

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2019
6:30 PM
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM
MINUTES

I. OPEN SESSION

Mr. Whitten called the meeting to order at at 6:32pm.

Members Present: Mr. Whitten, Mr. Nylen, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Kneedler and Ms. Gilliam.

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Whitten moved the School Committee to meet in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21(a) for the following purposes: Purpose 4: To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto, seconded by Ms. Kneedler. The motion passed by a roll call vote 5 Y-0 N.

III. OPEN SESSION

The School Committee returned to Open Session after a brief recess at 7:30pm.

Members Present: Mr. Hopping, Mr. Whitten, Dr. O’Flynn, Mr. Nylen, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Gilliam and Ms. Kneedler

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools and George Gallagher, High School Student Representative

George Gallgher read the Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hopping read the following announcements:

- The next School Committee meeting will take place on Thursday, October 17th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room
- There will be no school for all Ipswich students on Monday, October 14th and Tuesday, October 15th
- District Offices will be closed on Monday, October 14th
- Teacher Professional Development Day will be held on Tuesday, October 15th

CITIZENS’ COMMENTS

There were no citizens’ comments.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Whitten acknowledged the MS/HS Green Team who coordinated a Climate Strike at Five Corners in Ipswich. He believed this event to be very impactful with participation from students, teachers, school administrators and the community.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

George Gallagher, High School Student Representative

Mr. Gallagher reported on the Climate Strike organized by the MS/HS Green Team, describing it as a good example of how students and the administration can work together. He also reported that the freshmen class held their elections, the Club Fair was well attended and AP registration was complete. There was also a power outage at the MS/HS, limiting the WIFI in the building.

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Blake reported a busy two weeks in the district. He addressed the EEE threat, concerns with the administrative team and worked to ensure that evening events were rescheduled to occur before dusk. He notified the School Committee that the spraying of fields and school areas took place on Tuesday night. Dr. Blake held his weekly meeting with the Facilities Director and his bi-weekly meeting with the Administrative Team. He met with the Town Manager, visited Washington, D.C. for the day to celebrate Ipswich Middle and High School being named a national Green Ribbon School and reviewed MCAS results with the Director of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Blake attended a North Shore Superintendent Round Table meeting and a Community Development Planning Meeting. He was present at the arraignment hearing for Kevin Murphy and dealt with some personnel issues within the district. He met with the Policy Subcommittee, Budget Subcommittee, Vision 2030 Working Group and the School Facilities Working Group. Lastly, Dr. Blake discussed the recent power outage at the MS/HS.

<h2>IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS</h2>
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B. GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS CEREMONY REVIEW

High School teacher, Lori Lafrance, spoke on behalf of the two students who were instrumental in the Middle and High School achieving national recognition as a Green Ribbon School. On October 25th, Ms. Lafrance, Dr. Blake and former student Eva Capobianco flew to Washington, D.C. to accept their plaque and be recognized for their achievement. Originally, the two students decided to apply for Green Ribbon Status in the state and completed a rigorous application process which focused on three pillars: building status, student/faculty health and opportunities to learn about sustainability and environmental education. Ipswich Middle and High School was one of three schools to be awarded this title in the state. The Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education then sent their application to the national level and from there, Ipswich became one of 25 schools with Green Ribbon status in the country.

Ms. Lafrance described the experience as incredibly humbling, inspiring and invigorating.

C. SUPERINTENDENT GOALS DISCUSSION

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Now that the School Committee has finalized their goals, Dr. Blake wanted to address his goals for the 2019-2020 school year. He presented his draft goals with the intention of meeting with the Operations Subcommittee after to discuss them in more detail. He described his goals as follows:

- **Instructional Leadership:** focusing on the Educator Evaluation system, calibration exercises with the administrative team and working on observations
- **Management and Operations:** establishing a better understanding of the fiscal systems in the state
- **Family and Community Engagement:** increase stakeholder engagement especially surrounding the elementary school building discussion
- **Professional Culture-** Evaluating cultural efficiencies with a focus on the services provided and models used for an increasing ELL population

It was suggested by some members that they would like the Superintendent goals to include more direct contact with staff and to be more visible in the schools/classrooms. They feel it is important to have more unstructured time in the building to establish better relationships with staff beyond the administrative team.

It was also important to the Committee that when thinking of Vision 2030, the Superintendent have a stamp on the plan. He should think about what is important and what the district needs to make it great.

The Operations Subcommittee will meet with Dr. Blake to finalize and format his goals to align with the state's formatting. They will then report those goals back to the Committee for final approval at a later meeting.

