

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, January 6, 2022

7:00 PM

Watch live: <https://youtu.be/OQIRQcbeiXc>

AGENDA

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 7:00 PM | 1. Call to Order | | | C. Whitten |
| | 2. Reading of the District Mission Statement | | | |
| | 3. Announcements | | | |
| | 4. Special Acknowledgements | | | |
| | 5. Citizens' Comments | | | |
| | 6. High School Student Representative Report | | | C. Jepsen |
| | 7. Presentations | | | |
| 7:15 PM | A. School COVID-19 Update | <i>Information</i> | | B. Blake |
| 7:25 PM | B. Electric Vehicle Charging Station Project Presentation | <i>Discussion, Action</i> | | L. Lafrance and students |
| 7:40 PM | C. NESDEC Demographic Study Proposal | <i>Discussion, Action</i> | | B. Blake |
| 7:45 PM | D. Bill Logue Facilitation Proposal | <i>Discussion, Action</i> | | B. Blake |
| 7:50 PM | E. School Choice 2022-2023 | <i>Discussion, Action</i> | | C. Whitten |
| 8:10 PM | F. Policy Approval | <i>Discussion, Action</i> | | P. Kneedler |
| 8:20 PM | 8. Superintendent's Administrative Report | | | |
| 8:30 PM | 9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports | | | |
| | 10. New Business* | | | |
| | 11. Vouchers and Bills | | | |
| | 12. Consent Agenda | | | |
| | 13. Adjournment | | | |

**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: 01.06.2022

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20th at 7:00 PM.
- The Communications Subcommittee will meet Tuesday, January 11th at 5:00 PM.
- Schools and district offices will be closed on Monday, January 17th.
- Kindergarten Roundup has started. If you have a child who will be entering kindergarten in September, please complete the Kindergarten Roundup Form. A link to the form can be found on homepage of the district website: www.ipsk12.net



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ➤ Tel: 508-481-9444 ➤ www.nesdec.org

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December 8, 2021

Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent
Ipswich Public Schools
1 Lord Square
Ipswich, MA 01938

Dear Dr. Blake:

In response to your recent request, enclosed please find NESDEC's proposal for a Demographic Study for Ipswich Public Schools. I have also included General Information about NESDEC and a Statement of Qualifications. **Please note that Ipswich Public Schools is a NESDEC affiliate and is entitled to a 20% discount on our planning services.**

Please be assured that any aspect of this proposal is subject to modifications at your request, in order to meet the specific needs of the district with respect to such factors as the availability of staff, the schedule as affected by the school calendar, or cost.

If we can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me or Demographic Specialist, Dr. Karen LeDuc.

We thank you for considering NESDEC for this project.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arthur L. Bettencourt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Arthur L. Bettencourt, Ed.D.
Executive Director

cc. Dr. Karen LeDuc



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**PROPOSAL SUBMITTED
TO THE
IPSWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOR A
DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY**

December 2021

**New England School Development Council
28 Lord Road
Marlborough, Massachusetts
508-481-9444
nesdec@nesdec.org
www.nesdec.org**

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT NESDEC

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) is an organization whose general purpose is the development of high-performance schools throughout New England. NESDEC, originally established at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is now a stand-alone, not-for-profit corporation and has been serving New England school districts since 1946. Based upon the concept of collaboration, NESDEC seeks to meet the needs of school districts by pooling resources so that many can do together what one cannot do alone.

Today, NESDEC represents approximately 300 cities and towns in New England and offers services to school districts in four areas:

- ♦ **Planning Services.** NESDEC offers services related to strategic planning, special education audits, dropout prevention, collaboration/shared services, short- and long-range facilities planning (including enrollment forecasting, capacity determinations, option development, etc.), as well as services related to other aspects of school district planning.
- ♦ **Executive Search.** NESDEC assists School Boards/Committees in filling Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principal and other educational leadership positions.
- ♦ **Learning and Teaching.** NESDEC sponsors workshops/seminars and on-site training/coaching for school administrators, teachers, school board/committee members and others within the educational community.
- ♦ **Research and Development.** NESDEC undertakes research or development projects funded through public, foundation or corporate sources, which have a high potential for enhancing the performance of schools and school districts.

NESDEC is governed by a Board of Directors and administered by an Executive Director who is assisted by professional/support staff in the Marlborough, MA office and associate staff located throughout New England.

A not-for-profit organization, NESDEC is financed through affiliation fees, contract service fees, and grants received from public and private sources.

