

**Ipswich School Committee  
Thursday, December 21, 2017  
Middle/High School Ensemble Room**

**Minutes**

**I. OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair, Sarah Player, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. with the following members present: C. Whitten, H. O’Flynn, P. Kneedler, B. Hopping, N. Zito, and C. Nysten. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Blake and Director of Finance and Operations Joanne Cuff.

**READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Kneedler read the Mission Statement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Schools will be CLOSED for Winter Break Monday December 26- Monday January 1st. School will begin again on Tuesday, January 2nd.
- School Committee meeting on January 4th at 7pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room
- Policy Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, January 2nd at 7pm in the guidance conference room

**CITIZENS’ COMMENTS**

None.

**SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Dr. Blake acknowledged Bill Gallant and his students for the construction and installation of the new Doyon school sign. He also acknowledged the High School for its placement on the College Board AP District Honor Roll, a first for the High School. Mr. Whitten also acknowledged the efforts of the sixth grade class who helped raise over \$250,000 for the CureCMT4J Foundation since the release of their video.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Student Representative, Chris Berner, was not in attendance at the meeting but did forward his report to be read by Ms. Player.

*“School spirit is the highest I have ever seen it. Seeing the High School band together with the Middle School for the twitter/insta storm for Talia was incredible. As a Senior it was really amazing to see the underclassmen show their support and also the maturity and determination showed was truly inspirational. NHS is running the candy cane fundraiser in which you can send a candy cane to a friend during school. And Interact club is running the hat fundraiser in which you are aloud to wear your favorite hat for a dollar a day. The first semester is almost over and midterms are looming around the corner. and the seniors are starting to commit to schools. And I am happy to say we have a several rising*

*D1 athletes. The entire school is excited for the upcoming break. The holiday vacation is always a healthy rest from school and stress. I hope you are all doing well Happy Holidays !!”*

#### **A. SUPERINTENDENT’S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Blake reported on his busy two weeks. He participated in a webinar sponsored by M.A.S.S which focused on building a budget and garnering community support. He was able to refine the snow chain and specified that he will be utilizing Blackboard Connect to reach out to families. Dr. Blake has also limited the TV stations that he will be notifying. Dr. Blake met with the Policy Subcommittee to review and revise Policy Section B and went to Boston to attend a MSBA Board Meeting to gain approval for the Preferred Schematic Design. Several small focus groups met with the architects at Central Office to discuss small space design and Dr. Blake attended an office Christmas party. He attended a MEP Subcommittee meeting and went to a NSSRT luncheon at Essex Tech with his administrative assistant. Dr. Blake attended a Turf Field Subcommittee meeting and also went to the large ensemble concert at the high school. Dr. Blake attended another round table luncheon with Senator Tarr and Representative Hill at Essex Tech and met with people from Endicott College to discuss the Fellowship program. He spoke about the combined School Building Committee/School Committee meeting and their vote on both the fuel source and the HVAC systems. Dr. Blake had a successful meeting with his “coach” to review the School Committee meeting she observed and finished out the week at a Budget Subcommittee meeting.

#### **II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS**

##### **B. FIELD TRIP REQUEST TO FRANCE**

High School teacher, Alexander Craven, presented a field trip request to Hyeres, France from April 12- April 22, 2018. The field trip would cost roughly \$1,300 per student depending on contributions from IEF and fundraising. The trip will be offered first to those students that hosted French exchange students in the fall and if all spots are not filled, to members of the senior class. The goal of this trip is to provide an authentic French experience, gain a better global perspective and to practice their French. Several questions arose from Committee members including affordability, insurance, and the number of athletes that would be attending. At the time of the presentation, Mr. Craven said no one had come forward with concerns of affordability, but they would speak with Mr. Dalton if someone did. The trip was not currently insured in the event of a cancellation, but it was something that Mr. Craven would look into. Mr. Craven was unaware how many student athletes were currently interested in attending the trip.

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. O’Flynn to approve the spring break trip to France.  
UNANIMOUS.

##### **C. IT UPDATE**

Keith Borgen, Technology Director, gave a brief update on the state of the IT department. He acknowledged his staff- Jim DePue, Jim Evans, Bill Ford, and Chris Burke. The team worked quickly to acquaint themselves with the systems and technology in the District. They successfully completed the

October state reporting on time with no errors. Mr. Borgen explained that the District is in good shape. The hardware and infrastructure are sound and the integrity of the system is okay. Network updates will take place over the vacation week and after those are complete, Mr. Borgen will schedule monthly, after-hours system updates. Looking forward, Mr. Borgen is focusing on technology needed to support state testing, tweaking hardware for better quality service, and creating a student help desk/support staff.

School Committee members addressed Mr. Borgen with several questions surrounding technology curriculum, concerns about the balance of education and infrastructure, a need for more communication, better use of the Google suite and future expenses in the technology department. Curriculum questions and standards questions will be addressed at a later date by the Director of Teaching and Learning. Mr. Borgen stated that his plan is to replace a quarter of the equipment every four years. Eventually, they would like to switch services to the Cloud and will need specific hardware to replace it and regular system upgrades.

