

Holliston Public Schools
STRATEGIC PLAN
FY2017 - FY2022

HOLLISTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
March 2016

Strategic Plan Subcommittee:
Joan E. Sousa, Chair
Anne Louise Hanstad
Andrew Morton



March 2016

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HOLLISTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
370 Hollis Street • Holliston, Massachusetts 01746

March 2016

To the Holliston Community:

The Holliston Public Schools' ("HPS") Strategic Plan 2017-2022 was developed by the Strategic Plan Committee ("SPC"), a cross-sectional group of parents, teachers, administrators, and staff members, as well as business and community leaders. This group embarked on a mission to formulate a high-level strategic plan that would reflect the professional opinions of HPS' administration, faculty and staff; the input of the School Committee, and very importantly, that of the Holliston Community at large. To fully understand the perspectives and desires of this broad audience, the Committee developed and distributed a community survey. Every effort was made to get the survey into the hands of the community at large and encourage all parties to contribute their thoughts. Approximately 900 survey responses were received, and the ideas and themes represented in the responses were incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

What came through very clearly in the survey responses is the distinct pride that the people of Holliston take in their Town, and their confidence in its excellent public schools. It is clear that we must leverage this community strength and build upon it as we face the challenges of society's evolving educational, social and emotional demands. The Strategic Plan is designed to frame our choices and efforts in the years ahead. In some instances, this will mean staying the course – recognizing that there are many things HPS does well. In other cases, this will mean looking to areas of focus and investment to achieve our one true goal, student outcomes: the growth and development of each student's academic, social and emotional well-being.

Holliston Public Schools' strategy, as set forth in this Plan, only will be realized through continued collaboration and support within our community. The many voices that formulated this strategy – the community, administration, faculty and staff, parents, and community leaders - will be essential in the implementation of their expressed ideas. As Helen Keller so famously said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

Sincerely,

Carol Emmons, Chair
Holliston School Committee



Strategic Plan Committee

Sara Ahern, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent, Holliston Public Schools
Michael Benadon	Strategic Plan Project Manager; Parent
Keith Buday	Business Manager, Holliston Public Schools
Kevin Conley	Member, Holliston Board of Selectmen
Amy Donahue	Parent
Anne Louise Hanstad	Vice-Chair, Holliston School Committee
Bradford L. Jackson, Ed.D.	Superintendent, Holliston Public Schools
David Jordan	Assistant Principal, Robert Adams Middle School
David Keim	Principal, Fred W. Miller Elementary School
Daniel Knup	Parent
Diane McDermott	Parent
Laura McGann	Parent
Andrew Morton	Member, Holliston School Committee
Mary Beth Numbers	Teacher; Vice President, Holliston Federation of Teachers
Joan E. Sousa	Member, Holliston School Committee; Chair, Strategic Plan Subcommittee



Executive Summary

Objectives:

- **Develop 5-Year Plan** – Create a high-level strategic plan that incorporates professional input from Holliston Public Schools administration, faculty and staff, from the School Committee and from the community at large
- **Set Priorities for Annual District Planning** – The Strategic Plan will be used as the foundation for annual goal setting for FY 2017-FY 2022
- **Establish Goals and Priorities** - This effort focused on creating one overarching goal, with five supporting priority areas

Process:

- **Strategic Planning Committee**– Launched in 2015, a 15-member cross-sectional group of parents, teachers, administrators, town officials and community representatives convened in collaboration with the Holliston School Committee
- **Identify Needs and Expectations** – Early on, the committee worked to identify potential needs and expectations of the community of Holliston for the school district
- **Collect Community Input** – Community input was deemed a crucial factor in developing a strong strategic plan, therefore the committee distributed a community survey which received nearly 900 responses and 2,000 comments. A summary of these results is attached to the Plan
- **Develop Strategy** – Based on community feedback, the committee updated the Mission, Vision and Belief statements and generated a strategic framework to set district priorities

One Overarching Goal: Improved Student Outcomes

Outcome:

Deliver challenging, comprehensive, standards-based educational programs that support each student's academic, social and emotional growth to prepare each to be civic-minded citizens who are college, career and life ready.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

Five Priority Areas

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Technology

Talent and Resources

Communication

Funding and Resources

Next Steps:

- **Ongoing Planning** - Each year, the Holliston Public Schools and each building-level administration will formulate a slate of SMART goals as a focus for that academic year that will be targeted to the five priority areas identified in the Strategic Plan
- **Community Communication** - These goals will be presented to the School Committee and posted on the district web site

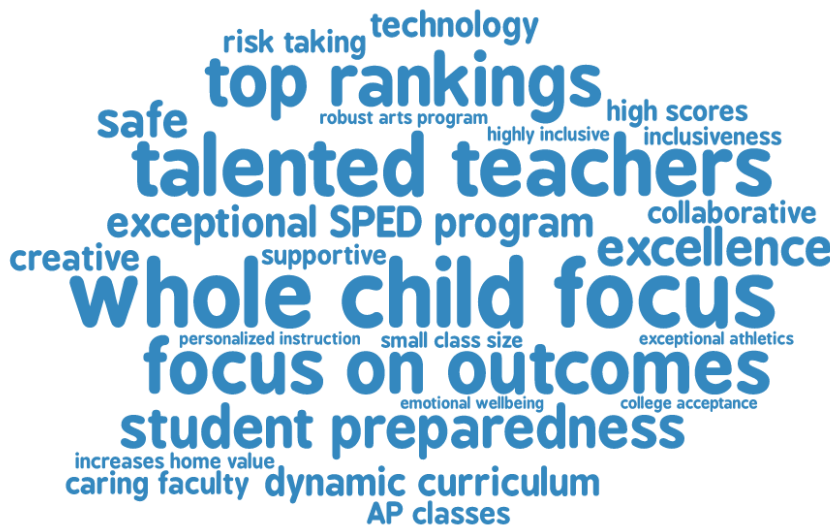


Introduction

In late 2014, the process of strategic planning began. The Holliston School Committee, at its retreat, focused on macro planning and strategy for the district, and spent a majority of its time brainstorming what it means to be a high-performing school system, and whether that is a priority in and to the Town of Holliston. Many ideas were shared as to what the Committee believes, and likewise, what it believes the community feels are the characteristics of a high performing school district. These discussions continued throughout the fall of 2015, and the Administrative team met and explored the same question from the perspective of educators, and the community at large.

