

FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION  
MARCH 15, 2016  
TOWN HALL, RM. A

OPEN SESSION  
CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mitch Feldman, Fin Com Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.  
Fin Com members present: K. Murphy, M. Schaaf, R. Howard, J. Fay, I. Miles, W. Hartford, J. Clements-Skelton, R. White.  
School Com members present: C. Nysten, B. Hopping, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, S. Player.  
Administrators present: Sup't. W. Hart, SPED Dir. B. Hegedus, Director of Teaching/Learning T. Wagner, Principals Dalton, Fabrizio, and Conley.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

MINUTES APPROVAL

March 1, 2016, Fin Com Minutes were moved, seconded, and voted for approval.

FY15 SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION: DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Dr. Hart began the night's presentation with the theme of the presentation, "We Are One." While people used to say that Ipswich had four autonomous schools, over the last three years, they have been collectively working together. Two videos were presented illustrating the collaboration and the STEAM program between professionals and students. While Ipswich has been a wonderful system for a long time, the financial support of the Town has made a huge difference. In keeping our promise, he said, the last two years spent in aligning the budget with the vision, is now being sustained over a five-year period. Positions are being funded again in FY17. Library specialists are the primary leaders in the "Day of Code." Two audits have recommended that support Teacher Assistants (TAs) must be replaced with professional SPED positions. Co-teaching of professionals in the classroom includes SPED personnel working with regular classroom teachers. Reallocations depicted on a chart showed that Doyon has added 2 professional positions; Winthrop, 1.5, Middle, 1.3; and High, 1.5. Secretarial support has increased by .3FTE (SPED), and Central Office has added .44FTE, Guidance (High School) has added 1.0FTE, and a M/HS custodian has been increased by .4FTE. "The budget is exactly what we said it would be and we will do this for the next four years," he said.

Powerpoint presentation showed the Operational Audit recommendations with the FY16 to FY17 highlights of accomplishments. Technology, Teacher Leader Positions, Professional Development, narrated by Director of Teaching and Learning Tracy Wagner, prompted questions from Mr. Feldman of continuity of knowledge across the grades and buildings as students progress, and Mr. Howard as to how the teachers have the time to do all this professional development. Ms. Wagner worked through the chart of FY17 Professional Development with workshops, course reimbursements, summer curriculum, and seven "work intensive days" during the school year where 75 professionals attended. She answered Mr. Schaaf's question of matrix measurement with information that tests are rapidly changing in SATs, MCAS

studies, and adoption of some of the Common Core recommendations.

Under Budget Drivers, the group reviewed health insurance increases of 10-12%, fixed cost expenses (sick leave, buy-back, OPEB, workers' comp, unemployment, retirements), grant funding, Choice funding, Circuit Breaker, and SPED expense growth. To the grant funding downward trajectory, Mr. Howard asked for clarification and Dr. Hart spoke of Federal, Title I, and IEA (SPED) grants dropping, all entitlement grants which are targeted money. Mrs. Clements-Skelton and Mr. Feldman felt that it would be interesting to see the private funding, i.e., EBSCO, Institution for Savings, NEBiolabs, Feoffee, and IEF, which, having increased over a period of years, show the community that outside funding has allowed Ipswich schools to be a model and which, Dr. Hart predicted, will mean that Ipswich school personnel will be presenting at State and National conferences because funders want to be invested in success, and Ipswich has certainly set itself up to be competitive. Mrs. Clements-Skelton asked that Dr. Hart provide private grant numbers and percentages of what private grants are vs. public grants.

Choice funding, spent down in recent years and lower in numbers because of high classroom enrollments which prevent Choice entrants, is getting a comprehensive evaluation with declining enrollments, building size, and Choice student graduation (17 last year). While at one point there was \$2 million in the account, it has been spent down over a number of years and currently what is brought in is spent immediately. Choice funds can be used wherever needed. Ms. Cuff, Financial Director, advises that \$300-400,000 should be maintained. Twenty-five positions at the M and H school were opened up last year and  $\frac{3}{4}$  were filled. Dr. Hart commented that phone-call inquiries are coming in.

Circuit Breaker funds, which are received by Ipswich a year after reports are made, do not fully replace "cost-out" for SPED, whose requirements can change at any minute with out-of-district placements. SPED appropriations grow every year--1.8% from FY16 to FY17. Mr. Murphy asked for the balance in the Circuit Breaker account.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dr. Hegedus reported on major aspects and goals: Fiscal responsibility and accountability while respecting the IEP as a legal contract, Decision-making driven by evidence in the collection of data (support and increasing independence for the students), and Commitment for student support with the least restrictive environment. Dr. Hegedus reviewed the training and licensure for 11 now-trained Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBT), one of SPED staff's own is the trainer for the Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), and there are structured phonics training programs. At the secondary level, there are 8 individuals involved in co-teaching in addition to the Young Adults Community (YACHT) post-secondary program (age group up to 22 years). To Mrs. Miles' question of trends, Dr. Hegedus replied that it is stable with Ipswich at 15.2% of the population (last year: 13.7% and State, 17.2%).

