

Ipswich School Committee
November 2, 2017
Middle/High School Ensemble Room

II. Open Session

Call to Order:

Chair S. Player called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM with the following members present: C. Whitten, N. Zito, B. Hopping, H. O’Flynn and C. Nylen. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Blake, Fin. Director J. Cuff and Student Representative Chris Bergner.

Chair S. Player opened the meeting by acknowledging Jean Emerson, retiring School Committee Clerk, for her 38 years of service as tonight was her last night. Committee members congratulated her and spoke highly of her commitment to the Ipswich community.

Reading of District Mission Statement:

Chris Bergner read the Mission Statement.

Announcements:

- November 7- Special Town Meeting, 7pm, PAC
- November 10- Ipswich Schools will be CLOSED in observance of Veteran’s Day
- November 13- High School Senior Class Fashion Show, 7:30pm, Ipswich Country Club
- November 14- Policy Subcommittee Meeting, 7pm, M/HS Guidance Conference Room
- November 15- Athletic Subcommittee Meeting, 7pm, M/HS Guidance Conference Room
- November 15- 7th Grade STEAM Department will be hosting the Probability
 - Carnival, 6-7pm in the 7th Grade Pod. School Committee is invited to see this example of hands-on, applied learning.
- November 16- School Committee Meeting
- November 17, 18, 19- Middle School Drama Club Presents: Peter Pan
- Food Drive for The Open Door Food Pantry is ongoing at the Middle School

Citizens’ Comments:

None

Special Acknowledgements:

Dr. Blake mentioned that Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, had a successful experience as a speaker at the SmartBrief Stem Summit in Washington, D.C.

High School Student Representative Report:

C. Bergner reported that the High School Spirit Week was off to a great start and Spirit Day was on Friday, November 3rd. The French Exchange Student Program was a good experience. The French students left today and Ipswich students will travel to France during April vacation. The girl's volleyball team will play a game on Friday, November 3rd, as well as football against Salem and a boy's soccer game. The school is looking forward to the Thanksgiving football game against Hamilton-Wenham.

A. Superintendent's Administrative Report:

Dr. Blake spoke about the successful NEASC visit that came to an end on Wednesday, November 25th. He finished his second and final Educator Evaluation Training on October 20th. Central Office now has a full staff after hiring a full time Payroll Clerk. Dr. Blake met with School Resource Officer, Joe Perna, to discuss school security. He attended an event with the Barr Foundation in Boston on October 30th. After an unexpected school closing on Monday, October 30th, Dr. Blake organized the school closing lists to better prepare for the next closing. He mentioned that the only comment he received was from a community member who was looking for the closing posted on TV and could not find one. He attended a School Building Committee meeting and introduced policies A, F and H to the Leadership Team at their Admin Meeting. Dr. Blake had an entry meeting with Jim Engel and Bill Craft. He also met with Sheila Taylor from the Ipswich Council on Aging and was happy to establish a relationship with her. He will be attending a Thanksgiving Luncheon for seniors at Town Hall on Thursday, November 9th. Dr. Blake also met with Robin Crosbie, Town Manager, on Wednesday, November 1st.

III. School Committee Presentations:

B. FIELD TRIP REQUESTS:

1. Bill Gallant: Engineering Project Racing Challenge in Troy, NY April 27-April 30, 2018

The field trip is to a national competition for high school students to compete in a racing challenge. Each group forms a racing team, markets the team, builds their cars using alternative energy sources and races the car. The Ipswich team competed in a regional competition in October and won. They are invited to attend the national competition in April at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. The group plans to travel by van, with parent chaperones, leaving on Saturday, April 28th. One parent will be driving a personal vehicle with supplies and the project. All chaperones will be CORI'd and fingerprinted. Upon arrival, the students will attend a banquet and set-up their project. On Sunday, April 29th, the team will present their team project, attend the race events, engineering project presentation, wind tunnel testing and then return to Ipswich at 8 PM. They anticipate having 25 students participate with 4

chaperones. Students will be using fundraising and sponsorships to help with the cost of the trip. The cost per student will be \$75.

C. Nylen motioned for approval of the field trip. H. O’Flynn seconded. UNANIMOUS approval by present members.

2. Gail Pepe- New York City Fine Arts Field Trip April 5 and 5, 2018

This field trip, in collaboration with Danvers High School Art Department, will be visiting the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum, as well as attending the Broadway musical The Book of Mormon and visit the Chelsea Art District. Each school will have 10-15 students attend the trip with priority given to Portfolio students and then juniors and seniors interested in the arts. Funding for this trip will include a donation from IMADA and possibly from a tentative “Print Night” fundraiser. B. Hopping motions for approval of this NYC field trip. H. O’Flynn seconds. UNANIMOUS approval by present members.

