

**Ipswich School Committee**  
MS/HS Ensemble Room  
134 High Street, Ipswich  
Thursday, January 5, 2023  
6:45 PM

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

GS called the meeting to order at 6:49 PM

Members Present:      G. Stevens (GS)              K. Eliot (KE)  
                                 J. Donahue (JD)              P. Kneedler (PK)  
                                 J. Poirier (JP)                E. Cannon (EC)

Also Present:            B. Blake, Superintendent of Schools (BB)  
                                 J. Bornstein, High School Student Representative (JB)

Absent:                    C. Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Operations (CHS)

**2. Executive Session:**

- *Motion to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose: (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for contract negotiations with nonunion personnel was made by EC and seconded by KE.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously**

**3. Returned to Open Session at 7:04 PM**

**4. Reading of the District Mission Statement**

JB read the mission statement.

**5. Announcements**

- The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19th in the MS/HS Ensemble Room at 7:00 PM.
- The School Committee will hold a workshop on Tuesday, January 10th at 5:00 PM in the Resource Room at Town Hall.
- Kindergarten Roundup is now taking place. Families of students who are eligible to attend kindergarten in September 2023 should take a moment to complete a Kindergarten Roundup Form. Information on the kindergarten registration process and a link to the roundup form can be found by clicking the link of the homepage of [www.ipsk12.net](http://www.ipsk12.net).

**6. Special Acknowledgements**

BB talked about the music department and the incredible performances that took place before the winter break.

This was the last meeting for the Director of Finance and Operations as she had accepted a new job in another district. BB thanked her for all her work of the last year and a half.

**7. Citizen' Comments**

There were no comments.

## **8. High School Student Representative Report**

JB shared that students are feeling motivated as they returned to school after winter break. Midterms were on the horizon which can feel overwhelming to some students. Teachers, JB shared, have done a good job providing additional help to students that need it.

## **9. Presentations**

### **A. High School Fall Sports Awards**

Tom Gallagher, Athletic Director, recognized the students that participated in fall sports this year and their accomplishments throughout the season.

### **B. Discussion on the continuation of the IEA Snapshot Presentations**

At the beginning of the school year, the Ipswich Educators' Association proposed a five minute snapshot presentation at each School Committee meeting as a way for educators in the district to briefly highlight a lesson that happens in their classroom. It was decided that the School Committee would re-evaluate these presentations and schedule mid-year. School Committee members felt it was a great way to hear about things happening in the schools and serves as a great reminder of the purpose of the School Committee. Some thought these presentations were the best part of any meeting. It was agreed that the presentations would continue and if the agenda is full, the IEA may be asked to postpone a presentation.

### **C. School Improvement Plans: Paul F. Doyon Memorial School, Winthrop School, Middle School, High School**

The Director of Teaching and Learning first reviewed the Strategy for Student Success Framework, showing where the Strategy for District Improvement and the School Improvement Plans fit in. She then reviewed the Strategy for District Improvement, highlighting the three main objectives and the action steps for each objective. It was noted that both elementary schools have collaborated on the action steps for their grade level. The School Improvement Plans presented tonight will all align to their respective school's action steps in the Strategy for District Improvement.

#### Paul F. Doyon Memorial School

Goal 1: Aligns with District Objective 1, Meeting the needs of all students

- The social emotional health of students will continue to be at the center of instruction and community support at Doyon. We recognize that the pandemic has affected our students in ways that we may not fully understand. In order for students to pursue academic development, social-emotional needs must be met and faculty will pursue a continued examination of the social emotional curriculum.

Goal 1: Action Steps

- Teaching staff will continue to implement and reflect upon current SEL programs, such as Responsive Classroom and 'Think Social!'.
- The Student Support Team will modify and enhance interventions at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels, and special educators will continue in the co-teaching model to support students, including those receiving Tier 3 interventions.
- Positive Behavioral Support models will be investigated, and Doyon community members, faculty, and parents alike, will engage in discussion regarding the behavioral and developmental growth of students.
- Continued Implementation of meaningful Professional Development opportunities for all staff, in pursuit of their own social-emotional health and a positive school climate, conducive for professional growth.