In late summer 2015, the Strategic Plan Committee was formed, under the leadership of Michael Benadon, a parent who served as Project Manager. This Committee was posed with the same question: What are the characteristics of a high-performing school district? Additionally, this group was tasked with finding out if it is a priority for the Town of Holliston to have a school district that is highly performing, and how that is defined. Among many other things outlined in more detail to follow, the team developed and circulated an online survey to garner community input. Nearly 900 responses were received.

The themes that emerged from the administration, the Strategic Planning Committee, and, importantly, the community-wide survey are generally consistent, with one over-arching theme emerging: If a school district is focused and wholly committed to the growth and success of its students across three key dimensions – academically, socially and emotionally – then it will achieve its goal of developing students who are prepared to enter society as civic-minded members, and who are ready for college, career and life. Our single-minded focus on this objective provides the foundation for this plan and will drive all strategic initiatives for the Holliston Public Schools over the next five years.

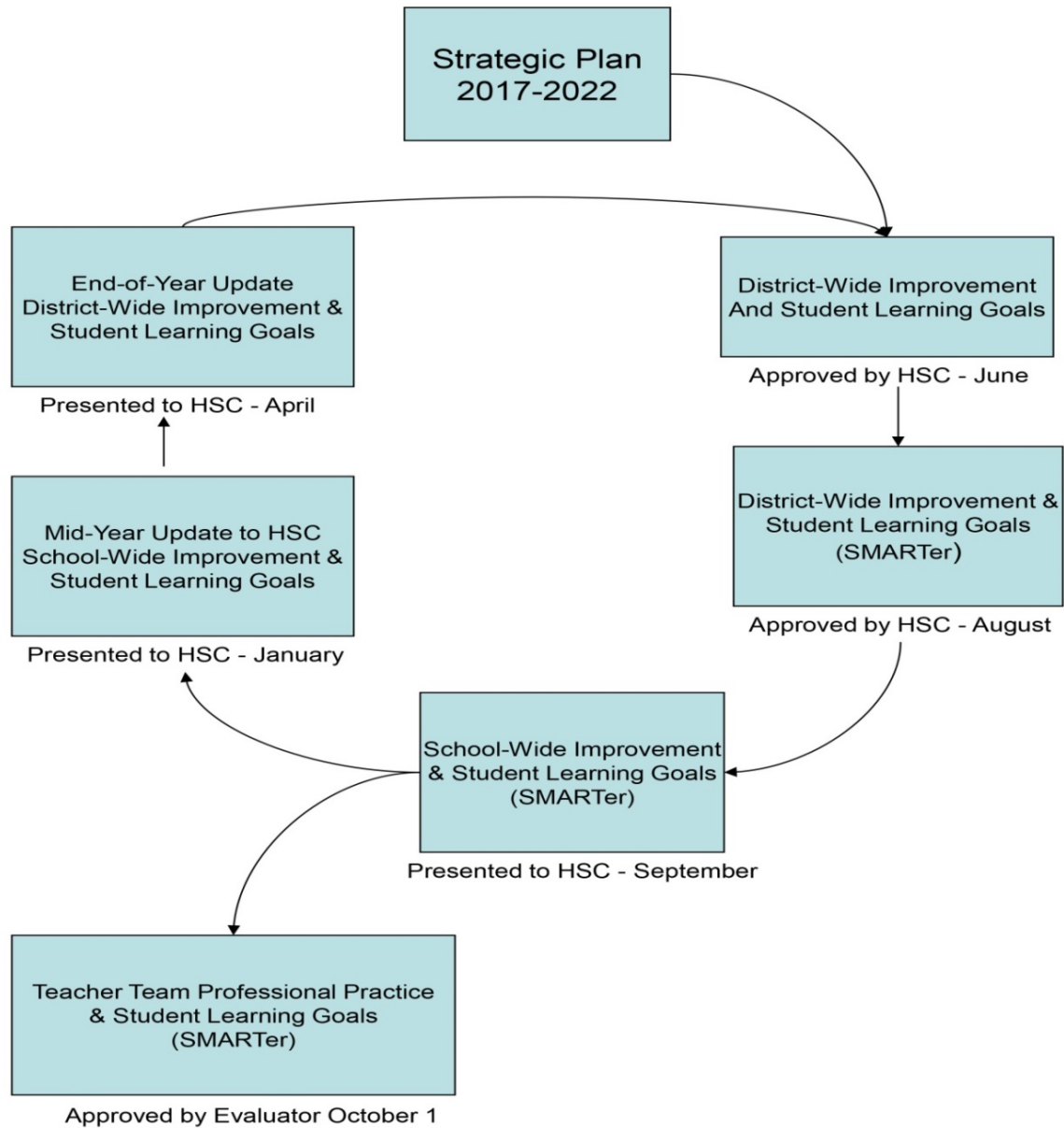


Strategic planning in education is a particularly complex and ongoing process of organizational change. In this context, planning requires an understanding of data, assumptions, and future trends; state and federal mandates; and, importantly, the availability of resources and funding. With a focus on continuous improvement, this Strategic Plan provides for substantial flexibility and is a reference point for each year's district and building level SMARTer goals (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound).

The annual goal setting process, included in the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation, was introduced by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2011, and its purpose is to set attainable measures for ongoing evaluation of performance. While in the past, a strategic plan may have contained very specific metrics and action steps related to the stated goals, the Committee believes that the Educator Evaluation process, applied annually, is the more appropriate space for that level of detail.



The following graphic depicts the role of the Strategic Plan in the district's annual goal setting process, and how the goals are reviewed, approved and measured. Each Plan, set of Goals, and Updates are posted to the district website.





The Committee, having set its focus on a long-term strategic view for the Plan, looked at whether the district's statements of Mission, Vision, and Beliefs stood the test of time or whether some revitalization was in order. The community survey addressed these areas as well, and specifically asked the respondents to rate and comment on each statement. This study confirmed that the themes outlined - with some minor revision - remain relevant and on target. Contributors also expressed a desire to have these themes expressed in "plain English." The themes that follow reflect these desired updates:

MISSION

The Holliston Public Schools is committed, through collaborative efforts within an educational community, to producing confident, self-directed learners in a highly motivating, safe, student-centered environment that supports each student's social, emotional and academic development.

