

## **Ipswich School Committee**

Thursday, April 4, 2024

MS/HS Ensemble Room

134 High Street, Ipswich

7:00 PM

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Call to Order**

KE called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

Present:        D. Freehan (DF)        M. Perry (MP)  
                     J. Donahue (JD)       J. Connolly (JC)  
                     S. Sopic (SS)               K. Eliot (KE)  
                     J. Poirier (JP)

Also Present:   Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools (BB)  
                     Tom Markham, Director of Finance and Operations (TM)  
                     Jimmy Bornstein, High School Student Representative (JB)

#### **2. Reading of the District Mission Statement**

JB read the mission statement.

#### **3. Announcements**

- The next School Committee meeting will be held Thursday, May 2nd at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- Bean Counting will take place on April 6th from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at Town Hall in Meeting Room A.
- The Policy Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, April 9th at 5:30 PM in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.
- The Communications Subcommittee will meet remotely on April 10th at 4:30 PM.
- The Negotiations Subcommittee will meet on Thursday, April 11th at 4:15 PM.
- Schools will be closed April 15-19th for vacation week. District offices will be closed on Monday, April 15th.

#### **4. Special Acknowledgements**

There were no special acknowledgements.

#### **5. Remarks from the Chair**

There were no remarks from the Chair.

#### **6. Public Comments<sup>1</sup>**

There were no public comments.

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

JB discussed:

- Students enjoyed the delayed opening.
- The BRIDGE program begins tomorrow.
- The Student Advisory Council will meet to discuss
  - The spring picnic event

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<sup>1</sup> Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority. While the Committee and/or administrators will not typically respond during Public Comment, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may choose to if s/he seems it expeditious. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue falls outside the purview of the School Committee, s/he may request that citizens direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given proper consideration. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person and a total of 15 minutes, overall.

- Exceptions made for BRIDGE Program participation
- Election process for the Student Advisory Council

## 8. Presentations

### A. High School Student Representative Appointment to Paine Grant Committee

The School Committee received a letter of interest from high school junior, Charlie Quimby, to participate on the Paine Grant Committee. High school principal, Jon Mitchell, submitted a letter of support for Charlie.

- *Motion to appoint Charlie Quimby to a two year term on the Paine Grant Committee was made by JP and seconded by JD. The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

### B. Elementary ELA Curriculum Compass Committee Presentation

Members of the Elementary ELA Compass Committee spoke about the two year process the committee has gone through looking at the literacy programs at the two elementary schools.

#### Process

- Set goals: revise criteria, research, and recommend new programming for a structured literacy program
- Rate 6 well-rated programs using our criteria
- Narrow down to 2 knowledge-building programs to research deeply (vendor presentations, site visits, etc.)
  - Wit & Wisdom
  - CKLA

#### Vetting Possible Programs - early 2024

- Created a site visit checklists
- Completed extensive site visits in 6 schools
  - Multiple grade levels
  - Different years of implementation
  - Debriefed with reading coaches and other staff
- Shared observations from site visits among Compass team
- Used a protocol to rate the 2 programs
- Made a recommendation to administrators

#### Our Recommended Program - Wit and Wisdom

- It is a knowledge-building program
- Uses authentic text
- Includes different and multiple cultural perspectives and authors
- Focus on the arts and humanities, including science and social studies
- Uses essential questions and focusing questions
- Aligns with Foundations (already in use K - 3)
- Includes consistent instructional routines
- Geodes materials
- Writing component
- Follows the Science of Reading with the connection to rich content

#### Why a knowledge-building program?

- Develops Both Background Knowledge and Foundational Skills
  - Baseball study (1988): student background knowledge of a topic matters just as much, if not more than, reading ability
  - More than word skills, research shows that deep knowledge on a topic is a strong predictor of reading success
  - Presents arcs of study that are deeply investigative of one topic from multiple perspectives, guided by essential questions (heart example, grade 4)
  - Helps students broaden and deepen their knowledge of content areas and topics
- Equity

- All students are exposed to high-quality Tier 1 instruction and rich content
- Prioritizes comprehension

### Next Steps

- Administrators build an implementation plan
- Secure materials
- Summer PD offerings
- Scheduling considerations for next year
- Literacy Coach/Literacy Leads
- Prioritize PD time during the 2024-2025 school year

It was confirmed that staff have the tools and resources needed to implement this new curriculum. The curriculum impacts students in grade K-5. BB talked about how this has gone through the curriculum review cycle and the Director of Teaching and Learning, Tracy Wagner, talked about the implementation plan. The plan kicks off with the launch on Monday. PD will continue in May and through summer professional development.