Goal 2: Aligns with District Objective 2, Creating innovative learning environments

- Faculty will investigate the current schedule by conducting data analysis of how academic time is allocated at each grade level. Feedback on schedule formats and adjusted time on learning will inform a new schedule, more conducive to student needs and innovative learning, including opportunities for interdisciplinary and personalized learning.

Goal 2: Action Steps

- Faculty will use data to inform instruction in reading and in math, working to adjust the schedule accordingly. Continued reflection on the new "FLEX" block and the interventions and personalized learning that accompany this time period.
- The Doyon faculty will study the effectiveness of writing across the curriculum. The faculty will comprehensively examine current writing methods and time spent on instruction.
- Continued examination of the IM math curriculum as it relates to scheduling and time on learning. Teachers will continue

to encourage students to explore math identities and productive struggles.

Goal 3: Aligns with District Objective 3, Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion

- As a community, we will continue to embrace the cultural, ethnic, and gender identities of our students and families. We will continue to develop ways to honor identities and amplify marginalized voices within the school. Exposure to cultures, ethnicities, and other diverse backgrounds will be continuously integrated into the curriculum, and teachers will explore creative ways to build awareness of diversity.

Goal 3: Action Steps

- Opportunities for professional development regarding Doyon's English Language Learners and multilingual learners
- The Doyon community will embrace the consistent implementation of the World Language Curriculum. Exposure to the Spanish language and Hispanic culture will be increased throughout the school day and accompanying holidays or cultural traditions will be integrated.
- Previous work on understanding and using multicultural literature will be a focus with all teachers. Programming and resources will be created to assist classroom teachers in making connections between the MA Social Studies standards and the core curriculum.
- All faculty will continue to take a deep dive into culturally responsive teaching and instruction, with particular emphasis on microaggressions and implicit bias.

Goal 4: Aligns with District Objective 1 and 2, Meeting the needs of students and creating innovative learning environments

- At the Doyon School, we recognize that communication and collaboration are at the core of all educational strategies. The last decade has spurred an increase in connection through educational technology, social media, and other communication platforms. The faculty at Doyon will investigate current communication strategies with the intention of increasing family partnerships and student engagement. Furthermore, community collaboration will inform group efforts designed to improve our physical spaces for optimal learning.

Goal 4: Action Steps

- Enhance consistent and cohesive communication techniques in the form of newsletters, possible social media narratives, and sharing of curricular information.
- Outdoor education and playground initiatives
- Create and enhance community connections and field trip opportunities for Doyon students.
- Community-based art projects

Resources and Supports

- ROAR
- Ipswich Public Library
- Student Support Team
- No Place for Hate
- COMPASS
- Change is Simple
- Project Adventure
- FRIES
- Responsive Classroom
- The Open Door
- Mass Audubon

### Winthrop School

Goal 1: Aligns with District Objective 1, Meeting the needs of all students

- Winthrop School will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

Goal 1: Action Steps

- Utilize data & assessments to plan interventions & supports

- Revise MTSS procedures
- Develop schoolwide systems and schedules to ensure times for intervention blocks
- Explore tutoring models
- Communicate, benchmarking, student progress, and implement intervention plans

Goal 2: Aligns with District Objective 2, Creating innovative learning environments

- Winthrop School will ensure that all students are immersed in an engaging and challenging academic program built on authentic, profound learning experiences driven by the Successful Habits of Mind.

Goal 2: Action Steps

- Partner with the Elementary ELA subcommittee to research and implement an articulated Literacy Plan and Program
- Expand reading intervention supports
- Develop a systematic identification & communication approach to comply with MA DESE's dyslexia law and literacy guidelines
- Reinstate and expand student leadership opportunities through activities and programs, such as:
  - Student Leadership Council
  - No Place for Hate
  - Early Act
  - Green Team
  - Garden Club
- Expand partnerships with local and community organizations
- SEL Survey
- Develop common Language
- Research & implement tools to support self-regulation
- Responsive Classroom
- Support and extend the World Language curriculum, instruction, and expectations

Goal 3: Aligns with District Objective 3, Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Winthrop School will ensure that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world that is more diverse than our immediate learning community.

