

## Mission

Ipswich Public Schools aspires to empower ALL students to be global citizens who are effective communicators, analytical problem solvers and savvy consumers of information. We propose to do this through an emphasis on communication, critical thinking, creativity, self-management, perseverance and collaboration. Students will be active partners in authentic learning, offering voice and choice in demonstrating competency.

## Ipswich School Committee

MS/HS Ensemble Room  
134 High Street, Ipswich  
Thursday, October 7, 2021  
7:00 PM

Link to watch live: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4gt9ietjFA>

## AGENDA

7:00 PM	<b>1. Call to Order</b>			C. Whitten
	<b>2. Reading of the District Mission Statement</b>			
	<b>3. Announcements</b>			
	<b>4. Special Acknowledgements</b>			
	<b>5. Citizens' Queries</b>			
	<b>6. High School Student Representative Report</b>			C. Jepsen
	<b>7. Presentations</b>			
7:20 PM	A. Traverso-Weatherall Grant Committee Member Approval	Action		C. Whitten
7:25 PM	B. Overnight Field Trip Request: Model UN	Information, Action		J.Krieger, A. Hayoz-Laverdiere
7:30 PM	C. Illustrative Math Program	Information		T. Wagner, Math Specialists
7:55 PM	D. Strategic Planning Working Group Executive Summary	Information		B. Blake
8:05 PM	E. Special Municipal Employee	Discussion, Action		B. Blake
8:10 PM	F. Substitute Teacher Pay Increase Request	Discussion, Action		B. Blake
8:15 PM	G. Request for Benefits Coordinator Position	Discussion, Action		B.Blake, C. Herrick-Stella
8:25 PM	<b>8. Superintendent's Administrative Report</b>			
	<b>9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports</b>			
8:40 PM	<b>10. New Business*</b>			
	<b>11. Vouchers and Bills</b>			
	<b>12. Consent Agenda</b>			
	<b>13. Adjournment</b>			

\*All business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Agenda items may be taken out of order to fill time gaps and/or to accommodate presenters when necessary. All times are approximate.

## **Announcements: 10.07.21**

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on October 21st at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The Special Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 16th at 9:00am.
- The following subcommittee meetings will be held:
  - Communications on October 18th at 5:00pm
  - Budget on October 18th at 5:30pm
- There will be no school for all students on Monday, October 11th and Tuesday, October 12th.
- All district offices will be closed on Monday, October 11th in observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Professional Development (PD) Day for all staff is Tuesday, October 12th



# Ipswich Public Schools

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## Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee

### New Member Application

For more information on the Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee: [CLICK HERE](#)

<b>Full Name:</b> Patricia Ganley
<b>Address:</b> Jeffreys Neck Rd
<b>Primary Phone Number:</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>
<b>Connection to the Ipswich Public Schools:</b> My sons attended Ipswich schools in the 1980s and 90s and I volunteered in their classrooms. I especially enjoyed my year volunteering in Shiela Smith's 4th grade 21 Century classroom back in 1995. Currently, I have a granddaughter in kindergarten at Winthrop School and another one in the preschool program. My research work with <a href="#">CAST</a> brought me to work with the teachers and students in many classrooms in the Ipswich Public Schools, especially the middle school.

### 1. Briefly state your interest in being appointed to the Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee:

I have recently retired from <a href="#">CAST</a> , a not-for-profit educational research organization, and am looking for a way to give back to the community and leverage my experience in the education field. I am committed to supporting rich, meaningful education in the Ipswich community.
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### 2. Describe your present and past community involvement and/or interests (i.e. voluntary, social, business, professional, etc.):

I volunteered in the Ipswich schools while my children were students and continued to work in the Ipswich Middle School as a researcher and instructional designer for CAST.
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**Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee**  
New Member Application

**3. Describe any particular skills, background, education, training or experience that you would bring to the Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee:**

I have degrees in Early Childhood Education, Psychiatric Social Work and an M.Ed. in Curriculum design. I have worked in Head Start programs, served as Head of School of The Childrens' Montessori School and for the last 15 years worked at [CAST](#) as a project manager, instructional designer, researcher and media developer. I love working with educators and students to discover how to design the best learning environments for all students.