E. MCAS UPDATE (change in order from agenda)

Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, first spoke about her experience at the SmartBrief Stem Summit in Washington, D.C. Because of some scheduling issues with other presenters at the conference, Tracy was asked unexpectedly to present to multiple groups. One presentation she particularly enjoyed was a follow up on how to support teachers in the classroom and focus on whole school alignment with respect to STEM. She felt honored to represent Ipswich Schools.

Tracy presented an overview of the 2017 MCAS, per Dr. Blake’s request, and asked that the School Committee focus on the key phrase “high level overview”. She suggested arranging for a more in depth review at a later date with each school. Before her overview, she noted that the MCAS is one of many forms of assessment in Ipswich Public Schools by which students show us what they know and are able to do. Through her slideshow presentation, Tracy noted there were a lot of changes in this year’s MCAS. The new version of the MCAS, know as the Next Generation test replaces the nearly 20 year old MCAS assessment and was given to students in grades 3-8 while the old version, known as the Legacy test was given to high school students. This newest version focuses on high order thinking skills, application of knowledge and the ability to make connections between reading and writing. This newer version is designed to give a clearer signal of readiness for the next grade level, college or career. This was the first time this test was administered on a computer and Tracy noted that this difference alone could be challenging for some students.

This year, the state will not be assigning an accountability and assistance level to any school that participated in the Next Generation test.

Along with the aforementioned changes, the Next Generation also changed the language around the achievement levels. See Below:

<h2>MCAS Achievement Levels</h2>	
★ Legacy	★ Next-generation
Advanced Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter, and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.	Exceeding Expectations A student who performed at this level exceeded grade-level expectations by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.
Proficient Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.	Meeting Expectations A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade in this subject.
Needs Improvement Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.	Partially Meeting Expectations A student who performed at this level partially met grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should consider whether the student needs additional academic assistance to succeed in this subject.
Warning Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.	Not Meeting Expectations A student who performed at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.

The scoring in the new test has also changed, showing more breakdown of each question. The results show how your child performed on the test in each reporting category, as well as on each individual test question. This year, the state created a new benchmark which has created a “buzz” among parents. Tracy noted that 2017 is a baseline year and parents, schools and the School Committee should not be comparing last year’s scores to this year. The results do not necessarily mean the student learned less, but just that the new MCAS measures in different way. The expectation is that scores will change over time, as occurred when the Legacy test debuted 20 years ago.

Although this is a baseline year, student growth percentiles (SGP), which measure how much progress a student made in a year, can still be compared. Based on the available information, Ipswich scored above the state average and had a strong SGP overall.

Tracy did mention that the 8th grade test results reflected a need for more support for 8th grade math and transdisciplinary growth. H. O’Flynn asked if the School Committee should look at the future 10th grade results for progress in that area or the next 8th grade results to which Tracy replied that the next 8th grade results would be a better measure. S. Player asked if there is a goal SGP to strive for. Tracy replied that it is a complicated algorithm to determine SGP, but that being consistently over 50 shows improvement.

N. Zito asked when the test is given and for how long. Tracy answered the test is given each Spring over a 17 day period. Tracy also emphasized the difficulties with taking the test online for the first time and that students did not learn less, but the Next Generation tests in a different way.

Tracy ended her presentation by congratulating the Ipswich Public School administrators, teachers and students on a job well done and also giving credit to administrators for anticipating concerns, preparing parents for the results and staying “ahead of the game.”

C. ITSE 2017

Sheila McAdams, Principal of Winthrop School and Chris Burke, Tech Integration Specialist presented on their trip to the ITSE Conference in June 2017. They began their presentation by providing Chromebooks to each School Committee member and asked each person to answer the following questions:

1. Schools should help students become..
2. Technology helps us realize our vision by...
3. As we integrate more technology into schools, this means we give up...

This exercise opened the discussion about the conference that included a slideshow presentation.

Chris Burke talked about her experience at the conference citing feeling “jazzed and rejuvenated” upon her return. Throughout her time at the conference, she was able to look, play and talk technology. She felt she gained a global perspective and was given an opportunity to self reflect and learn how to use technology in useful and innovative ways. She gained philosophical validation. Her takeaways were that “teachers are wizards”, something she learned from a keynote speaker, Jennifer McGuire.