Goal 3: Action Steps

- Implement student-led No Place for Hate initiatives
- Develop a common set of vocabulary and language
- Examine district and school traditions through the lens of cultural sensitivity and
- Inclusion
- Audit policies, procedures, and school and district forms for gender and family inclusivity
- Provide cultural enrichment with the goal of broadening cultural perspectives
- Provide outreach and support to welcome and foster belonging and partnerships with our growing English Language Learner population

Resources and Supports

- Teacher Leadership team
- MTSS team
- Scheduled Committee
- Elephant Tree Yoga
- HSTS
- FRIES
- Tutoring
- After school enrichment
- No Place for Hate
- Ipswich Public Library
- The Open Door

Ipswich Middle School

Goal 1: Aligns to District Objective 1, Meeting the needs of all students

- Ipswich Middle School will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

Goal 1: Action Steps

- Promote the consistent use of data among staff members by holding regularly scheduled meetings to review student data. MTSS: Lexia, iReady, MCAS, etc.
- Work collaboratively with IHS to create a comprehensive transition plan from grade 8 to grade 9. Ex. Algebra
- Continue to provide support for emotional health among students and staff. TAG class and biofeedback

Goal 2: Aligns to District Objective 2, Creating innovative learning environments

- Ipswich Middle School will ensure that all students are immersed in an engaging and challenging academic program built on authentic, profound learning experiences driven by the Successful Habits of Mind.

Goal 2: Action Steps

- Implement Illustrative Math curriculum in gr. 6-8. Consider and research Algebra curriculum in grade 8.
- Provide professional development to strengthen written language instruction within the Humanities model - Professional agreements, NCTE, and Patterns of Power, analyzing writing samples
- Use budgetary resources to support student access to Computer Science in grades 6-8.

Goal 3: Aligns with District Objective 3, Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Ipswich Middle School will ensure that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world that is more diverse than our immediate learning community.

Goal 3: Action Steps

- Initiate, plan, and introduce No Place for Hate and Restorative Justice training for staff.
- Increase instructional time for grade 8 Civics: Humanities workshop to full grade 8 class.
- Support the newly expanded World Language program - French and Spanish in grades 6 and 7.
- Utilize resources to support students with diverse backgrounds through professional learning for staff and guidance for students.

Resources, Supports and Next Steps

- Support student needs related to pandemic recovery
- Support staff in adoption of new programs and curriculum
- Continue to read, discuss and explore issues of social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion

After acknowledging that both administrators and educators are “wearing more hats than ever before”, EC asked if there was enough training and support for all the additional responsibilities.

Ms. McMahon felt there was never enough support or training. She acknowledged that the world is so complicated for students and that childhood has changed. She felt fortunate to work in a community that understands and respects schools.

Ms. Goodale-O’Brien gave credit to the teachers, saying that nothing could be done without the passion of the teachers.

### Ipswich High School

Goal 1: Aligns with District Objective 2, Creating innovative learning environments

- Align the curriculum in all courses with the most recent MA curriculum frameworks to ensure all students will be college and career ready

Goal 1: Action Steps

- Create useful scope and sequence documents in each subject area
- Common assessments in every subject area
- Data that will inform curricular, instructional, and PD decisions

Goal 2: Aligns with District Objective 1, Meeting the needs of all students

- Improve the transition between 8th and 9th grades

Goal 2: Action Steps

- Develop student led mentoring program
- Improve student preparation for increased academic demands
- Address student SEL needs

Goal 3: Aligns with District Objective 2, Creating innovative learning environments

- Address the recommendations as highlighted in the 2018 Decennial Visit Report from NEASC

Goal 3: Action Steps

- Update curriculum documents to include objectives centered on the SHOMS
- Better integrate the Successful Habits of Mind into daily lessons
- Create system of recording and reporting student progress on SHOMS

Goal 4: Aligns with District Objective 3, IPS will ensure that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world that is more diverse than our immediate learning community.