**4. Are you able to commit to a minimum of 15 hours of time for meetings to review and discuss proposals?**

YES

NO

Signature: Patricia Ganley

Date: 9/30/2021

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Please return your completed application to  
1 Lord Square, Ipswich 01938  
or email to [lhillery@ipsk12.net](mailto:lhillery@ipsk12.net)

*Your interest in serving on this committee is greatly appreciated. After this application is reviewed, you will be notified as to the School Committee's decision regarding appointment to this committee. Again, thank you for your interest in the long-term welfare of the Ipswich Public Schools.*



## **Boston College Model UN Conference**

**April 1 - 3, 2022**



September 27, 2021

To: Jonathan Mitchell

Attached is a field trip request for the 2022 Boston College Model UN Conference. We've included a tentative schedule and budget along with the necessary overnight field trip paperwork.



We understand that COVID-19 may change the nature or possibly force the cancellation of the conference. However, we are asking for preliminary approval so we can begin planning with students and start collecting money.

More than 50 students attended our first Model UN meeting last week. We talked about the Boston College Model UN Conference and explained that we have not received approval from School Committee. Students are very excited about the possibility of a conference. As of now, we have pre-registered for 30 spots and we're hoping BC could give us additional spots, if necessary, for interested students.

The attached budget shows the delegation (school) fee along with the delegate (student) fees. BC is requiring the fees to be paid by November 1. After this deadline, both fees increase by \$5. All of the fees paid to BC are 100% refundable until December 31. By then, we're hoping we'll be able to make well-informed decision about attending the conference.

We understand School Committee may not be able to approve this field trip request at this time. However, we are submitting this to start the process with the hope we can talk with students and collect money. If necessary, Alexandra and I will appear at a School Committee meeting.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

  
  
Jeff Krieger and Alexandra Hayoz-Laverdiere

**Describe the connection that this trip has to the district curriculum and State Frameworks:**

This will be our eighth year attending the Boston College Model UN Conference held at the Westin Copley in Boston. Approximately 700 students are expected to attend the conference. All students will stay at the Westin and the entire conference takes place in meeting rooms at the hotel.

The Ipswich High School Model UN Club is a collaboration of students from all grades who seek knowledge of the global community through dynamic competition, intellectual discussion and civic improvement projects. For this conference, students will prepare position papers prior to the conference and gain an in depth understanding of the United Nations. At the conference, students will simulate actual debates by playing the roles of delegates from United Nations member-states.

The pre-conference work and activities at the conference enable students to showcase the material that they learned through the Ipswich curriculum. Utilizing lessons from U.S. and Modern World History, students prepare speeches and defend positions based on current topics. Furthermore, following the Ipswich High School Mission Statement, students will demonstrate their capabilities in meeting and exceeding academic, social, and civic expectations.

There are multiple Massachusetts State Frameworks which are connected to student participation in the conference. Students must cite historical evidence when debating. Below is a list of specific frameworks which are connected to the preparation for the conference and the actual conference:

WHII.29 Describe reasons for the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and summarize the main ideas of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (H)

USG.4.7 Explain and evaluate participation by the United States government in international organizations.  
*Example:* The United Nations

USG.3.12 Use a variety of sources, including newspapers and internet web sites, to identify current state and local legislative issues and examine the influence on the legislative process of political parties, interest groups, grass roots organizations, lobbyists, public opinion, the news media, and individual voters.

USG.4.5 Examine the different forces that influence U.S. foreign policy, including business and labor organizations, interest groups, public opinion, and ethnic and religious organizations.

USG.4.6 Differentiate among various governmental and nongovernmental international organizations, and describe their purposes and functions.

WHII.47 Explain the rise and funding of Islamic fundamentalism in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and identify the major events and forces in the Middle East over the last several decades. (H, E)

- A. the weakness and fragility of the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and others
- B. the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979
- C. defeat of the Soviet Union by the Mujahideen in Afghanistan
- D. the origins of the Persian Gulf War and the post-war actions of Saddam Hussein
- E. the financial support of radical and terrorist organizations by the Saudis
- F. the increase in terrorist attacks against Israel and the United States

WHII.48 Describe America's response to and the wider consequences of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D. C. (H)

**Identify the specific goals and objectives of this trip:**

Goals and Objectives -- By the end of the conference, students should be able to:

- understand the role that the United Nations plays in global affairs;
- debate a current topic and defend a position using historical knowledge and factual information;
- collaborate with students from other schools to formulate position papers and other documents;
- identify the key leaders, political parties, economic foundation, religious groups, and social framework of the country which they represent;
- foster a positive relationship even when disagreeing and arguing with representatives from other schools;
- examine a sensitive political topic and propose solution to "real world" problems;
- discuss and debate in a group of students (Ipswich and non-Ipswich);
- demonstrate the ability to work independently; and,
- win (or attempt to win) delegate awards.

