

A lighthouse is visible on the left side of the slide, partially obscured by the dark blue background. The lighthouse is white with a red roof and a glass-enclosed lantern room at the top. The background is a solid dark blue color.

Holliston Public Schools

Strategic Plan
2010-2015

First Update
APRIL 2011

Mission 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.

Approved by School Committee – June 16, 2005
Reapproved by School Committee – February 25, 2010

Vision

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. We will:

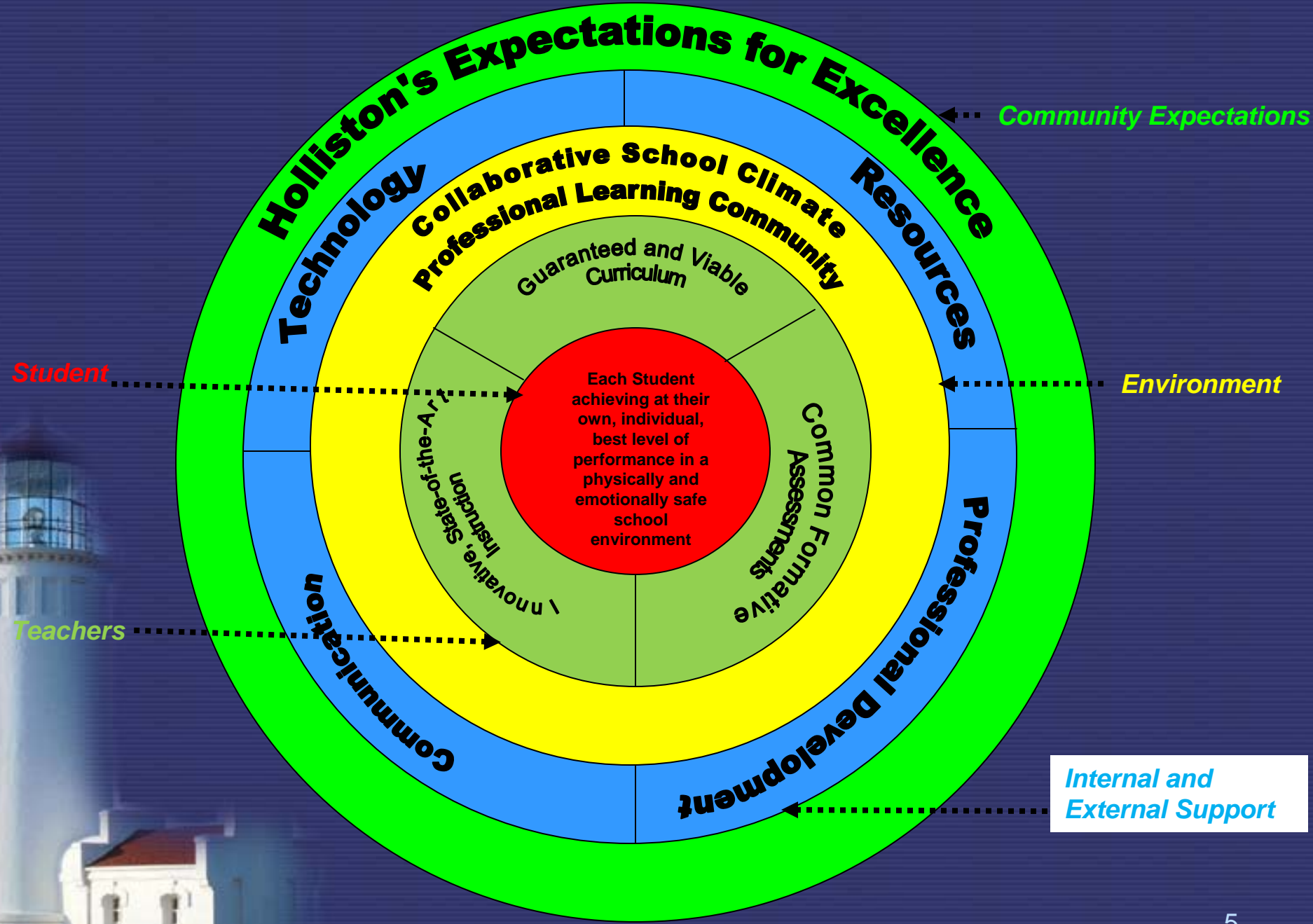
- Create a challenging and desirable learning environment for students and staff
- Ensure instructional innovation
- Establish and fulfill high expectations of scholarship
- Meet all federal and state accountability measures for student achievement
- Expand educational partnerships within the community and region
- Prepare students for success in a dynamic, multi-faceted world

