



HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Holyoke High School Dean Campus Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy

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I. Purpose and Overview

Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) recognizes that early exposure to career pathways, including Chapter 74 Career and Technical Education (CTE), is critical to equitable postsecondary access and informed decision-making. In alignment with 603 CMR 4.00, HPS has adopted this Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy to ensure that all students in Grades 7 and 8 are made aware of, and meaningfully engaged with, the CTE pathways available to them within and beyond the district.

This policy is designed to:

- Promote equitable access to information about CTE programs;
- Support student decision-making using the MyCAP process;
- Foster partnerships between HPS middle schools and regional CTE providers;
- Fulfill all state regulatory requirements.

II. Statement of Goals

Holyoke Public Schools is committed to:

- Ensuring all students develop an understanding of high school options, including CTE, before completing Grade 8;
- Supporting career-connected learning that reflects student identity, interest, and future goals;
- Implementing early and ongoing exposure to real-world career pathways through collaboration with high schools, employers, and technical programs;
- Leveraging MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) to guide each student's academic and postsecondary planning.

III. High School Pathway Options

Students in Holyoke may access CTE pathways through:

- **Holyoke High School Dean Campus** – offering state-approved Chapter 74 programs;
- **Regional CTE Schools** – including Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Education Center, Pathfinder Regional, and more.
- **Non-resident Application and Tuition Access** – in accordance with M.G.L. c. 74, § 7.

These options align with Massachusetts' Early College, Innovation Pathways, and Industry Credential initiatives. HPS counselors support all students in understanding eligibility, deadlines, and placement requirements.

IV. Middle School Career Exploration

A. MyCAP Integration

All HPS middle school students engage in MyCAP career exploration activities beginning in Grade 6. These activities are designed to:

- Build student self-awareness and identity;
- Introduce career clusters and labor market information;
- Help students reflect on personal interests, goals, and pathways.

The district's MyCAP Scope and Sequence is included in the Appendix to this policy and is updated annually.

B. School-Based Activities and Outreach

Each year, by October 15, HPS middle schools will ensure that students receive information about CTE programs through:

- In-school presentations by Dean Campus and regional CTE school staff;

- High school and career awareness events;
- Email, postal mail, and website postings highlighting application windows and open house events;
- Distribution of translated and accessible materials in English, Spanish, and other necessary languages.

Middle school counselors will coordinate with CTE school representatives to maximize student and family engagement.

V. CTE School Tours

Each HPS middle school will ensure that all 8th grade students have the opportunity to tour Holyoke High School Dean Campus.

- Tours will be coordinated by October 31 of each school year.
- Transportation will be provided by the hosting CTE school, as required by regulation.
- Participation in a confirmed CTE school tour will not be marked as an unexcused absence.

Each middle school will designate a staff member to manage logistics, permission forms, and accommodations.

VI. Records and Data Sharing

In compliance with 603 CMR 4.03 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), HPS will:

- Provide names and addresses of all 7th and 8th grade students to authorized CTE school personnel by October 15 each year, unless a parent or eligible student opts out;
- Maintain public notice and opt-out procedures in student handbooks and on the district website;
- Ensure student data shared with CTE schools is limited to what is necessary for admissions and lottery weights (i.e., attendance, discipline, interest) and only from Grade 7 onward;
- Confirm promotion status for admitted students following final grades.

VII. Maintenance and Implementation

HPS will:

- Maintain documentation of this policy's implementation, including:
 - Participation rates in tours;
 - MyCAP completion data;
 - Records of outreach events and communication;

- Submit this policy to DESE by November 1, 2025, and upon any subsequent revisions;
- Complete and submit DESE’s annual attestation form affirming policy implementation;
- Make this policy publicly available on the district website and in print upon request.

Appendix: MyCAP Scope and Sequence (Grades 6–8)

Grade	MyCAP Activities	Related Pathway Exploration Goals
6	Self-awareness lessons, interest inventories, “Who Am I?” journal prompts	Establish career identity foundations
7	Career cluster exploration, intro to CTE, postsecondary goal-setting, optional digital portfolio launch	Align interests with future goals
8	Career speaker events, CTE tours, mock applications, transition planning with high school counselor	Prepare for high school pathway decisions