

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 19, 2017
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

I. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair C. Whitten called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with the following members present: C. Nylén, B. Hopping, P. Kneedler, and N. Zito. Also present were Superintendent Blake, Fin. Dir. Cuff, and new Student Representative Chris Bergner.

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Chris Bergner read the Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Player read the following announcements:

October 22-25 – NEASC Accreditation Visit

“ 24 - Operations Subcommittee Meeting, 5:30, M/HS Guidance
Conference Room

“ 25 - MCAS Results will go home with students

“ 26 - Joint School Building Committee/School Committee, 7 p.m.,
Town Hall Room A

“ 30 - Nov 3 – High School Spirit Week

November 13 - Senior Class Fashion Show, Ipswich Country Club, 6 p.m.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Blake mentioned that Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching/Learning, is on her way to Washington, DC, to present at the conference regarding our STEAM program and will report on it at the next meeting.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Chris spoke of the upcoming NEASC visitation where members of the National Honor Society will be helping out. French students arrive on Friday at 9 p.m. and will be staying until November 2. Spirit Week is one and a half weeks away. Most of the clubs are putting things on hold to give students a breather.

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Stating that his last two weeks had been eventful as usual, Dr. Blake reported that he had attended the Ipswich Aware meeting in preparation for the guest speaker who presented in the Dolan PAC on drug abuse to 100 people. A followup with Ipswich Aware is hoped for in a return visit with a presentation with students and parents and perhaps SC and BOS in the evening. In the not-too-distant past, the Town voted for medical marijuana and there is a lot of concern that perhaps the

community wouldn't have enough adequate information. She wants to be able to come back and talk about that.

He met with IEA leadership re ongoing personnel issues in the schools which could pose a potential grievance.

He attended high school sports games. Meetings continue: entry meetings, a YMCA meeting, SBC/SC meeting, Education Evaluation Committee meeting to talk about educational evaluation within the district. He met with Winthrop and Doyon staff at the Doyon School for a presentation and conversation with the architect around the design of the building and got great feedback. Then they broke out into groups—a great meeting with the architect writing feverishly during the conversations.

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

B. TOWN MEETING UPDATE

Tom Murphy, Moderator, wanted to bring folks up to date on the steps that he took since the Spring Annual Town Meeting where people were unclear about how it goes. In September he met with Town Counsel on various aspects of the Town and Town Meeting and he urged people to watch the video. A Moderator's Forum with George Hall, Town Counsel, is scheduled for 4-5 days before the Town Meeting. He stressed that everyone sitting on the stage (except for the Moderator, Town Clerk, and Finance Committee members) are equal as citizens. Dr. Zito asked about helping those who are nervous about speaking at Town Meeting; there is a Moderator's page on the Town website.

Mr. Hopping asked if the School Building Committee would be able to provide an update at the beginning of the meeting, and Mr. Murphy said that SBC and Public Safety are both being granted a 3-5 minute time frame for informing Town Meeting of their progress.

Mr. Nylen asked about the decision re electronic voting. Mr. Murphy, after considering the opportunity as a "free" trial, met with the BOS who questioned the means of payment (\$5 -7,000 rental of equipment). Without the money, he felt that the BOS won't pay, and, while it does do things faster, there are not many instances where a handcount is called for, and he is not going forward with the option.

C. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

State Representative Brad Hill spoke of an enlightening first meeting with the new Superintendent. He came to update the School Committee on the status of the State's legislature and spoke about the need for pedestrian lights on Rte. 1A in front of the M/HS. There is a lot of walking, he said, by students and adults, many of them seniors using the sidewalks at night. It is a dangerous area, and he is reaching out to the School Committee and the Town. The 24/7 hanging light over the road doesn't seem to slow traffic down. He likes the flashing lights for Rte. 1 at the Topsfield trail (near the fairgrounds).

Ms. Player joined the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

The High-Intensity Activated Cross Walk (HAWK) system is used by Manchester, MA and he would continue to look into it if the School Committee is interested—maybe to be considered at next Spring or Fall Town Meeting. Mass Highway has examined the area; the approximate cost would be \$750,000 to \$1 million. Mr. Hill, in response to Mr. Hopping's comments of multiple issues including the entering-/leaving-school timeframes, said signage needs improving, police officers need to be there, and he is looking at ways to help. To Mr. Nylen's question of timing, Mr. Hill said that grants have already been given out for this fiscal year. Nylen suggested that Mass Highway should also look at the Linebrook Road area for the elementary school.

