200		1310	-110
Social Studies									
	4	1070	1030	1060	1100	1130	60	1340	-210
	8	1120	1120	1070	1080	1140	20	1320	-180
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1150	1180		1300	-120

Note: N/A indicates that test was not given to all grades in all years. Data obtained from DOE

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Holyoke**Teachers**

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 &5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

1 Education Reform	1&2	4 &5	3
1.a. Are you familiar with the issues of Education Reform, the Law passed in 1993?	80%	8%	12%
1.b. Do you feel you have a good understanding of the purpose and the goals of the law?	77%	8%	15%
1.c. Do you feel that there is a lot of confusion about what Education Reform is all about?	60%	18%	22%
1.d. Do you feel the issues of Education Reform are considered when school district plans are made?	79%	2%	19%
1.e. Do you feel the issues of Education Reform are considered when school-based plans are made?	81%	1%	18%
1.f. In your opinion is the school district taking positive steps to improve education?	85%	2%	12%
1.g. Do you feel your job has changed because of Education Reform?	56%	28%	16%
1.h. Do you think there has been an improvement in student achievement in your school due to Education Reform?	36%	12%	52%
1.i. Do you think the improvements in education at the school would have happened without Education Reform?	45%	9%	46%
1.j. Have you perceived an increase in school funding tied directly to improvements in education in your district?	34%	21%	44%
1.k. Is there a formalized process in place to analyze student test scores and identify areas of academic weakness?	70%	11%	19%
1.l. Are there specific programs in place to improve student performance in areas where academic weaknesses have been identified?	74%	9%	17%

2 Educational Goals and Objectives	1&2	4 &5	3
2.a. Are the school administration's goals and objectives generally clear and understandable?	82%	10%	8%
2.b. Are you clear about the school district's goals and objectives as they relate to your own job?	79%	10%	11%
2.c. Are there indicators issued to measure progress toward goals and objectives generally?	47%	14%	39%
2.d. Are there indicators used to measure your progress toward goals and objectives?	53%	14%	33%
2.e. Do you have a role in developing these goals and objectives?	43%	35%	22%

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Holyoke

Teachers

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 & 5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

3 Curriculum		1&2		4 & 5		3
3a.	Do you believe that your district's curriculum is coherent and sequential?	58%		22%		19%
3b.	Do you believe that your curriculum is challenging and tied to preparing students for life after secondary school?	76%		9%		15%
3c.	Is there a coherent, on-going effort within the district to keep curriculum current with evolving trends and best practices in pedagogy and educational research?	75%		8%		17%
3d.	Do teachers play an important role in reviewing and revising curriculum in the district?	63%		16%		22%
3e.	Will the curriculum now in use in your school improve student test scores?	53%		7%		40%
3f.	Do you believe that the curriculum content does not impact test scores as much as how a subject is taught by a teacher?	64%		15%		21%
3g.	Is the curriculum in your school aligned with the state frameworks?	92%		2%		6%

4 Planning		1&2		4 & 5		3
4a.	Is the planning for important issues (e.g. curriculum, budgetary, etc.) within the district a top-down process?	75%		4%		21%
4a.1.	If the answer is "Definitely yes" (1) or "Generally yes" (2), is there an important role for teachers and professional staff in the planning process?	32%		37%		32%
4b.	If staff does not have an important role in developing plans, are decisions made by the central office/school committee explained so that you can understand the basis for the decision/policy?	36%		33%		30%
4c.	Are you familiar with the content of your school improvement plan?	74%		12%		14%
4d.	Does the school improvement plan address the needs of students in your school?	68%		13%		19%
4e.	Is the plan used to effect important changes in your school?	61%		11%		28%

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Holyoke

Teachers

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 &5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

5 Communications and Mission Statement		1&2		4 &5		3
5a.	Is there adequate on-going communication between teachers and district administrators? In other words, do you think that you know what is going on in the district?	37%		32%		31%
5b.	Is there adequate communication between you and your superiors?	68%		17%		15%
5c.	Is there a mission statement in place for your school district?	79%		2%		19%
5d.	Is there a mission statement in place for your school?	89%		2%		8%
5e.	Does the mission statement define how the school is run, and how students are taught?	64%		16%		21%
5f.	Are these mission statements applied in the operation of the school and the teaching of students?	55%		16%		30%