VISION

The Holliston Public Schools is a community of creative lifelong learners that demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values required for productive and socially responsible global citizenship.

We will:

- Cultivate a challenging, safe and supportive learning environment for students and staff
- Ensure instructional innovation through creativity and smart implementation of technology
- Collaborate to achieve rigorous and differentiated instructional programs
- Meet all federal and state accountability measures for student and educator achievement
- Foster educational partnerships within the community and region
- Self-evaluate and measure performance and strive for continuous improvement

BELIEFS

We believe in:

- An emotionally and physically safe and supportive school environment
- Instruction that is differentiated to accommodate varied student needs, learning styles, and interests
- Class sizes and resources that best support effective instruction and the curriculum
- Recruitment and retention of high quality educators, administrators and staff
- Relevant assessments to measure individual growth and identify individual needs
- Smart use of technology to enhance innovative and creative teaching and learning
- Educating the whole child by supporting, among other things, a robust fine and performing arts program and a well-respected program of interscholastic athletics
- Collaboration in education and learning which engages family and community
- Effective interactive communication within the school community and beyond
- The intrinsic value a high-performing school district brings to a community
- Diverse extracurricular and cultural enrichment offerings, available to all students
- The promotion of mutual respect by understanding and appreciating individual differences



In addition, The Strategic Plan Committee reviewed the plans for many other districts in the state. The group looked at plans of all manner of districts, with a particular focus on those comparable in size, geography and socio-economic makeup to Holliston, to identify common themes and challenges, as well as innovative approaches in their practices and programs.

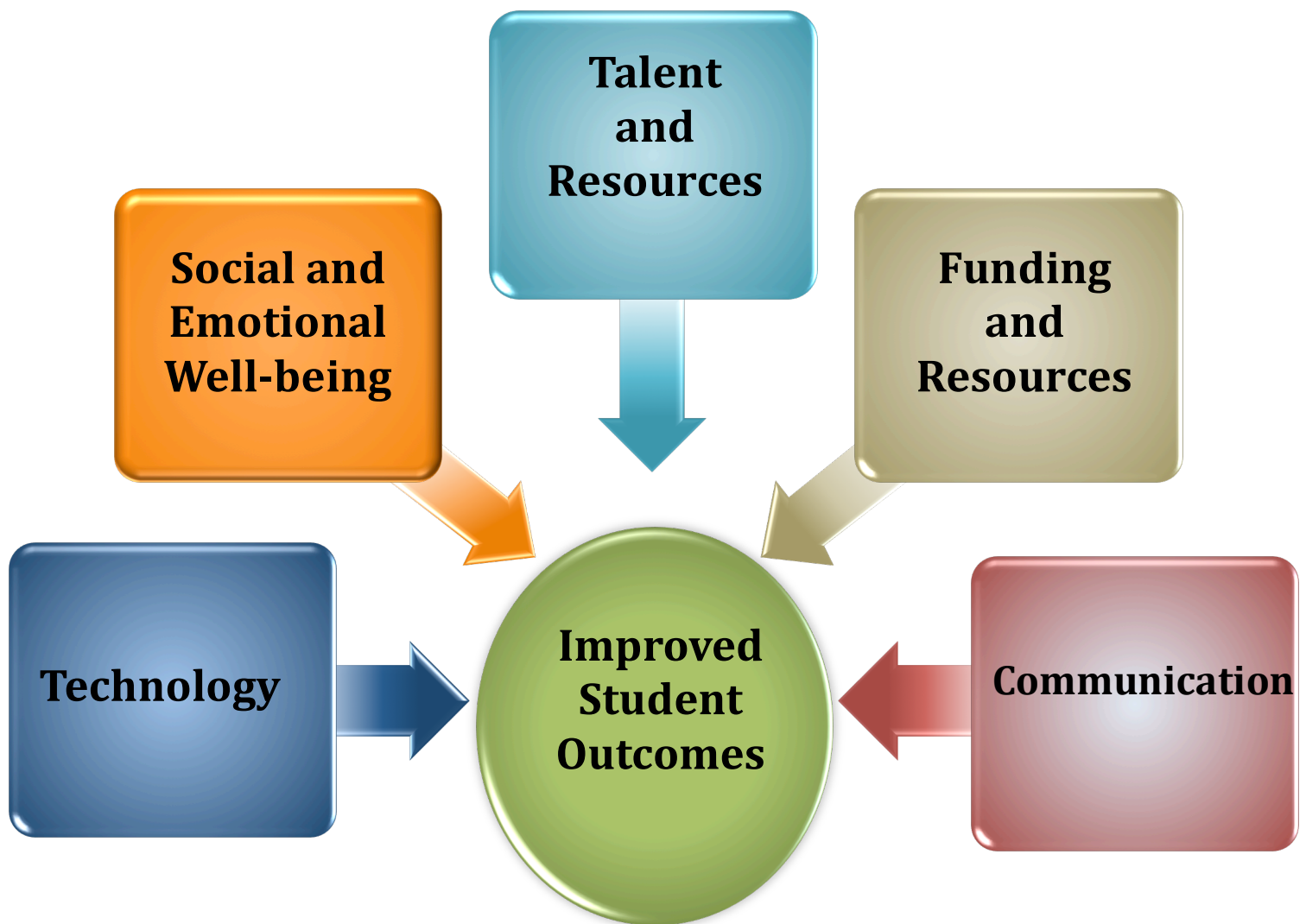
The strategic goal and priority areas outlined in this Strategic Plan will provide direction to the school leadership team over the next five years. In addition, the identified priority areas will serve as guideposts for the annual goal setting process – district and school SMARTer goals – for the next five years. This Plan will also shape school policy and help to focus the school budget process. However, the responsibility for achieving these goals does not lie solely with school personnel; the involvement and commitment of staff, parents and citizens working together to implement this Strategic Plan is integral to our future success and to achieving the level of excellence that the Holliston community expects.





Strategic Framework: A Student-Centric Focus

Since the Holliston Public Schools believes that focusing on **student outcomes** – the growth of each **student academically, socially and emotionally** - is the center of everything it does, it is only appropriate to set students at the epicenter of our strategy, and identify areas that will support the focus and produce the best possible outcome for each individual student in the district.