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Through its Planning office, NESDEC has been helping school districts plan for future school facility needs for over seventy years.

Specifically:

1. NESDEC prepares and updates approximately 280 enrollment forecasts each October. Additionally, NESDEC has prepared over 200 Community Demographic Profiles for those districts needing additional background data as a context for enrollment projections. These profiles are based on information from the U.S. Census, updated with more recent data, interviews with municipal officials, regional planners, and others familiar with each local community being studied.
2. NESDEC has extensive experience in working with the full range of a community's constituencies, including city/town officials, school building committees and/or other ad hoc planning groups, school staffs, parents and other community members. For decades, NESDEC has been using focus groups, surveys, and facilitated interviews as vehicles to strengthen school-community partnerships by sharing data and soliciting a wide variety of citizen input/opinions/feedback in the formative stages of NESDEC studies.
3. NESDEC works routinely with architects as well as regional and state planning agencies.
4. NESDEC has a proven record of success in effectively presenting and explaining school facilities planning issues in a variety of public forums.

DESCRIPTION OF SCOPE OF WORK

A. Nature of the Work

NESDEC proposes to develop a demographic study for the Ipswich Public Schools to assist in future planning.

B. Scope of Services

NESDEC would:

1. Gather and analyze federal census data (and updated estimates) on factors relevant to growth within the town/community including population size, household size and age composition.
2. Gather and review live birth data from the Massachusetts Division of Public Health and from local municipal offices.
3. Interview (by telephone, videoconference, or email) municipal officials (including the planning departments), as well as regional planning staff, selected realtors/developers, and other appropriate individuals in order to gather data on growth within the community as measured by housing, zoning, and other factors which tend to limit or encourage growth.
4. To the extent data is available, analyze public school, non-public school, and vocational school enrollment data for the past ten years.
5. Prepare an analysis of the factors impacting past and future enrollment.
6. Prepare a ten-year enrollment projection on a grade-by-grade and grade combination basis using the most recent historical data available.
7. Prepare an analysis of the enrollment projections including a discussion of the combined cohort (modified cohort survival) methodology used in their preparation.
8. Outline the assumptions upon which the enrollment forecast is based.

C. Conduct of the Report

1. NESDEC would provide the staff for the preparation of the report. The Superintendent/designee would take such action as appropriate to facilitate the work, including:
 - making the necessary arrangements to provide access to municipal and school reports/records
 - making the arrangements for meetings (likely virtual and/or by telephone) with school and municipal personnel and other residents/service providers as appropriate
2. The demographic report, which would include enrollment projections and the analysis of impact factors, would be submitted to the Superintendent in a format to be determined by NESDEC.
3. A final virtual presentation regarding the Demographic Analysis and Enrollment Projection Report would be made to the School Committee/Superintendent on a date and at a time to be mutually agreed upon.

D. Time

This project could be completed within three months of the signing of an Agreement or other mutually acceptable commencement date, contingent upon school vacation schedules, availability of municipal and school officials, and availability of documents and information.

E. Fee

The total fixed fee to the Ipswich Public Schools for the study detailed above in this proposal would be **\$6,520*** (**\$8,150 less the 20% NESDEC affiliate discount of \$1,630**).

Payment Schedule

One-half of the above fee, \$3,260, would be due at the signing of an Agreement, and the remaining half, \$3,260, would be due and payable within 30 days of the completion and submission of the final report.

F. Additional Scope of Work

Presentation

Presentations beyond that noted above (C-3) may be made at additional cost.

General Extended Scope

Additional scope of work beyond that specified in this proposal, if requested by the district and agreed to in advance by NESDEC, would be conducted at a cost of **\$195 per consultant hour** plus reasonable expenses.

This price quote will remain in effect until February 15, 2022.

***NESDEC AFFILIATION**

Ipswich Public Schools is a NESDEC affiliate and entitled to a 20% discount on our planning services.

NESDEC PROJECT TEAM

Karen LeDuc, Ph.D. Senior Staff Associate

Dr. Karen LeDuc is an experienced educator with a demonstrated history of working in primary/secondary education and higher education. Her major areas of expertise are Planning and Management, Curriculum Design and Review, Educational Technology, Instructional Design, and Leadership. She is a strong business development professional with a Ph.D. focused on Educational Studies from Lesley University. Prior to her work with NESDEC, she served as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning for the Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn (MA) and Assistant Superintendent of the Natick, Massachusetts Public Schools. She previously served the Framingham schools as a reading specialist, literacy and math teacher and mathematics curriculum coordinator. Dr. LeDuc has also taught as an adjunct professor at Framingham State University, Lesley University and Fitchburg State University.