6 Budget Process		1&2		4 &5		3
6a.	Do you understand your school budget process?	45%		29%		26%
6b.	Do you understand how the budget process impacts your department?	67%		15%		18%
6c.	Is the school budgeting process fair and equitable?	21%		38%		41%
6d.	Are budgetary needs solicited and adequately addressed in the budget process?	23%		38%		39%
6e.	Once the budget is approved and implemented, does the allocation and use of funds match the publicly stated purposes?	36%		14%		50%
6f.	Given the circumstances, the school department seems to be doing the best it can with in the school budget process.	44%		20%		37%
6g.	Are there deficiencies in this process?	53%		17%		30%

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Holyoke

Teachers

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 &5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

7 Professional Development		1&2		4 &5		3
7a.	Is there an adequate professional development program in your school?	70%		21%		8%
7b.	Is the program designed to meet school needs and tied to the new frameworks and assessments?	71%		11%		18%
7c.	Is the program designed to change the content of pedagogy in classrooms?	57%		15%		28%
7d.	Are there deficiencies in the professional development program?	43%		27%		30%
7e.	Did you participate in the professional development program in 1997/98?	83%		15%		2%
7f.	Professional development is making a difference and will improve education in my school district.	67%		12%		21%
8 Supplies		1&2		4 &5		3
8a.	Have you generally received sufficient and appropriate supplies to do your job?	59%		29%		12%
8b.	Have you generally received sufficient and appropriate basic educational supplies (e.g. chalk, paper, pens, pencils, etc.) to do your job?	87%		8%		5%
8c.	Have you generally been supplied with a sufficient number of a current edition of textbooks?	63%		29%		9%
8d.	Are students given a copy of these textbooks to keep at home during the year?	2%		93%		5%
8e.	Have you generally been supplied with sufficient ancillary curriculum materials (e.g. current maps, lab supplies, videos, etc.)?	46%		40%		15%
8f.	Is the process for obtaining supplies and materials effective, time sensitive and responsive to your classroom needs?	41%		37%		21%

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Holyoke

Teachers

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 &5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

9	Facilities	1&2		4 &5		3
9a.	How would you rate the overall state of school facilities (e.g. cleanliness, security, maintenance, structural integrity)?	57%		31%		31%
9b.	How would you rate the overall state of classrooms, labs, and other teaching rooms/areas?	57%		26%		26%
9c.	How would you rate the overall state of the common areas (e.g. hallways, stairwells, and cafeteria)?	61%		17%		22%
9d.	How would you rate the overall state of the areas outside of the building (e.g. playgrounds, walk-ways and grounds)?	63%		18%		18%
9e.	Would you agree with the following statement: "The school administration makes an effort to provide a clean and safe working environment."	70%		18%		12%

10	Computers and other Educational Technology	1&2		4 &5		3
10a.	Are the usage of computers and other technological tools a significant part of the management practices at the school?	68%		12%		19%
10b.	Are the usage of computers and other technological tools a significant part of the instructional practices at the school?	47%		26%		27%
10c.	In terms of student usage, are computers generally available only in a computer laboratory setting or library/media center?	44%		47%		9%
10d.	How many computers are located in your classroom?					
10e.	Do you have a school computer provided for and dedicated for your usage?	70%		28%		2%
10f.	Is there a school computer provided for and shared by you and other teachers?	55%		35%		10%
10g.	Are there computers available for and used on a regular basis by students?	69%		19%		12%
10h.	Is the number of available computers sufficient for the number of students?	25%		67%		9%
10i.	Are the computers in good working order?	64%		14%		22%
10j.	Are the software packages in the computers uniform and consistent with the instructional level to be provided?	48%		22%		22%
10k.	Is there a policy or program providing for computer training for teachers on software and computers used by students?	23%		19%		23%

SUPERINTENDENT'S STATEMENT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRESS AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM SINCE 1993

Since the passage of the Educational Reform Act of 1993, the Holyoke Public Schools have taken full advantage of the increased funding to rebuild the district by first increasing the overall number of staff. Our figures indicate a total staff increase of 27% over the 1993/94 school year.

Some key administrative positions have been added since 1993. Holyoke Public Schools now has a Curriculum Director, Human Resource Director, Technology Director, Parent Information Director and an Information Management Systems Supervisor. The total number of principals and assistant principal positions has increased 50%: from 21 in 1993 to 32 in 1999.