Mr. Feldman asked about fewer out-placements and was told that it is 9% of the SPED population and 1.4% of the whole school population. Dr. Hart added that in her two years Dr. Hegedus is working with the professionalism to keep students in the district with the SPED capabilities. Mr. Howard asked and Dr. Hegedus gave complicated examples of the ways of working a SPED student toward independence while making sure, if the child is disabled, that the gate-keeping aspect of always including the parents in the SPED team ensures advocacy for early intervention and inclusion. Mrs. Clements-Skelton asked if there is a forecast with Birth to 3; Dr. Hart will be working on data.

### HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Dalton spoke excitedly about his three innovative goals for FY17: (1)STEAM/STEM Pathway Initiatives for all students but focused on the 40% AP students including publishing, legal, robotic expansion program, intro computer programming redesign, music/engineering, and global science/computer science pathways; (2)Augmenting support for all students with a new school adjustment counselor, funding for YACHT, SPED co-teaching and reading specialist; and (3)Transition to a full-year schedule. Innovations and design-thinking go toward real work situations in the futures of students.

He spoke of his Costa Rican trip with sustainability students and learning about design-thinking, collaborating on and implementing solutions, and communicating successes and failures.

Mr. Feldman asked if going to a full-year schedule allows the students more experiences within scheduling. Mr. Dalton is working on internal mechanisms with the kids who want to take one of the aforementioned pathways.

Mr. Feldman asked if it could be argued that there are courses at IHS that would be the same as those at Essex Tech and similar schools. Mr. Dalton said there are a number of kids that will be helped, but Ipswich is not concentrating on the trades, such as culinary, cosmetology, carpentry, electric, plumbing, and animal care.

Mr. Howard asked why the block schedule is leaving IHS; Mr. Dalton replied that the block schedule began in 1995 but is not perfect either and was hard on AP students, made for long absences (up to 1 1/2 yrs.) between content subject matter; i.e. foreign languages, and not beneficial to some classes to be so long. Mr. Schaaf asked about the dropout rate and academic support and was told that of 556 students, 104 have been identified as high-need students (nearly 20%) and academic support students (72%) are also classified as economically deficient. The dropout rate ten years ago was 2.1%; in 2016, it is .2%.

Mr. Fay asked if these “pathways” and accompanying certificate will go beyond to colleges. Mr. Dalton is talking with other principals in the area and said it might be for a few junior and seniors who engage with NorthShore Community College for example.

Mr. Murphy asked about athletic user fees especially for those students who participate in school sports which Ipswich doesn't offer. While Mr. Dalton said he

would love to do away with user fees, he doesn't see a possibility in the future of alleviating these expenses.

Mr. White asked if there was advertising for colleges and what ones students are getting into. Mr. Dalton expressed his philosophy that he doesn't want the type of school where students are subjected to so much pressure that they are stressed. Mr. Fay added that the focus is telling the community that we have a great school. Mrs. Clements-Skelton called the college acceptance the common denominator and asked if they are getting into their first or second choice of college because we have prepared them in a way that allows success. Dr. Hart spoke of presentations made to school committee meetings by teachers and students and the Feoffee celebration to the public on April 14 as evidences of students' preparation for success.

Mr. Schaaf would like to see the status of revolving funds with a balance from last year and the current year.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. Fabrizio cited his and his teachers' vitality and enthusiasm this school year. Inside the classroom there is interdisciplinary collaboration, STEAM curriculum and integrated technology. Outside the classroom there are subject intensive experiences (the 7<sup>th</sup> grade had a full day of science), a student-produced newscast, Skyping with experts such as an Arctic scientist and a Singapore experience. Further, there is an updated and improved Project Assistance class (PA) which is "Vitamin K for the mind" with self-directed enrichment, project-related work, coding, interactive languages, remediation with teachers, independent reading, and the performing arts (band and chorus) along with academic support.

Response to Intervention (RTI) and the co-teaching model is being added (.8FTE). Professional development is ongoing with innovative teaching practices and focus on re-designing the MS education to provide for the future needs of students.

Mr. Fabrizio declared that his staff is now doing what they wanted to do with class sizes down, energy, an enrichment program, and helping needy students.

Mr. Feldman asked how identification of students with RTI help is coordinated from MS to HS. Mr. Fabrizio and Ms. Wagner assured him that data is tracked by computer and by personnel. Also, through the Compass Committee, there are teachers working together to provide alignment and Learning Cycles providing feedback now in all schools for alignment.

Mr. Murphy asked about tracking the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who leave Ipswich; Mr. Fabrizio replied that it is on a downward track: three years ago, 42 left; two years ago 43 left of 149; and this past year, 30 of 159 left. Whittier Tech takes 12-14 and Essex Tech has 6 this year, going to the trades. Because of the teacher teams at the MS, those who don't do so well are still coming to school, and they are making progress. Mr. Fabrizio said the guidance counselors deal with social/emotional problems, mostly RTI. Mr. Dalton emphasized Ms. Wagner's value as "better than it has ever been" because she has the time, is supportive, and the kids receive a sense

of community with SHOM and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. Ms. Wagner spoke to her methods of offering different ways of teaching. Mr. Schaaf suggested putting this information on the website for the community to view.

The School Committee portion of the meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m.