As part of the presentation, Chris and Sheila compiled a group of teachers who also participated in the conference to talk about their own takeaways and how they have incorporated technology into their classrooms upon return.

Sheila discussed her experience at the conference and spoke about putting her takeaways into action at Winthrop. Students are creating podcasts at the elementary level, coding, and using Flip Grid for cross classroom discussions.

Sheila also discussed ways the School Committee can help. She explained that teachers come back from this conference fired up, but are only able to ask for resources at the end of the school year. She asked that there be more flexibility for resources throughout the year, as it is important to plan ahead to efficiently create plans and set expectations. She asked for summer curriculum integration time. Sheila also suggested that teachers and administrators do what they can to

present at conferences like this. She also suggested that teachers have the ability to visit other classrooms to see how other people are implementing technology.

H. O’Flynn suggested creating a mechanism to support the conference yearly and creating larger grant programs. He also suggested that because there are so many platforms to use, it may be more helpful to find district wide ideas and platforms, rather than each person using different programs. He suggested using the tech team to vet certain programs for use in the district.

The discussion among the School Committee members went to funding and if this is going to be a regular trip, should it be included in the yearly budget and if so, where does the money come from. It was also suggested that there be incentives for those who present at the conference such a reimbursement for travel.

D. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Winthrop School, Sheila McAdams

Goal #1: Sheila presented the first goal: Establish learning cycles to evaluate instructional effectiveness through analysis of student work, particularly with regard to new project-based STEAM units. Sheila said that teachers are currently in the process of finishing the science and STEAM units. She mentioned that elementary teachers are typically very comfortable with literacy curriculum, but tend to be less strong in the math curriculum, so to help she brought a team of consultants to evaluate their work and to help identify links between reading and writing and inquiry-based science. This assessment will help to find ways to evaluate literacy, inquiry and overall refine student assessment.

Sheila also discussed the need for additional support in phonics and hopes that the introduction of Lexia 5 in the elementary schools district wide will help move kids along at their own pace.

Goal #2: Identify and expand opportunities for students to explain their thinking. Through Feoffee grants, consultants, online courses and the use of Google Classroom, a Resource Bank of tools and strategies for implementing writing into math lessons has been created to help teachers. Sheila mentioned her disappointment with the math testing scores as she felt a great deal of effort was put in. She will be evaluating two years of data to determine the problem areas. Exemplars were implemented to help analyze student writing in math, however she needs to evaluate if this was actually helping students improve.

Goal #3: Leigh Mantoni-Stewart, Winthrop Parent representative presented the third goal: broaden and enhance communication between and among parents, staff, and the community, while strengthening and expanding interactions with each other. Sheila and Leigh mentioned several programs that have been established at Winthrop to support the community. They have

been offering Adult Education Evenings, a successful family STEAM night, and the Winthrop Reads program. They also held a family tech night that was not well attended.

2. Doyon School, Sheila Halloran

Sheila first presented an overview of the School Improvement Plan goals which have been implemented thus far.

Goal #1: Communication. As part of her goal, Sheila has been working to share relevant Doyon School and New Building Project information in real time through the use of technology. To do this, she had to ask the question: where are people getting their information? She created a twitter handle @PFDoyonSchool and distributes a monthly newsletter to families. On Thursdays, Sheila sends out a personal Principal's Corner letter to share updates directly from the principal. The school also has an active FRIES group.

Goal #2: Social Emotional Learning/Success Habits of Mind: Sheila talked about creating a community environment for her building through the social emotional learning curriculum "Community Building K-5". Sheila spoke about the need to look at the whole child and create best practices for recess and unstructured play. Doyon also received a grant for Responsive Classroom to help teach empathy and kindness. They have created a calendar of kindness, held assemblies and staff members submitted a mini-grant for books that teach global awareness.

B. Hopping asked Sheila to clarify what Community Building meant, to which she explained that it was emphasizing language used in all grades, role playing and how to address problems/problem-solving using similar language throughout the building. She went on to explain that they are working with students to identify big problems vs. little problems, expected vs. unexpected behaviors. B. Hopping also asked Sheila how are Community Building and Responsive Classroom integrated. She explained that staff and students are tying in common language and shared resources.

Goal #3: New Academic and Communication Goals: Sheila explained that they have created the STEAM Studio, a new space in the library funded by the Feoffees which is visited by groups from across the North Shore and emphasizes critical thinking among students. Doyon has held two STEAM family nights which have been a big success.