John H. Kennedy, M.A. Senior Staff Associate

Mr. John Kennedy has been an educator for over thirty years. He received his B.A. from Villanova University and a M.A. from Boston College. He has served as a Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Development and a K-12 Curriculum Coordinator. Prior to that, he was a Department Chairperson and Classroom Teacher. He has had extensive experience with curriculum mapping, standards alignment and assessment, and professional development planning and implementation. He has also served as a Title I Director. Mr. Kennedy has led several Department of Education workshops and seminars on a range of topics related to improving academic achievement. He has served as an Assistant Chair on an NEASC Visiting Committee and he was a member of the committee that developed the Massachusetts Social Studies Curriculum Framework. Mr. Kennedy has participated in and served as Team Leader for numerous NESDEC facilities planning projects throughout New England.

Nancy Gustafson Staff Associate

Nancy Gustafson serves as a consultant in the areas of leadership development, organizational improvement and executive searches in PK-12 education. She served as a superintendent in Massachusetts for over 12 years and as director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development for an additional 10 years. Additionally, she has over 20 years of experience as an elementary principal, teacher of bilingual education, English as a second language, Spanish, and developmental reading. Her district leadership includes expertise in building capacity, shared leadership, and a student-centered, collaborative culture of continuous improvement, with high student engagement and achievement, especially via blended/technology-enhanced, competency-based, and personalized learning with a focus on equity of opportunities. Her leadership and inclusive approach resulted in community support for funding and construction of an award-winning new elementary school in Millis, MA.

With her expertise in bilingual education, schools in her district won international awards for the Spanish immersion programming and she has helped to implement Spanish immersion programs in other districts. Nancy holds a CAGS from Lesley University in Educational Administration, an MED from Boston University in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and a BA from Grinnell College in Spanish and Education.

Arthur L. Bettencourt, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Dr. Bettencourt received his B.A. from Salem State College, his Master's degree from Tufts University, and his Doctorate from Boston University. He served as a Superintendent of Schools in Massachusetts for twenty-one years. Prior to working as a Superintendent, he held several administrative positions in public schools. Dr. Bettencourt has been a Lecturer at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts, and is active in the training and preparation of educators at the graduate level. He has also served on the Boston University PreK-12 Educational Advisory Committee. Dr. Bettencourt has offered numerous professional development workshops in school governance, planning and organizational development, leadership entry, career path development, and curriculum design. While serving as a superintendent, Dr. Bettencourt administered several school construction and renovation projects at both the elementary and secondary levels. He is on the Board of Directors of the National School Development Council and recently served as the organization's president. He is also on the editorial board of the *Journal for Leadership and Instruction*, an international, peer-reviewed research journal for educational professionals. Dr. Bettencourt coordinates all of NESDEC's executive search and planning projects, and he has worked for the firm since 2004.

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December 14, 2021

Via Email Only

Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent
Ipswich Public Schools
1 Lord Square
Ipswich, MA 01938

RE: Proposal for Facilitation of Facilities Committee
Public Engagement Listening Sessions

Dear Dr. Blake,

I am pleased to submit this proposal to facilitate a series of meetings as the school committee considers next steps in submitting a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA).

Understanding of the Need

My understanding is that several current school buildings are nearing the end of their useful life and the community is exploring the construction of one or more school buildings. In 2018 a variety of options were considered and there were differences in the community about the most appropriate course of action. As a result, the proposed plan did not garner the required majority for approval at town meeting.

Given the passion around the issues and to demonstrate to MSBA that the community has been consulted, the School Committee wants to engage a neutral facilitator to assist in designing and facilitating a number of meetings or possibly listening sessions to gather input from parents, students, the wider Ipswich community and perhaps separate listening sessions with teachers and other staff. Ideally this process will be open and transparent to ensure hopes and concerns can be heard and considered as the application is drafted and built into the feasibility study should it go forward.

Overview of Background and Experience

As you know from the School Committee workshop earlier this year, I have more than 30 years in the public and private sector as a consultant, facilitator mediator, trainer and consensus builder. I bring substantive experience in a wide range of social, human service, educational, and environmental issues to this project. Many of my facilitation projects are designed to integrate decision making of government agencies with input from members of the public.

Much of my work has been in collaboration with Loraine Della Porta. Given the tight timeline and tasks I suggest she help me on this effort. Loraine's public sector career spans more than 20

years and reflects extensive experience in conflict prevention, organizational development and training. For eleven years Loraine was Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration.