- Identify and leverage resources to augment our inclusive learning environment

Goal 4: Action Steps

- Identify and implement PD
- Participate in “No Place for Hate” initiative
- Update curriculum to ensure diversity and inclusion
- Include anti-bullying component in peer mentoring program

Both Mr. Mitchell and Ms. McMahon addressed the concerns over staffing the library after school hours. There is a need for additional staff to keep the library open longer after school ends. The library is open during lunch blocks. There is not enough classroom space at the MS/HS, so often classes are using the media center throughout the day. The issue of staffing the library will be looked at to try and increase accessibility.

JP talked about each School Council as an area for improvement and collaboration. He talked about the need for better communication, posting of meetings and a list of members.

PK shared her excitement for how far the district has come in terms of the World Language programs.

#### **D. No Place for Hate Discussion**

BB discussed the “No Place for Hate”, created by the Anti-Defamation League, is an initiative being introduced across the district. According to the ADL, “No Place for Hate is a collaborative initiative that provides PreK–12 schools with an organizing framework for students, administrators, teachers and family members to develop long-term solutions for creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable climate. No Place for Hate schools receive their designation in the following ways:

- Building inclusive and safe communities in which respect and equity are the goals and where all students can thrive.
- Empowering students, faculty, administration and family members to take a stand against bias and bullying by incorporating new and existing programs under one powerful message.
- Sending a clear, unified message that all students have a place where they belong and should be treated equitably.”

Each school has enrolled in the program and is in the process of forming their school-level committees. In the coming weeks, the committees will make presentations to the students and encourage them to then sign a pledge indicating that they will work toward making their school No Place for Hate. BB then read the pledge from each school.

In addition to that new initiative, BB talked about a new program started by DESE and the MIAA, in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General, to address hate in high school sports. The high school principal, athletic director and BB attended a

conference introducing the initiative. Additional training and workshops will take place throughout the year for school leadership and student leaders.

#### **E. Elementary Building Project Update: Workshop Planning**

A review of the work of the School Committee in relation to a future elementary building project(s) and the submission of an SOI in April 2023 was discussed. Items included:

- The commissioning of a demographic/enrollment study by NESDEC
- Listening sessions for the community and staff
- A three hour School Committee workshop in November 2022
- An agreed upon list of elements for a project(s)
- A meeting with elementary principals and staff to discuss accessibility and equity for vulnerable families
- An hour long phone call with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to learn more about the SOI process
- Votes to eliminate Bialek Park as a school site and Winthrop School as a site for a combined elementary school

The Elementary Building Project Working group met on December 7th and spent the bulk of the meeting talking about the upcoming workshop. It was agreed that the workshop should begin where the last workshop ended- discussing the potential for a ballot vote, and then working through potential scenarios for a building project(s). There was a discussion about pulling the information currently on the website and separating the information by site/school. There is still work left to do by this working group.

The discussion continued around the format and purpose of the workshop scheduled for January 10th.

A few months prior, the School Committee wanted to submit a site and configuration with the SOI in April. The phone call with the MSBA clarified the SOI submission process, making it clear that a site and configuration were not necessary to determine prior to submission. BB reminded the group that an SOI is a statement of interest identifying the need for a project and looking at the history of the buildings. While narrowing down sites and locations could be good in moving a project forward, it is not necessary for the SOI. EC expressed frustration in continuing to talk around the issues of the building project and not through them. She felt the School Committee needed to decide whether they were willing to talk about practical plans moving forward, narrowing down sites and configurations. If not, she felt the School Committee should just move forward with submitting the SOI without another workshop.

The discussion continued about the need for a ballot question to get a sense of direction from the community. The School Committee recognized that the makeup of the committee may look different years down the line and it would be helpful for these new members to use the ballot information in future discussions. The potential ballot questions would be discussed at the workshop. BB reminded the Committee that warrant articles were due to the town by February 17th, which may also include all potential ballot questions.

JP asked if the potential ballot questions would include sites that were eliminated at a prior meeting. While some members shared that they were uninterested in revisiting those sites, JP felt differently.

The purpose of a ballot question was discussed. The idea of ranked choice voting was discussed as a way to collect concrete evidence of what the broader community wanted. The options on the ballot, however, should be feasible. Some worried that during the last project, the town spent significant time investigating options that were not feasible.

It was agreed that the focus of the workshop should be the ballot question.