By increasing the number of instructional staff – (teachers and aides) at all grade levels and in all three programs: Mainstream, Transitional Bilingual and Special Education, the district has improved class sizes and reduced teacher/pupil ratios.

At the Elementary level the numbers of Unified Arts staff and Computer Specialist personnel have completely doubled. A significant number (15), Language Resource positions have been created. Some elementary schools currently have both English and Spanish Language Arts Resource persons.

The Middle School level expanded Foreign Language Studies (French and Spanish) into the Grade 6 and 7 curriculums. As with the elementary level, more Middle School Computer specialists were hired to enhance the connection between technology and the classroom.

At the Secondary level, increased staff contributed to the recent restoration of full accreditation for both Holyoke High School and Dean Technical High School by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

In addition to the increased number of staff in Holyoke, and in order to maintain a competitive salary structure attractive to talented personnel, the salary scales for each of the union bargaining groups have increased as well over the last 6 years.

With the improved fiscal situation, the members of the Holyoke School Committee, concerned community and staff members, along with the Superintendent, began to focus their attentions on developing a vision and philosophy for the Holyoke Public Schools.

In its 1995 mission statement, the Holyoke School Committee clearly established its emphasis on high expectations and high achievement for all students. The state Curriculum Frameworks provided the district with a clarity of focus, giving Holyoke Public School educators a strong sense of purpose to collaboratively develop the tasks, goals, and activities needed to actualize the school committee's vision and improve student achievement.

Within the framework of the statewide standards, and the local educational goals, policies, and budget established by the Holyoke School Committee, the curriculum development process and its products have been helping to achieve the primary goal of Education Reform: to enable all students to meet the high standards of the Common Core of Learning and Curriculum Frameworks.

Under the direction of Holyoke's Curriculum Director, the arduous process of developing Holyoke's own curriculum in each of the discipline areas has continued to occur. Beginning in 1996 Holyoke Public Schools' *Mathematics Curriculum Guide (K-12)* was completed. Since that time, *English Language Arts*, *Science & Technology* and *Educational Technology Curriculums* have all been developed. A multitude of committed Holyoke Public Schools staff has put enormous amounts of time and energy into the creation of these curriculum guides. Currently in draft form and soon to be approved, is the *History and Social Science Curriculum*. The guides for *World Languages*, *Health and Arts Curriculum* are nearing completion.

These guides are providing the foundation for the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and between the monolingual and bilingual programs in the district and initiating communication and coordination between feeding and receiving schools. They also provide a shared focus and direction for the expectations and learning outcomes of students within the district that is congruent with the Curriculum Frameworks and Standards required by the Department of Education.

In addition to the development of the curriculum, the Holyoke Public Schools has made certain that the educational textbooks, educational materials, and Assessment programs are also congruent with the Curriculum Frameworks Standards required by the Department of Education. Some specific examples of the new instructional materials purchased that enhance student learning opportunities are: Integrated Reading and Language Arts Series in Spanish and English, K-5, K-12 bilingual and ESL writing portfolios, Elementary hands-on Science kits, K-12 math manipulatives, new texts and calculators, updated supplies and materials for all secondary science labs, updated computers in labs and classrooms across the district and a K-12 Health program.

Critical to success on the MCAS is a high level of literacy. A central goal of the Holyoke Public Schools has been that all children achieve grade-level reading in their primary language by the end of the third grade. This requires rich, high quality primary classroom experiences starting in preschool, a safety net such as the Reading Recovery Program, appropriate text at students' instructional level, ongoing assessment and monitoring of student progress, school leadership and upper elementary and middle school grades. The district has continued to sponsor and expand on the numerous activities that support grade-level reading and mathematics skills. Some examples of these are:

- *Reading Recovery* – Early intervention program (total of 15 teachers trained)
- *Soar to Success* – intervention model for intermediate and upper grade students
- *High School Transition Program* – new option for 8th graders targeted for retention (summer program)
- *Third Grade Retention Program* – option for 3rd graders targeted for retention
- *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* – curriculum corresponds with state standards: depth in Mathematical thinking (K-5)
- *Connected Mathematics Project* – Lynch piloted implementation in SY99-00.
- *LINKS* – set of strategies and resources to help educators meet the challenges of working with students of diverse learning needs.
- *Summer Reading Program* – Grades 3-5