Loraine and I have worked together on numerous extended projects involving task forces, public engagement and consensus building and co-presented at numerous workshops, conferences and trainings.

Approach and Methods

I believe that no single model or approach to meeting process and facilitation of public advisory sessions should control. Rather, the process should reflect the needs and desires of the parties with the facilitator being transparent about the process and issues to be addressed and choices to be made. It is also important that any sponsoring or convening organization be clear about the goals and any limitations of the process.

The effectiveness of the meetings is dependent on how agendas are arrived at; how complex information is developed, shared and conveyed; understanding and addressing expectations and potential differences in advance; wise use of work group time; and respect for the time and attention paid by each person involved. Generally, we find that with these types of listening sessions one and one-half to two hours allows people to engage and make the time commitment to participate. As a contingency plan or in addition for those uncomfortable with in-person events, we can set up and convene sessions on Zoom.

Given the tight timeframes involved the work on this effort will need to be concentrated and time used efficiently. What follows is a brief outline of tasks and a budget estimate based on my current understanding.

Work Plan by Task

Task 1 - Plan Phase 1 Listening Sessions – Late January/Early February 2022

- Calls and video meetings with members of school committee designated for the planning process and/or superintendent.
- Advise on materials to be developed/disseminated in advance of each listening session.
- Consult on locations for sessions, logistics/COVID protocols
- Develop framing questions, proposed agendas and meeting process for each session.
- Review/consult on outreach plans to promote sessions, meeting registration process.
- Review presentations and coach on content and delivery.
- Coach on development of "Anticipated Questions."
- Outline logistics for each session – time, presenters, pre-recorded materials, need for small group facilitators/note takers, etc.
- Identify small group volunteer facilitators and note takers, preparation meeting in advance of the sessions (volunteers would receive a modest gift card as a sign of appreciation).

Work Product: Draft annotated and public facing agendas, framing questions.

Task 2 - Facilitate Listening Sessions & Survey

- Welcome attendees, reminder of ground rules, review agenda and facilitate forums in a manner that fosters dialogic conditions and encourages collaborative discussion and clarifies concerns, issues, hopes and interests. Assist the group in staying on time and on task.
 - Suggestions that sessions be held on two different days with two sessions on each day, one in late afternoon and one in the early evening.
 - Consider backup plan for Zoom sessions if weather or public health guidance make this advisable.
- Debrief with School Committee designees and Superintendent at end of first session, assess if session met goals and any adjustments necessary for subsequent sessions.
- We would work with you to arrive at mutually convenient dates given your needs and our calendars.
- In addition to the sessions, feedback can be supplemented through a brief online survey.

Work Product:

- Compile survey information (if conducted).
- Gather notes and raw data from notetakers.
- Prepare draft and final summary of sessions.

Task 3 - Plan Phase 2 Listening Sessions – Spring 2022

- Consult with Superintendent and School committee on developing consensus on site selection for a proposal for MSBA. Develop plans for listening sessions on proposed site.
- Similar planning process for Phase 2 sessions incorporating lessons from Phase 1 sessions and outcomes.

Work Product: Draft annotated and public facing agendas, framing questions.

Task 4 - Facilitate Listening Sessions & Survey

- Facilitate sessions in similar fashion to phase 1.

Work Product:

- Compile survey information (if conducted).
- Gather notes and raw data from notetakers.
- Prepare draft and final summary of sessions.

Fees

I am happy to undertake this on a flat fee basis based on tasks and a defined scope. The rates proposed are below market and reflect my understanding of budget limitations for

municipalities. We will need to be efficient with our time and I hope to rely on the School Committee and staff to provide information, suggestions and initial drafts of some documents, as appropriate, and handle some of the agreed-on logistics and act as note takers for any small group discussions.

A draft budget is attached. When Loraine and I are on the same call or at the same meeting we will work on a reduced blended rate.

I look forward to discussing this and answering any questions you might have.