As for the future of Doyon, Sheila looks to bring creativity into the classroom, focus on next generation science units and introduce novel engineering. She said she is looking forward to the future of the New Building Project and would like to continue with joint faculty meetings to open dialogue and communication among the two elementary schools.

B. Hopping asked both Principals to look at how their improvement plans may link to the budget and if there are things they want or need to let the School Committee know ahead of time. B. Hopping would like to eliminate as many surprises as possible come budget time and to try to anticipate needs like substitutes for teachers visiting other classrooms. He asked both principals to define their needs.

Sheila Halloran then suggested that there will be a need for foreign language and that all strong school districts have STEAM specialists. She mentioned the need for guided reading resources and training for trauma sensitive classrooms.

F. MSBA ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

S. Player read a request for administrative action to accommodate MSBA language on two votes by the School Committee, taken on 12/1/16 for \$45,828 for the traffic study and \$250,000 on 7/27/17 for the feasibility study at Doyon were included in the motion. Although each of these votes were already taken and the money has been allocated, this new wording would bring the motions into alignment with MSBA requirements. It was decided to separate into two motions. S. Player motioned to approve \$45,828 for an expanded traffic study with the MSBA language. H. O'Flynn seconded that motion. UNANIMOUS approval from all present members. S. Player motioned to approve \$250,000 for the feasibility study at Doyon with the MSBA language. H. O'Flynn seconded motion. The motion passed with 4 votes in favor and 2 votes against.

G. SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION TIMELINE

The Operations Subcommittee met to discuss the standards voted on by the School Committee on 10/19/17 and added an additional professional practice standard using Dr. Blake's third goal (New Superintendent Induction Program) to include an overview/report on the induction process and his experience with his coach. B. Hopping asked what evidence will be provided to look at and C. Nysten responded that Dr. Blake will provide feedback from his seminars. The Operations Subcommittee will provide a draft evaluation document to the School Committee at the next meeting. The School Committee would like to have Dr. Blake's mid cycle report completed by January. B. Hopping asked to have the report in advance to help the committee formulate questions. Dr. Blake's end of the year evaluation will be submitted and presented in June.

IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Vouchers and Bills
- b. School Committee Reports
 1. **Athletic Subcommittee-** Meeting Wednesday, November 15
 2. **Budget Subcommittee-** Meeting Tuesday, November 7. The Committee is working to determine suggestions for administrators to follow when creating their budget. J. Cuff is going to create sheets to compare the budget historically.

3. **Operations Subcommittee-** The committee created a draft of eight norms. They plan to review those norms one more time before presenting to the School Committee for approval. They also discussed creating a State of the Feoffees Report to possibly be released in the fall so it is disconnected from the budget.
4. **Policy Subcommittee-** N. Zito reported that the Policy Committee is going to be meeting on Tuesday, November 14 to determine their final recommendations for policy sections A, F, and H. They will present these recommendations to the School Committee at the next meeting for approval.
5. **Turf Subcommittee**
6. **School Building Committee-** There was a successful combined School Committee/School Building Committee meeting held on Tuesday, November 17th at Town Hall
7. **New Business-** Dr. Blake spoke with the IEA to address their concerns about the lack of substitute teachers in the District. Substitutes teaches in the District are currently paid \$70/day which is the lowest rate among surrounding towns. Dr. Blake asked what the procedure is to change the pay rate. J. Cuff responded that historically, the Superintendent set the rate of substitutes and it had been a long time since a raise has been instated, but that bus driver and custodial substitute rates had seen incremental raises. Last year, the District budgeted \$145,000 for substitutes and spent \$147,000. It was concluded that Dr. Blake would bring the substitute rate to a more competitive rate.

V. CONSENT

- A. Consent Agenda- C. Nylen checked to see if any member had sent a letter to Rep. Brad Hill with a list of unfunded mandates in follow up to his School Committee presentation on October 19th. At the same meeting, B. Hopping asked that Rep. Hill send Ipswich a list of unfunded mandates from other towns. S. Player agreed to follow up with Rep. Hill.

S. Player moved, seconded by H. O'Flynn to accept the Consent Agenda as follows:
Acceptance of the Open Session Minutes of October 19, 2017

UNANIMOUS approval by all present members.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

S. Player moved, seconded by B. Hopping to adjourn at 10:01 PM. UNANIMOUS.