Dr. Wagner said that she anticipates this will follow a similar roadmap like Illustrative Math. Middle school teachers are aware that this is rolling out at the elementary level. Dr. Wagner then addressed the literacy coach Paine Grant. This year the grant was right-sized in hopes of finding a qualified literacy coach.

KE felt it would be helpful to have a presentation on what a Wit and Wisdom lesson looks like at a later date.

### **C. Kindergarten Screening/Calendar Discussion and Potential Vote**

Last spring, the kindergarten teams began a discussion about kindergarten screening and how it may work better at a different time of year for a variety of reasons. The idea was first proposed in a meeting between the IEA President and BB and then brought forward to a Mutual Concerns meeting. School Committee members on the Mutual Concerns Subcommittee thought the discussion would be best suited for the whole School Committee.

Members of the kindergarten team then spoke about the kindergarten screening process. Screenings typically take place at the end of May at the library. The kindergarten teams meet for one day over the summer to discuss placements.

The kindergarten team outlined challenges with the current screening process which includes finding coverage when 6-8 teachers are out of the building at one time. Service providers are at the library and their current students are not receiving services while they are out of the building. School secretaries are also out of the buildings. Currently, incoming kindergarten students aren't receiving their school placements until August.

The kindergarten teachers proposed ending the kindergarten school year at the same time as the preschool, which is typically four days before the rest of the district ends school. This will allow families more time to register their children for kindergarten and allow more time for students to grow before the screening process. The placements could be a collaborative process involving all service providers and kindergarten teachers. Substitutes would not be needed for teachers and service providers.

The School Committee can establish a different schedule for kindergarten. The requirement is 425 annual hours of learning time. The district is currently above the required learning time.

The kindergarten team talked about the impact to working families and recommended reaching out to the Ipswich YMCA and other local businesses. The team recommended high school students that could help babysit. There would also be ample notice to allow time for parents to plan for their own childcare needs.

The team was requesting for this change to go into effect next school year.

KE asked why four days were requested when only three days are currently used for screening and placement. It was explained that it would be for screening and placement and would allow for more collaboration amongst the grade level team.

There were concerns about childcare for parents when their kindergarten students were out earlier and camps were not in session yet. The options presented were simply suggestions for where parents might be able to send their children.

JD reviewed the Mutual Concerns meeting where this topic was first discussed. In the interest that this was just introduced and the logistics that would need to be considered for such a change, JD suggested that the School Committee not vote on this item tonight. The conversation should continue to work through the concrete details needed for this kind change. Members, while generally supportive, did express concern for working parents and childcare needs for families. KE asked that the presentation be forwarded to the School Committee. The request was taken under advisement and will be revisited at a later time.

#### **D. AI Presentation/Technology Plan Update**

Keith Borgen, Director of Technology, and Amy Gregory, Digital Learning Specialist, presented the District's technology plan. The plan will be visited annually and adjusted as things evolve. Mr. Borgen reviewed the current tech plan, highlighting each section of the plan which includes:

- Infrastructure and Security
- Hardware, Access, and Services
- Data
- Educational Software
- Learning and Support

Mr. Borgen then talked about where the district is in terms of using AI technology. The district utilizes OpenAI, which is an industry standard and is an environment that has satisfactory student privacy agreements. OpenAI will not allow the use of their products by anyone under 13 years old. This platform allows flexibility for how it is being used, while at the same time protecting students and academic integrity. Examples were shared for how OpenAI could be used in teaching and learning.

JB asked if having non school-issued devices still pose security reasons. Last year, the district implemented a policy where students could not use their own devices. Mr. Borgen explained that in terms of security, all non-school issued devices would go on the BYOB network and would not pose a security threat. The policy was implemented at the high school because certain programs run on the Chromebooks. School devices are the only devices that also have a lockdown browser for times when students are testing.

JC referred to the tech team as "unsung heroes" for their work behind the scenes in the district. KE added that it was nice to hear what the tech team does on a daily basis.

