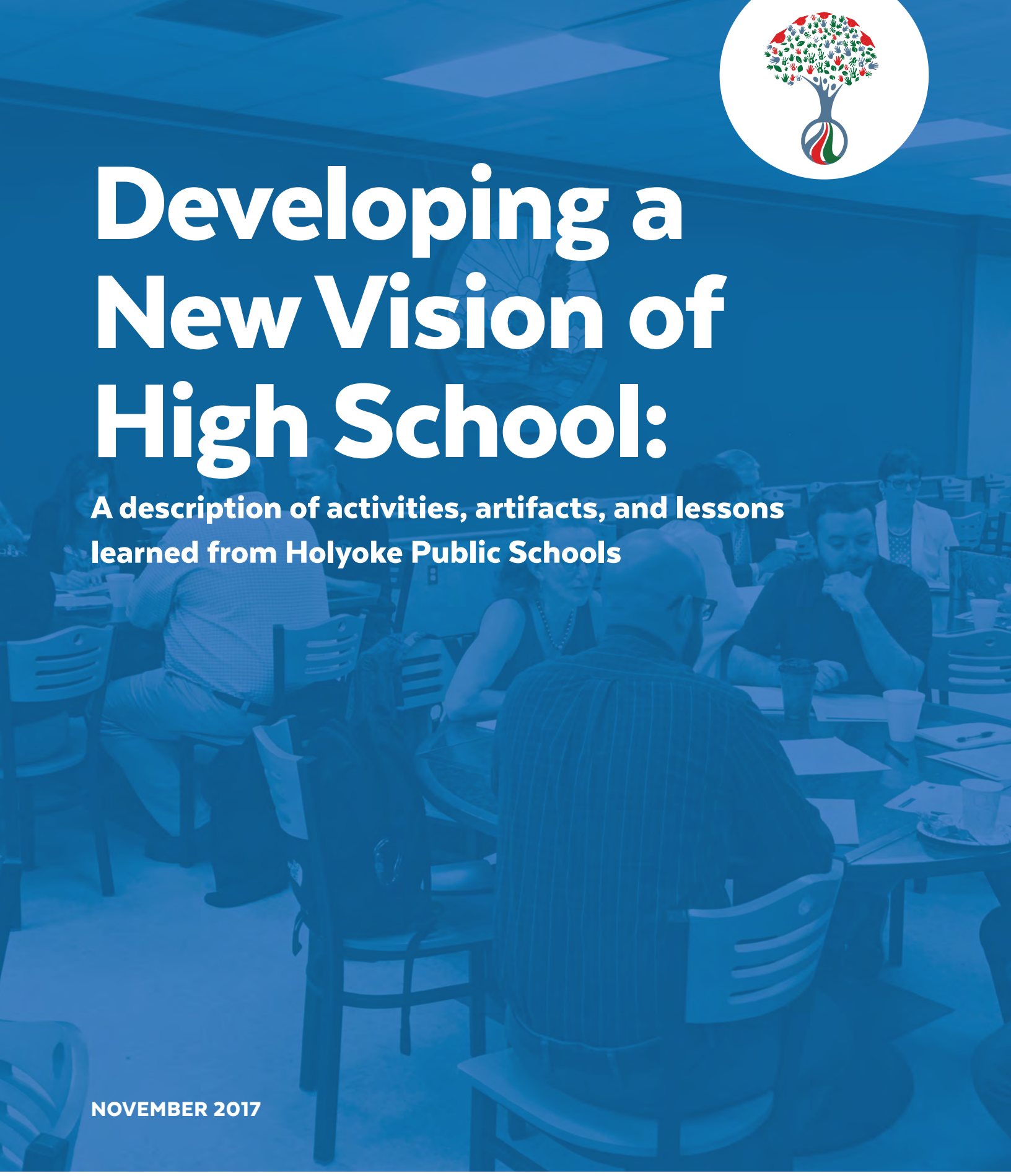


Developing a New Vision of High School:

A description of activities, artifacts, and lessons learned from Holyoke Public Schools

NOVEMBER 2017

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A PATHWAY FOR EVERY STUDENT

Acknowledgments

The Barr Foundation would like to acknowledge and thank Barbara Crock, Ed.D., President of Crock Leadership Associates LLC, for authoring this synthesis of Holyoke Public Schools' high school redesign process. We also thank Holyoke Public Schools for their thoughtful, ambitious work and their willingness to share their experience and learning with the field.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Context: Holyoke Public Schools

Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) served approximately 1,600 high school students across two campuses in western Massachusetts in the 2016-17 school year: Dean Technical High School (200 students) and Holyoke High School (1,300 students). Both schools have strong alumni networks and local community support.

Dean Technical (Dean) has historically served as the district's vocational education school, training students for jobs in the local economy in auto mechanics, printing, and machine manufacturing. The jobs that have traditionally been linked to Dean's career preparatory programs are no longer consistently viable options within the local county nor across the state, creating the need to redesign the career technical programs at Dean to meet the needs of the 21st century labor market.

Holyoke High School (HHS) has served as the district's "college-prep" campus, providing many—but not all—students with access to options for post-secondary study. In the 2015-2016 school year, HHS analyzed its "Freshman On-Track Indicators." For example, 36% of all freshman students across the high schools in the 2015-16 school year were failing one or more core classes (English, math, science, social studies) at the end of their third school quarter and, historically, 98% of the students who did not successfully pass English in 9th grade did not graduate from high school.

In April 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to designate Holyoke Public Schools as chronically underperforming (Level 5), placing the district in state receivership. In July 2015, by appointment of Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Dr. Stephen Zrike, Jr. became the Receiver of Holyoke Public Schools. In October 2015, Dr. Zrike convened a Secondary School Redesign Working Group to begin the first phase of the high school redesign process, and in January 2016, the Working Group provided recommendations to Dr. Zrike to improve high school graduation rates, student academic performance, and student engagement and ownership.

In the 2016-17 school year, a Freshman Academy was established to create equitable experiences for all freshman students across high school campuses. New leadership was established at Dean Technical High School, and participation in dual enrollment courses with Holyoke Community College, Westfield State University, and the University of Massachusetts quadrupled. While the Work Team's recommendations served as a foundation for high school redesign work, Dr. Zrike, with support from the Barr Foundation, simultaneously proposed a second phase of high school redesign. The purpose of phase II of high school redesign, which is the focus of this document, was to develop a comprehensive new vision for high school education in Holyoke.

Building from the district's vision of "a pathway for every student," HPS entered phase II of high school redesign work in the 2016-17 school year. The district embarked upon the phase II planning process open to all possibilities for the eventual design of Holyoke's two high schools. The intent was that the new vision for high school education would create complementary, competitive, and 21st century learning pathways for all students to challenge the existing current system in place within Holyoke Public Schools.

While there are many decisions and phases still to come for transformation, Dr. Zrike and HPS know that the process begins with a dramatic shift in school culture and the foundational experiences of school. In Holyoke, Massachusetts, high school redesign is not just desirable—it is essential to the success of its students.

Stages of Developing a New Vision of High School

This document outlines three stages of work in the phase II redesign process in order to develop a new vision for high school education in Holyoke. First, *stakeholder engagement* describes the efforts of the Holyoke Coordinating Committee to expand the number of individuals involved in high school redesign and to structure work teams. Once the working structures were established, team members began to *explore high school models* in the second stage. Preparing for, participating in, and reflecting upon school visits both external and internal to the district are explored in this section. The final stage, *strategic transformation*, describes Holyoke's efforts to turn insights, inspirations, and challenges into a strategic plan to redesign high school education for its students. Finally, the document closes with key insights and lessons learned.

3 Stages of Developing a New Vision of High School

Stakeholder Engagement

- Design Team
- Innovations Team
- Recruitment, commitment, & orientation

SEPTEMBER

Exploration of Models

- School visitations
- External partners exploration
- Analysis & sharing

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

Strategic Transformation

- Strategic planning
- Feedback
- Professional learning

JANUARY - MAY

Stage I: Stakeholder Engagement

"Getting [more people and] the right people on the bus" — Jim Collins, Good to Great

Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) sought to authentically engage stakeholders in identifying, piloting, and building sustainable high school models. The Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways (ED), the Chief of Strategy and Turnaround, and the lead consultant/facilitator for the project served as the Coordinating Committee, accountable for driving the vision, implementation, and accountability of the high school redesign work. Key to this experience was the Coordinating Committee's development of teams of stakeholders.

HPS's Coordinating Committee engaged stakeholders at three nested levels in the exploration of innovations for high school redesign: (1) the Design Team, (2) the Innovations Team, and (3) the Secondary School Staff. The Design Team was envisioned to be the decision-making body for the strategic plan. The Innovations Team served as the district's lead learners, making innovation recommendations to the Design Team for consideration and use in the strategic plan. The secondary school staff who did not choose to apply to participate on the Design or Innovations Teams were informed of the learning and emerging recommendations through venues such as all-staff meetings.

Prior to the launch of the teamwork, the Coordinating Committee defined the purpose and logistics for each strand of stakeholder engagement. These are outlined in Table 1.2 on page 7.