Student Outcomes

Holliston Public Schools is laser focused on delivering challenging, comprehensive, standards-based educational programs that support each student's academic, social and emotional growth to prepare each to be civic-minded community members, who are college, career and life ready. All of the identified priority areas are designed to achieve the best possible outcomes for each and every student. We believe this goal is achieved through:

- Teams of educators and curriculum specialists collaborating to refine essential content and learning expectations across a grade level or course as well as vertically across the district
- Teams of educators and curriculum specialists collaborating to ensure that common assessments are well-aligned to essential content and learning expectations
- Educators implementing research-based differentiated instructional practices and making adjustments to their practice based upon their examination of data about student learning from a prioritized set of assessments
- Students experiencing opportunities for success as a result of a well-coordinated system of instructional interventions and enhancements that are designed to meet their learning needs
- Students having opportunities to learn in a personalized, digitally-rich learning environment through the use of technology as an instructional tool and as a means with which students can display their understanding.

In support of the singular goal of improved student outcomes, the Strategic Plan Committee formulated five priority areas upon which to focus over the next five years:

- **Social and Emotional Well-Being**
- **Technology**
- **Talent and Resources**
- **Funding and Resources**
- **Communication**

The following page represents the strategic framework at a glance, followed by a detailed description of each priority area.





Five-Year Strategic Plan

ONE OVERARCHING GOAL: IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

The Holliston Public Schools is laser focused on delivering challenging, comprehensive, standards-based educational programs that support each student's academic, social and emotional growth to prepare each to be civic-minded community members who are college, career and life ready.

➤ **Priority area: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

Provide a safe and supportive learning and social environment where each member of the educational community can achieve in a respectful and productive environment.

➤ **Priority area: TECHNOLOGY**

Students will have opportunities to learn in a personalized, digitally-rich learning environment through the use of technology as an instructional tool and as a means with which students can demonstrate their learning.

➤ **Priority area: TALENT and RESOURCES**

Attract, retain and support professional, high-caliber educators. Promote robust professional learning communities and encourage a positive, supportive and collaborative environment of instructional creativity.

➤ **Priority area: COMMUNICATION**

Ensure consistent, effective communication between/among administration, schools, staff, parents and the community to address student achievements, opportunities and areas for improvement.

➤ **Priority area: RESOURCES and FUNDING**

Increase financial support from existing sources and identify new and alternative sources of funding.



Priority Area: SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Priority Area

Ensure a safe and supportive learning and social environment where each member of the educational community can achieve in a respectful and productive climate.

Strategic Goals

- Students and staff will experience a physically and emotionally safe school environment
- Students and staff will take positive risks and challenge themselves to experiment in new disciplines, with different groups, and in new activities, due to an academically safe instructional environment.
- Students will grow in the five Social-Emotional Learning Competencies: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making, and Self-Management
- Staff will partner with parents and the community to develop and maintain a community-wide commitment to the social-emotional health of Holliston's children

Focus Areas

- Monitor the social-emotional health of our students and staff through a variety of methods and adjust focus as needs change
- Implement adjustments to practice to address the revised focus areas
- Integrate social-emotional topics into parent education efforts
- Integrate social-emotional topics into professional development efforts
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive K-12 Social Emotional Learning curriculum that supports the development of the 5 Social Emotional Learning Competencies: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making, and Self-Management



Priority Area: TECHNOLOGY

Priority Area

Students will have opportunities to learn in a personalized, digitally-rich learning environment through the use of technology as an instructional tool and as a means with which students can demonstrate their learning.

Strategic Goals

- Students will develop 21st century skills to be prepared for a constantly changing world
- Students will be skilled researchers, able to evaluate sources of information and think critically about varying perspectives
- Students will use technology to support collaboration and communication with other students, teachers, and the community
- Students will have access to an educational experience that is personalized based on individual student learning styles
- Students will be empowered by technology to create content in addition to consume information
- Students will have access to technology that maximizes engagement
- Students will have opportunities to use technology to broaden their global perspective

Focus Areas

- Establish a decision-making structure that insures that all stakeholders have a voice
- Offer broad professional development opportunities for teachers and professional staff that is current, relevant, and consistent with school and district goals
- Ensure that all schools' network infrastructure is adequate to support classroom use of technology without limitation
- Provide teachers and students with access to appropriate digital devices to support learning
- Cultivate curriculum development protocols that have broad opportunities to include technology
- Recognize that constantly changing technology requires flexibility and responsiveness
- Establish sustainable funding to support the district's network infrastructure and to support appropriate digital devices for teachers and students



Priority Area: TALENT and RESOURCES

Priority Area

Attract, retain and support professional, high-caliber educators. Promote robust professional learning communities and encourage a positive, supportive and collaborative environment of instructional creativity.

Strategic Goals

- District leadership and the Holliston School Committee will ensure a regionally-competitive wage and benefit package for all staff in order to hire and retain high-performing educators
- Holliston Public Schools will uphold a culture of collaboration and mutual respect between teachers, administrators, parents and the community, where the teacher feels supported as a professional in their classroom
- District leadership will build a comprehensive professional development program to support the professional growth and effectiveness of new and experienced faculty

Focus Areas

- Ensure support of teachers by providing access to and professional development on the use of high-quality curricular and instructional materials needed to deliver a challenging, comprehensive, standards-based educational program
- Highlight the performance of our schools, teachers, students, musicians, actors, athletes, and artists through School Committee, central office, and school communications
- Plan training and supports for new teachers so they feel supported in and out of their classrooms. Experienced teacher professional development should meet their specific needs as a veteran educator



Priority Area: COMMUNICATION

Priority Area

Ensure consistent, effective communication between/among administration, schools, staff, parents and the community to address student achievements, opportunities and areas for improvement.

Strategic Goals

- Holliston Public Schools will maximize use of communication technology to ensure timely sharing of information to the community
- Holliston Public Schools will foster an environment that encourages open communication from its stakeholders
- Holliston Public Schools will streamline communications that maximize reach across constituencies
- District leadership will develop and maintain a current communication strategy for interacting with various constituencies in a timely manner
- School leadership will create accessible, simple, user-friendly information about school (support) services

Focus Areas

- Explore new communication channels as effective means of sharing information (e.g. text alerts)
- Develop and share a strategy that outlines how various stakeholders can communicate with schools and vice versa
- Create a communication strategy relating to student services and guidance, including the menu of available supports



Priority Area: FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Priority Area

Increase financial support from existing sources and identify new and alternative sources of funding.