- *Project Advance 2000* – Improve English language proficiency - Grades 4-6
- *Excelsior Program* – Academic and therapeutic services to prevent regression for students with IEPs.
- *21st Century Summer Program* – MCAS Preparation and recreation – Grades 5-7.
- *21st Century Summer Gifted and Talented Program* – middle school level

Over the years, Holyoke has had to develop broad based and far-reaching Transitional Bilingual and English as a Second Language programs. In 1965, Hispanics constituted less than five percent of the school population. By 1999, that figure has grown to about eighty percent. Holyoke's Transitional Bilingual Education Program follows the transition philosophy where the native language and culture is used as a medium of instruction until the student acquires a level of English proficiency, which will enable him/her to function at a level with his/her peers in a monolingual classroom.

The TBE program serves as a bridge between the language and culture of the linguistic minority students and that of the English speakers. In order to better coordinate the transition between students in the bilingual and mainstream programs at the elementary level, a new integrated reading and language arts series was implemented in both Spanish, *Cuentamundos*, and English, *Spotlight on Literacy*. This was an innovative approach to match the elementary TBE reading program with that of the mainstream programs.

Another important change is that both the new reading series are based on the use of “on-grade-level” materials for all students within a classroom. In the past, ESL students were not able to develop the critical thinking skills appropriate to their grade level because the ESL teachers were using below grade level materials. Now, the ESL students can develop the same skills at the appropriate grade levels (with some amount of adaptation) as their mainstream counterparts. This has eased the burden of adjustment for newly mainstreamed students.

Other examples that mark an increase in the reading and writing components of the TBE Program are: the increase in the use of trade books, coordination of theme topics for Bilingual and ESL instruction, use of team teaching approach in the content areas, new teacher awareness of a broad based literacy program that intertwines reading and writing and extensive literacy training for bilingual and ESL teachers. At the elementary level, 3 Bilingual teachers and 1 ESL teacher have completed their training for Spanish and ESL Reading Recovery.

In response to the demands for increased English proficiency, a sheltered English approach is now being implemented in the delivery of Math and Science across the grade levels. At three elementary schools, transitional classes in grades one and two in the content areas are now being taught.

New ESL materials have recently been purchased for all grade levels K-12. At the middle school level, ESL classes have been paired with mainstream classes and bilingual classes with ESL classes for math, science and social studies.

The TBE administrator along with various staff have been involved in the process of revising the ESL curriculum K-12 to meet the requirements of Education Reform and develop critical English that are so necessary for the academic success of the TBE students in the mainstream program.

The TBE Program has developed and perfected a comprehensive assessment and tracking system for their students. All students are orally assessed in the fall and spring of each school year. A thorough review of every TBE student's individual instructional plan takes place twice a year by TBE staff: in mid-year and late spring. These reviews are used to project changes in instruction and plan for the future needs of each student.

All TBE and ESL staff have continued to be updated and trained in the Curriculum Frameworks developed by the Department of Education as a result of the School Reform Act of 1993.

The TBE Parent Advisory Council (TBE PAC) has been and continues to be, an active link between the schools and the community. The members of the TBE PAC have been participating in school related activities, monitoring the TBE Program, visiting schools and classrooms, and increasing the communication between schools and parents. The TBE PAC was instrumental in initiating the first Holyoke Parents Statewide Conference: *Parents, Schools, and Community: Improving Education and Building Citizenship Toward the Year 2000*. This conference was held on October 25, 1996, at the Dean Technical High School, where the main speaker, *Dr. Virginia Collier* addressed the group with her latest research on bilingual education.

Holyoke Public Schools' Special Education costs and services have continued to escalate over the years; alarmingly absorbing disproportionate amounts of Education Reform funding. The type and severity of handicapping conditions now served within our schools require an ever-increasing range of specialists, equipment and educational programs.

Across the district, Special Education has expanded programs and procedures to aid in the continued inclusion and mainstreaming of students into regular classrooms for both English and Spanish speaking students. Students in self-contained programs are being mainstreamed whenever possible for a variety of academic as well as social experiences. Special Education classes, once concentrated at a few schools, have been more widely dispersed throughout the district offering greater school choice for the students and parents as well as greater involvement for the entire student body and staff.

