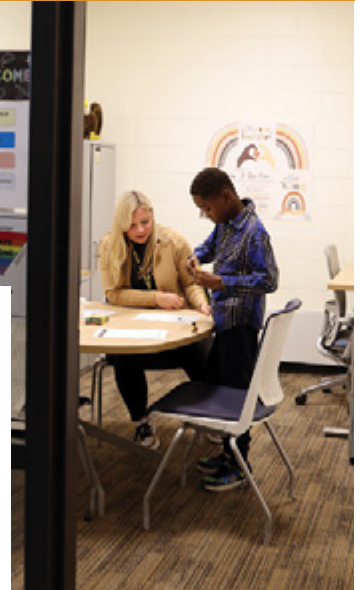


HOLT PUBLIC SCHOOLS ROOMS READER

Official Publication of Holt Public Schools



SPRING
2026



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Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Holt Public,

Welcome to another edition of the Rams Reader! We are excited to share news about some of the incredible accomplishments, events and updates happening across our district.

We are proud to continue our focus this year on fostering student growth. We work hard every day to create relevant and meaningful learning experiences for our students to maximize their thinking, learning and engagement to help ensure they are set up for a successful future.

At Holt Public, we are committed to maintaining effective, timely and consistent communication with our families, community members, educators and staff members. We appreciate our students who show up every day with a positive attitude, our families who provide encouragement and support at home and our educators and staff members who consistently share their excitement for learning.

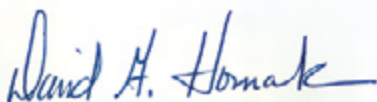
This has been an especially exciting school year for a few reasons, including:

- opening the doors to our new **Dimondale Elementary School**, which features safe and secure entries, new classroom technology and other improvements
- continuing to make progress on construction of the new **Sycamore Elementary School**, which will have new classroom equipment and upgraded technology as well as a new playground and parking lot
- celebrating our educators who have received accolades for their hard work from their peers, including Holt Junior High School health teacher **Sydney Moore**

As always, I look forward to hearing from our students, teachers, staff and families. Please share your stories with us so we can recognize them and any ideas you have to make our district even better.

As I retire this year after 32 years of service, I am deeply grateful to the Holt Public community.

I hope you'll enjoy the new edition of the Rams Reader!



David G. Hornak, Ed.D. (he/his/him)
Superintendent, Holt Public Schools



Rams in the News

January 2026:

Holt spreads spirit with school organizations ahead of Game of the Week



November 2025:

Holt schools receive more than \$17K for classroom innovation

December 2025:

Schools Rule! Holt educator named Michigan PE Teacher of the Year

January 2026:

Holt Public dining services director: What new federal dietary guidelines mean for school lunches



August 2025:

“Wow, wow, super wow!”: Community celebrates completion of new Dimondale Elementary School

October 2025:

Holt Public Schools pledges free meals for all students through 2025-26 school year

A message from the President of the Holt Public Schools Board of Education

To members of the Holt Public learning community,

Holt Public Schools superintendent, **Dr. David Hornak**, recently announced his plans to retire as the superintendent of Holt Public Schools.

Along with my fellow members of the Holt Public Schools Board of Education, we are deeply grateful to Dr. Hornak for his 32 years of service to our learning community. With 11 of those years as our district's superintendent and decades before as an educator, Dr. Hornak has made an enormous impact on our community.

Dr. Hornak is leaving our district in an incredible position.

We opened the new **Dimondale Elementary School** building to students and staff this year and construction continues on the new **Sycamore Elementary School** building.

Under his leadership, we also have seen great progress on other projects, including new HVAC systems, technology and updated facilities at several of our school buildings. Dr. Hornak's leadership made these investments in our students possible.

Our Board of Education is excited to welcome **Hal Heard III**, who most recently worked for Plymouth Canton Community Schools (P-CCS), to be our district's next superintendent.

Mr. Heard is a proven and experienced educational leader whose passion for public education and student focus will continue the district's tradition of high expectations and promoting the success of all students. Our board is confident that Heard's vision and growth mindset will continue to lead Holt Public on our journey to excellence.

Heard brings to the position the cultural competency, ethical integrity and collaborative spirit necessary to champion every student and staff member within the diverse Holt Public community. He previously served for 13 years at P-CCS, most recently as the district's executive director of student services. At P-CCS, he also served as a high school principal and the executive director of high school education.