Strategic Goals

- Holliston School Committee and district leadership will advocate for financial support at the state and federal level
- Holliston School Committee, with support from district leadership, will advocate for financial support within the town
- District leadership will maximize opportunities to collaborate with other districts to generate cost savings where applicable (e.g., special education transportation, professional development)
- District leadership and the Holliston School Committee will explore alternative sources of funding.

Focus Areas

- Continue frequent dialogue with state legislators, reinforcing the need to fully fund state aid to education, including Chapter 70
- Lobby legislative leaders for meaningful change to municipal finance to ensure focus of school districts is centered on core mission
- Maintain solid working relationships with local leaders to ensure their collaboration and advocacy for Holliston Public Schools
- Remain active in regional advocacy, including the Suburban Coalition, to reinforce local school issues with the state legislature
- Collaborate with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), lobbying groups on behalf of public schools in Massachusetts
- Communicate a clear picture about the successes in our schools, the challenges faced, and the financial realities of running a high-performing school district.



Appendix

APPENDIX A: Community Survey – Summary of Findings

APPENDIX B: Community Survey – Summary of Results



Appendix A:

Community Survey - Summary of Findings

Background and Methodology

In October 2015, the Strategic Plan Committee distributed a comprehensive online survey to the Holliston community at large to:

- a) Engage the community in the development of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan
- b) Understand their expectations and priorities for the Holliston Public Schools
- c) Gain greater insight to the community's perceptions of the district's current performance against key criteria and the relative importance of these criteria

The survey was fielded over a three-week period in October, 2015. Distribution was intended to reach parents of future, existing and former students; recent graduates; administrators and educators in the district; town officials; and Holliston business owners and other community members, including senior citizens. Nearly 900 participants responded representing all of the above constituents.

The survey explored the following:

- The characteristics of a high-performing school district, and the relative importance of these characteristics;
- The relative importance of performance criteria across:
 - Student outcomes (many dimensions)
 - Student welfare (social, emotional, overall well-being)
 - Tools and technology (required to support the overall educational environment)
 - Communication (among administrators, parents, students, and the community)
 - Talent and resources (from human capital to financial resources);
- An assessment of the district's current mission and vision statements, as well a number of related support points;
- The relative importance of 13 different "belief statements" and the degree to which the community believes there is evidence of the district's performance in these areas;
- An evaluation of the district's greatest strengths.

Finally, throughout the survey, the Committee offered extensive opportunity for open responses. More than 2,000 comments were collected and evaluated in the context of the quantitative feedback. Following are highlights from the survey, as well as a snapshot of the quantitative results.



Key Findings

Respondent Profile

It is encouraging that respondents from every key constituency participated in the survey. The vast majority (74.8%) indicated they are a parent/guardian, teacher (10.1%), or community member (29.7%). It is important to note that respondents could belong to multiple groups (responses add to > 100%).

Among the 666 parents responding to the survey, most indicated they have school-age children grades K-12 (86%); however, 16.9% said they have pre-school age children, and as many as 20.5% said they are parents of Holliston public school graduates.

Overall Themes

While many topics were explored in the survey, five key themes emerged:

- The social and emotional well-being of our students is a key concern and top priority.
- Investing in attracting, retaining and developing outstanding educators is essential in maintaining a high-performing school district.
- Holliston must continue to invest in technology and related resources to support the high-quality, innovative educational standards expected by the community.
- Fostering open and frequent communication, especially between educators and parents, is important.
- Identifying innovative sources of funding is essential to supporting our overall mission, vision, and beliefs.

Criteria for a “High-Performing School District”

A dozen different traits were evaluated in terms of how well they describe a high-performing school district. Of these, the top three in “agreement,” (% of respondents who strongly agree or agree) tie directly to the quality of our educators. The next three criteria point to the importance of communication, innovation and support for learning differences:

- 1) “Expects excellence from its administration, teachers and students” – 98.7%
- 2) “Respects its team of educators” – 98.5%
- 3) “Continuously builds the skills and capabilities of all staff to meet the unique needs of the student populations” – 97.4%
- 4) “Promotes strong partnerships between families and educators” – 97.3%
- 5) “Offers innovative academic programs” – 95.8%
- 6) “Ensures early intervention and support for learning differences” – 95.9%



Perspective on Student Outcomes

Respondents were asked to evaluate how important it is for Holliston Public Schools to perform against each of seven criteria. Of these, the top three in importance (“Extremely/Very Important”) address the rigor of our offerings and challenging our students to achieve their potential:

- 1) “Challenge each student to reach his or her maximum potential” – 98.3%
- 2) “Consistently provide a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum” – 96.7%
- 3) “Offer a strong academic program and deliver outstanding student achievements” – 95.8%

It is worth noting that none of the statements were rated below 86% in combined importance (“extremely/very important.”)

Understanding Student Welfare

Student welfare was an important topic discussed by the committee, and as such was a key area of exploration in our research. Student welfare covers a broad array of topics from the nature and safety of the learning environment to the portfolio of extracurricular activities offered. In sum, it addresses the need to care for the “whole child.”

Of the seven criteria evaluated, respondents overwhelmingly stated that it was extremely or very important (97% combined) to “provide a positive and safe learning environment for all students.”

Following that, respondents indicated that ensuring “students know how to seek help at school if they have a problem” and that “the administration/staff are responsive to parent and student concerns” are of key importance (76% and 66% stated these are “extremely important,” respectively).

Assessing the Need and Role of Tools and Technology

Holliston has made a significant effort to stay on the forefront of innovation in education by investing in technology tools and resources to empower our teachers, engage students more effectively, and train them in 21st century skills. This section of the survey was intended to assess the relative importance of investing in and integrating technology into our curriculum.

The community provided a strong endorsement for these investments:

- 92% indicated that it is extremely/very important to “have sufficient technology to meet the needs of [the HPS] teachers and students;”
- 88% indicated it was extremely/very important to “prepare students to thrive in a technology-based world.”



The Importance and Nature of Communication

Communication is always a key topic in the community and one that the Holliston Public Schools takes seriously. Various aspects and goals of communication were explored in this survey, but the community overwhelmingly stated the importance of ensuring that “educators consistently and clearly communicate student progress and concerns” (96% selected extremely or very important).