Regards,



William DeVane Logue

The Logue Group
Estimated Budget - Ipswich Public Schools

	Estimated Hours	Estimated Cost	
TASK 1 - Phase 1 Planning			
Planning calls & meetings	4	\$800.00	
Process design	1	\$200.00	
Volunteer solicitation, guidance and prep call	2	\$400.00	
Outreach and presentation materials review	2	\$400.00	
Preparation (graphics, agendas, etc.)	3	\$1,050.00	
	12	\$2,850.00	\$2,850
Task 2 - Phase 1 Listening Sessions			
Assumptions Bill & Loraine to manage + 4 volunteers			
Logistics & other potential issues	2	\$400.00	
Listening Sessions w/ 2 per day	5	\$1,750.00	
Flat fee travel from CT & RI/day		\$400.00	
Gift card/session * 2 per day	4	\$400.00	
Compile notes, survey and summary of sessions	6	\$1,200.00	
Per Session Day	17	\$4,150.00	\$4,150
If 2 session days		\$7,900.00	\$7,900
PHASE 1 SUBTOTAL - 1 session day			\$7,000
PHASE 1 SUBTOTAL - 2 session days			\$10,750
Optional Zoom Online		\$1,400.00	
Per Zoom session flat fee - (up to 60 people setup, registration, small group facilitators and recorders,			
Task 3 - Phase 2 Listening Sessions			
Planning calls & meetings	6	\$1,200.00	
Process design	1	\$200.00	
Volunteer solicitation, guidance and prep call	2	\$400.00	
Outreach and presentation materials review	6	\$1,200.00	
Preparation (graphics, agendas, etc.)	3	\$600.00	
	18	\$3,600.00	\$3,600
Task 4 - Phase 2 Listening Sessions			
Assumptions Bill & Loraine to manage + 4 volunteers			
Logistics & other potential issues	2	\$400.00	
Listening Sessions w/ 2 per day	5	\$1,750.00	
Flat fee travel from CT & RI/day		\$400.00	
Gift card/session * 2 per day	4	\$400.00	
Compile notes, survey and summary of sessions	8	\$1,600.00	
Per Session Day	19	\$4,550.00	
If 2 session days		\$8,300.00	
GRAND TOTAL 1 Session day in each Phase			\$11,550
GRAND TOTAL 2 Session days in each Phase			\$22,650
Additional Zoom Sessions			\$1,400

Current Choice Numbers

Grade 1	0
Grade 2	0
Grade 3	4
Grade 4	0
Grade 5	2
Grade 6	2
Grade 7	1
Grade 8	3
Grade 9	7
Grade 10	11
Grade 11	7
Grade 12	8

Consent Agenda: 01.06.2022

Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept the following:

- The School Committee Open Session meeting meeting from December 2, 2021
- A check from Gekus Studios in the amount of \$940 to be deposited into the Doyon Student Activities Account;
- A check from Gekus Studios in the amount of \$1,040 to be deposited into the Middle School to be deposited into the Middle School Student Activities Account;
- The purchase of 19 jackets for the High School Girls Volleyball team players and coaches by the Institution for Savings equal to the amount of \$721.05 plus shipping and handling

Ipswich School Committee

MS/HS Ensemble Room
134 High Street, Ipswich
Thursday, December 2, 2021
7:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mr. Whitten called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Members Present: Mr. Whitten, Mr. Stevens, Dr. O'Flynn, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Cannon, Ms. Eliot and Mr. Poirier.

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

2. Reading of the District Mission Statement

Ms. Jepsen read the mission statement.

3. Announcements

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The following subcommittees and working groups will be meeting:
 - Policy Subcommittee: Tuesday, December 7th at 5:30pm
 - Race and Equity Working Group: Tuesday, December 7th at 7:30pm
 - Athletic Subcommittee: Thursday, December 9th at 5:30pm
 - Negotiations Subcommittee: Tuesday, December 14th at 3:45pm
 - Budget Subcommittee: Thursday, December 16th at 6:00pm

4. Special Acknowledgements

Dr. Blake congratulated the girls volleyball team for their state championship title. He also acknowledged the girls field hockey team on their postseason accomplishments.

5. Citizens' Comments

Mitch McDonald, Kimball Avenue: Mr. McDonald first asked what educational criteria the School Committee was using to choose a site for a new school. He pointed out that Doyon abuts Willowdale Forest which adds value for environmental education. He then talked about a Facilities Working Group Meeting in June 2021 where a discussion around bringing a site proposal to Fall Town Meeting occurred. At that time, the group had discussed holding community listening sessions. He asked about changes to that plan. He then asked if there were studies the School Committee was relying on to go before the Select Board to request the use of Bielek Park. Mr. McDonald then shared concerns over the listening sessions and whether the vocal minority will be taken into account. He asked the School Committee to provide ways to show confidence that all will be listened to and heard at these sessions.