Diagram 1.1 Relationship Among Teams

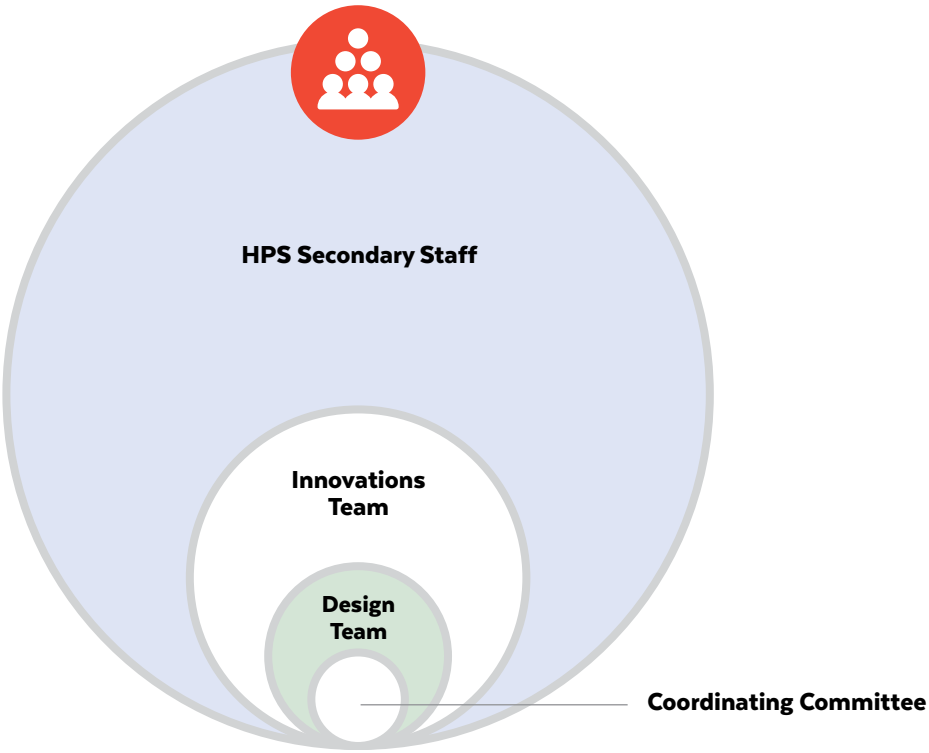


Table 1.2 Team Details

	COORDINATING COMMITTEE	DESIGN TEAM	INNOVATIONS TEAM	SECONDARY STAFF
Purpose	• Organize and drive the Design and Innovations Team's learning and collaboration • Write the strategic plan • Implement a communications plan across the greater community • Secure the support and alignment of the work with the Receiver/ Superintendent and the Chief Academic Officer	• Design a sustainable secondary school model to challenge current practice and transform the high school experience, resulting in complementary, competitive, and 21st century learning pathways for all students • Inform, advocate for, and approve the strategic plan	• Be the district's lead learners and make recommendations based on perspective, practice, and exploration • Advocate for innovation • Respond to models and drafts • Represent peers	• Increase awareness and understanding of the Innovations Team's learning, redesign initiatives, and recommendations in the strategic plan
Members	• 2 district staff members • 1 lead consultant	• 3 district staff members • 3 school administrative members • 2 teacher representatives • 1 state education department liaison • 1 facilitator	• 1 district staff member • 13 teacher/staff representatives • 3 parents • 4 community members • 4 students	• *All* teachers, counselors, and teaching assistants at Dean Technical HS and Holyoke HS
Duration	• Ongoing	• Ongoing	• 4 months	• Ongoing
Meetings	• 2 times per month	• Every 4-6 weeks • Participation in Innovations Team meetings and school site visits	• 7 meetings • At least 2 school site visits per team member • Community meeting • Participation and leadership in all-staff professional learning sessions	• 1-3 hours at quarterly all-staff professional learning sessions

Recruitment Strategies

The Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways (ED) led the earliest effort of recruitment for the high school redesign work at the opening of school activities with the staff of both high schools. As a new team member of the district, the ED had just completed a 30-day entry period listening to the cares and concerns of the community. During the opening professional development, the ED shared trends and challenging statements with the staff and asked them to reflect on the following comments:

- "I heard Dean Tech is a dumping ground."
- "I heard that Holyoke High serves some students well, and other students not well."
- "I heard that the high schools do not have a drop out problem. What they really have is a 'push out' problem for those student that don't fit."
- "I heard that in the Holyoke school system (all levels) being Puerto Rican and speaking Spanish are viewed as deficits that make it less likely students will learn to high levels."
- "I heard that [students learning English and those with special education needs] are largely served by 'others' in isolation."

At the end of this professional learning session, the ED announced that a large-scale change process was being launched to develop a new vision for the high school to address the current concerns. He invited those interested in pushing and leading the change to apply to join the work teams. Through the ED's presentation, the problems of practice to be solved through redesign were articulated. This allowed the work teams to be formed and to move to learning and action.

The *Design Team* consisted of administrative and teaching team members. Administrators from the central office and the schools were appointed by invitation from the Coordinating Committee. Teachers were recruited through the first all-school secondary professional learning session, the posting of a link to job description,[1] review of written responses, and individual outreach to encourage interest. The teachers responded to one of the following prompts:

1. What aspect of high school redesign work would you like to explore at another school? What do you hope to learn? What do you think might be possible here in Holyoke?
2. In what ways do you believe Holyoke's high school programs needs to continue to evolve? What do we need to learn more about as teachers, leaders, and learners to build pathways of choice for all students?

Teachers received a $1,500 stipend for participation, $750 each semester. This stipend showed appreciation and provided limited compensation for an investment of time beyond the school day, advocacy work, and time away from their primary teaching responsibilities.

The *Innovations Team* was composed of the lead learners for this project—students, teachers, parents, and community members. The purpose, timeline, and meeting dates were all scheduled in advance of and shared during recruitment. A requirement for application was participation in all scheduled meetings. Teachers were recruited through the first all-school secondary professional learning session mentioned above, the posting of a job description[2], responses to one of the two questions listed above, and individual outreach to encourage interest. Members of the Design Team nominated students[3] from each of the high school campuses. The ED met with the students as a small focus group at each site and then interviewed interested students. The ED also spoke to the family members of student finalists to ensure support for participation. In addition, family and community members were identified with assistance from the Receiver/Superintendent and principals. Family and community members often served multiple roles on the committee, representing various groups, including

[1] An excerpt of the Design Team job description for teachers is available in Appendix A.

[2] The full Innovations Team job description for teachers is available through the hyperlink and in Appendix B.

[3] The full Innovations Team job description for students is available through the hyperlink.

the school committee, the local charter school, the middle school taskforce, the social-emotional learning committee, the Puerto Rican advocacy community, and connections to local city government.

All members of the Innovations Team received a stipend. Teachers, parents, and community members earned $500. Students received a Chromebook.

After brief interviews and with consideration for a balanced diversity of role, expertise, peer representation, gender, race, school assignment, influence, and complementing and competing commitments, the ED made assignments to both the Design Team and the Innovations Team. The Design Team provided input into the ED's appointments to the Innovations Team. All teams' membership is listed in Appendix C, and Appendix D contains participants' names.

Initial Foci

There were two initial foci for both the Design and Innovations Teams. The first was to set team norms defining how they would work together while also challenging the individual mindsets that they bring to the team. Through the establishment of norms, permission was given to think differently, to question, and to seek new learning for the greater good of the team and Holyoke students.

Norms for Innovating[4]

- Look for your cage
- Spar with ideas
- Ask questions to probe for deeper understanding
- Change your mind
- Demonstrate curiosity
- Hold students' needs at the center of our work

The facilitator brought and taught the norms, integrating the voices of individual participants and making adjustments as needed. The most important norm seemed to be "Look for your cage." Adapted from *Cage-Busting Leadership*[5] by Fredrick Hess, the cage is the metaphor for fixed mindsets. Leaders, Hess argues, intentionally bust through their own cages, finding new strategies to do or new ways of being in the work. Cage-busting leaders are not limited by what has always been done or the way we currently believe it needs to be done. They are looking to bend the bars of the cage, to find new ways to unlock it, to make the cage bigger if they must live within one.

Participants often referred to this metaphor when presenting new learning from site visits or responding to others' comments. Participants could be heard saying, "Seeing my own cage now, I had a hard time understanding what I saw…" or "Perhaps my cage is preventing me from seeing the power of…" or "I think we might have different cages…"

The second focus of the initial engagement with the teams was to set a vision for instructional excellence in the 21st century. To do so the teams engaged in defining several commonly used terms—such as pathway, college and career ready, project-based learning, blended learning, mastery learning, etc.—by examining research and videos of current practice from other sites. Appendix E identifies the resources that were used to support participant learning. Participants were able to choose from a variety of learning sessions at initial Innovation Team meetings. In each learning session participants used a task card,[6] which included videos and question prompts related to the topic (similar to Summit Public School's model of personalized learning), to engage in small group conversation.

[4] Adapted from Aguilar, Elena. (2016). *The Art of Coaching Teams: Building Resilient Teams that Transform Schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[5] Hess, Fredrick M. (2013.) *Cage-Busting Leadership.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

[6] Sample Task Card Topics for Innovation Team Learning Sessions: 1) Individualized Real-World Learning, 2) Blended Learning 3) Mastery / Competency Based Learning

The use of video on classroom practices and school models was very intentional as a means of preparing participants for school visitations where they would need to observe teaching practice.

Additionally, they believed it was important for the participants to "see it" in action, not only read about it. Several Innovations Team members extended their learning by completing all task cards on their own between meetings.

In addition to the team formation, two key products came out of the initial stakeholder engagement work: (1) a working definition of "pathways" from the Design Team and (2) HPS student learning outcomes for 21st century learning from the Innovations Team. HPS' definition of pathways is *a student-centered, learning trajectory resulting in competitive advantage in the choice of college and/or career success.* A hypertext strategy was used to provide more details and definition to each phrase (see Table 1.4) and was created in a facilitated session with the Design Team.