Investing in Talent and Resources

This section evaluated five criteria related to investing in talent and resources, and again the community provided resounding support for our teachers:

- 98.5% said that it is extremely or very important to “recruit, motivate and retain excellent teachers”

The remaining four criteria were also deemed to be extremely or very important, with each rated above 90% for the combined score (top two boxes).

Assessing the District’s Mission, Vision, and Belief Statements

To provide continuity in planning, the committee asked the community for feedback on our current mission, vision and belief statements.

- MISSION: While the majority of respondents (76%) agreed with the existing mission statement, the committee felt that other insights gleaned from our research results, including contextual feedback from the open comments, warranted updating the statement. (*See page 8 for revised statement.*)
- VISION: Similarly, respondents are predominantly in agreement with the existing vision statement (83%), but the committee felt that it should be revised slightly so as not to be confused or compete with the mission statement. (*See page 8 for revised vision statement.*)
 - Vision Support Points: In addition to evaluating the existing vision statement, we asked the community to consider the importance of six support points. Based on a top two-box score (% who said extremely/very important), the most important support points are:
 - “Create a challenging and desirable learning environment for students and staff” (97.7%);
 - “Prepare students for success in a dynamic, multi-faceted world” (95.8).
 - The least important support point with a combined top-two box score of 72.3% was “Meet all federal and state accountability measures for student achievement,” although at 72% the community is acknowledging the need to comply with state mandates.



- BELIEFS: Finally, we asked participants to evaluate nine statements based on:
a) How important they believe each is to the future of the Holliston Public Schools, and b) whether excellence in each area is clearly evident today.

Again, the statement that garnered the most support (97% agree/strongly agree) echoes the need to invest in our educators: “We believe in recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, administrators and support staff.” However, only 56.8% agree or strongly agree that excellence in this area is clearly evident today.

A close second relates to the social and emotional theme emerging in other aspects of this research. Specifically, the statement that received the next highest combined score was, “We believe in an emotionally and physically safe school environment” (96.8% agree/strongly agree). Yet again, there is a perceived gap in how well we are doing on this front. Only 61% of respondents say, “Excellence in this area is clearly evident today in the Holliston Public Schools.”

Respondents assessed all of the other belief statements as important to the future of Holliston Public Schools (at or above 90% in combined top two-box scores on agreement), with somewhat smaller gaps in perceived evidence of excellence in current performance. *(See tables on following pages for detail.)*

Evaluating HPS’ Greatest Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The last section of the survey asked respondents to select from a list of five core areas, those that represent the district’s a) top two greatest strengths, and b) two most important areas for improvement.

The five areas included those evaluated throughout the survey:

- 1) Student outcomes
- 2) Student welfare
- 3) Tools and technology
- 4) School communication
- 5) Talent and resources

By far, the community selected student outcomes as the leading strength of the district (selected by 76% of respondents) – more than double that of almost every other area. Second on the list was student welfare, selected by 37.8% of respondents.

The community was more divided over the areas for improvement, with almost all areas being selected by between 30% and 45% of respondents; however, “talent and resources,” and “tools and technology” rank first and second among respondents, selected by 44.2% and 41.3%, respectively.



Appendix B:

Community Survey - Summary of Results

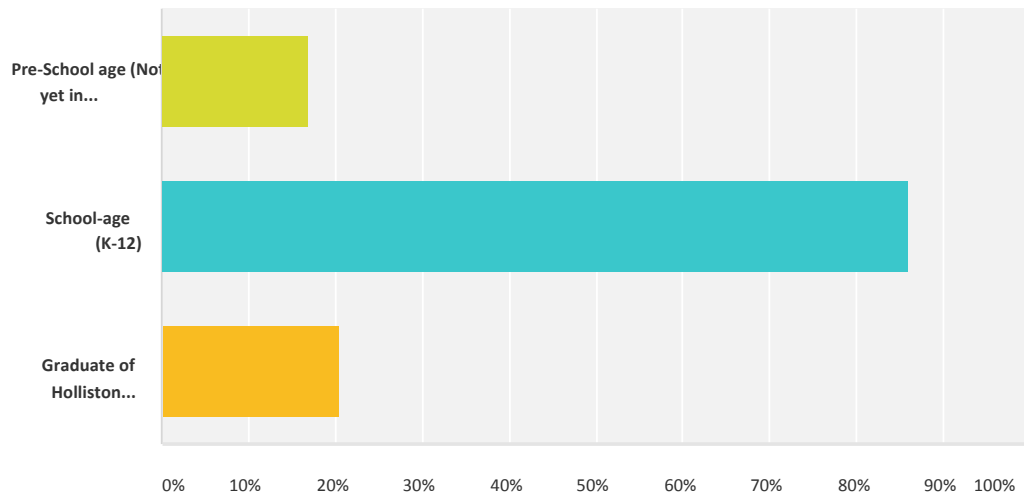
Q1 Please check all that apply. I am a:

Answered: 890 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Parent/Guardian	74.83% 666
Teacher	10.11% 90
School Administrator or Support Staff	3.26% 29
Student	0.79% 7
Appointed or Elected Town Official	2.02% 18
Holliston Business Owner	2.47% 22
Community Member	29.66% 264
Other (please describe)	4.49% 40
Total Respondents: 890	

Q2 My child is /children are (please check all that apply):

Answered: 664 Skipped: 226



Answer Choices	Responses
Pre-School age (Not yet in Kindergarten)	16.87% 112
School-age (K-12)	85.99% 571
Graduate of Holliston Public Schools	20.48% 136
Total Respondents: 664	

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q3 I am a resident of:

Answered: 883 Skipped: 7

Answer Choices	Responses
Holliston	90.71% 801
Other (please specify)	9.29% 82
Total	883

Q4 A high performing school district is characterized by the following traits.