D. POLICY UPDATE

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Blake asked Jonathan Mitchell, High School Principal, to speak to the new attendance policy being enforced at the High School this year. This policy was created in an effort to combat the chronic absenteeism issues from last year and to address the state's new accountability assessment. Mr. Mitchell shared a document that showed the total number of absences in the first 21 days of school over the past three years. Based on that data, it shows that this year the total

number of absences dropped significantly (130 in total). The High School has also seen a 3.9% decrease in the number of students considered chronically absent at day 20 since the same time last year. Based on these numbers, Mr. Mitchell believes that the High School will hit the “target” number in the state’s accountability assessment.

Mr. Mitchell also discussed his “stick and care” approach to attendance. What “sticks” is the policy and the “care” is making the school more welcoming to students that are having a difficult time getting to school. He is focused on creating more professional development opportunities to address social/emotional health and has introduced the BRYT Program.

Mr. Mitchell finished his presentation with the following points to remember:

- The policy is consistent with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s definitions of “chronic absenteeism”
- There is an appeal process in place
- Students can re-earn the grade for the quarter of chronic absence
- The average number of absences last year was 2.25
- Classes don’t meeting every day- the policy refers to class absences not entire days
- The policy is just one half of the plan

V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS- Done.

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee met on September 25th where the following was discussed:

- Participation numbers for fall sports, on par from previous years
- Open coaching positions for winter/spring track
- 205 athletes participated in IMPACT concussion testing
- Improvements to the tennis courts
- Status of the locker rooms
- Athletic enrollment numbers going forward, specifically football and swimming
- EEE threat and rescheduling games/practices
- Middle School sports
- Capital plan review

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee met on October 2nd where the following was discussed:

- Created a list of issues to bring forward when meeting with the administrators to discuss what should be included in the vision for the district
- Going to be in a good position for long term budget planning

- The Budget Subcommittee will present an update at the second School Committee meeting of each month

GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES

These subcommittees have not met.

OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee will be scheduling a meeting to discuss Superintendent goals.

POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee met on October 1st and the following was discussed:

- A review of the policies that were not approved last year
- A plan to review the recommended policies from MASC that the district does not currently have to see if any are good fits for Ipswich
- Establish a Wellness Committee
- Organize a joint meeting with the Feoffee Policy Working Group

TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee has not met.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee met on September 23rd and discussed the following:

- The first newsletter is going to be released on Oct. 24th which will include the elementary education report, basic information on district events, etc.
- Scheduled meet and greets at Zumi's in Nov 16th 12:30-2:30 and Council on Aging in May 19 11:30-12:00

C. WORKING GROUPS

FEOFFEE REPORT

This working group has not met.

FEOFFEE POLICY

There is a joint meeting with the Policy Subcommittee scheduled for October 7th.

CLIMATE

Representative from this group would like to present at the School Committee meeting on November 7th.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

This working group met tonight and discussed the following:

- The process to distribute the Elementary Education Plan

- Research on other district projects through MSBA particularly those that failed and what they are doing now
- Outreach to MSBA about next process
- Formulated questions to ask over call or meeting in person with MSBA
- Would like to establish next steps to develop a process to start rethinking building again

VISION 2030

This working group is scheduled to meet on October 30th.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. Nylen attended this meeting where they discussed the following:

- Consulting team is gathering feedback to establish the first phase report to discuss needs and if there is a vision that the community can draft
- Committee is starting to look at a consultant for next phase to establish recommendations to the Town

NEW BUSINESS*

Dr. Blake asked if the Committee had any questions for Tracy Wagener, Director of Teaching and Learning, to address in her MCAS and Literacy presentations at the next meeting. Members requested that slides be shared ahead of time and that the MCAS results be broken out in more detail. They asked that the results are not compared to state averages, but rather to similar districts in the area.

School Committee members would also like to hear an honest assessment of where the district is with literacy and wants Ms. Wagner to acknowledge any challenges of needs. They would like several questions addressed like the amount of professional development devoted to literacy and what are the resources provided to teachers, is there formal reading instruction at the Middle School and what are the challenges of uneven instruction at each grade level.

Dr. O’Flynn notified the Committee about his conversation with George Markos of the Feoffees Trust Committee. He said that the group was interested in fundraising with the intention of increasing the Feoffees Trust. They want to make Ipswich the “best school in America” and need to hear from the district what they will need to make that possible.

Dr. O’Flynn would like a status update on the Ipswich Education Foundation now that former member Kevin Murphy’s arraignment.

VI. CONSENT

Mr. Hopping moved the Ipswich School Committee to accept the School Committee Open Session meeting minutes from Thursday, September 19, 2019 and to accept a donation on behalf

of the Winthrop School for \$2,000 to be deposited into the Winthrop Gift Account from an anonymous donor for the 5th grade trip to Plimoth Plantation. Seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitten moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.