Beliefs

We believe in:

- An emotionally and physically safe school environment
- Instruction that is responsive to student needs and learning styles
- Class sizes and resources that best support instruction and the curriculum
- Recruitment and retention of high quality teachers, administrators and support staff
- Relevant student assessments to measure individual growth, identify individual needs and inform individual instruction
- Expanded use of technology to enhance teaching and learning, and support the efficient management of district resources
- Educating the Whole Child by offering, among other things, a robust fine and performing arts program and a well-respected program of interscholastic athletics.
- Collaboration in learning which engages family and community
- Effective interactive communication among all stakeholders
- The importance of being recognized as a community with superior schools
- Diverse extracurricular and cultural enrichment offerings available to all students
- Promotion of tolerance and respect by understanding and appreciating individual differences

Approved by School Committee – February 25, 2010



Strategic Focus Area:

All Students Achieving at their own individual best level of performance

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
Provide and maintain a physically and emotionally safe school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-going parent information programs on the social and emotional health issues facing today's students. • Continue our active and pro-active anti-bullying campaign targeting both "traditional" and cyber-bullying. • Ensure that each student has a "trusted adult" in their school who can be a source of assistance and support when needed. • Continue efforts to establish a school culture where all individual differences are respected and valued. 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Received 3-year grant from MetroWest Community Healthcare Foundation to fund anti-bullying campaign. Conducting baseline-surveys now. •Partnered with PTSA and HYFS to conduct a number of parent forums to discuss bullying. •Established Student Leadership program at Adams to improve school culture. •Implemented Rachel's Challenge Program at HHS. •Developing partnership with ADL – World of Difference. •Positive Behavior Support Initiative at Placentino. •Social Emotional Summits continue. •Special Education Program Reviews at HHS.
Provide and maintain an emotionally and academically safe instructional environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide differentiated instruction to students of differing abilities, ensuring that all students, whatever their ability, are academically challenged. • Continue to encourage educators and students to be academic risk-takers when teaching or learning. • Actively pursue on-going efforts to re-define instructional objectives in terms of Essential Understandings or Power Standards. 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading Street ELA curriculum offers deeper opportunities for differentiation (Sidewalks). •On-going curriculum re-design efforts slowed in 2010-2011 due to loss of Professional Development Days. •Surveyed SPED parents to review program effectiveness. •enVisionMath Kits. •UbD Stage 1 at HHS. •Wilson Reading training. •Integrated RTI model into culture. •Change Speech/Language model from pull-out to inclusion.
Focus on expanding the definition of academic achievement beyond test-scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a set of 21st Century Skills that all students should possess by graduation; design instruction and assessments that will nurture and grow those skills. • Define a set of character traits that all students should possess by graduation and design programs to model, nurture and develop those traits. 	Long-Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Informal use of 21st Century Skill model developed by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has begun. •Health/Wellness Curriculum focuses on character development. •MS Student Leadership team builds/encourages character building.

Strategic Focus Area: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Continue the definition and documentation of all curriculum at all levels using a backwards-design model where students are expected to develop deep understandings of “big ideas” by focusing on the “essential questions” of a lesson, unit or course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and execute an ongoing improvement process for the refinement and development of curriculum with consistency and continuity • Establish mandated state curriculum standards as the school district’s minimum baseline • Research and leverage best practices • Utilize student data to inform curriculum design. • Set expectations that the published local curriculum should be followed by all • Focus desired outcomes on developing students’ ability to apply knowledge through the expanded use of experienced based learning 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Efforts slowed due to loss of Professional Development Days during 2010-2011 School Year, impacting momentum. •Using the PLC attribute of shared learning, administrative team attended a 6-session series of workshops on UbD and how to lead implementation with their staff.
<p>Provide tools to facilitate the development and sharing of curriculum units, assessments and best practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand use of <i>Atlas Rubicon</i> software as a curriculum development tool and repository • Collaborate and share curriculum among other communities • Monitor state efforts to provide state-wide learning and curriculum tools through the <i>Race to the Top</i> federal initiative 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Atlas Rubicon software available to all teachers for documenting curriculum. •Efforts to populate Atlas Rubicon slowed by loss of Professional Development Days in 2010-2011 school year.
<p>Communicate the shift in curriculum development to ensure alignment of teachers, students and community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue practice of presenting the results of curriculum review efforts to the community via School Committee meetings and other media outlets illustrating the importance of continuous curriculum revision and development • Provide timely and relevant Professional Development to all teachers on the latest techniques in curriculum development 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Atlas Rubicon demonstration to School Committee received strong support. •On-Going Professional Development efforts shifted to workshops and faculty meetings due to loss of Professional Development Days in 2010-2011 School year. •Continue to highlight Professional Development experiences during Public Comment section of HSC meetings.