Mr. Hill reviewed local aid numbers commenting that they are okay but that revenue figures have fallen below the structure that was agreed on. Unemployment is down to 3.9% but revenues are not coinciding—pay checks for the new people are not as high, but they are getting health benefits, etc. Local aid will not be cut this FY and Chapter 70 has the highest amount ever. The House has passed one version of an ELL bill and the Senate has passed a very different version. Because of these differences, the bill is now in Conference Committee and there will probably be a new law for ELL. He detailed a variety of program options: allow districts to develop and adopt their own programs, performance improvement plans, parent-advisory council, pre-K expansion, opportunity for parent to opt out, and reporting requirements being addressed—all of which are holding the bill up. He urged the Ipswich School committee to send a letter asking the Conference Committee to make sure that they don't do "unfunded mandates." Rep. Hill set up a commission to look at unfunded mandates and this letter would be helpful. Mr. Hopping would like to see reports of these "unfunded mandates."

Mr. Hill continued discussion with the recent release of MCAS scores and assured parents that this is a brand-new test, much stricter than the old MCAS, trying to ensure that the goal of the Federal government is reached. Meanwhile, Massachusetts is #1 in English and math. Massachusetts school districts have not gone backwards. Dr. Blake added that a letter had just been sent to Ipswich parents to step back and look at the process: a brand-new, vigorous test, where cutoffs are different and a new pipeline has been established. Mr. Hill added that the Class of 2023 (5 years hence) will be the first one that will really show comparisons.

Mr. Hill spoke of the \$100 million Circuit Breaker "which is killing us." Healthcare, which was 28% twenty years ago, is now at 40%.

To Mr. Hopping's question of MSBA updates regarding the elementary school project, Mr. Hill said that conversations are very positive, they want to see something happening in Ipswich, are bending over backwards to make it happen, and recognize the animosity. The money is there and we are not in jeopardy now, but the money will go somewhere else if Ipswich doesn't take it. Dr. Blake further stated that he is telling people that the money is available now and MSBA wants to help Ipswich, but, if people don't want it, those monies go away and the opportunity might be as much as ten years away before it comes back.

Dr. O'Flynn joined the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

D. SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Ms. Player reported that the MASC document on evaluation has come. The Superintendent's rubric contains four major standards. Operations Subcommittee meets next week (Dr. Blake will attend) to study the Superintendent's goals and give him indicators for his evaluation. If the plan is to do a mid-cycle review in January, the newness would be understood. Dr. Blake would do a binder of his evidence; each SC member would write comments about the rating scales in the document and the Chair will complete a summary of the SC commentary.

Dr. Blake's coach recommends that he collect artifacts to show how he is meeting these areas. Most of this will be taking place with staff and SC. Mr. Hopping prefers that followup be in writing (mid-cycle report). Mr. Nysten asked for thoughts on standards/indicators before the next Operations Committee meeting.

Upon his coach's recommendation, Dr. Blake selected an indicator for each of the four standards as follows:

1. Instructional Leadership—1d Evaluation/educators' goals
2. Management and Operations -2a Environment/getting to know the school system
3. Family and Community Engagement—3a Engagement with families
4. Professional Culture—4c Communications

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn, to accept the standards and indicators chosen by Dr. Blake. Mr. Nysten hadn't expected any action before Operations Subcommittee meets. Vote: IN FAVOR- Hopping, Zito, O'Flynn, Kneeder, Whitten, Player; OPPOSED- Nysten.

The next SC meeting agenda will contain reference to recommendations and the evaluation cycle.

E. SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Player introduced the discussion with a review of the combined SBC/SC meeting on the exterior of the building and an elementary faculty meeting on their thoughts as architects listened. The next SBC/SC meeting on October 26 will be a final vote of the recent PSR to MSBA on November 6. Dr. Blake added that these meetings were well attended by a variety of people and lots of support by the teachers. Energy is increasing all the way around.

Mr. Whitten enjoyed the comments at the Doyon meeting and is happy to see the new iteration of the plans. While there was an additional 15,000 sq. ft. of play area, the overlapping of fields don't work and he suggested changing the arrangement. Mr. Hopping commented that he had talked to Mr. Nysten and Mr. Murphy and is still convinced that focus should be the opportunity of a multi-purpose field. Mr. Nysten commented that everyone is recording different perspectives, but the question we need to settle is "What do we need today?"