6. High School Student Representative Report

Ms. Jepsen reported on the activities taking place throughout the high school. Her report included the following:

- The girls volleyball team claimed their first State Championship title
- The girls field hockey team played in the State Championship game, coming in as runner up
- The boys cross country team participated in the All Star meet
- The Green Team and the Environmental Club collaborated on a cleanup effort around the school grounds
- The National Honors Society held their induction ceremony in-person
- The Interact Club is working on the final details for the Jingle Bell Walk to be held later this month
- Mr. Shippen, math teacher at the high school, has revived the Ski and Snowboarding Club
- The Sustainability Club is hosting a coat drive

- The music program will be hosting a winter concert on Thursday, December 16th

7. Presentations

A. Global War on Terror Speaker Series Presentation

Rich Barbato, an Ipswich resident and Iraq combat veteran, along with Karen Tyler of Veteran Services shared information on their efforts to move bill SD 2069: an act naming the Global War of Terror Memorial Bridge in the Town of Ipswich forward. In response to some pushback on the proposal, Mr. Barbato and Ms. Tyler created a series of speakers and presentations to educate the community on the Global War on Terror. The first event in the speaker series was poorly attended, so Mr. Barbato and Ms. Tyler were coming before the School Committee in hopes of generating more interest in the school community.

Along with garnering interest for the speaker series and bringing attention to their effort to name the bridge, the two also spoke about an essay contest for students based on the question, "What is the price of freedom?". Dr. Blake and Mr. Whitten both agreed that information about the essay contest could be shared with the schools.

Ms. Tyler shared that the best way to support SD 2069 would be to contact local State Representatives.

- *Motion to direct the School Committee Chair to write a letter on behalf of the School Committee in support of SD 2069 was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Ms. Cannon. The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

B. Discussion/Vote to support a School Committee request to the Select Board to release Bialek Park for consideration as an option for a school building project

Mr. Whitten began by sharing that he, along with Dr. Blake and Mr. Stevens had a call with Town Counsel, George Hall. This discussion outlined the timeline around the potential release of Bialek Park. He then reviewed the timeline which included:

1. Non-binding referendum vote at ballot, potentially Spring 2022
2. Select Board must declare the site is no longer needed for playground use
3. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote at Town Meeting allowing Bialek Park to be transferred to the school district
4. Begin and complete the Article 97 process, which typically takes a year

Overall, Mr. Whitten explained, the process between Town approval and the State requirements takes roughly two years. While he was hopeful this would be a site of compromise and consideration, Mr. Whitten admits that he has not seen positive support. He said that moving forward, he felt this site should not be pursued and the School Committee should disengage in the discussion around Bialek Park as a potential location for a new elementary school.

Mr. Whitten also shared that there was a discussion with Bill Logue, the facilitator who worked previously with the School Committee. He is awaiting a proposal from Mr. Logue to begin listening sessions for the new project. The early sessions will focus around issues like community values. While the details are still to be worked out, Mr. Whitten is hopeful these will be well attended and useful as the process moves forward.

Mr. Stevens agreed with Mr. Whitten. He felt that timing is also an issue with the potential override vote in May. He felt it was unwise to combine these two contentious issues. Mr. Stevens agreed that listening sessions will help find a consensus among the Town. He also agreed that the School Committee should not move forward with their request to the Select Board to release Bialek Park.

Ms. Eliot agreed that there has been little support for the Bialek Park site and also supported not moving forward with the request. She said it was important to not think of these issues in a bubble, but rather look out on the horizon and figure out the priorities for the school district. She felt there was little appetite for a long, drawn out process that may have little community support.

Dr. O'Flynn said that he has been clear that the most important thing the School Committee does is support a long term operating budget. He has been a longtime advocate for a single elementary school and feels that Bialek Park has always been the best location. He worries that the School Committee will find themselves in the same place as the last attempt at

a building project. Dr. O'Flynn feels that the highest priority should be to pass the override . If you cannot have both a new school and the override, then the override must come first so the schools can be adequately funded.

Mr. Poirier asked if this conversation should have come sooner. He feels that the community believes the School Committee has already committed to a site and a location. He felt it was time to begin the community listening session and also share with the community what configurations and locations are possible. He agreed that the School Committee should not move forward with their request to the Select Board.

Mr. Whitten hoped that the listening sessions would begin in mid-January and include community members who fell on either side of the school issue during the last go around.

Ms. Cannon first asked why the School Committee would be voting now. She felt that the conversation with Town Counsel should have taken place prior to going before the Select Board. She said that if the School Committee is focused on building a consensus among the Town, it is important that the Town trusts the process and feels that the School Committee is doing its due diligence. Ms. Cannon feels the process needs to slow down and that the listening sessions will be key to any strategy moving forward.