The Innovations Team meetings were initiated with a focus on "21st century learning" and trying to understand how team members and others defined the term. After examining short inspiring videos like this one, the Framework for 21st Century Learning, and The Four Dimensional Education: the Competencies Learners Need to Succeed frameworks, team members prioritized key characteristics of a 21st century learner. These characteristics were turned into the word cloud in Graphic 1.3 and became key aspects and themes for the participants to look for during the upcoming school visits.

Graphic 1.3: Word Cloud of 21st Century Outcomes for Students

Table 1.4: Descriptions of Holyoke's Pathways Definition by Component

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A DISTRICT OF "PATHWAYS"	
Student-informed	• Students are empowered to shape the focus and demonstration of their learning through choices of content, learning modality, and program participation. • Through the learning, students come to know what interests and inspires them and what does not. This learning supports students in making better-informed choices. Students develop confidence and purpose. They know more about themselves. They take ownership for their learning.
Learning trajectories	• The development of an individual learning plan projects the student's personalized pathway to post-secondary success. • Learning plans are revisited and implementation is flexed in response to each student's ongoing development. • Trajectories guide, not assign, learners towards courses, career exploration, and college exploration activities.
Resulting in a competitive advantage	• Students build *strong core foundations* in key subjects – English, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, history, government – and 21st century [interdisciplinary/pathway] themes – [global awareness, economic and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, and environmental literacy]. Students know and name their competencies. • Students *learn to learn* and to creatively innovate. They think critically and solve problems. Students reason effectively, use systems thinking, and make judgments and decisions. Students communicate clearly and collaborate effectively and respectfully with others. • Students are *information, media, and technology literate*. They use these skills to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy. • Students *navigate complex life environments* because they know how to flex and adapt, initiate and self-direct, interact with and work in diverse teams, manage projects, produce results, guide and lead others, and act responsibly.
In the choice of college and/or career success	• Upon completion of their learning trajectory, students are aware of and prepared for multiple post-secondary opportunities. All students have explored multiple careers and colleges. They have participated in early college/dual enrollment, expanded learning opportunities, internships, and externships. They see all choices within their realm of possibility. • Students actively and with intention choose how to transition from adolescence to adulthood—college to career, certification to career, or career to college. • Students are accepted and invited to their choice of post-secondary options. They persist and continue to be positively engaged in civic, work, and family life.

Stage II: Exploration of Innovations

Oh, the Places We'll Go

HPS's strategy for the phase II high school redesign sought innovation and inspiration through three simultaneous strategies: (1) school visits by the Innovations and Design Teams, (2) sharing the learning from the visits to inspire others, and (3) partner exploration by the Coordinating Committee.

School Visits by the Innovations and Design Teams

Holyoke Public Schools set a goal of 100 individual visits to schools.[7] This was a demanding goal requiring each Innovations and Design Team member to visit two unique schools and to also engage parents, students, community members, and additional staff in the learning. It was important to set the minimum number of visits at two so that participants were required to see more than one model in action. Three important topics emerged through the site visits: organizing for success, school visit sharing, and implications for transformation.

Organizing for Success

Innovation Team members were introduced to the school visit expectations at the second team meeting. The goal of the meeting was to introduce team members to the schools and to have them sign up for visits that best matched their interests and schedules (prior to the second Innovation Team meeting, the Coordinating Committee had already identified and scheduled nine site visits). Visits were to be conducted by groups of three to five team members, generally within driving distance. Trips were usually full-day experiences, requiring substitutes for teachers. Key roles for each visiting team included the leader and the members.

Role of Team Leader

1. Arrange and coordinate transportation
2. Confirm logistics with contact at school
3. Coordinate logistics with Innovation Team members
4. Return artifacts to Coordinating Committee within 24 hours of visit
5. Identify two team members to lead sharing at the next Innovations Team meeting
6. Process reimbursement forms for transportation and meals

Role of Team Member

1. Respond to school visit invitation (RSVP yes or no to coordinating team)
2. Prepare for the visit through online research
3. Coordinate logistics with Team Leader
4. Participate in visit by asking questions and collecting insights
5. Process reimbursement form for meals
6. Share key insights at next Innovations Team meeting

Team membership was balanced to ensure the inclusion of a student and a parent or community member on each trip, whenever possible, and also staff representatives from both secondary school campuses.

Parents and community members traveled as team members both on day and overnight trips. Students only participated in day trips. Innovations Team members were asked to prioritize their availability and interest for scheduled trips twice during the process. The Coordinating Committee invited the team leader and members based on these requests and the opportunity to create inclusive teams representative of Holyoke Public Schools.

[7] When a team of three people visited one school site together Holyoke counted this as three individual visits to a site.

School Visit Protocol

All school site visits utilized the same protocol. Participants were to do pre-work, on-site work, collect artifacts, and share key learnings. The expectation was not to learn for one's own sake, but to bring back the learning to the district. The site visit protocol is provided in Appendix F.

School Visit Selection

Holyoke sought out a variety of models to understand the breadth of experiences, rather than the depth of experiences. The target was to get all team members on one school visit between Innovations Team meetings so that at the next meeting school visit sharing could occur and implications for transformation could be defined. To do so, Holyoke needed to have at least nine initial visits scheduled. Scheduling the site visits required outreach, patience, and follow-up. Several schools had a predetermined schedule of visiting days; some charged fees for visits; some worked with the teams to accommodate their specific needs; and others never responded to email or personal inquiries.

Initial inquiries were made by Coordinating Committee members with at least one of two intents: the ability to see "in action" one of the models previously shared via video with team members, or the opportunity to visit a school supporting students learning English or those with diverse learners—both areas that need improvement within HPS. Beyond the regional area, Holyoke was also able to send five teams to sites across the nation. These trips were often multi-day learning treks. One Coordinating Committee member participated on each trip as the team leader. The complete list of schools visited by Holyoke team members is available in Appendix G.

After completing 90% of the visits within 10 weeks, participants asked to visit their own schools in Holyoke. Many indicated that they wanted to learn more about what was actually happening in the classrooms of their schools. This request was perfectly timed, as team members were ready to compare what they had seen as possible to what Holyoke was currently doing. Appendix H identifies the internal site visits completed.

School Visit Sharing

Each team leader was responsible for collecting artifacts of the team's learning during the school visit. Required artifacts, identified in the school visit protocol (Appendix F), included:

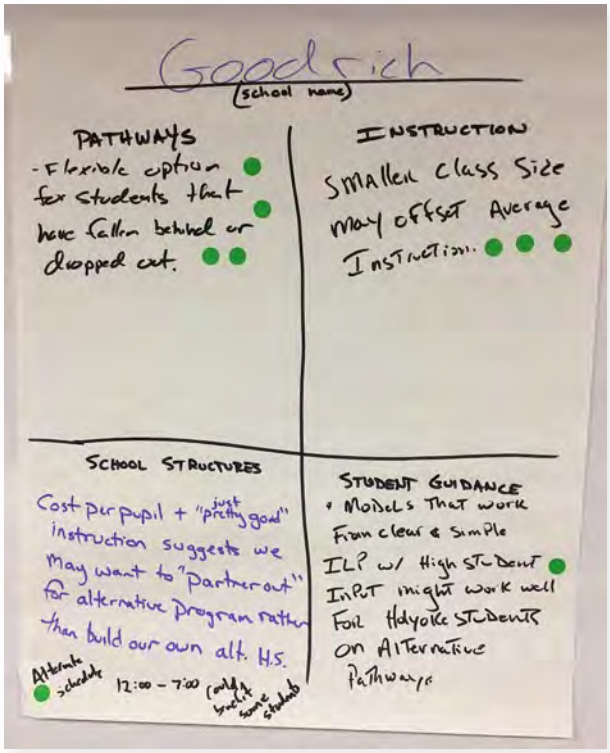
- 10 pictures from the visit illustrating key learnings or insights,
- 3 short video clips, each responding to a different prompt, and
- Scanned artifacts to share with other Innovation Team members at a debriefing session (For examples of raw artifacts, see the Worcester Tech, MA visit or the Stall/Wando, SC visit.)

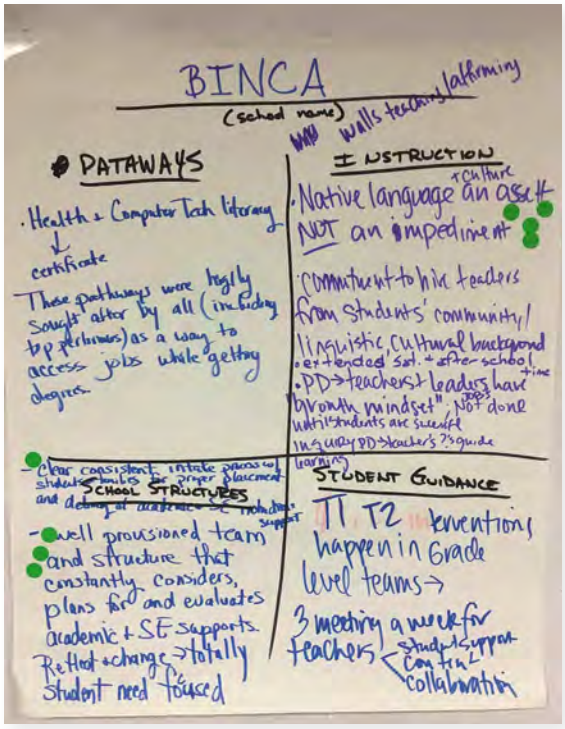
The team leader also identified two individuals who would lead a sharing session at the next Innovations Team meeting and describe three headlines. The Coordinating Committee compiled artifacts into brief video overviews prior to the upcoming Innovations Team meeting. At the next Innovations Team meeting, all participants (including the Design Team members) watched a video overview of sites recently visited and then had the opportunity to learn and discuss key findings through choice sessions (here's an example of one of the videos). Team members either led or participated in two 25-minute learning sessions of their choice at each meeting. The sharing began with 10 minutes of "headlines," and was followed by 10 to 15 minutes of discussion about the applications and implications for Holyoke.

