



Message from School Committee Chair, Barry W. Hopping

“Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Ipswich School Committee launches new communications campaign!”

Welcome and now that I have your attention, we sincerely hope you’ll find our newsletters to be both informative and enjoyable reading. In our attempt to be more communicative with the Ipswich community, we will be publishing four newsletters over the course of the next several months. This is the first edition with others to follow on December 12, February 13, and April 16. For those of you that would prefer opportunities to meet with School Committee members in person, we have scheduled a series of “Meet & Greets” at Zumi’s on Saturday, November 16 from 12:30 - 2:30 PM, at the Council on Aging on Tuesday, May 19 from 11:30 AM - noon, and at a future Rotary Club meeting, time and date to be determined.

We have identified improved communication as one of our overarching goals for the 2019-2020 school year and we will incorporate a variety of different means to accomplish that. Communication Subcommittee members Sara Gilliam, Pavica Kneidler, and Greg Stevens have done an outstanding job of defining the work that needs to be done in establishing more meaningful and purposeful links between our committee and the residents of Ipswich.

Of course, we also encourage you to attend and be heard at our regularly scheduled School Committee meetings that happen on the first and third Thursday of each month. Our meetings begin promptly at 7:00 PM in the Ensemble Room at the MS/HS and one of the first items on every agenda is “Citizens’ Comments.” We’d love to hear from you and this would be your opportunity to share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns about the status of our schools. We have much to be proud of when assessing the value of education our children receive each day in classrooms throughout the district. Our intent is to help spread the word and let our readers know about the people, programs, and performances that are behind our district’s greatness!

We look forward with eager anticipation to your feedback once you’ve had a chance to peruse our newsletters and perhaps attend a “Meet & Greet” or two. In the interim, please know that we will be quick to respond if your question or concern can’t wait. We take our responsibilities very seriously as elected officials and welcome the opportunity to lobby and advocate on behalf of the students, staff, and parents of the Ipswich Public Schools. We are here to serve and invite you to join us in the process of providing every child with the highest quality public school experience that they so justly deserve.

Ipswich Middle/High School Honored Among 2019 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools



We are so pleased to announce that the Ipswich Middle/High School has been selected as a 2019 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School. Nominated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the school was recognized for its ongoing commitment to the environment and sustainability through programs initiated by engaged students and the school department.

At a ceremony held at the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C., 35 schools and 14 districts were honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education. Ipswich is one of only 25 public schools in the country to receive this 2019 designation.

According to Ipswich Superintendent, Dr. Brian J. Blake, “the best part of the award is the recognition that it was completely student driven under the guidance of teacher Lori Lafrance. I’m very proud of our students and staff working to improve our school and community environments.”

2019 Elementary Educational Program Report

The Ipswich School Committee formed a Working Group on Elementary Education for the 2018-2019 school year in response to questions from the community about whether Ipswich students are afforded common experiences and opportunities in our elementary schools. The appointed Working Group consisted of the following individuals:

Nicole Zito, Charles Whitten, and Carl Nylen, Members of the School Committee

Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning

Sheila McAdams, Principal, Winthrop Elementary School

Sheila Halloran, Principal Paul F. Doyon Memorial School

The work of the group focused on identifying core priorities for commonalities between the schools, choosing data points to measure the extent to which students are afforded common experiences and opportunities, gathering information about commonalities and differences, making observations and drawing conclusions from gathered data, and communicating the group's progress, findings, and recommendations.

Formative questions were developed to guide the work of the Group, principal among which were the following:

What common school elements should define an Ipswich elementary student's experience?
How can we ensure a sense of *one* learning community districtwide?

The Group determined that the appropriate outcome of their effort should be the release of an Elementary Education Plan for the Public Schools that reflected the principles, philosophies and attributes shaping the elementary school experience. Given the substantial effort already invested in the Elementary Education Plan released during the recent school building project, the Group focused on modifying the plan to strip out any artifacts from the school building project and incorporate all of the common elements of elementary education resulting from the Group's research and discussion.

The resulting document, called the Elementary Education Program, is intended to serve as a guiding plan for District elementary education. The plan has been adopted by the School Committee and is being distributed to faculty and staff, as well as parents and community members for review. The plan is intended to be dynamic with periodic review and adjustments made as needs and practices demand.

The plan can be found on the Ipswich Schools website at <https://www.ipsk12.net/Page/973>. Comments or questions on the plan can be submitted to the Ipswich School Committee or Superintendent's Office.

2019 Ipswich Official Accountability Report



The 2019 MCAS test results have been published to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. The Ipswich School Committee would like to recognize the superlative efforts of our teachers, administrators, students, and staff at Paul F. Doyon Elementary, Winthrop Elementary, Ipswich Middle, and Ipswich High - as well as the parents, caregivers, and community who are so supportive of our schools. While the MCAS tests are just one assessment tool, they nevertheless

remain an important measurement of student achievement and mastery of subject matter. We are proud that Ipswich Public Schools performed well above the state average in 2019, continuing a long tradition of academic excellence.