The tech team talked about how Ipswich compares to other districts. In terms of staffing, the district is comparable. The refresh rates are better than most districts.

Mr. Borgen talked about the transition to a new website and the functionalities it could do. The priority now is to just update the website.

KE asked if there were any policies that the School Committee could update and review. Mr. Borgen said that BB typically reaches out if any technology policies are being discussed.

#### **E. Town Meeting Warrant Article Vote/Speaker Assignment**

#	Title	Motion	First	Second	Vote	Speaker
1	<b>Consent Calendar</b>	Support	MP	SS	7-0	
2	<b>Finance Committee Election</b>	RATM			RATM	
3	<b>FY 2025 Municipal Budget</b>	Support	JP	DF	7-0	
4	<b>FY 2025 School Budget</b>	Support	JP	JD	7-0	KE
5	<b>FY 2025 Whittier Regional High School Budget</b>	Support	SS	JD	7-0	

6	<b>FY 2025 Essex County Technical Institute Budget</b>	Support	SS	JP	7-0	
7	<b>Transfer of FY 24 Appropriated Budget Funds to Educational Stabilization Fund</b>	Support	JP	DF	7-0	SS
8	<b>Stabilization Funding</b>	Support	JP	DF	7-0	
9	<b>Other Post-Employment Benefits Funding</b>	Support	DF	JP	7-0	
10	<b>Annual Capital Plan</b>	Support	JP	DF	7-0	JP
11	<b>Amendment to Ipswich Protective Zoning Bylaw to Define and Permit ‘Public Safety Facilities’ By-Right Across All Zoning Districts, with Specific Dimensional and Density Standards, and Specific Relief from Other Regulations</b>	No Position				No position
12	<b>Water Department Dam Upgrades</b>	No Position				No position
13	<b>Water Department Well Upgrades</b>	No Position				No position
14	<b>Water Department Plover Hill Tank Painting</b>	No Position				No position
15	<b>Wastewater Infrastructure Upgrades</b>	No Position				No position
16	<b>Chapter 109 Animals: 109-5 Leash Law; 109-11 Call to confine &amp; impounding</b>	No Position				No position
17	<b>Replace General Bylaw - §199 with New Reference Location for Stretch Code and Adoption of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code</b>	Support	DF	JD	5-2	KE-Majority, JC-Minority
18	<b>Citizen Petition – Repeal of Stretch Energy Code</b>	Support	JF	JD	1-6	
19	<b>Citizen Petition – Repeal of Prohibitions on Federal Immigration Officials to Work With Town Law Enforcement to Identify and Detain Undocumented Immigrants</b>	No Position				

20	<b>Citizen Petition – Amending Town Charter to Give Select Board Exclusive Authority to Appoint Members of Planning Board</b>	No Position				
21	<b>Citizen Petition – Prohibition on warrant articles citing mankind's impact on climate change as a justification</b>	No Position				
22	<b>Citizen Petition – Evaluation of the Electric Light Department governance structure by the Government Study Committee</b>	No Position				

#### **F. Discussion and Potential Vote on SOI Submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority**

At the last meeting, there was a procedural question raised about the process. After that meeting, the School Committee received clarification from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The School Facilities Working Group met to discuss how to best proceed given the information from the MSBA. The School Facilities Working Group recommendation is to select Doyon as the priority school. The two Statement of Interests (SOIs), one for Doyon and one for Winthrop, have been updated to include the district's intention to study a consolidated school at Doyon.

The MSBA clarified that the prioritization of a school in the SOI could be based on:

- Urgency and need
- Building condition
- Community readiness
- Capability and willingness to fund two phases of a project including a feasibility study and construction
- Public confidence in and willingness to support the project

The piece that has changed in the current SOIs, that differs from the last meeting, is the intention to study a consolidated school at Doyon.

A question was raised about the new language and how it does not specifically speak to a two school option. Some members felt that the current language is the best way to articulate what direction to move forward in now. The district has not completed a feasibility study and there are a lot of things that would need to be worked out. MP added that the current language does not preclude the other options. The language speaks to intention, not commitment. The likelihood of being accepted for two projects simultaneously is unlikely, so it is the intention of the School Committee to be accepted for one project at the Doyon site.