Strategic Focus Area: State of the Art Instruction

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Design instruction that meets the needs of multiple learning styles and various abilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand the district's repertoire of Differentiated Instruction strategies in order to meet the needs of all students • Develop and expand the district's collection of Response to Intervention instructional tools and strategies in order to meet the needs of all students • Foster and encourage developmentally appropriate discovery-based learning and expand the use of a coaching instructional model 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading Street and enVisionMath adoptions provide teachers with easily available tools to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual learners. •Grade 6 Literacy Block shifted to Response to Intervention strategy. •Discovery-based learning model being introduced to selected teachers as appropriate. •Expanded use of co-teaching model at HHS. •District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) re-written in 2011. •Redesigned DSB for Special Education students. •Focused AYP Intervention programs at Miller/Adams. •Integrated support teachers into classroom and away from pull-out model.
<p>Foster an environment that encourages teachers to take risks and seek peer feedback on performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a feedback culture and mechanism that fosters peer observation • Recognize, acknowledge and encourage "acts of bravery" among staff and students • Restructure the evaluation process to make the feedback loop a critical part of performance evaluation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Awaiting adoption of new teacher/administrator evaluation framework by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. •Superintendent conducts weekly classroom walk-throughs with Principals. •Piloting Instructional Rounds at HHS. •Voluntary peer observation at Miller.
<p>Leverage technology to maximize access to instructional materials both in the classroom and outside of class for all learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of <i>Web 2.0</i> and other digital tools to increase the availability of content for students outside the school day to increase the effectiveness of face-to-face classroom time • Create an instructional culture where technology is an integral and necessary component of instruction 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased visibility of Web 2.0 tools by Administrative Team via hands-on training sessions at bi-weekly Team meetings. •Technology Integration Specialist for HHS in FY12 budget. •Dozens of staff attend MESPA Technology Conference in Fall 2010. •Integrate technology training into bi-weekly Administrative Council Meetings.

Strategic Focus Area: Collaborative School Climate

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Strengthen and build upon strong collaborative culture to impact more of the routine or operational activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to build off of the community's ability to come together in times of crisis for more operational needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Document community response processes from previous crises * Leverage processes in more routine activities such as fostering community volunteers, participation in governance and committees • Ensure at the center of all collaborative efforts are the needs of the students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Start each interaction with a reminder / statement of student learning being at the center * Add the statement to planning documents and agendas 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continually integrate concepts of Professional Learning Communities into our day-to-day work •Special Education Self-Assessment completed in anticipation of Coordinated Program Review. •Added additional Common Planning Time into Kindergarten calendar to facilitate Reading Street implementation.

Strategic Focus Area: Collaborative School Climate (continued)

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Student learning must be at the core of all decisions and interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define decision structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Document roles and responsibilities of members of committees, schools and administration * Define decision tree / structure for clarity (what decisions are non-negotiable and which ones are open to broader input) * Involve parents and community in decision process utilizing this framework to ensure alignment of expectations for involvement • Utilize data in decision process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Leverage existing data from various sources including assessments, external sources and best practices 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Expand use of data in decision-making process. •Transition from using TestWiz to new data analysis tool provided by DESE and take advantage to further compare Holliston's results to other like communities. •Transitioned to DESE Data Warehouse model for data storage, inquiry and report writing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for risk taking for the sake of improving schools and better learning for students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourage peer reviews * Establish recurring forums for providing feedback on improving processes •Partner with parents through communication channels to encourage them to provide feedback and raise concerns without fear of "retaliation" 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Open iPass Parent Portal to HS parents. •Teacher-initiated expansion and acceleration of communication model underway through pilot of Open Gradebook at HHS.