#### **D. SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCUSSION**

Dr. Beverly Hegedus, Director of Pupil and Personnel Services, presented on the state of the Special Education Department. School Committee members submitted questions to Dr. Hegedus prior to the meeting that addressed the adopted co-teaching model, staff and spending increases, and major budget drivers in the special education budget. It was stressed by School Committee members that the co-teaching model was intended to decrease costs by eliminating the need for more TA's and support staff, yet it appears that each year the number of FTE's, RBT's and TA's is still increasing. Dr. Hegedus explained that even with the shift in service to a more co-teaching model, it is near impossible to completely decrease personnel because not all students can receive 100% of services in the classroom. This model is able to benefit all learners and for Special Education students, it provides access to higher standards and helps retain students in the District. Most notable, there has been a substantial decrease in referrals for special education evaluations. Also, Winthrop School partially attributes its change to Level 1 Status with DESE to the impact of co-teaching.

After several questions were raised regarding management, projected increases and levels of predictability, Dr. Hegedus explained that it can be difficult to project costs associated with Special Education because at any time a child can enter the District with significant needs, a more demanding Special Education plan and costly care that the District must provide. Mr. Hopping added that as Special Education evolves, the level of training for staff also becomes more involved and costly and it is important that the Finance Committee understands the level of unpredictability in Special Education. This is an issue not just within the Ipswich School District, but throughout the state. It was also mentioned that if we cannot educate this demographic in our own classrooms, then the District is still accountable for their education somewhere else which raises the question-what is more expensive? Special Education needs to not only be proactive, but reactive. There may not be a program already in place to serve the needs of a child coming into the District.

It was suggested that before presenting to the Finance Committee, Dr. Hegedus should compile information on the level of needs of the students currently in the District, the number of move-in's to the

District over the past five years, the extent of their needs with regards to Special Education and to find ways to talk about this data without breaching confidentiality.

#### **E. POLICY SECTION B REVIEW**

Dr. Blake presented policy section B, *Board Governance and Operations* for School Committee approval. These policies were first brought to the administrative team for feedback and then brought to the Policy Subcommittee for review and possible revision. Dr. Blake reminded the Committee that the final copy, approved by the Policy Subcommittee, is then presented to the full School Committee for final approval. It is the understanding that at the time the policies are presented to the School Committee, they have been fully edited and vetted.

The Policy Subcommittee did note that there were several policies that were not being practiced and that the School Committee would need to review those policies to insure that going forward those practices were taking place. The School Committee was always in compliance with the law, but not always in compliance with the policy.

Mr. Whitten moved, seconded by Ms. Zito to approve policy section B. UNANIMOUS.

#### **F. NORTSHORE CONSORTIUM APPROVAL**

The District has sought and obtained unanimous approval from our School Committee at their September 21, 2017 meeting for the petition to formally apply for membership in the Northshore Education Consortium. As part of the lengthy application process, the School Committee was asked to approve Ms. Player's authorization of the approval of Northshore Consortium's Articles of Agreement.

Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Mr. O'Flynn to approve Ms. Player's authorization. UNANIMOUS.

#### **G. SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE**

At the last joint School Committee/ School Building Committee meeting, the HVAC system, fuel source and some plumbing systems were voted on and approved. These decisions enable the architects to put the building together and effectively evaluate both cost and efficiencies. Looking forward, there are meetings planned to discuss sustainability, technology, security and special education needs. There is another combined meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2018 which will include a final discussion on the interior and exterior materials. There will also be a final vote on special education plans and layouts that will then be submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval. There were questions surrounding the timing of the discussion, but it was noted that these decisions must be made to meet deadlines provided by the MSBA. It was also noted that all special education staff have had the opportunity to have discussions with architects regarding space.

### **III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. VOUCHERS AND BILLS**

#### **B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE-** have not met
- b. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE-**
- c. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES-** have not met
- d. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE-** have not met
- e. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE-** meeting schedule for January 2, 2018 at 7pm in the MS/HS guidance conference room
- f. TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE-**
- g. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE-** earlier report in meeting agenda
- h. NEW BUSINESS**
  - 1. Dr. Blake announced to the School Committee that he has received a School Choice request for a high school student. The School Committee had previously voted to not accept Choice students at any grade level in the high school and this request was denied. It was agreed by all members that School Choice required a much larger conversation and should be addressed at a meeting in the near future.
  - 2. Mr. Hopping presented a piece of new/old business. At a previous meeting, the policy KCD was held while it underwent further review by the Policy Subcommittee. The newest revisions were presented to the full School Committee. Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. O’Flynn to accept the revisions to the policy. UNANIMOUS.

#### **IV. CONSENT**

##### **A. CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping to:

- 1. Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept the minutes of the December 7, 2017 Open Session Meeting.
- 2. Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept one voucher in the School of Education and Social Policy from Merrimack College to be used toward any course in the graduate education (M.Ed.) catalogue or a course in the Child, Family and Community Studies bachelor’s program.
- 3. Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a check in the amount of \$994.00 from Geskus Studios & Yearbook Publishing for the Winthrop School’s portion of the proceeds from school photographs to be deposited into the Winthrop School Student Activity Account.
- 4. Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a \$2,000 donations from New England BioLabs to support the Robotics Team to be deposited into the High School Gift Account.
- 5. Move the Ipswich School Committee to vote to authorize the closing of idle subsidiary accounts within the High School Student Activities Account according to Policy DIF-P in the total amount of \$2,992.28. The following is a list of the idle subsidiary accounts within the High School Student Activities Account:
  - Class of 2003-\$1,121.23
  - Class of 2006-\$1,000.00
  - Class of 2007-\$871.05

Monies remaining in these accounts will be transferred to the subsidiary “Principals” account which is the account designated for the general benefit of student activities.

UNANIMOUS.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. Nylén to adjourn at 9:53 PM. UNANIMOUS.