Answered: 828 Skipped: 62

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Respects its team of educators	71.83% 589	26.71% 219	1.34% 11	0.12% 1	820
Offers innovative academic programs	63.59% 524	32.28% 266	3.28% 27	0.85% 7	824
Shows a willingness to chart its own path independent of state and/or federal expectations	48.91% 402	38.44% 316	11.31% 93	1.34% 11	822
Is highly ranked in surveys published by respected state and national media	35.78% 293	51.65% 423	11.48% 94	1.10% 9	819
Receives a generous level of financial support from its community	35.56% 293	49.51% 408	12.86% 106	2.06% 17	824
Promotes strong partnerships between families and educators	64.08% 528	33.25% 274	2.31% 19	0.36% 3	824
Ensures early intervention and support for learning differences	60.78% 499	35.69% 293	3.17% 26	0.37% 3	821
Continuously builds the skills and capabilities of all staff to meet the unique needs of the student populations	66.42% 546	31.02% 255	2.31% 19	0.24% 2	822
Encourages engagement of all members of the community	42.67% 349	51.10% 418	5.87% 48	0.37% 3	818
Expects excellence from its administration, teachers and students	79.34% 653	19.32% 159	1.22% 10	0.12% 1	823
Inspires families to move to or remain in Holliston because of the perceived value of the education provided	57.94% 478	36.00% 297	5.21% 43	0.85% 7	825
Improves the town's overall reputation by increasing property values and economic viability	51.46% 423	40.51% 333	6.69% 55	1.34% 11	822

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q5 STUDENT OUTCOMES: For each statement below, please indicate how important it is for Holliston Public Schools to perform against the following criteria. Holliston Public Schools should...

Answered: 813 Skipped: 77

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Provide individualized instruction to meet the needs of students.	52.29% 423	33.75% 273	13.10% 106	0.87% 7	809
Challenge each student to reach his or her maximum potential.	76.27% 617	22.00% 178	1.61% 13	0.12% 1	809
Consistently provide a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum.	64.32% 521	32.35% 262	2.84% 23	0.49% 4	810
Offer a strong academic program and deliver outstanding student achievements.	62.95% 508	32.84% 265	3.97% 32	0.25% 2	807
Effectively meet the needs of students with academic challenges.	58.84% 476	33.50% 271	7.29% 59	0.37% 3	809
Effectively meet the needs of top performing students.	53.71% 434	38.86% 314	6.31% 51	1.11% 9	808
Effectively measure student progress	44.93% 363	43.32% 350	11.01% 89	0.74% 6	808

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q6 STUDENT WELFARE: For each statement below, please indicate how important it is for Holliston Public Schools to perform against the following criteria. Holliston Public Schools should...

Answered: 799 Skipped: 91

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Provide a positive and safe learning environment for all students	85.41% 679	12.08% 96	2.52% 20	0.00% 0	795
Ensure that students know how to seek help at school if they have a problem	75.50% 601	22.49% 179	1.88% 15	0.13% 1	796
Ensure that the administration and staff are responsive to parent and student concerns	66.25% 526	29.85% 237	3.78% 30	0.13% 1	794
Effectively meet the social and emotional needs of all students	55.78% 444	32.41% 258	11.06% 88	0.75% 6	796
Provide a strong portfolio of extracurricular opportunities	38.14% 304	45.67% 364	15.18% 121	1.00% 8	797
Provide a strong portfolio of athletic and fitness opportunities	30.87% 246	49.06% 391	18.07% 144	2.01% 16	797
Provide a strong portfolio of arts and creativity opportunities	47.17% 375	39.87% 317	12.45% 99	0.50% 4	795

Q7 TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY: For each statement below, please indicate how important it is for Holliston Public Schools to perform against the following criteria. Holliston Public Schools should...

Answered: 794 Skipped: 96

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Effectively integrate technology into students' educational experience, both in and outside the classroom.	45.58% 361	38.13% 302	14.14% 112	2.15% 17	792
Provide innovative, state of the art instruction in its classrooms.	42.86% 339	35.90% 284	19.09% 151	2.15% 17	791
Have sufficient technology to meet the needs of its teachers and students.	57.95% 459	33.84% 268	7.07% 56	1.14% 9	792
Prepare students to thrive in a technology-based world.	54.67% 433	33.21% 263	11.24% 89	0.88% 7	792

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Holliston Public Schools to perform against the following criteria. Holliston Public Schools should...

Answered: 787 Skipped: 103

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Provide comprehensive information to the community about school programs and achievements.	30.23% 237	48.09% 377	20.54% 161	1.15% 9	784
Report and respond quickly to the community about school events, questions and concerns.	44.15% 347	42.62% 335	12.21% 96	1.02% 8	786
Ensure educators consistently and clearly communicate student progress and concerns.	61.48% 482	34.18% 268	3.83% 30	0.51% 4	784
Ensure parents and guests feel welcome at the schools.	39.90% 312	43.61% 341	14.71% 115	1.79% 14	782
Provide opportunities for parents/guardians and community members to get involved with school activities.	34.78% 273	44.97% 353	19.11% 150	1.15% 9	785

Q9 TALENT AND RESOURCES: For each statement below, please indicate how important it is for Holliston Public Schools to perform against the following criteria. Holliston Public Schools should...

Answered: 781 Skipped: 109

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Recruit, motivate and retain excellent teachers.	80.36% 626	18.10% 141	1.54% 12	0.00% 0	779
Have a comprehensive plan to continuously improve the skills of all professional teaching and administrative staff.	56.10% 437	35.43% 276	7.96% 62	0.51% 4	779
Have adequate staff to support its teachers and students.	63.75% 496	29.95% 233	6.17% 48	0.13% 1	778
Aggressively pursue innovative sources of funding.	60.44% 469	30.80% 239	8.12% 63	0.64% 5	776
Provide adequate investment to meet future needs.	54.43% 424	38.77% 302	6.16% 48	0.64% 5	779

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q10 MISSION: The following Mission Statement was drafted in 2010. A well-crafted mission statement should clearly and succinctly describe the purpose and intentions of the school system. Please review and rate the following statement: "The Holliston Public Schools are committed to providing the resources and opportunities that will enable each student to develop and maximize individual potential in a positive and collaborative environment that encourages and affirms academic achievement and personal excellence."

Answered: 777 Skipped: 113

Answer Choices	Responses	
I agree with this statement	75.68%	588
The statement needs revision	21.75%	169
I disagree with the statement	2.57%	20
Total		777

Q11 VISION: The following Vision Statement was drafted in 2010 to describe Holliston's expectations for the future of its school system. Please review and rate this vision statement: "Our goal is to graduate confident, critical thinkers, productive and creative lifelong learners, and socially responsible, engaged citizens who are capable of adapting to change in a technologically advanced and multicultural society."