Implications for Transformation

At the conclusion of the sharing, participants were asked to synthesize their learning from peers and the visits into four themes/quadrants summarizing the implications for HPS's strategic redesign plan: (1) pathways, (2) instruction, (3) student guidance, and (4) school structures. After a gallery walk of all learning, participants voted with dots regarding the emerging priorities for high school redesign. This process was repeated after each month of school visits as the priorities started to become recommendations.

Artifact 2.1 Sample School Summary Posters





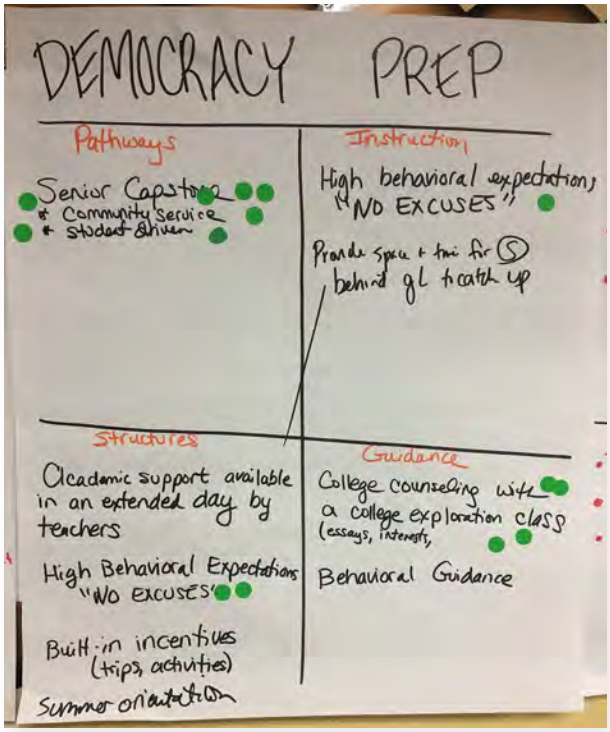


Table 2.2 Sample Compilation of Most Frequent Initial Recommendations

Pathways

- Capstone project (9)
- Project-based learning in the pathway (7)
- "Liberation through education"—anchored by mission (5)
- Business partnership for pathways (5)
- Options for students who are behind or have dropped out (4)
- Associates degree upon graduation (4)

Instruction

- Native language as asset in instruction; developing a student's first language while developing a second (6)
- Technology-driven (5)
- Project-based learning as instruction (4)
- No grade levels, competency-based (4)

School Structures & Systems

- Freshman Success/BAG (behavior, attendance, grades) on-track measures (7)
- Team teaching/multiple teachers in one room (6)
- Smaller class size (5)
- Collaborative planning daily (5)
- Flexibility of schedule (e.g. week on week off, 3 days on, 2 days off) (5)
- Return to admission/application-based entry (5)
- Native language as an asset (4)
- Technology (hardware, replacement, platform) (4)

Student Guidance

- Individualized Learning Plans (7)
- College counseling with a college exploration class (essays, interests, etc.) (4)
- Community as school; school as community (4)
- Foster student ownership (4)

From Innovation Team school visits that took place on October 2016 and November 2016, aligned to the strategic redesign plan quadrants. Numbers next to each theme indicate the number of initial votes for applicability to a new vision for high school education in Holyoke.

Members of the Innovations Team also shared their learning and insights with members of the community and the secondary school staff through forums, professional learning sessions, and the creation of video interviews.[8]

[8] Video Sample 1 (Student Voices), Video Sample 2 (Teachers), Video Sample 3 (Community Partner), Video Sample 4 (Adjustment Counselor), Video Sample 5 (Central Office Administrator)

Partner Exploration

While the Design and Innovations Teams were exploring innovative practices within schools, the Coordinating Committee was simultaneously exploring external partners to support HPS's ongoing design and anticipated implementation work. To this end, the Coordinating Committee identified several potential partners, researched and interviewed several options, and organized them into three groups based on its learning: school operators, technical assistance providers, and designers.

As recommendations began to emerge from the Innovations Team's work, the Coordinating Committee met with the Design Team to review initial findings from the partner exploration work and to co-define the opportunities and challenges of partnering with external organizations. External partners were not adopted until the strategic plan was approved.

Artifact 2.3 HPS Design Team Defines Successful Partner Conditions

Successful partner conditions

- Consistent presence
- Respond to the realities of local context
- Support HPS' vision
- Capitalize on what is already working
- Keep us honest

Challenging partner conditions

- Bring "their" program
- Limited flexibility during implementation
- Staying power beyond terms of initial engagement
- Do not have "skin in the game"
- Not in the work

Stage III:
Drafting the Strategic Redesign Plan

Creating a Shared Vision for What Will Be

During Holyoke's exploration stage, it was easy for participants to say "let's do this," or to comment on how another school was doing better in a particular area than others. Beyond these immediate responses, the purpose of the site visits, as well as the overall planning phase, was to inform recommendations and a shared vision for secondary education within Holyoke Public Schools. Tension existed between the Design Team's immediate need to define the "pathways" and develop the strategic plan, and the Innovations Team's commitment to ongoing learning. Two sets of activities supported the need for divergent and convergent thinking simultaneously: (1) use of design thinking exercises and (2) the creation of core tenets.

Design Thinking Exercises

Design thinking is a user-centered methodology to solve complex problems. It is not a linear process, but an iterative process to generate multiple ways of solving a problem and respond to feedback about direction and vision of a solution. The methodology utilizes a design mindset focused on actions towards creating a preferred future. It is not focused on creating the one solution.

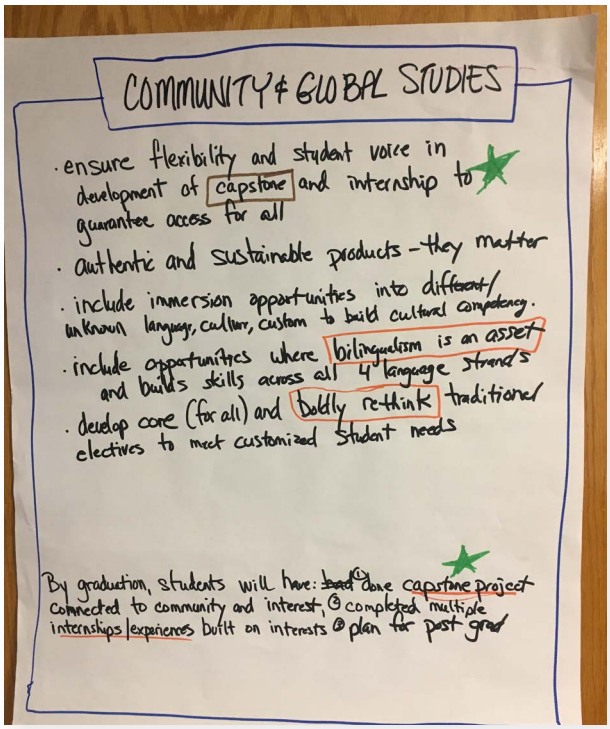
The consultant from the Coordinating Committee led both the Design Team and Innovations Team in design thinking exercises at several points during the redesign process. The first effort was with the Design Team after receiving the initial feedback from the first round of

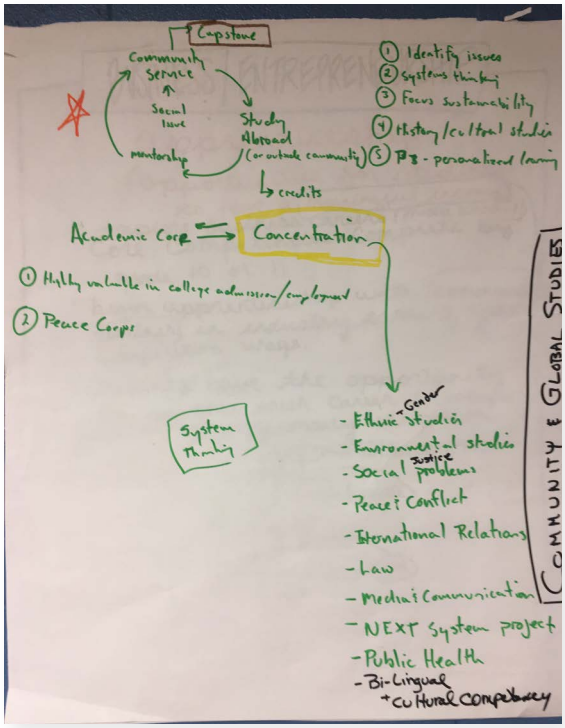
Artifact 3.1: Design Team Pathway Prototypes

school visits. The design process, adapted from the Stanford School of Innovation,[9] required each team member to build a three-dimensional prototype of a pathway in response to a current perceived problem of practice in Holyoke's secondary schools when compared to current research and initial recommendations from the Innovations Team. When the tightly timed and guided activity was completed, the Design Team had created nine unique models, increasing the divergent thinking of the group and spurring additional options. The process objectified possibilities and allowed safe talk and expanded thinking for what might be possible for the schools. The language of team began to sound like, "What if... How might... I can see another way... Let's blend these... What other way..."