The interplay of Special Education with other community and social agencies is a dynamic process that has continued to evolve as student needs are addressed in both school and community settings. The life-long learning process of Special Education students continues to be addressed in the transition process at both the early-childhood and high school levels by teams of individuals knowledgeable of the students and their needs/abilities. . The Special Education Department participates in the *Interagency Team*. It is made up of most state and city agencies that provide services to children in the Holyoke Public Schools. A number of out-of-district education schools/sites are also represented on this team that meets each month at a different member site to provide new information regarding any recent changes in delivery of services to children. The networking that is an integral aspect of the *Interagency Team* facilitates communication between the agencies in order to provide the collaboration necessary to deliver the comprehensive wrap-around services needed by an increasing number of our students. In Holyoke, a seamless web of services has been and continues to be developed and offered for any individual requiring specialized ongoing support.

The Holyoke School Department has worked closely with the Department of Education and other agencies and as a result of this collaboration the following programmatic options are now offered:

1. The formal establishment of the Early Childhood Center at Metcalf School.
2. The representation and involvement of H.P.S. staff on the Early Childhood Enrichment Team Project.
3. The establishment and implementation of a diagnostic center/ concept.

Currently, about 75% of all students in Holyoke who require specialized instruction receive services in a resource room or a replacement model program. The middle schools do not offer resource room support but provide skill and content instruction through replacement model classes. Because of its designation as an inclusion model school, Lynch Middle School staff has focused on the basic skill areas of reading and language arts in its replacement model classes. Peck and Magnet Middle Schools have both provided full replacement model options for students needing the services indicated by a 502.4 prototype. Both Dean and Holyoke High Schools have been providing replacement model classes in all academic areas. Holyoke High also continues to offer resource room support to students enrolled in regular education classes. At all grade levels, special education services have been and still are available in both English and Spanish/English bilingual environments.

A list of the various Holyoke Special Education class types now available in the system are:

- Behaviorally Involved Groups (BIG)
- Raising Individual Self Efficiency (RISE)
- Inclusion
- Special Education Technical Programs (SPED TECH)
- Transitional Occupational Program (TOP)
- Horizon Program
- Integrated Programs (Metcalf Preschool)
- Holyoke Alternative (HAP)
- Excelsior Summer Program

The Holyoke Public Schools has made outstanding strides in framing the educational technology plan as outlined by the Education Reform Act. Committees met over several months to develop and write the technology plan under the auspices of the new District-wide Technology Director. The formal Technology plan was completed and implemented.

During the 1995-96 academic year, the Holyoke Public Schools expended \$1.2 million on the installation of infrastructure, hardware, and software. By November of 1996, the new technology was in place and operational. The purchasing and installation of a Novell Network and server took place at Holyoke High School, Peck Middle School and John J. Lynch Middle School. Many pieces of software, along with 330 new computers and necessary peripherals, were also purchased to effectively use the new

system. Holyoke High School's network is an intricate and complex system. The server at the High School operates as one of the main hubs with the system.

For the 1996-97 academic school year, the Holyoke Public Schools committed \$500,000 to the installation of more networking, instructional hardware, and instructional software throughout the schools in the district. In concert with these acquisitions, plans were made to build an infrastructure in the administrative wings of each school to provide all building principals, asst. principals, guidance staff, and secretarial staff with new technology and the ability to communicate on-line with Holyoke Public Schools administrative staff.

The district has built networks throughout every school in the system and continues to implement the technology plan. The school district began the movement of computers, not just into computer labs, but also into the classrooms to ensure that the computer will be viewed as a tool for instructional learning with the classroom setting.

Of equal importance, Holyoke Public Schools has been committed to providing educational technology professional development to its teaching staff. Empowering the teaching staff allows teachers to bring technology into their classroom where students and teachers may engage in state-of-the-art educational experiences.

The administration of the Holyoke Public Schools recognized early on that ongoing professional development was essential in order to support teacher and administrators as they took on the challenges set forth by the Education Reform Act. Opportunities have been provided to review teaching models and the 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.

The Holyoke Public Schools have had a number of district and school-based professional development structures: Partnerships Advancing Learning in Mathematics and Sciences (PALMS), Cost-free Option for Recertification Program (CORP), Holyoke Professional Development School (HPDS), School-to-Work Partnership, and other initiatives, both locally and grant funded. These structures have been and still are available to all teachers and administrators and nurture professional growth, sharing and enhancement.

