

# **HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Holyoke Public Schools offers new coding program to all 7th graders**

*Enhanced “Holyoke Codes” program runs April 25 – June 9, 2016 at the MGHPCC*

**Holyoke, Massachusetts** – The Holyoke Public Schools in cooperation with Holyoke Codes and the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, is offering a new seven-week program aimed at providing each of Holyoke’s 400 7th graders with a hands-on coding experience.

“We are elated that every seventh grade student in the Holyoke Public Schools will participate in a six-hour coding experience this spring at the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center,” said Holyoke Public Schools Receiver Dr. Stephen Zrike. “This is an incredible opportunity for students to further develop their technology and problem solving skills through activities that are meaningful, engaging and exploratory. As part of our turnaround efforts we are increasing opportunities for students to engage in STEM experiences as a viable career pathway.”

The MGHPCC, a sponsor and member of Holyoke Codes, will host the program at the Center and provide laptops, tablets, and robotics kits through a grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. The new curriculum will be taught by computer science teachers and IT professionals from the region and will integrate coding with *Scratch*, a visual programming environment with rich multimedia capabilities developed by MIT and robotics projects. Students will focus on such areas as design cycle, mathematical concepts, and communication while learning about the MGHPCC and the types of research it supports.

“We are pleased to collaborate with Holyoke Codes and the Holyoke Public Schools in offering this new program, which is not only inclusive but also of the highest caliber,” said MGHPCC Executive Director John Goodhue. “Understanding computational thinking is essential preparation for students who must compete in the new global workforce in many, if not most, fields.”

***About Holyoke Codes:***

Holyoke Codes, launched in December 2014 as part of Computer Science

Education Week, is a collaborative partnership of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC); Girls Inc. of Holyoke; Commonwealth Alliance for Information Technology Education; New England Regional Developers; Sweet and Fizzy. Educators, computer science and IT professionals develop and teach our workshops, which provide hands-on experiences for kids and families in coding, robotics, and technology. Most workshops are offered in downtown Holyoke at little or no cost to participants. The program encourages creativity, abstract thinking, systematic reasoning, collaborative working skills, and confidence, so kids and families can thrive in any environment. For more information, visit <http://holyokecodes.org/>.

***About the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center:***

The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) is a ground-breaking collaboration of five of the state’s most research-intensive universities, state government and private industry — the most significant collaboration among government, industry and public and private universities in the history of the Commonwealth, and the first facility in the nation of its kind. The 90,000-square-foot computing facility in Holyoke, Massachusetts, opened in November 2012. Funding was provided by the five member universities -- Boston University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts -- the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Cisco, EMC, and the Federal New Markets Tax Credit program. The member universities fund the ongoing operation of the MGHPCC. For more information on the Massachusetts High Performance Computing Center, visit <http://www.mghpcc.org>.

***Contact:***

If you have any questions or are interested in visiting the Holyoke Public Schools, please contact Judy Taylor, Web and Print Communications Director at
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