Strategic Focus Area: Collaborative School Climate (continued)

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2010 UPDATE
<p>Encourage a climate in which students feel confident and safe in driving activities important to the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways for students to participate in the governance and decision processes of the schools and district (set clear expectations so they are not disenchanted with level of participation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School committees, school improvement councils * Feedback processes to administration with clear guidance around potential outcomes • Ensure the schools provide a physically and emotionally safe environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Build upon current practice by educating students at each level about physical and emotionally safe practices * Provide consistency across the schools on addressing safety concerns (tailored to level of students) 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to expand role of Student Council at HHS. • Development of Student Leadership Team at RAMS focusing on improving culture of respect. • Expansion of 5th Grade Student Leadership team at Miller. • Positive Behavioral Support program at Placentino encourages student self-correcting behavior. • Student participation in Rachel's Challenge. • Second grader at Placentino started recycling at Placentino cafeteria.
<p>Identify and define the interaction model for collaboration across the district with the needs of the students always at the center of all collaborative efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and document the processes by which the groups work together to identify opportunities for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Set clear expectations for group dynamics and roles * Publish key information in forum to share across interested stakeholder groups 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to expand use of Professional Learning Communities as a model for integrating collaboration into our professional practice.

Strategic Focus Area: Technology

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2010 UPDATE
Effectively and appropriately expand the use of technology as an instructional tool to meet the needs of all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a Task Force of teachers and technology experts to, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establish a base-line * Examine our blocking practices * Discuss the implications of teachers using social networking sites (e.g. <i>Facebook</i>) * Address needed Professional Development * Recommend appropriate hardware * Consider “requiring” using technology * Establish measurable goals. • Explore the creation of a 1:1 portable computing environment at HHS 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Administrative-lead efforts to expand use of technology as an instructional tool include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-weekly technology training at Admin Council • “TECH” Talk Presentations at School Committee meetings • Superintendent’s Vision of Technology presentation • Integrate wireless technology into HHS infrastructure • MacBook PLC • iPad Administrative Pilot • Blocking practices examined • Technology Integration Specialist at HHS remains funded through New Initiative • Use of Assistive Technology expanding
All students need a defined base-line level of technology skills in order to succeed, including product knowledge, the ability to use technology appropriately and critically evaluate information gathered from the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an agreed-upon list of software products that students should be able to use and the grade by which that will be accomplished • Research and implement an effective program(s) that discourages on-line harassment and cyber-bullying and supports on-line safety. • Integrate the skill of critically evaluating the reliability of information found on the internet into classroom assignments. 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“Critical evaluation of information” is a 21st Century Skill and this is part of that discussion. •Continue to integrate Internet safety into all aspects of technology instruction K-8. •Reviewed Miller technology curriculum . •Added Science, Engineering & Technology as a course at HHS.

Strategic Focus Area: Technology (continued)

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2010 UPDATE
Effectively and appropriately expand the use of technology as a communication tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of blogs and podcasts when communicating essential information to the public. 	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Administrative Ning used to test effectiveness of the tools. •School Committee website to be redesigned. •Grade Leaders use an internal Ning at Miller and Placentino for collaboration and sharing of best practices. •Kindergarten and Grade 2 wiki at Placentino.
Expand/Extend the school community so learning can occur at any time or in any place, reflecting the world in which students live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the use of on-line courses for Holliston credit. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Superintendent leading TEC's efforts to develop and expand TEC On-Line Academy. •Moodle server up and running. •Sending a number of teachers to ACCEPT's Project ABLE training. •Lexicon, MySkillsTutor and enVisionMath available to parents from home via internet access.

Strategic Focus Area: Resources

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Align the community expectations for excellence with community's willingness to financially support the schools' mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold face-to-face and on-line community-wide forums to discuss the role of the schools in the community and establish community expectations for school performance. • Have an independent audit of the school budget conducted that establishes an impartial opinion regarding the effective allocation of financial resources within the district. • Develop and publish a Financial Adequacy Study that documents the cost of meeting the community's expectations for school performance. • Report any gap between expectations and adequate costs to the community for further action. 	<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget presentations and "Did You Know" community information flyers focus on comparative data to inform public. • Legislative efforts to conduct state-wide School Finance Adequacy Study stalled. • School Committee email remains most effective means of communication. • All four Principals appear on HCAT programming this year to discuss their schools.