Ms Kneedler said she was hopeful the School Committee would receive some positive feedback in the upcoming listening sessions. She felt it was discouraging knowing that members of the community did not believe the School Committee was coming from a place of honesty. Ms. Kneedler said the School Committee has always done their best to help the children of Ipswich.

Mr. Stevens said that in hindsight, the School Committee should have had more of a discussion and voted ahead of the Select Board meeting. While the process may not have started the right way, the School Committee is on a better path moving forward.

Dr. O'Flynn felt that once Bialek Park is no longer an option, there will continue to be people in opposition of any site.

Ms. Eliot stressed the importance of having parameters around the listening sessions.

- *Motion for the School Committee to remove their request to the Select Board to release Bialek Park for consideration as an option for a school building project was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Mr. Poirier. The motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 opposed.*

C. Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Presentation

Ms. Cannon reviewed the thirteen Traverso-Weather Innovation Grants approved for the Fall grant cycle. The total amount funded equaled roughly \$56,000. Ms. Cannon said that it was clear teachers were working to adapt to challenges brought on by the pandemic. She was impressed with the creativity. The list of approved grants included:

1. Stepping into Kindergarten
2. 3d Printer
3. Girls, Inc.
4. Pamper Pole High Element
5. Elementary Comic Con
6. Elementary Robotics Program
7. Books to Diversity
8. Multilingual Showcase
9. Focus Garden for the 4th Grade
10. Joy is Contagious
11. Building Fact Fluency
12. Tiger Year Festival
13. Laser Cutting

Dr. O'Flynn shared that he is always impressed with the Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grants and felt that these types of projects help to inspire both students and educators.

Ms. Cannon said that as a School Committee member and a parent, it was nice to see the spark of joy returning to the educators and students.

Mr. Stevens reminded the School Committee that the Feoffee Trust is growing faster than the district is spending the funds. He felt it would be beneficial for them to reach out to the school community several times over the year and discuss the grant program in an effort to generate more interest.

D. Discussion and Vote on Operational Override

Mr. Stevens began the discussion with an overview of the last override. With great fiduciary responsibility, the School Committee has been able to extend a five year plan into year eight. With \$2.6 million currently in the Stabilization Fund, the district's operating budget can be supported through FY23. Without an operational override, the district will fall off a "financial cliff" in FY24. Mr. Stevens, along with members of the Budget subcommittee, felt it prudent to approach taxpayers in May 2022 for a \$2 million override request that will stretch the Stabilization Fund for an additional five years. A \$2 million request in FY24 would only cover two years.

Mr. Stevens explained that moving forward with an override request while some district accounts maintain healthy balances allows for a smaller ask of the taxpayers. An approved override now will bolster the Stabilization Fund and reduce interruptions to educational programming. Should an override not pass, the district will see significant cuts and a greater ask from the taxpayers at the next attempt for an override.

Dr. O'Flynn felt it was best for the students to have a stable budget from year to year. He felt that the fatal flaw of a longer term override is that districts are left with a larger deficit compared to the operating budget. If you go too far, the district will fall off a financial cliff. The decision to seek an override while the district is still in a stability phase is to avoid that cliff. Dr. O'Flynn felt it was critically important for continued success in the district to pass this operational override this year.

Ms. Eliot shared her concerns. She felt it could be hard to pass an override if the elementary school building project is not further along. She is concerned that the School Committee will be unable to garner broad community support given the low turnout at the informational meeting. She said with healthy account balances, the sense of urgency is lacking. It will be the School Committee's responsibility to create that sense of urgency. She also noted that without the support of the both boards, passing the override will be more challenging.

While Mr. Stevens said he understood where Ms. Eliot's concerns came from, he felt that pushing off the override would ultimately push the School Committee into a school decision. If the override is delayed and does not pass in FY24, the school district will fall off the financial cliff.

Ms. Kneeder agreed with Mr. Stevens. She said she had lived through a failed override when her children were in school and it was described as "scary". She said at the time, the district was forced to make draconian cuts. It took years to get that programming back.

Mr. Whitten reminded the School Committee that they are fiduciaries. He felt the override requests laid out a plan that allows the district to be fiscally conservative with their funds.

It was decided that Mr. Whitten would ask for a discussion regarding the operational override to be placed on the Tri Board agenda. The expectation was that the boards would not vote on the override at that meeting, but rather listen to information about the timing, calculator and overall budget.