FIELD TRIP  
REQUEST AND APPROVAL FORM  
Overnight Trips Only

*School Committee approval must be obtained prior to making any formal commitment to students and parents and prior to collecting any deposits.*

THIS PRIOR APPROVAL MUST OCCUR AT LEAST TWO (2) MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF ANY OVERNIGHT TRIP.

Person Requesting and Responsible for Trip: Jeff Krieger

Date of Request: 9/27/21 School: IHS

Identity of Group: Model UN Club

Number of Students in Group: 50

Number of School Days Students are Expected to be Absent: 1/2 of Friday, April 1

Date and Time of Departure: 4/1/22 Noon Date and Time of Return: 4/1/22 3 pm

Specific Destination: Westin Copley Hotel, Boston

Means of Travel: School Bus

Name and Address of Travel Agent: N/A

Cost to School: 1/2 Day Substitute Cost to Students: ~ \$300

Availability of Scholarship: Yes:  No:  Funding Source: BC

Mandatory Current Criminal Offense Record Information (CORI) on File in Central Office for all Chaperones/Volunteers: Yes:  No:

Name(s) of Teacher, Chaperones (for final approval):  
Jeff Krieger  
Alexandra Hager-Leverland

Names of Non-Teacher Chaperones (for final approval only):  
/

Individual(s) responsible for administration of medication: Jeff Krieger + Alexandra Hager-Leverland

Are there individuals attending the trip who are not chaperones or students in the group?  
Please list: NO

Are expenses for chaperones to be paid and to what degree? Hotel Room  
Are chaperones paid? NO How much? N/A



Date final report is to be submitted after trip: 4/14/22

The final report should include financial review, overview of positive results, problems which may have occurred and recommendations for improving future trips.

Educational Purpose(s) (Attach Any Additional Pertinent Information)

1. Describe the connection that this trip has to the district curriculum and State Frameworks:

2. Identify the specific goals and objectives of this trip:

3. What will the students do on this trip? Please attach a detailed itinerary.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

Recommendation by Principal: Jonathan Mitchell Date: 9/29/21

Recommendation by Superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved by School Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Conditions (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted: March 7, 1985  
Adopted Revision: December 2, 1999  
Adopted Revision: May 20, 2004  
Adopted Revision: October 20, 2005  
Adopted Revision: June 15, 2006

# Preliminay 2022 Model UN Schedule

## Friday, April 1, 2022

4:00-6:00 pm	Registration
6:00-7:00 pm	Opening Ceremonies
7:00-8:30 pm	Dinner Break
8:30-11:00 pm	Committee Session 1A*
8:45-11:15 pm	Committee Session 1B*
8:45-10:30 pm	Reception for Faculty Advisors and Invited Guests
1:00 am	Curfew

## Saturday, April 2, 2022

9:00-11:30 am	Committee Session 2A*
9:15-11:45 am	Committee Session 2B*
9:30-10:30 am	Faculty Advisor Feedback
11:30-1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:30-4:00 pm	Committee Session 3A*
1:45-4:15 pm	Committee Session 3B*
4:00-5:00 pm	Break
4:45-7:45 pm	Committee Session 4A*
5:00-8:00 pm	Committee Session 4B*
10:00-11:45 pm	Delegate Dance/Trivia Night
12:00 am	Curfew

## Sunday, April 3, 2022

9:00-11:30 am	Committee Session 5A*
9:15-11:45 am	Committee Session 5B*
11:00-12:00 pm	Hotel Check Out
12:30-1:30 pm	Closing Ceremonies



**Boston College Model UN Conference**  
**April 1-3, 2022**  
**Ipswich High School Model UN Club *Estimated Budget***

<b># of Delegates = 30</b>	<b>Jeff Krieger, Adviser</b>
<b># of Advisors = 2</b>	<b>Alexandra Hayoz-Laverdiere, Adviser</b>

<b>Conference Registration Fees</b>			
	<b>#</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Ipswich Delegation Fee	1	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00
Per Delegate Fee	30	\$ 90.00	<u>\$ 2,700.00</u>
<b>Total Registration Fees &gt;&gt;</b>			<b>\$ 2,770.00</b>