Answered: 769 Skipped: 121

Answer Choices	Responses	
I agree with the statement	83.36%	641
This statement is in need of revision	14.69%	113
I disagree with this statement	1.95%	15
Total		769

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q12 The above Vision Statement is supported by the support points shown below. Please rate the **IMPORTANCE** of each of these supporting points according the following scale:

Answered: 769 Skipped: 121

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total
Create a challenging and desirable learning environment for students and staff.	69.66% 535	27.99% 215	2.08% 16	0.26% 2	768
Ensure instructional innovation.	42.45% 326	42.97% 330	13.54% 104	1.04% 8	768
Establish and fulfill high expectations of scholarship.	48.36% 369	40.24% 307	10.22% 78	1.18% 9	763
Meet all federal and state accountability measures for student achievement.	30.55% 234	41.78% 320	24.54% 188	3.13% 24	766
Expand educational partnerships within the community and region.	32.64% 250	44.52% 341	20.50% 157	2.35% 18	766
Prepare students for success in a dynamic, multi-faceted world.	71.97% 552	23.86% 183	3.78% 29	0.39% 3	767

Q13 "We believe in an emotionally and physically safe school environment."

Answered: 763 Skipped: 127

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	76.08% 579	20.76% 158	2.89% 22	0.26% 2	0.00% 0	761
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	17.42% 131	43.62% 328	28.72% 216	8.24% 62	1.99% 15	752

Q14 "We believe in instruction that is responsive to student needs and learning styles."

Answered: 763 Skipped: 127

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	67.28% 512	27.20% 207	4.34% 33	1.18% 9	0.00% 0	761
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	12.70% 96	40.61% 307	33.73% 255	10.71% 81	2.25% 17	756

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q15 "We believe in class sizes and resources that best support instruction and the curriculum."

Answered: 763 Skipped: 127

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	70.04% 533	24.84% 189	4.60% 35	0.53% 4	0.00% 0	761
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	13.77% 104	37.75% 285	31.26% 236	14.44% 109	2.78% 21	755

Q16 "We believe in recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, administrators and support staff."

Answered: 763 Skipped: 127

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	79.76% 607	17.61% 134	2.10% 16	0.53% 4	0.00% 0	761
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	16.73% 126	40.11% 302	31.34% 236	9.30% 70	2.52% 19	753

Q17 "We believe in relevant student assessments to measure individual growth, identify individual needs and inform individual instruction."

Answered: 755 Skipped: 135

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	49.00% 369	39.31% 296	9.96% 75	1.33% 10	0.40% 3	753
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	13.48% 101	41.66% 312	34.18% 256	9.21% 69	1.47% 11	749

Q18 "We believe in the expanded use of technology to enhance teaching and learning and support the efficient management of district resources."

Answered: 755 Skipped: 135

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	51.66% 389	36.52% 275	8.63% 65	2.79% 21	0.40% 3	753
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	13.52% 101	43.11% 322	32.93% 246	9.24% 69	1.20% 9	747

Holliston Public Schools - 2015 Strategic Plan Survey

Q19 "We believe in educating the whole child by offering, among other things, a robust fine and performing arts program and a well-respected program of interscholastic athletics."

Answered: 755 Skipped: 135

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	59.28% 447	33.55% 253	5.57% 42	1.33% 10	0.27% 2	754
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	14.75% 110	41.02% 306	28.69% 214	11.80% 88	3.75% 28	746

Q20 "We believe in collaboration in learning that engages family and community."

Answered: 755 Skipped: 135

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	47.21% 356	44.03% 332	7.43% 56	1.19% 9	0.13% 1	754
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	14.42% 108	42.32% 317	34.45% 258	7.74% 58	1.07% 8	749

Q21 "We believe in effective communication among all stakeholders."

Answered: 755 Skipped: 135

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	56.82% 429	37.35% 282	5.30% 40	0.53% 4	0.00% 0	755
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	13.39% 100	40.03% 299	32.40% 242	11.78% 88	2.41% 18	747

Q22 "We believe in the importance of being recognized as a community with superior schools."

Answered: 753 Skipped: 137

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	58.24% 438	32.18% 242	7.31% 55	1.86% 14	0.40% 3	752
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	20.83% 156	51.80% 388	21.23% 159	5.21% 39	0.93% 7	749

Q23 "We believe in diverse extracurricular and cultural enrichment offerings available to all students."

Answered: 753 Skipped: 137

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	48.60% 365	39.68% 298	9.05% 68	2.26% 17	0.40% 3	751
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	11.53% 86	40.62% 303	37.40% 279	8.98% 67	1.47% 11	746

Q24 "We believe in promotion of tolerance and respect by understanding and appreciating individual differences."

Answered: 753 Skipped: 137

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	67.02% 504	27.26% 205	4.79% 36	0.93% 7	0.00% 0	752
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	20.72% 155	45.45% 340	27.67% 207	4.68% 35	1.47% 11	748

Q25 "We believe Holliston Public Schools should have the resources needed to accomplish its goals."

Answered: 753 Skipped: 137

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Excellence in this area is IMPORTANT to the FUTURE of the Holliston Public Schools	69.41% 522	25.40% 191	4.26% 32	0.66% 5	0.27% 2	752
Excellence in this area is CLEARLY EVIDENT TODAY in the Holliston Public Schools	13.50% 101	36.36% 272	31.28% 234	16.04% 120	2.81% 21	748

Q26 What do you believe are the GREATEST STRENGTHS of the Holliston Public Schools? (Please check your TOP 2 choices and then provide specifics in the comment box.)

Answered: 720 Skipped: 170

Answer Choices	Responses
Student Outcomes (Academic Performance)	75.97% 547
Student Welfare	37.78% 272
Tools and Technology	22.50% 162
School Communication	21.25% 153
Talent and Resources	31.53% 227
Total Respondents: 720	

Q27 What do you believe are the TWO MOST IMPORTANT areas for improvement that you would like to see addressed by the 2015 Strategic Plan? (Please select two areas and then provide details in the comment box.)

Answered: 724 Skipped: 166

Answer Choices	Responses	
Student Outcomes (Academic Performance)	36.74%	266
Student Welfare	40.19%	291
Tools and Technology	41.30%	299
School Communication	30.66%	222
Talent and Resources	44.20%	320
Total Respondents: 724		

Q28 Please provide any additional comments or feedback you would like to share with the Holliston Public Schools Strategic Planning Committee:

Answered: 179 Skipped: 711