Since academic school year 1997, Holyoke has provided its staff with a comprehensive organized and outlined Professional Development Plan.

Professional development activities have been specifically developed both in the administrative and teacher levels that ensure the monitoring of teacher effectiveness in student learning. The staff development program for the principals in the area of clinical supervision and evaluation conducted through the University of Massachusetts and through other consultants is designed to provide the principals with skills and knowledge that should assist them in the evaluation and monitoring of teachers.

Staff development for teachers was planned to enable them to have a better understanding of the Curriculum Frameworks and methodologies used for the teaching of the Curriculum Frameworks and an enhanced awareness on how to best utilize our instructional materials in the delivery of the teaching services.

The focus of much of the staff development has primarily been centered around early literacy in the Curriculum Frameworks content for the very fact that "reading literacy" is critical to success in school and also, the student's ability to demonstrate his

skills and knowledge on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Standards (MCAS) necessitates the teacher's and the district's move towards a more standard based curriculum.

Through the Cost-free Option Programs and other staff development programs in Holyoke, the district has provided numerous opportunities for staff to interact and participate in programs that provide them with positive experiences that will assist them in understanding issues regarding race, creed and national origin. Some examples of these are the courses offered at Mt. Holyoke College for developing effective ant-racism classroom practices and the all day conferences at Dean Tech in June entitled for *Success for Diverse Learners*.

During the 1997-98 school year a standardized system for the assessment of students was put in place. The assessment criteria included: a) administration and scoring of the California Achievement and SABE tests in Spring, b) administration of the MCAS and Grade 3 Iowa Reading tests and the scoring results, c) administration and scoring results of the reading tests in Grades 2,3,7 and 8 in the Fall. The informational data obtained through the administration of these tests assisted the district in the development and refinement of the curricula and the implementation of appropriate staff development activity. Most importantly, the results helped ascertain the overall ability of our students, especially the high academic achievers.

In order to better assist the Administration and the School Committee in the monitoring and oversight responsibilities regarding students' successful accomplishment on the MCAS, a new student data tracking system was established. This student data tracking system is used to provide the individual schools, the district and the Holyoke School Committee information specifically related to a variety of categories so that appropriate and informed decisions can be made.

With this new data tracking system, teachers and parents should have a better awareness of student performance as well a grasp of the overall student academic climate in our schools. The monitoring system operates within the elements of a variety of accountability systems that are found in other school systems in the United States as well as mechanisms that have been identified as appropriate for use in the Holyoke Public Schools. The other elements that are now contained in this monitoring system are: enrollment data, attendance records, suspensions, drop out information as well as student academic achievement performance.

Part of the development of this monitoring system and Holyoke's corresponding review of other systems and assessment instruments resulted in this school district making the determination to utilize new standardized assessment tests: the *Terranova and Supera* in the future.

Over the years since Education Reform, the school system has offered a variety of opportunities for parents, principals and teachers to be involved in the successful implementation of the School Committee's goals and the development of school improvement plans. Through the parent advisory councils: Special Needs Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC) and the TBE PAC, interaction between the community and the schools allows for community input and involvement

Another very important opportunity for community involvement has been the establishment and maintenance of individual school improvement councils. On a yearly basis members of the school improvement councils are able to meet with the Holyoke

School Committee, through the Special Programs Subcommittee. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the successes and accomplishments of the previous school year's improvement plan and explain and show how the new school improvement plan for the forthcoming year will be developed.

Through the years these school improvement plans have undergone some changes in an attempt to provide the School Committee and the community with more definitive information on a specific number of topics such as:

1. Summary of the major accomplishments for the school year in question and a summary of the program recommendations and problem areas for the school year in question
2. A description and listing of all grants that are an integral part of the individual school improvement plan
3. Provide evidence that the school improvement plan is related to the overall district-wide strategic planning process
4. Provide evidence that the school improvement plan is based on content, process and outcome indicators regarding student achievement
5. A brief synopsis of the recent achievement test results
6. A prediction of the mean scores the school will be achieving on the next administration of the Terranova, Supera and MCAS tests
7. Provide evidence that the plan is evaluated on an annual basis
8. Provide a brief statement regarding the physical condition of the school and the safety and organizational structure of the school environment

In academic school year 1996, The Holyoke Public Schools began a major revamping and upgrading of its fiscal accounting budgeting and expense process by converting to the Munis System. The Munis System, it was hoped, would significantly improve management access to school-based financial information. The Munis System, has not completely brought about all the advantages originally anticipated, but the School Department continues to refine and improve the system in order to meet the needs of Holyoke Public Schools' financial management.