At the October 17, 2019 School Committee meeting, Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, gave a [presentation](#) on Ipswich Public Schools' MCAS test results. You may also find Ipswich's complete accountability report on the Massachusetts DESE website:

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5&>

School Committee Subcommittees, Working Groups, and Liaisons

The School Committee relies on the work of subcommittees and working groups to consider policies and issues facing the district. These small groups of School Committee members are tasked with providing the Committee as a whole with the information necessary to take action on school related matters. The School Committee's [2019-20 goals](#) are allocated to four subcommittees/ working groups:

Budget Subcommittee: The Budget subcommittee is currently working with the school administrators to develop a framework for upcoming budgets. Discussions center around how best to allocate the School's resources in order to provide all students with the best possible educational experience. 2019-20 subcommittee members: Hugh O'Flynn, Carl Nylén, Greg Stevens.

Vision 2030 Working Group: Our Vision 2030 group is tasked with developing a vision for the schools. By integrating existing district plans into a unified framework, the School Committee will be able to articulate district beliefs, purpose, strategy and anticipated outcomes. This framework and vision will help us guide the schools forward through the next decade. 2019-20 working group members: Barry Hopping, Carl Nylén, Pavica Kneeder.

School Facilities Working Group: This working group will work to develop a solution to meet our elementary school building needs, including clarification on what a future MSBA process will look like. They will also assess current needs within the schools to determine which capital projects take priority. 2019-20 working group members: Carl Nylén, Sara Gilliam, Chub Whitten.

Communication Subcommittee: Our Communication subcommittee will improve access to information about the school district to the community at large. This goal will be accomplished by creating and distributing a quarterly newsletter, hosting meet and greet opportunities for the public and enhancing the School's website content and social media presence. 2019-20 subcommittee members: Sara Gilliam, Pavica Kneeder, Greg Stevens.

Liaison positions, which are assigned each year just like subcommittees and working groups, afford School Committee representatives the opportunity to participate in other community meetings with relevance to Ipswich Public Schools. Our subcommittees, working groups, and liaisons give reports to the rest of the School Committee during our Open Session meetings.

For a meeting calendar and more information about our subcommittees, working groups, and liaison positions, please visit our website at <https://www.ipsk12.net/domain/308>. We will be highlighting these groups in each of this year's newsletters to help further our goal of increasing transparency and strengthening community connections.

School Committee Meeting Highlights

August

Tri-Board Meeting on August 13 to discuss the Dude Solutions facilities assessment reports, which were presented by Tony Marino, Town Manager, and Chris Rais, Facilities Director. Budget updates from State Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Brad Hill, recommendation to the School Committee to send a letter to Governor Baker and other elected officials to discuss the decline in state aid funding for Ipswich.

School Board annual retreat on August 14 to discuss goals for the 2019-20 school year. Four main [2019-20 goals](#) were identified: Communication, Budget, School Facilities, and Vision 2030.

Welcome to Greg Stevens, who was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Nicole Zito
August financial report which included a summary of closing out the 2018-19 fiscal year
Subcommittees, Working Groups, and Liaison positions were determined

September

Welcome to George Gallagher, the new High School Student Representative, who is currently a senior at Ipswich High School

Presentation on the proposed Ipswich High School trip to the Boston College Model U.N. Conference and on proposed 6th grade ecology field trip to Poland Springs in Maine; trips were approved

Introduction of and Presentation by Amy Gregory, the district's new Digital Learning Specialist
Setting Goals of School Committee subcommittees and working groups
[Local news article](#) on the Ipswich High School Robotics Team summer project that addressed area clam flats toxicity issues.

Middle school leadership team introductions: Kathy McMahon, IMS Principal, and Sean Fitzgerald, IMS Assistant Principal
Educator Evaluation Review and Approval

October

Green Ribbon Schools Award presentation

Superintendent Goals discussion

MCAS and Literacy presentations from Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning

Presentation on the proposed Ipswich High School trip to the Engineering Racing Challenge; trip was approved

Vision 2030 update and discussion

Upcoming District Events

- October 29:** Special Town Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the PAC
- November 7:** School Committee Open Session Meeting*
- November 11:** Veteran's Day, School Holiday
- **November 12:** Tri-board Meeting 7:30 p.m. Meeting Room A, Town Hall
- November 16:** School Committee Meet & Greet, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. at Zumi's
- November 21:** School Committee Open Session Meeting*
- November 27:** Thanksgiving Early Release (Secondary Schools at 11:20 a.m.; Elementary Schools at 11:55 a.m.)
- November 28-29:** Thanksgiving Break
- December 5:** School Committee Open Session Meeting*
- December 19:** School Committee Open Session Meeting*
- December 23:** January 3: Winter Break

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