EC felt that submitting an SOI with practical, concrete options would show the MSBA that the district is further along in the decision making process than the last project. The SOI could then be used as a guiding document down the road, as it gives direction.

It was suggested that the ranked choice ballot be written in a way that provides open options with some direction. While the feasibility study may take away some options, the School Committee will still be able to see how all the options were ranked by the community. Those ranked options can be used as guidance for decision making going forward.

GS suggested that the ballot vote take place in May, just a few weeks after the SOI submission. Although the SOI is based solely on need, it will be good to show the MSBA that the district has narrowed down options for consideration should the SOI be accepted in this round. PK added that the community wants input in the process and that the School Committee needs community support.

KE stressed the importance of discussing options at the workshop that are likely to work. EC added that the elementary buildings will not survive something that is not practical. Having these discussions now will help the process move forward in a consistent manner and help to streamline the feasibility process once the SOI is accepted.

There was a discussion about some of the details that the community may want to know when voting like cost and timing. It would be hard, some thought, to give options without addressing the “what ifs” and areas of concern. While there are some pieces of information that the School Committee simply does not have now, it will still be important to convey what is feasible and how it is feasible.

BB agreed to speak with Town Counsel on the possibility of ranked choice voting and report back during the workshop.

KE said the workshop would focus on figuring out different scenarios for a school building project(s) based on existing sites the School Committee has discussed. JP added that the School Committee was supposed to determine whether a campus style school would fit on the Doyon site after the last workshop. He was unsure how to get that information, but stressed the importance of knowing whether that was a possibility. GS added that he would report out about the potential use of Mile Lane at the workshop.

There was a suggestion that members of the last School Building Committee talk to the group to give insight into what happened last time. It was agreed that this potential meeting would make sense at a later date.

#### **F. Policy Update**

PK presented the following policies for approval:

- JEB: Entrance Age
- JF: School Admissions
- JFABC: Admission of Transfer Students
- JFABD: Homeless Students- Enrollment Rights and Services
- JFABE: Acceptance of Children of Nonresident Professional Personnel
- JFABE: Children of Military Families
- JFABF: Rights of Students in Foster Care

➤ *Motion to approve the School Committee policies as presented was made by EC and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

#### **10. Superintendent’s Administrative Report**

Dr. Blake’s schedule included:

- A meeting to discuss the Extended Day Program (EDP)
- Administrative Team meetings
- Interviews for the Director of Finance and Operations position
- Northshore Education Consortium Board of Directors meeting
- A meeting to discuss electric buses
- A DEI Team meeting
- Several subcommittee meeting
- Attendance at the MIAA conference
- School art and music performances
- Parent meetings
- CREST Collaborative Board of Directors meeting
- A budget meeting with the Town Manager
- Luncheon at Whittier
- Budget meetings with all principles and directors



JD suggested to BB that in the event he is thinking about canceling or delaying school, that he notify staff ahead of time. While she agreed with his decision to cancel school on December 23rd, JD felt that some chaos could have been avoided if he notified staff a few hours earlier.

#### **11. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports**

- **Athletics:** No meeting, needs to reorganize
- **Budget:** No meeting
- **Communications:** December newsletter was released. Discussion on the value of writing an article to be published in the Ipswich Local News.
- **Mutual Concerns:** No meeting
- **Negotiation:** No meeting
- **Operations:** No meeting
- **Policy:** Reported on as part of an earlier agenda item.
- **Elementary Building Project Working Group:** Reported on as part of an earlier agenda item.

GS addressed the need for the Feoffees Working Group to meet to discuss the distribution policy.

#### **12. New Business\***

GS announced that he was stepping down from his position as Chair of the School Committee. He will also not be running for another term in the spring.

CHS provided her final business office update, highlighting the information shared in her memo to the School Committee. Her report included the increased costs to health insurance for FY24 and increased out-of-district placement costs. CHS shared that most districts are looking at an 8-11% budget increase for FY24 at their first pass at the budget.

#### **13. Vouchers and Bills**

All were reviewed and signed.

#### **14. Consent Agenda**

- *Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by PK and seconded by EC. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

#### **15. Adjournment**

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by EC and seconded by PK. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

**Meeting adjourned at 9:34 PM**