<b>Hotel Fees</b>				
	<b>Quads / Singles for Advisors</b>			
Room Rate/night	\$	249.00		
Tax/night	\$	<u>35.98</u>		
Total/night	\$	284.98		
2 night stay	\$	569.96		
Four students per room (8 rooms for 2 nights)	8	\$ 569.96	\$	4,559.69
Two advisor rooms (2 rooms for 2 nights)	2	\$ 569.96	\$	<u>1,139.92</u>
<b>Total Hotel Fees &gt;&gt;</b>				<b>\$ 5,699.61</b>

<b>Transportation</b>			
School bus roundtrip to IHS (Salter = \$274 each way)		\$	548.00
<b>Total Transportation Fees &gt;&gt;</b>			<b>\$ 548.00</b>

		\$	9,017.61
<b>Total Conference Fees &gt;&gt;</b>			
<b>Conference Fees per Delegate &gt;&gt;</b>			<b>\$ 300.59</b>

# Strategic Planning Working Group

## Executive Summary

September 2021

This document provides a summary of the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group for the Town of Ipswich. It contains a short history of the Working Group, a summary of our findings and recommendations, and details on the scenarios studied by the Working Group and the recommended plan adopted by the Town.

### History and Purpose

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Strategic Planning Working Group (Working Group) is to provide community leaders and Ipswich residents with information on major infrastructure and operational needs of the Town including a variety of scenarios to consider for meeting these needs. The strategic plan will allow managers and residents to better appreciate our future planning needs, understand the costs, benefits, and interactions of various planning scenarios, and make thoughtful and effective decisions.

**Goal:** To develop a cost projection and investment model for key infrastructure and operational needs in Ipswich, MA. Utilizing the model, propose for Tri-Board discussion 5-10 different scenarios for addressing those needs over the next 10-15 years and beyond.

### Committee Membership

**Anthony Marino**, Town Manager, **Brian Blake**, Superintendent, **Ethan Parsons**, Planning Director, **Nishan Mootafian**, Select Board, **Rob White**, Finance Committee, **Carl Nysten**, Former Member of the School Committee/Citizen, **Adam Gray**, Citizen, **Emilie Smith**, Citizen, **Sarah Johnson**, Town Finance Director, **Joanne Cuff**, Retired School Finance Director, **Cheryl Herrick-Stella**, Ipswich Schools Director of Finance & Operations, **Chris Rais**, Facilities Director, **Rick Clarke**, Public Works Director, **Vicki Halmen**, Water & Wastewater Director

### Process and Key Assumptions

After formation in 2020, the Working Group examined the Town's most pressing strategic needs presented by town department heads, creating the following list of investments:

- Public Safety Building
- Elementary School Building
- Roads
- Open Space
- School Operational Override
- Town Operational Override

- Water Utility Systems
- Electric Utility Systems

The Working Group examined the following factors for each investment: the tax rate impact using different debt payment scenarios for each project, the rate-payer impact of utility (water, wastewater and electric) improvements, and the cost and impact of deferring each project.

The Working Group scenarios and findings were based on a number of assumptions including: focus on a 10-15 year planning horizon to address needs, tax rate impacts are based on a \$500,000 home value with 3% annual property value increase (based on past history), debt service terms used are the maximum allowable borrowing term or historic practice, and project sequencing is based on investment timeframes recommended by the departments.

## **Investment Scenarios and Findings**

The Working Group collected past and present planning documents from the town departments, and various town committees. The group reviewed these plans with an interest in capturing major town-wide capital and operational investments that Ipswich will need to contemplate in the next 20 years including cost estimates and recommended timeframes. The committee then compiled and sequenced all major (>\$500K) capital and operational expenditures into the following investment groups:

### **Major Investment Groups**

- 1) Public Safety - \$27.5M New Combined Public Safety Building (FY22 - FY24)
- 2) Schools Buildings - \$40M (town share) Elementary School(s) (FY24 and FY28)
- 3) Roads - Major paving projects: Topsfield Rd (FY21 - 1.5M), High St (FY24 - 4.4M), Argilla Rd (FY27 - 1M) and Jeffries Neck Rd (FY30 - 1M)
- 4) Open Space - \$500K in FY22 and \$3.5M over FY28 – FY38
- 5) Town Operational Override - \$1M (FY24)
- 6) School Operational Override - \$2.9M (FY23 & FY29)
- 7) Water/ Wastewater – water and sewer repairs and modernization \$60M (FY22 – FY32)
- 8) Electric - Base rate increases cover capital expenditures. Capital plan is included in the ELD budget.