The Innovations Team design thinking exercise further explored the challenges and opportunities determined by the Design Team. They asked, "How might we build pathways off of current successes while also integrating new learning from other sites?" A "world café" exercise to promote discussion in small groups supported collaboration around emerging tensions and terms. A guided design process allowed for the emergent creation of theme-based academies with embedded pathways integrating key learnings and recommendations from site visits. Artifact 3.2 shows two examples of pathways being envisioned within a Community and Global Academy. In design thinking, there is intentionality in creating multiple options, thus opening the mindset for more possibility, more creativity, and more bending of the bars of our cages.

Artifact 3.2: Innovation Team Academy-Pathway Prototypes





[9] For more information see https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/

Development of Core Tenets

While design thinking broadened possibilities, the Coordinating Committee attempted to narrow the recommendations through the identification and commitment to core tenets for design.

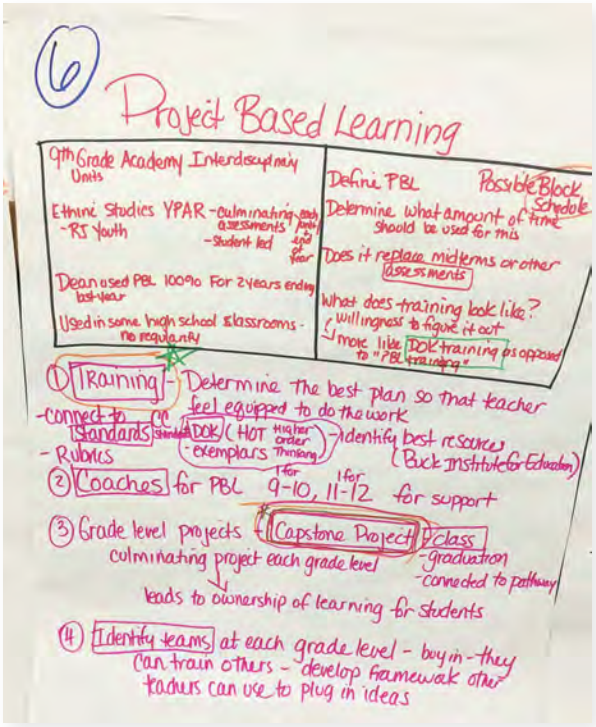
The core tenets began to serve as the non-negotiables for high school redesign in Holyoke. They also served as the bar of equality and equity for the district's "pathway for every child."

The initial descriptors of the pathways included ten characteristics, all derived from synthesizing the Innovations Team's key learning from school visits and the Design Team's research. The initial ten requirements for a pathway included:

1. Career and college outcomes for all students
2. Career and college exploration
3. Stackable credentials (high school diploma plus another credential) for all
4. Defined course sequences that meet MassCore, the Massachusetts recommended high school course of study
5. Standards aligned (Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, industry standards, WIDA, etc.)
6. Performance-based learning
7. Early college option
8. Access for all
9. Personalization strand
10. Flexibility within and across pathways

The Innovations Team worked to define the current and the ideal pathway characteristics, as well as the steps needed to reach the ideal state. Many of the "steps" to reach the ideal state became supporting factors in the high school redesign plan, often relating to various structures, systems, and mindsets. Artifact 3.3 identifies the current practices in the left box related to performance-based learning (characteristic #6), and also projects questions to be answered and recommendations for implementation.

Artifact 3.3: Evaluating the Current State and Future Needs for Project-Based Learning



Over time the Design Team honed these ten characteristics into five explicated core tenets[10] for Holyoke's secondary pathways:

1. All pathways prepare students for **career and college success** through exploration activities, coursework, and outcomes. Exploration is built into classes, activities, and applied learning opportunities. The greater regional educational community and the economy are reflected in the pathway design. Families and students choose the post-secondary destination. Staff members support students' interests and development through instruction, mentoring, and guidance.

2. Students apply learning, engage in design thinking and innovation, and contribute to the community through **project-based learning**, including **capstone projects**. Project-based learning requires students to acquire deeper learning by solving real-world challenges and problems. In Holyoke Public Schools, the community serves as the campus for project-based learning. Students' learning opportunities extend beyond the walls of the school and include **work-based learning opportunities**, such as internships and work-study.

3. The content within each pathway is aligned to **21st century education and industry-based standards**. In addition to content knowledge, students graduating from pathway programs demonstrate competency in thinking critically, communicating with purpose, problem solving, collaborating, and using technology. Capstone projects provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of academic and non-academic standards.

4. Students learn about their interests, preferences, and abilities throughout high school and are guided by caring adults in the development of **flexible and personalized** pathways. Students and their families make informed choices about applying to academies, concentrations within academies, and outcomes for individual pathways—college first, then career; career, then advanced certification; or both college and career simultaneously. Students have choice of instructional modes, projects, and courses to demonstrate mastery for graduation criteria. An increased emphasis on career and college planning collaboratively—guided by families, teachers, and guidance counselors—will support students setting their own direction.

5. All students will complete a common set of requirements to graduate. In addition, each pathway provides opportunities for students to earn **stackable credentials**, which include college credit; degrees; credit-bearing, non-credit, and work readiness certificates; badges; professional/industry certifications; apprenticeships; and licenses—all of which attest to people's skills, knowledge, and abilities. Pathways offer Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, early college, and industry certification opportunities.

[10] From HPS High School Redesign Strategic Plan, March 2017 at https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/turnaround/high-school-redesign/

Building off of the five core tenets described above, the Coordinating Committee took responsibility for the initial drafting of the redesign plan, seeking feedback and input from the Innovations Team and Design Team members. An initial draft was shared across the greater Holyoke community for an extended comment period in January 2017. From January – March 2017, Receiver Zrike and the ED held several formal, public sessions gathering reactions and input. Sessions were held with current high school families, extended day partners, community social support agencies, community employers, students, and current high school staff. With this additional input, the Coordinating Committee revised and published the final High School Redesign Plan in April 2017.

The High School Redesign Plan, developed by nearly 100 educators, students, community members, and national experts, is organized around an academy structure designed to provide "personalized learning pathways" for all students. The plan calls for creating a series of thematic academies that will provide opportunities for students to develop a personalized learning path towards college *and* career. Built upon choice and access to advanced educational opportunities, the plan deepens student engagement and provides families and business and civic leaders explicit opportunities to partner with educators to help guide students' career and college plans. Importantly, the academy structure will prepare Holyoke students for the global economy and a society that demands more critical thinking and higher levels of educational achievement. It is a structure that gives HPS students a competitive advantage, ensuring they graduate with stackable credentials sought after by employers and colleges and universities alike.

Key Insights & Lessons Learned for Developing a New Vision of High School

Throughout the three stages (i.e., stakeholder engagement, exploration of innovations, and strategic planning), team members across the different working groups stopped to reflect on key insights and lessons learned. The "top ten" list is shared below.

1 Seeing it makes a difference!

The strategic planning process described in this document was different than many strategies used by other districts as stakeholders were engaged as authentic learners and visionaries in the early stages. With clear directions from Dr. Zrike to create "pathways," but without expectations for what the pathways would be and/or what cultural and instructional methodologies were to be used, most were surprised by the flexibility and influence they were given to craft the vision and the plan.

The exploration stage was critical in shifting from an improvement process to an innovation process. One Design Team member commented, "We can improve what we know, but it is extremely hard to do something different if we do not know what it looks like in action." Visiting schools and being learners was key. Another individual commented, "I've grown up as a student, teacher, and leader in Holyoke. This was my first visit to a school beyond our city in more than 35 years."

2 Student voice and participation matter.

The Innovations Team reserved four spots for sophomore students, two from each of the two high schools, intentionally representing a variety of student populations. Sophomore students were chosen because they brought high school experience and would be present for implementation of the recommendations in years to come. The ED interviewed and met with individual students prior to their participation. The facilitator intentionally created space for their voice within meetings, often letting students have the final word. Having students, families, and staff integrated into one team brought equality to the amplification of their voices.

On school visits, the students were the first among their visiting teams to see the differences and opportunities within the cultural and instructional models. Visiting schools provided a point of comparison, interrupted the status quo, and helped establish a vision for what might be possible. *While others may have hesitated, the students served as the strongest advocates for something new and different for Holyoke Public Schools.*

3 Parents and community members became strong advocates during and after the visits.

Several parents and community members joined the Innovations Team but were reticent to jump into the educators' conversation in the initial meetings. When asked for insights initially, they often spoke of their own child's experience and the need for the continuance or establishment of special opportunities or programs.

Upon the completion of the external site visits, the voice of parents and community members changed. They came back to the greater team demanding something different for the students of Holyoke, not just their own child. They also insisted upon visiting the internal Holyoke school sites to expand their understanding of schooling across the city. *The parents and community members provided the data for school comparisons and led the uncomfortable, but necessary, debrief conversations challenging the status quo in which education worked for some students, but not all.*

Finally, the parents and community members were able to network with others beyond the team into the high school redesign conversation. This was evident through the community-wide meeting, the partners, and business team meetings that occurred during the planning stages.

4 Context mattered for learning and adoption. Team members struggled to take lessons from charter schools.

While students, parents, and community members were eager learners at all schools, some staff members who participated in school visits were quick to dismiss programs, strategies, and/or visions when set within a charter or selective enrollment context. To maintain an open mindset while learning, the "kids" needed to be "like mine." Alternatively, sometimes team members started wanting to put conditions onto programs, e.g., "If we put in admissions policies, then..." This countered the charge of building pathways for *all* students. *Anticipating context in advance and tightly narrowing the focus for the visit—especially when visiting schools with a governance structure or students "not like mine"—helped to open mindsets for learning.*

5 Culture and academic programs were easier to see than instructional transformation.

Holyoke Public Schools' stakeholders conducted extensive school visits, each time looking for particular elements of 21st century learning. After initial visits were made, the Coordinating Committee recognized that participants were returning with evidence of school culture and the outcomes of instructional programs (e.g., capstone projects or mastery learning trackers). They did not return with data or vision for changing the instructional core—the interactions among students, content, and the teachers in the classroom; nor was there any sharing of the instructional planning or professional learning required to achieve the innovative secondary school model.