Strategic Focus Area: Resources (continued)

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Engage the community and expand individuals' personal commitment to participate in the work of the Holliston Public Schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a community-wide marketing campaign using the theme "Holliston's Schools – They belong to all of us!" • Expand the communication of school-information beyond parents into the broader community. • Develop and maintain an up-to-date list of volunteer opportunities within the District and other ways for community members to engage in the work of the schools. • Explore the use of <i>Web 2.0</i> tools as methods of engaging the public in the work of the schools. 	<p>Long-Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little focus was made to advance this goal during 2010-2011 School Year.
<p>Attract, motivate, retain and effectively allocate the highest quality school staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate and honor the teaching profession and individual and group accomplishments • Research, develop, and implement strategies for the recruitment and retention of a culturally diverse workforce. • Monitor wage and benefit package for competitiveness 	<p>Long-Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate HEF's "Spotlight on Excellence" award into the HPS culture. • Integrate HPS' diversity goals into student-teacher recruitment strategy. • Transitioning New Teacher Institute to regional model through ACCEPT Collaborative.

Strategic Focus Area: Professional Development

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Provide information to both the community and school staff about professional development and why it is critically important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate through established and new channels what Holliston provides for professional development • Continue to build upon a culture that embraces professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Staff leveraging available resources * Encourage staff ownership of their own continued development * Allow for forums and opportunities to share practices and knowledge 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of Professional Development Days to 2011-2012 school calendar. • Report staff participation in national conferences regularly to School Committee. • Continue to focus Faculty meetings more on Professional Development and less on review of operational issues. • Principals highlight Professional Development activities in newsletters.
<p>Define a professional development focus and approach and execute against the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create professional development plans for all staff based on agreed upon needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Build in allocated time for development directives from state and federal agencies • Continue to leverage cross-district professional development opportunities to allow for scale and efficiency • Communicate to the community what the overall Professional Development plan and approach is and share progress towards achieving plans 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Professional Development Plan created and constantly updated.
<p>Create professional development committees to drive best practices and ongoing improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a district level committee that provides a forum for professional development discussions and action planning which feeds into School (building) based committees • Focus on leveraging technology where applicable to demonstrate the staff's commitment to technology usage • Evaluate how to allocate training dollars equitably across staff 	<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term efforts focused on finalizing roles and responsibilities of Curriculum Council before considering creation of additional district-wide Committee.

Strategic Focus Area: Communication

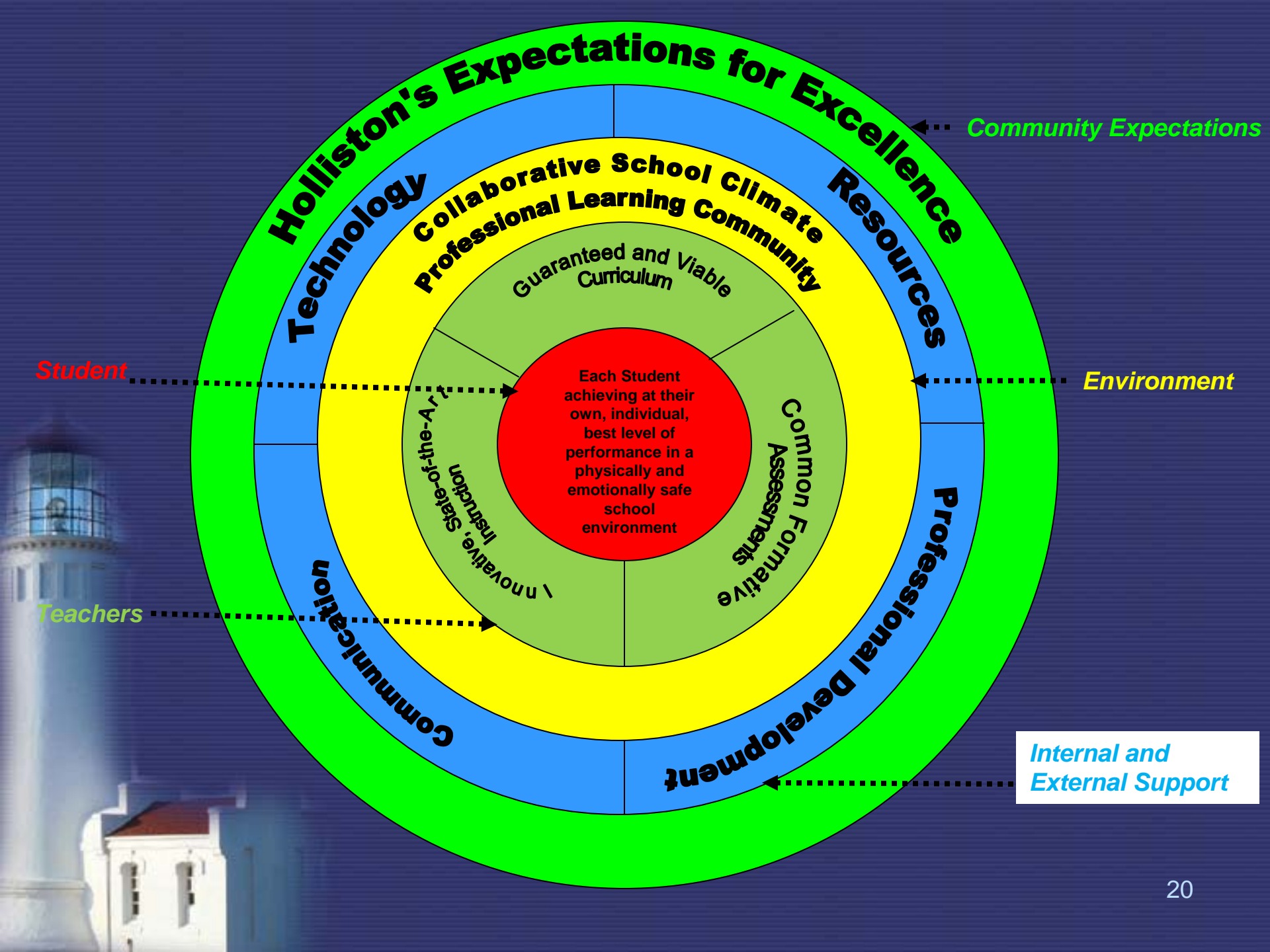
CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Streamline and improve effectiveness of communication from Holliston Schools to Holliston Community to foster greater engagement from community members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practices utilized by other school systems • Build and implement a comprehensive communication strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Define key messages for reinforcement * Define and streamline channels including the evaluation of Web 2.0 tools and social networking * Identify target audiences Document channel usage for each content type • Educate community-members on new communication approach • Provide consistency and continuity across schools on usage of communication channels 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communication continues to center around email as a primary means. No emerging best practice to replace email is apparent at this time. •School Committee email continues to be most effective communication method. •Placentino added "Ask the Principal" area on School website.