The Working Group presented the results of this plan and the investment sequencing to the Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee on September 2, 2020. The boards voted to accept this plan as a roadmap for Ipswich's future investments.

## **Recommendations**

Planning for and addressing the major operational and capital needs of the town should be treated as a continual process, one that requires consistent monitoring, prioritization and adjustment, as identified needs are addressed and new priorities are identified. Consider that just during the 12 months the SPWG has been in existence, initially identified priorities including major road construction have begun to be addressed, while additional priorities including

affordable housing, climate adaptation, and historic resource protection have been identified for inclusion in the plan. We expect this process to continue in the future. With this thought in mind the SPWG recommends the following actions and timeframes for their implementation (**short term = 6 months, medium term = 12 months, long term = > 12 months**):

- An outreach campaign should be undertaken to share the findings of the SPWG, educating residents and business on the town's major operational and capital needs and seeking community input on the investment plan. **Timeframe: Short Term**
- The Town should develop and implement a process for vetting the strategic investments requested by town, school and utility departments. This process should be designed to ensure that submitted investments (among other criteria) are necessary, timely, and affordable. **Timeframe: Short Term**
- The Town should develop a more formal process for the ongoing identification and prioritization of major operational and capital needs of the town. This process could borrow from the town's capital project approval process and should be structured, objective, and transparent. **Timeframe: Medium Term**
- The Town should establish a permanent Strategic Planning entity to perform the periodic updates and modifications necessary to maintain the currency and relevancy of the strategic plan. **Timeframe: Medium Term**
- The Town should develop a process for monitoring and tracking the progress of major operational and capital investments. This process should include investments in information technology products (e.g. dashboards) that inform town leaders, departments and citizens. **Timeframe: Short to Medium Term**



**Cheryl Herrick-Stella**  
**Director of Finance**  
**& Operations**

**Associate**

# Ipswich Public Schools

**PAYNE SCHOOL BLDG.**  
**ONE LORD SQUARE**  
**IPSWICH, MA 01938-1909**  
**TEL. (978) 356-2935 X1117**  
**FAX (978) 356-0445**  
**Cherrick-stella@ipsk12.net**

## Memo

To: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent  
From: Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Operations  
RE: Designation of Special Municipal Employees  
Date: September 29, 2021

The conflict of interest law, G.L. c. 268A, covers all municipal officials and employees, whether elected or appointed, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time. However, two sections of the conflict law apply less restrictively to those part-time or unpaid municipal officials who have been designated as "special municipal employees."

"Special municipal employee" status can be assigned to certain municipal positions by a vote of the school committee.

A position is eligible to be designated as a "special municipal employee" position provided that:

they are not paid; or

they hold a part-time position which allows you to work at another job during normal working hours; or

they were not paid by the city or town for more than 800 working hours (approximately 20 weeks full-time) during the preceding 365 days.

It is the municipal position that is designated as having "special" status, not the individual. Therefore, all employees holding the same office or position must have the same classification as "special municipal employees."

The designation may be made by a formal vote of the school committee at any time. Separate votes should be taken for each board or position being designated, expressly naming the

positions being designated. Once a position is designated as having "special" status, it remains a "special municipal employee" position unless and until the classification is rescinded. A list of all the "special municipal employee" positions should be on file at the town or city clerk's office. This list also should be filed with the Ethics Commission.

I am requesting that the school committee vote to make the following positions special municipal employees:

- Lunch Aides
- Food Service employees
- EDP employees
- Coaches
- Substitutes

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.



## Substitute Pay Rate Increase

	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>Proposed Rate</b>
Teacher	\$90/day	\$100/day
Licensed Teacher	\$90/day	\$115/day
Teaching Assistant	\$70/day	\$80/day
Projected increased cost to district:		Approx. <b>\$4,850/year</b>



**Cheryl Herrick-Stella**  
**Director of Finance**  
**& Operations**

**Associate**

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**Cherrick-stella@ipsk12.net**

## **Memo**

To: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent  
From: Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Operations  
RE: Part-time Benefits Coordinator  
Date: October 1, 2021

Over the past 3 and a half months I have had the pleasure of working with many dedicated and hardworking employees at Central office, the Town and in the Schools. After observing, learning and conducting a number of discussions with various employees I have determined that there is an important need for additional part-time staff support at Central office. I am requesting that the School Committee consider approval of a part-time Benefits/HR coordinator position for the Ipswich Public Schools that would report to the Director of Finance & Operations of the Ipswich Public Schools.