In future rounds of visits, the committee intentionally spoke with site visit leaders to support the narrowing of the focus while visiting classrooms, yet the teams still struggled. Soon teams learned to do quicker visits to the classrooms and to place greater emphasis in the debrief conversation on how a

particular methodology or culture came into existence. What was the change process? What did teachers and students have to learn, do differently, or stop doing? How has the experience been transformed? What are the specific instructional practices common across classrooms and programs?

As the implementation of the strategic plan continues, stakeholders will need to see the larger programmatic vision, regardless if it is cultural or academic, and then narrow their learning lens to the specific strategies and practices of quality instructional practice. It is anticipated that targeted classroom visits focused on the instructional practice (not program) will be needed during ongoing implementation. Improving core instruction is a prerequisite to taking on any new secondary schooling model.

6 Intentionally invite others beyond the "team" to travel with you.

While the Innovations Team members served as the lead learners for the district, each site visit team was enlarged to include an additional member of greater Holyoke Public Schools staff. The receiver/superintendent, members of the central office teaching and learning team, assistant principals, deans, department heads, and emerging teacher leaders were invited to attend alongside others. At times the invitations were to support a particular learning focus; for example, the department head for English Language Learning accompanied a team to visit a dual language academy. Other times, the invitations served a more general purpose to garner buy-in and experience in the work. *The participation of additional staff helped to expand the network of advocates for change and build allies for an emerging vision.*

7 Logistics matter.

As investment of time and resources is needed to explore innovations through the use of school site visits. Dedicate a person to contact schools, schedule teams, and organize leaders. Recognize the impact on the students when their teachers are away learning at another site. Working with the Holyoke principals, no more than two teachers per site were permitted to be off-campus at the same time in order to continue to maximize instruction in their absences.

Traveling together was a key opportunity to build informal peer-to-peer relationships and strengthen the team dynamics. One participant stated, "I learned more about what was needed for Holyoke schools by riding in the back seat of the car and listening for two hours than I did at the actual school site visit." Discussions during travel supported the creation of clearer shared vocabulary, time to plan, and opportunities to debrief.

8 Protect the learning... there are many shiny bullets!

The phase II redesign gave the district permission to engage in learning for several months. However, after the first round of school visits during the first month, many team members felt like they had the answer to Holyoke's secondary redesign challenge. The requirement of a second school site visit helped to protect the learning time and expanded the possible options being chased. Quick answers became more complicated by additional learning. Quick answers did not always persist to become part of the strategic plan; rather they often guided further inquiry. *Taking time to debrief, reflect, refocus, and extend the inquiry and learning was important in generating a bigger shared vision for change.* The first solution may be the best, but others always need to be explored to confirm or challenge initial assumptions.

9 A key role of the consultant/facilitator was to maintain the pace of learning.

The external facilitator supported the pace of learning by outlining the seven Innovations Team meetings in advance, helping to facilitate the Design Team meetings, and keeping the Coordinating Committee on track to meet deliverables. The financial investment of the outside facilitator created an informal accountability tool for dates, meeting times, and agendas. Given the competing commitments of district priorities and personal job responsibilities, requests were often made by other departments or individuals to reschedule, postpone, or hijack agendas. The external facilitator protected time and process and did not let this occur. *Maintaining the pace and meeting stated expectations supported efforts to build systemic and organizational trust, especially with internal participants.*

10 Teacher and staff participation in the planning process grew, shifting from learning to leading.

The teachers who participated in the process are now learning and leading. More than 70 individuals influenced the high school redesign work through participation on work teams related to the strategic planning implementation. This is more than 100% increase over the course of a school year. In addition to general engagement and participation, teachers are now leading academy design teams and special education and English language learning transformation teams. Capacity and trust are growing among district, site, and classroom leaders. *The foundational investment in learning together supports leading high school transformation work together.*

Conclusion and Challenge

Holyoke Public Schools is engaging in a shared transformation of secondary schools among teachers, students, community members, and district leaders. Holyoke is committed to providing complementary and competitive pathways for students that challenge the current attainment system across our high schools. To that end, after months of shared learning and initial teamwork, Holyoke landed on a new vision for high school articulated in a strategic plan that includes a commitment to launch four theme-based academies in the 2018-19 school year. These new theme-based academies will complement the current Freshman Academy, Newcomers Academy, and Opportunity Academy in place for the 2017-18 school year.[11]

The theme-based academies will lead to college and career readiness and success for all students and require capstone projects; a shift from mostly teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning; and intentional linking of learning across content areas and beyond the school walls. *Holyoke Public Schools has not adopted one particular model, but is integrating and adapting aspects from several models seen across the nation through the exploration of innovations of secondary schools.* **Holyoke challenges other districts engaged in similar work to do the same—look at the examples and build your own exemplar model!**

[11] More information about Holyoke Public Schools' redesign process is available on their website.

Appendix A:

Excerpts from the Design Team Job Description For Holyoke Public Schools Secondary Redesign

Job Description

RESPONSIBILITIES: Serve on the steering committee to guide phase II of the secondary level redesign process which will consist of a four part approach: (1) design and Innovation teams, (2) exploration of models, (3) "pilot" programs and (4) strategic transformation.

Members of the Design Team will include two positions for teacher level staff at our high schools as well as school-based and district level administrators, and external consultants. The Design Team will guide the strategic process for each part of the redesign process.

The Design Team will meet every other week from 3:30-5:00 pm throughout the first semester and with a lesser frequency during the second semester. The Design Team will guide an Innovation Team consisting of 25 educators, students, family, and community members to explore promising models and pathways at successful schools throughout the Commonwealth and country. It will guide the consolidation of that learning to develop a strategic plan and implement pilot programs.

QUALIFICATIONS: Staff member at Holyoke High School or Dean Technical High School

An **HPS Design Team** will steer the learning and systemic recommendations from research into practice throughout the term of this grant. The team will be led by Mickey Buhl, HPS Executive Director of Secondary Pathways, and facilitated by Barbara Crock, President of Crock Leadership Associates LLC and lead consultant for Phase I of secondary redesign.

The Design Team will field an **Innovations Team**, consisting of up to 15 teachers, 6 parents or community members and 4 sophomore students. Members of the Innovations Team are the district's lead learners of new secondary school models and will commit to participating and reporting on at least two school visits and at least 7 team meetings. Key characteristics of these team members include risk-taking, interest in improvement, curiosity, inquiry and influence. Mickey Buhl and Barbara Crock will co-facilitate the Innovations Team.

Exploration of new secondary models is the key strategy for sparking change, improvement, and new ways of teaching and learning. From October – December 2016, Innovations Team members will visit and learn from schools that are using time technology, talent, and other resources in new ways. Models may include, but are not limited to, personalized learning, blended learning, competency-based learning, early college, etc. At least two members from the team will attend each site visit. Written reflections and a presentation will be required as a means of transferring learning to others across Holyoke Public Schools. In addition to the 25 core members of the Innovations Team, it is anticipated that the Design Team, Chief Academic Officer, members of the Teaching and Learning central office service team, school administrators, and Receiver Zrike's cabinet members will also participate in school visits.

While the Innovations Team is exploring new secondary models, the Design Team will also explore external partner organizations that may support the emergence of new, competitive 21st century learning models. Up to two organizations may be selected to provide support and documentation of early implementation efforts and then create and implement a professional learning plan to support the scaling of the initiative during the summer of 2017 for the following school year.

Teachers will be invited through a mini-RFP process to innovate and **pilot new programs** within their current classrooms and teams during the spring semester. This

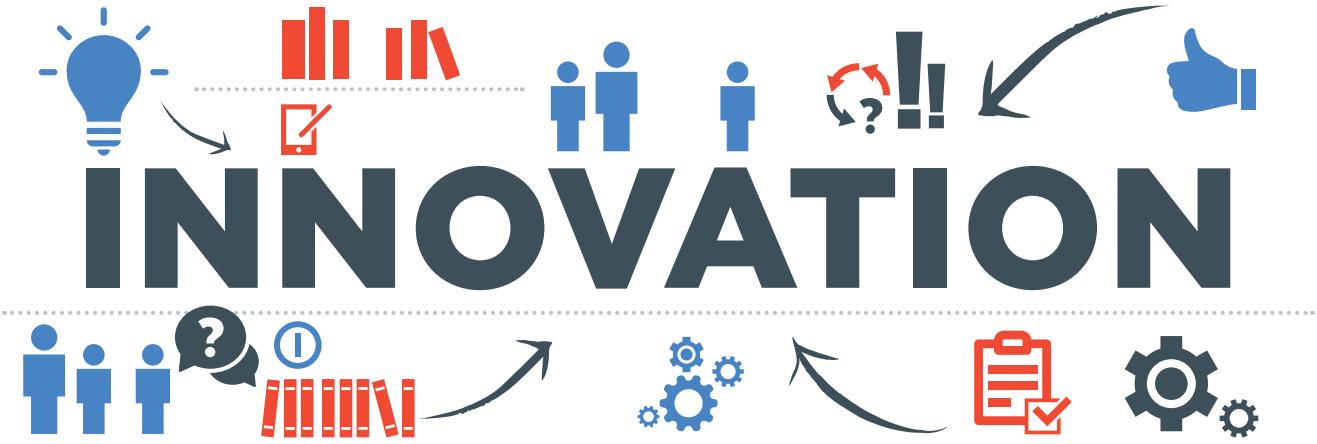
Appendix A

pilot program will inform professional learning, resource, planning, student management and engagement, and cultural needs to support full-program implementation in the upcoming year. Up to 8 teachers will participate in the pilot program(s) as individuals or across teams. Each teacher will receive a stipend, supply/material funds, and resources for professional learning to support their early implementation of pilot programs. In addition, an external partner will provide implementation and documentation supports.