Mr. Nysten asked about the MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) meeting. Several fuel sources are under discussion and even the all-electric option as a comparison for the future. Mr. Whitten also mentioned central air to water heat

pump, a solar-ready roof, and a rain catchment system. Dr. Blake mentioned plantings and zero scaling.

Mr. Player read a request for administrative action to accommodate MSBA language. Two votes by the SC, taken on 12/1/16 for \$45,828 for the traffic study and \$250,000 on 72717 for the feasibility study at Doyon were included in the motion. There were questions about the manner in which this has come forward: not on tonight's agenda, new SC members, no unanimous original vote. After discussion, the matter was tabled and Ms. Player was asked to speak with MSBA and she withdrew the motion.

F. BUDGET UPDATE

Ms. Cuff reviewed her year-to-date report for the appropriated budget and the quarterly report for revolving and gift accounts. The Circuit Breaker account is expected to bring \$680,024 to Ipswich and the current balance of \$479,000 will help going into the FY19 budget. Choice revenue this year is \$349,068 (63 students) and each principal will receive 25% of the revenue determined by student population. She commented that money is certainly available for that \$45,000 MSBA feasibility study. She mentioned a personnel vacancy in the Payroll Department which will be filled shortly. The Audit on 6/30/17 commented that the Feoffees check received on 6/16/17 was not deposited until 7/5/17 (held in secured and locked location to be "booked" and used during FY18) but recommended that it be deposited in a timelier manner.

Mr. Hopping questioned unexpected costs at Middle and Doyon; Ms. Cuff responded that both schools have unanticipated costs as usually happens.

G. FY18 BUDGET TIMELINE

Ms. Cuff has set up budget dates including three nights with the Finance Committee.

H. FY18 SCHOOL BUDGET FRAMING QUESTIONS

Ms. Player began discussion about extending the override budget and how best to advise administration. Dr. O'Flynn commented that we need to give them a sense of where SC wants to go, mentioning the 17-18% decline in school population and questioning the personnel. He also spoke of the philosophical piece: changes must be made with teachers and administrators. Mr. Whitten spoke of Capital Plan discussions with the Town, and Dr. Blake said it is ongoing. Whitten added that security issues, which were not fully funded, need to become new conversations with the Town.

Dr. Blake asked to be able to go to the leadership team with SC decisions for budget direction. In terms of programming, discussion could go on at a lower level. If it is around changing models, Dr. Blake would like discussion about that. If it is 2% to administration, then they know where they have to make changes. If it is reducing FTEs, it could be a problem. Dr. O'Flynn suggested attrition; Ms. Cuff asked if the "calculator", used successfully for the past three years, could be used (for the five years), next year drawing from the Stabilization Fund. If it is different from the

override calculator, it would be better to know earlier than later. Mr. Hopping advised not to ignore the calculator. Dr. O'Flynn felt that a deficit spending mode would result from using the Stabilization Fund and wants to make adjustments over time so that the budget is "right-sized", planning in advance so that the budget won't end up in a big hole.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE
2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
3. GRANT COMMITTEES
4. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE – meeting next Tuesday
5. POLICY – Zito reported her election as Chair on the 11th, addressing two goals, developing 12-month policy reviews, sharing revised policies with stakeholders, and looking at the updated policy manual.

Mrs. Zito reported that a citizen asked that protocols be followed regarding policy. Dr. Blake mentioned a calendar for policy review: Nov. 2 agenda with SC will cover Section A; Nov. 14, a calendar for each section of the policy manual. PLT will have seen the policies.

6. TURF
7. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
8. NEW BUSINESS – Ms. Player asked for recommendation on the Re-Adopt OPEB Warrant Article. After a short discussion, Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn for discussion, to support the Re-Adopt OPEB Warrant Article. Dr. O'Flynn said it competes with SC needs. UNANIMOUS. No speaker.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mr. Nylen, to accept the Consent Agenda as follows:

Acceptance of the Open Session Minutes of October 5, 2017

Acceptance of the donation of \$1,500 given by the Institution for Savings, Savings Charitable Foundation, to support the cost of funding the staging for the IHS Fashion Show to be deposited in the HS Activities Account.

Approval of the Ipswich Middle School Grade 6 Overnight Trip to Ferry Beach Ecology School in Saco, ME, from April 24 – April 27, 2018.

UNANIMOUS.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. Whitten, to adjourn at 9:58 p.m.
UNANIMOUS.