It is my understanding that over the past few years there has been a reorganization and shifting of responsibilities as it relates to the Human Resources, Payroll and Benefits functions for the Town & the School. Currently the District shares the Human Resources Director and Manager with the Town and they focus on a number of important high-level HR functions across all of the Town and School Departments. The HR department is integrated into the leadership meetings and they are at Central office once a week, which we greatly appreciate. Our HR department handles a large number and volume of responsibilities for both the Town & the Schools including, but not limited to:

- All new hire on-boarding administration
- Educator waivers, license tracking and compliance
- Retiree processing, reporting, administration
- FMLA leave
- Coordination of open enrollment
- End of Employment
- HR trainings
- Worker's compensation
- Verification of employment (shared responsibility)
- Reasonable assurance letters
- Negotiate benefits and interface with benefit companies
- Employee & Retiree relations
- Coordinate wellness programming

Given the scope of responsibilities that fall under the current HR Director and Manager, there is limited bandwidth to take on additional responsibilities while appropriately maintaining all of their tasks.

New rules, new types of leave, additional employees and necessary compliance has increased the scope and complexity related to HR, benefits and payroll for the District. The school finance office staffing levels have remained consistent, but the responsibilities within the jobs have grown significantly. While we always look to streamline where possible to create efficiencies with limited staff, there is still a limit with respect to how many additional responsibilities we can take on. The business office handles financial reporting and billing for EDP, transportation and oversees Food Services. Grants and compliance associated with these functions have increased significantly. Reporting requirements continue to rise in number and complexity, including an entirely new schedule added to this fiscal year's End of Year Report. Additionally, the school finance office provides administrative and financial reporting support for the maintenance and management of the Feoffee Grants. This is a wonderful resource for the Ipswich Public Schools but requires additional time and attention. While the move to the Harpers payroll system has certainly resulted in some efficiencies gained for the Town, it has created additional work for the school that historically was handled by Munis. Such additional work includes manually encumbering and manually releasing payroll encumbrances each pay period. This does not pose a problem for the Town as they do not utilize payroll encumbrances. Staff lists need to be maintained in excel manually for the payroll encumbrance process. In addition, staff lists are used to pull other important payroll data, including stipend, extra pays and various other data that Munis was able to provide us. The transition to Harpers for the school payroll office has increased the complexities and responsibilities for the payroll coordinator.

An important piece and responsibility that was not entirely vetted when all the changes were occurring was where benefits administration would land. This is a vitally important position just like payroll. Historically these responsibilities were included under the Town payroll individual & never adequately staffed. Over the past year the school payroll coordinator, HR, town payroll and finance office and outside consultants have worked tirelessly to try and correct and resolve problems that occurred. The town ended up in this position due to a lack of bandwidth for the payroll/benefits coordinator to focus on anything other than processing payroll. They simply did not have adequate time to devote to benefits administration.

The school department has almost 400 employees, who are constantly coming on and off, going on extended leaves, have varying pay frequencies, multiple types of pay and are often paid from a number of different sources. Having worked for the Town previously and now having deeper exposure to school finance, I now have a far deeper understanding and appreciation of how much more complex school payroll and benefits administration is. People rightfully expect their payroll and benefits to be correct and it is a very complicated job for the schools that deserves adequate resources.

An important part of my recommendation for this position is also so that we have proper back-up to the payroll process. We currently have one employee who knows the entire process all the way through. Ideally we should have one primary and once secondary back-up and they should have sufficient time to train and continue to train on the process so that should something happen to the payroll coordinator we have sufficient coverage to step in to ensure employees are paid. Adding this position also helps to increase our internal controls. The payroll person today is the one making pay rate changes and deduction changes. To appropriately mitigate risk, this role should be a separate individual from the person processing the payroll as a check and balance. The district has seen seven individuals over roughly the last 15 years in the payroll position, which could be considered a high turnover ratio. This is an indicator

to me that the payroll position has a level of responsibility that does not appear to be sustainable. Having a position of such importance with that level of turnover creates a risk to the District on a number of levels, including potential errors with pay rates, deductions, accountability and overall general knowledge base can be lost with high turnover.