Efforts to engage in and launch **strategic transformation** of HPS schools will be documented through the creation of a 3-5 year strategic plan for secondary redesign. Transformation efforts targeted for implementation in 2017-2018 will begin after the exploratory period in the fall of 2016 with intentional piloting of programs in February 2017. The strategic vision, student recruitment, program marketing, and staff and budget implications will be addressed in the spring 2017.

Appendix B:

Excerpts from the Innovations Team Job Description



Join the High School Redesign 2.0 Team

Holyoke Public Schools seeks teachers, counselors, sophomore students, family members, and community members to become lead learners of 21st century secondary school models. Join the team that will conduct 100 school visits this fall, make recommendations for new models of instruction, inform new pathways, and strengthen current programs.

COMMITMENT:

- Participation in 7 Innovation Team meetings from 3:30-5:00 on Tuesdays: 9/13, 9/27, 10/25, 11/1, 11/29, 12/13, 12/20
- Learning on at least 2 school visits between October 1 – December 15, 2016
- Documentation and sharing of learning with Innovation Team members

STAFF COMPENSATION:

- $500 stipend
- Personal professional learning

STAFF APPLICATION:

Email a written response to one of the following prompts to Mickey Buhl, Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways, at mbuhl@hps.holyoke.ma.us by September 4, 2016 to indicate your interest in the application process:

- What aspect of high school redesign work would you like to see in action at another school? What do you hope to learn? How do you anticipate it might be useful to you and your colleagues?

- In what ways do you believe Holyoke's high school program needs to continue to involve? What do we need to learn more about as teachers, leaders, and learners to build pathways of choice for all students?

The Innovations Team membership will be announced on Friday, September 9, 2016.

Appendix C:

Team Membership

ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS	COORDINATING TEAM (N=3)	DESIGN TEAM (N=10)	INNOVATIONS TEAM (N=25)
Central Office Staff	• Chief of Turnaround • Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways	• Chief of Turnaround • Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways	• 1 staff member from Teaching and Learning team
Dean Technical High School		• Assistant Principal • Career Technical Education Director • Instructional Leadership Team member	• 7 staff members • 2 students
Holyoke (Comprehensive) High School		• Principal • Department Chair • Freshman Academy member • Climate & Culture team member	• 6 staff members • 2 students
Pathways Alternative Program			• 1 staff member from Pathways Alternative Program
Family and Community			• 2 parents • 4 community partners
Other	• Lead Consultant / Facilitator	• Liaison from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	
Ad Hoc (As available)	• Receiver (Superintendent)	• Chief Academic Officer • Principal of Dean Tech HS	

Note: This membership across teams stands in stark contrast to earlier Holyoke redesign efforts (2015-16 school year) that engaged a Working Team of ten individuals from various organizations invested in the success of Holyoke Public Schools. Of the ten members of the initial Working Team, three were from Holyoke Public Schools and one actively remained teaching in the district during the 2016-17 school year. Engaging current leaders, staff, and students in visioning new models and pathways is a key strategy for the next phase of transformation.

Appendix D:

Team Participants

HPS Innovations Team

Alize Rivera
Dean Tech
Student

Ana L. Jaramillo
Community Member
Program Supervisor
Holyoke Health Center

Andrew Pasquale
Community Member
Holyoke Codes, Educator

Betty Medina Lichtenstein
Community Member
Executive Director
Enlace de Familias de Holyoke

Bob Frye
Holyoke High
Social Studies teacher

Dana Altshuler
District & Holyoke High
Coordinator of Culturally Responsive Education (8th and 9th grade)

Erika Boulware
Holyoke High
Adjustment Counselor

Gloria Urbina
Parent - Holyoke High
Parent Liaison, Holyoke Community Charter School

Gwendolyn Martin
District, Assistant Director of Enrichment and Extended Learning

J'Anthony Smith
Holyoke High
Student

Jasmine Ortiz
Parent – Dean Tech & Holyoke High
Paraprofessional, HPS

Jeffrey Hamilton
Dean Tech
Teacher

Jennifer Robson
Dean Tech
Special Education Team Leader

Katelyn Cruz
Holyoke High
Student

Kendrick T. Roundtree
Dean Tech
Special Education

Kerrita K. Mayfield
Holyoke High
Teacher

Kevin Bechard
Holyoke High
Social Studies Teacher

Liam O'Brien
Pathways/HALO program
Pathways Coordinator, ABE SS/ Science Teacher

Lissie Fein
Community Member
Holyoke Codes, Educator

Luis Arroyo
Dean Tech
Electrical Shop Teacher

Marcus Holt
Dean Tech
Science Teacher

Normand LeBlanc
Dean Tech
Transition Coordinator

Nyles Courchesne
Parent - Holyoke High
Attorney
Peskin, Courchesne and Allen

Rolando Colon
Dean Tech
Student

Sharon Summers
Dean Tech
Health Assisting Teacher

HPS Design Team

Barbara Crock
Facilitator/Consultant
Crock Leadership Associates LLC

Deb Lantaigne
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Education Liaison

Erin Linville
District
Chief of Strategy and Turnaround

Jerica Coffey
Holyoke High
Director of Youth Organizing
Pa'Lante Restorative Justice Program

Lori McKenna
Holyoke High
English Teacher & Department Head

Luis Soria
District
Chief Academic Officer

Maggie Gifford
Dean Tech
Director of Career, Vocational and Technical Education

Marc Swygert
Dean Tech
Assistant Principal for Instruction

Mary Grumoli
Holyoke High
Social Studies Teacher & Department Head

Mickey Buhl
District
Executive Director of Secondary Education and Pathways

Stephen Sullivan
Holyoke High
Principal

Appendix E:

Terms and Task Card Resources

Pathway

Defined as *"a student-centered learning trajectory resulting in competitive advantage in the choice of college and/or career success."* This definition was created in a Design Team meeting in collaboration with Receiver Zrike.

21st century learning

EdLeader21 & Pearson Foundation. (2012, February 23). *The Four C's: Making 21st Century Education Happen* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghx0vd1oEzM

EF Explore America. (2012, March 15). What is a 21st Century Education? Video].

Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax5cNIutAys

Fadel, C., Trilling, B., & Bialik, M. (2015). Four-Dimensional Education: The Competencies Learners Need to Succeed. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning. (n.d.). Framework for 21st century learning. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework

Robinson, K. (2010, October 14). *RSA ANIMATE: Changing Education Paradigms* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Engaging Students in Work That Matters* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/engage-students-meaningful-work-hth

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Deeper Learning: A Series Overview* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/deeper-learning-a-series-overview?referral_code=3kV-7aDan8R5hU8Vjsxu

U.S. Department of Education. (2013, June 7). Fact Sheet: Redesigning America's High Schools. Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-redesigning-americas-high-schools

College and career ready

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. (2014, October). Degrees of Urgency: Why Massachusetts Needs More College Graduates Now (Rep.). Retrieved from http://www.mass.edu/visionproject/_documents/2014 Degrees of Urgency - Vision Project Annual Report.pdf

Symonds, W. C., Schwartz, R., & Ferguson, R. F. (2011, February). Pathways to prosperity: Meeting the challenge of preparing young Americans for the 21st century (Rep.). Retrieved https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4740480/Pathways_to_Prosperity_Feb2011-1.pdf?sequence=1

Regional employment board data, job descriptions, and industry initiatives

Sample task card topics for innovation team learning sessions

Sample Task Cards:
1) Individualized Real-World Learning,
2) Blended Learning
3) Mastery/Competency Based Learning

Real-world learning

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Individualized Real-World Learning* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/high-school-internships-bpl

Personalized learning

Cook-Deegan, P. (2016, June 27). Redesigning American High Schools for the 21st Century. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/re_designing_american_high_schools_for_the_21st_century

Kallick, B., & Zmuda, A. (2017). *Students at the Center: Personalized Learning with Habits of Mind.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Getting Personalization Right. (2017). *Educational Leadership, 74*(6). Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Crew: Check-in and Support* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-support-structure-exl

Appendix E

Project-based learning

Buck Institute for Education. (n.d.). Videos. Retrieved from http://www.bie.org/objects/cat/videos

ConnectEd The California Center for College and Career. (n.d.). Linked Learning. Retrieved from http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/our_work/linked_learning

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Bringing Industry into the Classroom* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/merging-industry-and-classroom-ced

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *The Evolution of a Project* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/self-directed-student-project-edv

The James Irvine Foundation. (2012, July 5). *Linked Learning: Life comes to school* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aL5xh9cbIQ

The flipped classroom

Bergmann, J. (2010, December 16). *The Flipped Classroom* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H4RkudFzIc

Blended learning

The Learning Accelerator. (2014, May 7). *What is Blended Learning?* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4gA-eeJrcc

Edutopia. (2014, September 11). *Blended Learning: Making it Work in Your Classroom* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auzwH1mK2TY