Strategic Focus Area: Communication (continued)

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>Encourage the Holliston Community to communicate more effectively with schools through improved processes and technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practices utilized by other school systems • Educate community on methods available and importance of communicating with the schools • Ensure internal processes for escalation of issues communicated by parents are documented and understood within the schools (understanding of chain of command) • Encourage feedback from the community through various channels (<i>Web 2.0</i>, school committee email, coffee talks, etc.) 	<p>On-Going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee studying re-design of their webpage to enhance web presence and improve communication. • School Committee emails and coffees remain effective means for communicating with interested parties.
<p>Improve communication within schools to enable best practice sharing and ongoing improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to share best practices among staff and across district (leverage some methods identified in Professional Development) • Foster a community of sharing of information so everyone can learn 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Ning piloted in 2010-2011 to see if that technology offered opportunity for easier exchange of information. • Grade Leaders Ning in use during 2010-2011 school year to exchange best practices and collaborate electronically.

Strategic Focus Area: Holliston's Commitment to Excellence

CRITICAL ISSUES	STRATEGIES/ INITIATIVES	TIMELINE	APRIL 2011 UPDATE
<p>All components of the Holliston community do not universally agree on the need to continuously improve the quality of the Holliston Public Schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a community-wide program to educate the community on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The competitive nature of public education today and the need to maintain our excellence * The relationship between the quality of the local education system and real estate values * The importance of maintaining our reputation as an excellent school system. 	<p>Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to inform community of important milestones and awards received by Holliston to bolster sense of community pride in their schools.
<p>Holliston's Senior Citizen community represents a largely untapped opportunity to improve the quality of the Holliston Public Schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus schools community service efforts on areas that will serve Holliston's Senior Citizen community. • Encourage teachers to invite members of Holliston's Senior Citizen community into our classrooms to share their knowledge and experience where it can enhance instruction. • Work with Town Officials to expand opportunities for property-tax reduction options for Holliston's Senior population. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between schools and Senior Center deepened during 2010-2011 school year. • HS Senior/Senior Dance. • 8th Grade town-wide event. • Increased intergenerational programming. • Wildly successful Gift Bag program at Miller continues. • Senior Citizens Speaker Bureau information being collected at HHS.



Holliston's Expectations for Excellence