Amy Dalton

President, Holt Public Schools Board of Education (she/her/hers)



MEET OUR BOARD:

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Dr. Kevin Leonard

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Term Expires: Dec. 31, 2028

Follow Holt Public on social media at:



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Information about HPS athletics is online at holtathletics.org

Career opportunities are online at jobs.redroverk12.com/org/holtpublicschools



Veteran educator Hal Heard III to be new HPS superintendent

"I am thrilled to join the incredible team at Holt Public Schools and lead the district's exceptional students and staff. The Holt Public community is special, and I am honored to have been selected as the district's next superintendent. I am committed to leading Holt Public into the future and being a part of all the great things happening at our district."

—Hal Heard III, newly named Holt Public Schools superintendent

New Dimondale Elementary School celebrates its first school year

It's the first school year for the new Dimondale Elementary School!

The new elementary school showcases the commitment of Holt Public to creating relevant, meaningful, student-centered learning experiences. The new building features:

- safety and security updates,
- new classroom furniture and equipment,
- and upgrades to instructional technology, student devices and classroom audiovisual equipment.



The building, located at 330 Walnut Street in Dimondale, was among several upgrades across the district supported by a \$148 million bond approved by the community in 2021. The district was able to invest an additional \$22 million in building updates and infrastructure improvements with the approval of the Holt Public Schools Bond Proposal in early 2024.

“Our students, teachers, staff and families are excited to walk through the doors of this new building to be part of Dimondale’s inaugural class,” said **Dr. David Hornak**, superintendent of Holt Public Schools. “This new building is a true testament of our district’s commitment to provide students with a world-class education in a safe and welcoming environment.”

The old Dimondale Elementary building dated back to 1952.

“This new school year is a special one for us at Dimondale as we open our doors to this



world-class facility and all the wonderful amenities it provides,” said **Shannon Barker**, Dimondale Elementary principal. “Our students, families, educators and staff members have been eagerly awaiting our new spaces for learning and playing provided in our new building.”

**NOW ENROLLING AT
DIMONDALE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL AND OTHER HOLT
PUBLIC SCHOOLS!**

We are currently enrolling students for the 2026-27 school year! Visit hpsk12.net for more information.

Progress on building new Sycamore Elementary School

A lot has changed since Holt Public hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Sycamore Elementary School building in April 2025.

The building is getting closer to becoming a reality.

The project at Sycamore will mean new classroom furniture and equipment as well as upgraded instructional technology, student devices and classroom audiovisual equipment. That project also includes building a new playground and paving a new parking lot as well as driveways and walkways to ensure safe departure and arrival each day for students and staff.



The construction at Sycamore is among several planned

upgrades at buildings and facilities across the district funded by bonds approved by the community in 2021 and 2024.

“Members of the Holt Public Board of Education are dedicated to being good fiscal stewards of taxpayer dollars and providing modern, innovative facilities for our students to ensure they have access to great educational opportunities in a safe and welcoming environment,” said Holt Public Schools Board Treasurer **Mark Perry**. “This new building will benefit our students, staff and teachers for years to come.”



Holt Education Foundation invests more than \$17,000 in learning programs, education innovation

New STEM, library, music and other resources for **Holt Public Schools** students and educators are on the way, thanks to more than \$17,000 in mini grants from the **Holt Education Foundation**.

More than 20 applicants received mini grant funding in November. Since the Holt Education Foundation formed in 1993, the nonprofit has invested more than \$425,000 in innovative and enhanced teaching and learning projects through competitive mini grants.

Some of the 21 projects approved for funding in the 2025-26 school year include:

- Cultivating inclusive learning environments and establishing a literacy project for **Pre-K for All** at the **Midway Early Learning Center**.
- Developing a music program called Color, Calm and Connection to broaden learning for students at **Elliott Elementary School**.
- Organizing a Girls Dream Fair focused on STEM learning at **Holt Junior High School**.
- Establishing a Spanish language book collection at the **Holt Junior High School** library.
- Creating a special section in the **Holt High School** library with books for students who study English as a second language.

“Announcing these mini-grant projects is always a highlight of the school year,” said **Dr. David Hornak**, superintendent of Holt Public Schools. “We are so appreciative of the Holt Education Foundation for its continued generosity and dedication to our school district that help us continue to provide our students with a world-class education.”



Holt High School students attend leadership conference learning about accounting, college careers

A group of **Holt High School** students attended the **Michigan Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA) High School Leadership Conference** in February, an engaging, hands-on event designed to introduce students to real-world careers in accounting and business.

At the conference, our students:

- ✓ Participated in an interactive accounting and budgeting challenge

- ✓ Practiced teamwork, communication and leadership skills
- ✓ Learned about college pathways and workplace readiness from current college students
- ✓ Explored accounting programs and career opportunities shared by representatives from Oakland University

“The MICPA leadership conference gave our students exposure to real career

possibilities while helping them build practical skills they can use right now,” said **Jassen D. Dowling**, Holt High School accounting instructor. “Experiences like this help students see how their education connects to future opportunities.”