Early college

Edutopia. (2016, June 14). *Early College Model: Giving Students College Access in High School*. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/practice/early-college-model-giving-students-college-access-high-school

NC New Schools, & Breakthrough Learning. (2013, October 29). *2013 National Early College Conference* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ip_25jLPGps&list=PL5J0ZIyDKtV1XLT23MzUzDj7qg2CsJQ_r

Mastery/competency-based learning

Martin, D. (2015, June 21). *Assessing Our Reassessment* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xolcQHSU2tw

Khan, S. (2016, March 19). *Mastery based learning explained* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnVzug0mA2w

Burns, N. (2015, March 6). *Competency Based Learning in a Nutshell* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VceJM4SNa_Q

The Nellie Mae Foundation. (2014, May 19). *What is competency-based education?* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RckLD9A0pqc

Collaborative teaching

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Collaborative Teaching for Interdisciplinary Learning* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/collaborative-teaching-ntn

Edutopia. (2015, February 5). *Integrated Studies: Sustainability and Cross-Curricular Connections* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7VBc5RqCmo

Exhibitions of student learning

Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Student Profile: Portfolio Defense* [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/success-portfolio-defense-eed

Appendix F:

HPS School Visit Protocol

PHASE 1: Before the Visit (1 hour)

1. **Know what you are looking for...**
   - 21st century learning characteristics
   - Indicated focus area(s)
   - Your own questions and interests
2. **Research the school's website**
3. **Search for YouTube videos from the school to get an orientation**
4. **Research the instructional model or design. Use the video links from the initial Innovations Team meeting as a starting point.**
5. **Anticipate your learning**
   - 21st century learning characteristics
   - Indicated focus area(s)
   - Your own questions and interests
6. **Write 5 questions you want to answer during the visit.**

PHASE 2: During the Visit (3.5 hours)

1. **Approx. 30 min: Tour the school**
   Does anything stand out to you as different or unique compared to HHS and Dean? (e.g., tone/culture of the building, student/staff interactions, school physical design and components)
2. **Approx. 60 min: Visit 2-3 classrooms on a "typical day"—observe both the adults and the students.**
   - Are students engaged?
   - Is it academically rigorous?
   - What are the instructional approaches?

   a. Talk to a few students in each classroom:
   - What are you working on? (do they seem excited/interested in the work?)
   - What do you like most about this school?
   - Is there anything about this school that could be improved?
   - What are your plans for after high school? (do students have a sense of where they are going next?)

   b. Talk to the teachers (if appropriate):
   - What do you like most about teaching this class or at this school?
   - In what areas do you think the school has room for improvement?
   - What types of PD or supports have been most helpful for practice?
   - How do you view your role as a teacher?
   - What was the hardest part of implementing X [design feature — e.g., expanded learning opportunities]? How have you addressed this challenge?
   - What advice would you give to teachers interested in adopting X?
3. **Approx. 60 min: Debrief with the school leadership and teacher leaders (can be separate conversations with different staff):**
   - Ask clarifying questions about what you observed (e.g., do all students in the class we observed need to participate in a self-directed project?)
   - Ask about the process they took to implement the components you are most interested in (e.g., what would you say were the first three key steps you took to create an early college with your local community college?)
   - Ask about what they think is working and why (e.g., is the competency-based system increasing student achievement? What trends have you seen?)
   - Ask what they would do differently if they had to start over again. In other words, what advice would they share with another school interested in doing the same thing?
   - Ask about what schools (locally or nationally) they are drawing inspiration from.
4. **Approx. 60 min: Debrief with the Holyoke team that participated in the visit and prepare artifacts for sharing your visit with the Innovations Team. Take notes in the Google Drive folder.**
   - What did you find most exciting or inspirational?
   - What components of the school are you concerned about or seemed the weakest?
   - What follow-up questions do you have for the school (that the lead could potentially email to them)?
   - What are the biggest take-aways that you want to share with the rest of the Innovations Team?
   - Where / how are we in Holyoke ready to implement the "take-aways" from this visit? If we are not ready, what conditions do we need to anticipate for success?
   - What other schools do we now want to visit, if any?
   - Capture 10 pictures and 3 video clips described below before leaving the school. Have fun! Make it interesting for the other team members.

Appendix F

PHASE 3: After the Visit

1. **10 pictures from the visit illustrating key learnings or insights**
2. **3 short video clips, each responding to a different prompt below:**
   - Description of the school
   - Evidence of 21st century learning
   - Take-aways for Holyoke's ongoing secondary redesign plans
3. **Scanned artifacts you want to share with other Innovations Team members at our debriefing session**
4. **Identify two team members who will host a learning/sharing session at the next Innovations team meeting**

Appendix G:

School Sites Visited Beyond Holyoke

Reasons for visit:

- 21st century learning
- Supports for students learning English and students with special needs AND ...

1. **Ambassador School of Global Leadership Los Angeles, CA**
   + Linked Learning model, career and college readiness integration, capstone projects
2. **BINCA: Boston International Newcomers Academy Boston, MA**
   + Learning designs and instructional supports for English language learners (Stanford School to Learn From)
3. **Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy Cumberland, RI**
   + SUMMIT model phased implementation into 9-12 program
4. **Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, Upton, MA**
   + CTE, use of student portfolios, health services / post secondary, electronics and engineering technology, manufacturing and engineering technology
5. **Boston Arts Academy, Boston, MA**
   + Innovation programs including STEAM courses and lab, Literacy Development initiative, intersession, project-based learning, capstone projects
6. **Boston Day and Evening Academy, Boston, MA**
   + Competency based education, capstone projects, student-centered education for off-track learners
7. **Brockton High School, Brockton, MA**
   + School transformation that includes personalization, literacy initiative, a focus on freshman transition, and ELLs
8. **Campos Academy/Puerto Rican Community Center Chicago, IL**
   + Alternative high school
   + Puerto Rican embedded culture
   + Community-school partnerships
9. **Cristo Rey, New York, NY**
   + Work-based learning model
10. **Democracy Prep Middle School, New York, NY**
    + Academic preparation for high school, aligned culture and academic expectations for high school success
11. **Democracy Prep High School, New York, NY**
    + Culture expectations, academic press
12. **El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice New York, NY**
    + Integration of Puerto Rican culture, alternative schooling options and model
13. **Framingham High School, Framingham, MA**
    + Two-way bilingual program from K-12, at HS bilingual program for Y1 English language learners that transitions to Y2 sheltered support
14. **Goodrich Academy, Fitchburg, MA**
    + Independent learning courses, alternative school and scheduling
15. **Greater New Bedford Regional Technical High School Greater New Bedford, MA**
    + CTE, use of Moodle with blended learning, Healthcare pathways, Engineering, Manufacturing; Individual learning plans – Your plan for the future user
16. **Intrinsic School, Chicago, IL**
    + Collaborative teaching, 80 students per classroom with 3 teachers, competency-based learning
17. **Lake View High School, Chicago, IL**
    + Freshman on track
18. **Life Academy of Health & Bioscience, Oakland, CA**
    + Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways
19. **Los Angeles High School of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA**
    +Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways
20. **Margarita Muniz Academy, Boston, MA**
    +Only dual language high school in MA, innovation school within Boston Public Schools; use of Expeditionary Learning design principles

Appendix G

Reasons for visit:

- 21st century learning
- Supports for students learning English and students with special needs AND ...

21. **Marlborough High School, Marlborough, MA**
    + STEM Early College and early college pathways in Computer Information Systems Information Technology/Computer Science, Manufacturing Technology, Engineering and Health Care/Nurse Education and Biotechnology

22. **The MET, Providence, RI**
    + Work-based learning, internships, industry connections, entrepreneurship strand

23. **Moreau Catholic School**
    + Hayward, CA Teach to One math curriculum

24. **San Lorenzo High School: Bay Area Digital Arts**
    San Lorenzo, CA
    + Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways

25. **Sarah Goode STEM, Chicago, IL**
    + P-TECH model, early college, industry partner

26. **Social Justice Humanitas Academy**
    San Fernando, CA
    Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways

27. **South Shore International Academy**
    Chicago, IL
    + Freshman-on-track
    + Standards based grading
    + International Baccalaureate

28. **Stall High School, Charleston, SC**
    + Competency-based learning
    + Academy structures

29. **STEM Academy of Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA**
    +Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways

30. **Summit Schools - Ranier, Ranier, CA**
    + Summit personalized learning Blended learning

31. **UCLS Community, Los Angeles, CA**
    + Linked Learning model, career & college readiness, theme-based pathways

32. **Wando High School, Charleston, SC**
    + Competency-based learning
    + Academy structures

33. **Worcester Tech, Worcester, MA**
    + CTE, transformation, embedded academics, work based learning

34. **[Various sites], Sheffield, England**
    + Manufacturing, city and school transformation, university and industry partnerships

Appendix H:

School Sites Visited Within Holyoke

Reasons for visit:

- 21st century learning
- Supports for students learning English and students with special needs AND ...

1. **P3 Personalized Pathways Program at the William R. Peck School, Holyoke, MA**
   + First year implementation of personalized learning using the Summit Schools model
2. **Gateway to College Success at Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, MA**
   + Early college model for students seeking an alternative to traditional high school offerings
3. **Pathways Program, Holyoke, MA**
   + A new blended learning alternative program integrating adult HiSET education with high school students working with the PLATO program
4. **Dean Technical High School, Holyoke, MA**
   + Career technical classrooms and core education classrooms, culture norms
5. **Holyoke High School, Holyoke, MA**
   + Media electives and leveled courses (Advanced Placement, honors, and core course options)

www.hps.holyoke.ma.us

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A PATHWAY FOR EVERY STUDENT