As a way for the Holyoke School Committee to continue appropriate monitoring of the financial-purchasing-payment-expenditure of funds, the district developed and implemented the Holyoke Public Schools Site-Based Management Report. This report deals with the financial aspects of the School Department budget as it related to Foundation Aid funding, Federal and State grant funding, and student activity funding. This report is further augmented by an Expenditure Report for each month of the school year which again contains information about the amount of money received, the amount of money expended, the amount of money transferred in or out, and the balance.

Ultimately, the school district, through this monitoring of the financial-purchasing-payment-expenditure of funds process, enables the School Committee to have an overview of how the spending is carried out by the various cost centers.

In an effort to ensure that all Holyoke Public Schools were appropriately equipped and structurally responsive to the academic needs of the students in Holyoke, a 2-phase architectural study was completed in May of 1997: The NESDEC Report. This report contained ten-year enrollment forecasts and the capacities of each of the schools and

concluded with a statement of a problem that identified space needs as well as suggestions for the development of a long-range master plan and a detailed capital asset assessment of each building.

The NESDEC Report was reviewed by the Holyoke School Committee and became part of the operational guide for Holyoke Public Schools' Maintenance Director. Many of the projects identified in the NESDEC Report have been addressed. A monitoring assessment report is provided to the School Committee on a regular basis by the Maintenance Director and the building needs of the Holyoke Public Schools have been discussed at the School Committee level and the administrative level.

A major goal to establish a new middle school has not yet been completed due to the lack of necessary funds to ensure the various activities that need to take place so the school can be built. The City is not in the position at this point in time to move forward with the construction of a new middle school.

The Maintenance Department currently attempts to keep operational all aspects of the Holyoke Public Schools plant assets and, at the same time, systematically service mechanical installations, ensuring their continued operation. Utilizing School Committee approved funds as well as School Committee identified maintenance projects, the Maintenance Department has worked to make sure the schools are maintained in a clean, well-maintained manner. Some examples of activities taken place in recent years are:

- Replacement of Peck and Lynch gym windows and renovation of gyms
- Window replacement at McMahon School
- Construction of Language Lab at Holyoke High School
- New tile floor and encapsulated asbestos floor at Holyoke High School
- Exterior guardrails, fabricated and installed at Kelly School
- Holyoke High School repainted
- New steam heat exchanger installed at Holyoke High School
- Handicap ramp installed at Lawrence
- Pre-cast concrete shelters for the removal of flammables from schools:
Morgan, Lawrence, Metcalf, McHugh and White
- Improvements at Metcalf to accommodate Pre-K

The school building custodians are now working with new types of chemicals for cleaning that are safer and, at the same time, more effective. Overall, the staff of the Holyoke Public Schools, from the Maintenance Department to the school custodians, have worked hard to make sure the buildings and grounds continue to be in a condition that augments and reinforces all our students to be successful and well-rounded educational leaders.

In June of school year 1999/2000, a representative group of internal Holyoke Public Schools staff and external community leaders, parents, and business persons got together for the purpose of establishing the future direction for the school district. This group of about 30 committed individuals, under the direction and facilitation of Ralph J. Jaspardo, Ph.D., of Educational Designs and recommended by the Department of Education, created the first formal District Strategic Plan for The Holyoke Public Schools.

This plan presents an analysis of the school district's strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats anticipated by current trends and future conditions. Based upon these understandings and analysis, this document defines the mission, objectives, guiding beliefs, and vision that will guide the school district during the next five years.

Once this plan has been officially approved by the School Committee, Principals will meet with selected members of their building staff. They will begin to develop the action plans - (School Improvement Plans), that address the prioritized objectives and strategies, establish specific action steps, identify the persons responsible for implementing each step, establish timelines, determine indicators of accomplishment, and establish budgets for the action plan implementation.

The Holyoke Public Schools will continue to provide educational opportunities for all students to reach their full potential in a safe, secure, healthy learning environment while valuing diversity and promoting responsible citizenship.