We’re grateful for partners like MICPA, who help our students connect classroom learning to building a strong future. Way to go, Holt Rams!



Holt Junior High teacher named state middle school PE instructor of the year

Holt Junior High School health teacher **Sydney Moore** has been named Michigan's Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the Society of Health and Physical Educators, known as SHAPE-MI.

Moore was recognized because of her commitment to excellence and her impressive record in promoting physical fitness to students at Holt Public. Moore received the award at the SHAPE-MI Annual Conference in November at the Lansing Center.

"Sydney goes above and beyond to help students build confidence, practice teamwork and develop lifelong fitness skills," said **Dominic Knighten**, principal

of Holt Junior High. "She is helping to nurture the next generation of educators while working with other institutions to develop innovative ways for movement to spark joy and a deep sense of belonging."

Moore helped efforts to revamp SHAPE America's Youth Fitness Plan, which recommends school-age children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. She also has participated in wellness initiatives including the Michigan Moves Day, which was hosted on the lawn of the state Capitol last year.

Moore, who has been a district employee since 2017, has a strong track record of creating programs that help students gain confidence and leadership skills.



"We are thrilled to see Sydney recognized for her consistent efforts to go above and beyond to help our students achieve success," said **Dr. David Hornak**, superintendent of Holt Public Schools. "She works hard through community outreach and promoting health and wellness, including serving as a representative for our local Special Olympics organization."

Manufacturing group honors robotics coach

The Capital Area Manufacturing Council (CAMC) recognized **Bryan Taisor**, coach of Holt's RoboRams robotics team, as its **Education Partner of the Year**.

The honor celebrates Taisor's extraordinary work and his personal journey with cancer.

Through his leadership, Holt High School's RoboRams robotics team has become a powerhouse in FIRST Robotics. The team has traveled to Texas multiple times to compete at the World Championships.

Taisor has remained committed to hands-on education and community outreach, inspiring students, robotics teams across the country and manufacturers across Michigan. Even after his cancer diagnosis, Bryan continues to exemplify resilience and courage.

"Bryan is a one-of-a-kind educator and an inspiration to all of us," said **Cindy Kangas**, executive director of CAMC. "His passion for students and his ability to connect robotics to real-world STEM careers has left a permanent mark on the



talent pipeline we are nurturing for Michigan manufacturers."



A look at Holt Public competitors who took part in the state HOSA competition last spring. At the time, it was the largest group of students Holt Public had sent to the state contest.

HOORAY for HOSA students!

Holt Public's entire 14-member team moved on to the state competition for HOSA, Health Occupations Students of America. The organization helps students prepare for careers in health care.

After the regional contest was canceled due to weather, the HOSA organization allowed the Holt Public team to move ahead to the state contest, which took place in April at the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa in Acme.

That was great news to members who have been studying and preparing since August. At the state competition, 10th grader **Pauline Kelley** became the first Holt High School student to qualify for the 2026 HOSA Internationals.

Being part of a Career Technical Student Organization like HOSA empowers students to grow academically while also fostering essential skills like teamwork, leadership and professionalism. Together, we inspire a drive for excellence and pave the way for successful health care careers.



Holt Rams experience the Big Apple!



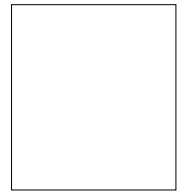
In February, Holt Public choir students had the incredible opportunity to experience the bright lights of New York City.

The trip focused on experiencing vocal musicianship, storytelling and expression by participating in a variety of programs, including:

- Being part of an ensemble singing workshop with Broadway actor and music director, **Jeremiah Ginn**, who taught the students a number from the musical “Kinky Boots.”
- Attending a singing masterclass with **Ryann Redmond**, an accomplished Broadway actress and first woman to play Olaf in the “Frozen: The Broadway Musical.”
- Meeting with **Jerry Mitchell**, a three-time Tony Award winning choreographer and director from PawPaw, Michigan, where students got a chance to ask him questions about his experiences and career advice.
- Seeing two Broadway shows, including “The Outsiders” and “Maybe Happy Ending.”

Paid for by Holt Public Schools

5780 West Holt Road
Holt, MI 48842



Important dates to remember

May 11: Board of Education meeting

May 22-25: Memorial Day break

May 31: Graduation for the Class of 2026,
4:30 p.m. at The Breslin Center

June 8: Board of Education meeting

June 10: Last day of school

ENROLL
NOW

ENROLL NOW! Holt Public Schools is currently
enrolling students for the 2026-27 school year!

Visit hpsk12.net for more information.