Ms. Cannon felt that while people are wanting to return to normalcy, they are failing to recognize how much has been lost in terms of programming, socialization and other factors due to the pandemic. She said that to do anything that would remove teachers and programming is not what is best for the students of Ipswich. If supporting an override means fighting to keep consistency in students' lives, then the School Committee needs to do it. Ms. Cannon felt the School Committee would be missing the point of their roles if they failed to acknowledge how this could impact the students.

Dr. O'Flynn clarified that the money from the override would be used in the budget immediately and would ensure the future programming for the students.

Carl Nysten, Brownville Avenue: After thinking about previous overrides, Mr. Nysten felt it was important to ask for a formal vote from each board as early into the process as possible so the School Committee understands where each board stands. He also said it was important to think about the sequencing of this override versus the school building project. Mr. Nysten felt that the community will have difficulty focusing on anything else until the issue of the school building project has been settled. His suggestion to the School Committee would be to make progress on the building project before moving forward with the override.

Mr. Whitten clarified that the School Committee would not submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in April without a show of community support through a site vote at Town Meeting. There is no Town Meeting before the deadline to submit the SOI for this year. Mr. Whitten said that the School Committee is also respectful of the Strategic Plan laid out by the Town.

Rachel Roessler, Spillers Lane: Speaking to sequencing, Ms. Roessler also shared her concern about putting the override before the building project. She felt it would be hard to separate the two. She said that every year the project is delayed, the cost of supplies increases and the amount needed from the town will also increase. She felt the faster you can build a consensus on the building project, the chances of passing an override become stronger. The sooner the School Committee can remove the anger and confusion from the community, the more successful they will be.

Dr. O'Flynn felt that the override was the priority. He felt the override could bring the community together with clarity and purpose.

Ms. Cannon talked about want versus need. The district needs the override and wants the school building project. Like Dr. O'Flynn, she felt that the override is the more responsible choice at this point.

Ms. Eliot clarified that she was not opposed to an override, but rather the timing of when it occurred.

- *Motion to support an operational override on the May 2022 Town Meeting warrant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Mr. Poirier. The motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 opposed.*

8. Superintendent's Administrative Report

Dr. Blake reported on his work throughout the district in weeks since that last School Committee meeting. His report included:

- A COVID update
- A meeting with John Blair regarding the potential for electric vehicle charges on the high school property
- A Facilities update with Chris Rais
- Triboard Chair meeting
- A meeting with Joe Gill regarding personnel issues
- Ongoing negotiations with the Ipswich Educators' Association
- A call with the Disability Resource Center
- Several subcommittee meetings
- Rotary breakfast with the high school administration and the athletic director
- Conference call with Town Counsel
- Dinner bell with the School Committee
- An Admin team meeting
- A Northshore Education Consortium (NEC) board meeting
- A meeting with Tracy wagner
- A meeting with Bill logue to discuss a proposal for listening sessions for the school building project
- Attendance in the Supporting Culturally Proficient Classrooms and Schools class

9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- **Ipswich Education Foundation (IEF):** The group is working on their branding, brochure and updates to their website. They talked about wanting to align with other grant funding sources in the district and help to fill the gaps.
- **Negotiations Subcommittee:** These meetings are ongoing.

- **Mutual Concerns Subcommittee:** The group discussed inviting members of the boards to visit the schools. The facilities work order system is working well in each building. They discussed building a working relationship between the School Committee and the Ipswich Educators' Association(IEA).

10. New Business*

Dr. O'Flynn highlighted the School Choice student who helped to bring the volleyball team their Championship win, as well as the Educational student on the field hockey teams.

Mr. Whitten suggested holding a workshop to review the School Committee roles and responsibilities with the district's legal counsel. The School Committee has not held a review of this subject in several years. This workshop will take place at a meeting in January.

There is a conflict with the School Committee meeting on December 16, 2022. It was decided to cancel this meeting and return to regularly scheduled meetings in January.

Dr. Blake received the NESDEC Enrollment Projection report for this year. The numbers are correct in the report; however, the report does give an accurate depiction of enrollment or the projections. NESDEC has only factored in residents of Ipswich and does not account for the large building projects in town. He shared that NESDEC offers a more in depth study that he would like to pursue. He feels it critical to get the most accurate numbers ahead of the override and building project discussions.

11. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.

12. Consent Agenda

- *Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Whitten and seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

13. Adjournment

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Kneedler and seconded by Ms. Cannon. The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 PM