For these reasons, I recommend upon your approval the posting and hiring a school part-time benefits/HR coordinator. To fund this position I recommend that the School Committee consider utilizing the additional appropriation that the school department is receiving at Special Town Meeting this month or they could use cost savings from our transportation contract that we realized in FY22.

I have attached the job description for your reference & appreciate your time and support to ensure that we are giving our employees the best possible service we can provide them.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY****Part-time HR & Benefits Coordinator (up to 19.5 Hours a week)****Job Summary:**

Maintains school employee and benefit information by collecting, calculating and entering changes in the school's financial software & is the liaison to school employees for benefit related questions. Updates school employee records, benefits & salary changes, etc. working closely with the payroll coordinator. The HR/Benefits Coordinator is responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/her direction and control. Works under the general direction of the Ipswich Public Schools Director of Finance and Operations

**CHARACTERISTIC JOB TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES****May include any and/or all of the following:**

1. Maintains all human resource records for existing & terminated employees; updates employee database with salary & compensation changes, job classifications, dues, and benefit information and changes, including, but not limited to pay information, deductions, and accruals for active and terminated employees. Responds to employee inquiries regarding benefits and assists with resolution as required.
2. Work with various benefit providers to answer questions, disseminate information & records as necessary
3. Works in conjunction with the payroll coordinator on the staff lists
4. Works with unemployment provider on processing unemployment claims and reconciling the invoices
5. Prepares reports and analysis as needed for the Ipswich Public Schools Director of Finance & Operations and/or the Superintendent
6. Works closely with the payroll coordinator on end of employment calculations
7. Responsible for maintaining sick leave bank balances & usage
8. Responsible for a thorough knowledge of all collective bargaining agreements and individual contracts, including implementation of contracts for compliance
9. Responsible for processing, maintaining, reporting and reconciliation of all benefit accounts and activities for all school employees (active & retirees), this includes any calculations as they relate to deductions & any payments necessary. Reviews and analyzes payroll data to determine correct payment and disbursement of employee benefit invoices.
10. Audit the benefit plans twice a school year to maintain accuracy
11. Responsible for assisting school department staff with all matters relating to benefits & other HR related questions, including school retirees and taking over the counter payments for benefits
12. Responsible for maintaining retirement records for the Mass Teachers Retirement System & Essex County Retirement
13. Process retirement applications as needed, research questions, process creditable service requests
14. Responsible for completing verification of employment for school employees
15. Maintains personnel records for active and non-active school employees for all personnel and makes necessary wage adjustments as required, this includes electronic and hardcopy files. Records include, but are not limited to, sick leave, personal leave, vacations and other wage and compensation actions.
16. Serves as the primary back-up to the payroll coordinator for the school biweekly payroll process
17. Assist in the payroll encumbrance process
18. Assist in other year-end or other Finance Dept. reporting requirements

19. Other duties, responsibilities and projects as assigned

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- Working knowledge of benefits administration
- Experience or knowledge of payroll systems & Harper's preferrably
- Must be proficient in Microsoft Excel and Word
- Customer service skills
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Report preparation skills
- Be able to interact in a courteous and professional manner at all times
- Ability to plan and organize
- Good organizational and time management skills
- Must be a team player, works closely with the payroll coordinator and the Town/School HR department
- Must have proven ability to effectively research and resolve benefits issues
- Ability to work in a fast paced environment
- Ability to maintain confidentiality

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

**Education and experience equivalent to:**

Bachelor degree preferred; supplemented with three (3) years of progressively responsible benefits, Human resources and payroll experience, preferably in a school setting

**Hourly Salary Range:** \$25.00-\$28.00 an hour commensurate with experience (non-benefit eligible position).  
Up to 19.5 hours a week.

**Reports to:** The Ipswich Public Schools Director of Finance and Operations

**To Apply:** All applicants must apply through School Spring via the Ipswich Public Schools' website.

Dr. Brian Blake  
Superintendent of Schools

September 21, 2021

The Ipswich Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs activities. The Ipswich Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity in our workplace. The school system's educational philosophy and personnel goals, including the goal of equal employment opportunity, will be considered in filling all positions.