Auditee's Response

As Superintendent of Schools, I would like to commend the members of the Department of Revenue Team who conducted the review of the implementation of Education Reform in the Holyoke Public Schools. My staff and I found the Review Team to be professional, thorough and comprehensive in their conduct of the program audit. They also served as a valuable resource to us providing technical assistance on Education Reform Rules and Regulations as well as fiscal issues.

I would like to point out that while at times it was a stressful and a most demanding activity, the Department of Revenue Auditors were always highly professional and courteous and actually made the entire review a positive learning experience for all.

The following are the audit recommendations currently being implemented:

1. The district should implement procedures to ensure that instructions for the Individual School Report and the Foundation Enrollment Form are adhered to annually. This should include the dating of data used to prepare the reports.
2. The district has implemented a process to verify foundation enrollment reports sent to the DOE. The audit team strongly encourages the use of this verification process.
3. In the future HPS should file a report with the Commissioner of Education's office as required by law stating its reasons for not meeting the foundation budget target levels in any of the key areas noted in the chart above.
4. The audit team suggests that HPS develop a district policy for gathering and recording data to ensure that continuity exists on a yearly basis regardless of who completes the report for the district.

5. The audit team suggests that the district implement procedures to ensure that detailed supporting documentation be maintained.
6. HPS needs to improve its record keeping with regards to contractual documentation. All terms of employment should be documented and signed.
7. Sufficient funds should be budgeted and spent on professional development to meet DOE minimum spending requirements.
8. School improvement plans should be submitted to the school committee for approval in a more timely manner.
9. The audit team recommends that HPS should develop a process for remediation of 10th grade students who have failed the MCAS exam.

I would like to point out that, at this point in time, the district has developed procedures both at the school level, as well as the central office, to ensure that the data used to prepare a report is collected in a consistent and timely manner. Since much of the data collected is tied to finance, the responsibility for the data collection, maintenance and reporting has been moved to the business office. In addition, with the introduction of the new Rediker Student Enrollment Software Program as well as the Department of Education Data Based System, we will be able to respond in a more positive way to the auditor's recommendations.

A more formal and signatory verification of enrollment report has been established in the district. With the end of the year report for fiscal 2000, any category where the school district has not met the foundation targeted level, a letter will be sent to the Department of Education. The district, through the Superintendent's office, will ensure that all the necessary supporting documentation is not only kept at the district level, as was found in the audit, but also additional backup data would be kept at each individual school in a systematic, organized manner in conformity with our district policies. The district has just completed the Strategic Plan for the Holyoke Public School (copy attached). The district will be

working with the Regional Education and Business Alliance to provide staff development activities for all schools to assist them in developing new school improvement plans that are aligned to the district's strategic plans in a requirement of the Education Reform Law.

Commencing 2001/2002, each school in the district will be required to submit their school improvement plan prior to May 1st. Previously, the development of school improvement plans was delayed by the election of school improvement council members in the Fall. The school district has recently completed a new Strategic Plan. This new Strategic Plan will help form the basis of the new school improvement plans. In addition, in the Fall of 2000, all school committee members, school council members and related staff will receive training in the writing, development, implementation and monitoring of school improvement plans. For the 2000/2001 school year, the school improvement plans will be completed for December of 2000. (This is necessitated because of the new strategic plan and the need to train all the appropriate constituencies in the various components of a school improvement plan as well as school councils.) These changes will facilitate the more timely submission of the plans to the school committee.

The principals at both secondary schools will be working with the Director of Curriculum to ensure that a plan is in place for any and all students who did not pass the MCAS in grade 10. A plan will be in place by April 2001.

I should point out that in addition to these initiatives and/or activities, there has been an increase of \$3,000.00 in the amount of funds the principals can obtain through merit pay. The increase would clearly be aligned to the findings and recommendations of the Department of Revenue audit.

The following additional administrative positions have been established: the Director of School Improvement/Title 1; The Director of Program Assurance and Student Accountability; and three Academic Coordinators, (Reading and Language Arts, Mathematics, and Second Language Learning) at the Middle School Level. These added positions complete the infrastructure necessary to successfully continue the implementation of the Education Reform Law in Holyoke.

While the school district is appreciative of the Department of Revenue's comments regarding individual contracts for central office staff, it is an understanding that the central office staff works as a team with the Superintendent. These central office staff retain statutory rights set out by law.