JP suggested edits to the SOI document. The suggested addition stated that the district would address Winthrop School in a subsequent project after the Doyon project. The revised language would say that the School Committee voted to eliminate all potential sites and configurations except those listed as part of the non-binding ballot vote. The revised language would show progress.

The MSBA, DF said, is looking at how they can fund a project and what the district's biggest scope would be. There will be more information to come in the feasibility study.

There was a continued discussion on the proposed revisions to the SOI around the options included in non-binding ballot vote in 2023 and the suggested language about addressing Winthrop in a subsequent year. It was suggested that the SOIs state that a small school may also be considered on the Doyon site. A straw poll was taken to see who supports the SOI language as currently written. Some members suggested they would support a further discussion on including a variation of the suggested additional language. Other members felt that the additional language changes were not necessary.

- *Motion to let it be resolved, having convened in an open meeting on April 4, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Ipswich, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2024 for the Winthrop School located at 65 Central Street which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the*

*priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future. Priority 2: Elimination of severe overcrowding; Priority 5: Replacement, renovation, or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; Priority 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Ipswich Public Schools to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority was made by SS and seconded by KE. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

- *Motion to let it be resolved, having convened in an open meeting on April 4, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Ipswich, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2024 for the Paul F. Doyon School located at 216 Linebrook Road which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future. Priority 2: Elimination of severe overcrowding; Priority 5: Replacement, renovation, or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; and Priority 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Ipswich Public Schools to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority was made by SS and seconded by DF. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

#### **G. Negotiations Update**

The Negotiations Subcommittee met with the Ipswich Educators' Association bargaining team on March 27th. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11th.

#### **H. Superintendent Evaluation Process/Timeline Review**

BB will provide his evidence related to his goals at the end of the month. A blank evaluation form will be circulated for review, as well as a DESE evaluation rubric. School Committee members will need to complete their individual evaluations and submit them to KE within the first two weeks of May. KE will compile the individual evaluations into a summative evaluation that is read into the record at the May 16th meeting. The goal is to have the evaluation completed before there is turnover on the committee.

#### **I. End of Year Events Review**

Members reviewed the upcoming end of year events held throughout the district. Members chose which events they would attend on behalf of the School Committee.

### **9. Superintendent's Administrative Report**

BB's report included:

- Interviews for the Pupil Personnel Services Director
- Working groups and subcommittee meetings
- Ipswich Education Foundation meeting
- Administrative Team meeting
- Meeting with the Town Manager
- Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion course
- Staff meeting
- Negotiations
- Extended Day Program Director meeting
- MSBA phone call
- Luncheon at Whittier
- North Shore Superintendents Roundtable meeting
- Northshore Education Consortium Board of Directors meeting

- Athletic Director meeting
- Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents meeting

BB talked about the purchase of materials, include telescopes and eclipse glasses through a Traverso-Weatherall Grant submitted by David Cellucci. Plans have been made to distribute the materials to students and staff.

BB was asked to discuss the process that takes place and conversations that are had related to school closings, specifically how the recent delayed opening was called.

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

- **Feoffees Policy Working Group:** The end of grant reporting form was reviewed and should be implemented at the end of this grant cycle. Policy changes are still being reviewed. It was suggested that the Feoffee policy be discussed further at the summer retreat.
- **Communications Subcommittee:** Members of this committee went to the preschool event held at the library. The approval of the newsletter was discussed.

#### **11. New Business\***

School Committee members committed to attend a bowling fundraiser for the D-Day events taking place in Ipswich.

#### **12. Vouchers and Bills**

All we reviewed and signed.

#### **13. Consent Agenda**

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


#### **14. Adjournment**

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

#### **DOCUMENTS:**





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 1.School Committee Meeting Agenda 04.04.24 


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 3.Announcements: 04.04.24 

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 8.B.ELA Compass Update.pdf 

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 8.D.2024-2027 IPS Technology Plan .pdf 



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 8.E.Control Sheet - 2024 ATM School Comm.xlsx 



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 8.E.DRAFT 2024 ATM Warrant.docx 


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 8.F MSBA Vote language for SOI submission 2024.docx 



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 8.F REDACTED Copy of Doyon 2024 DRAFT 4.3.24.pdf 


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 8.F REDACTED Copy of Winthrop 2024 DRAFT 4.3.24.pdf 



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 8.I.End of Year Events 2024 


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 13.Consent Agenda: 04.04.24 



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 13.Consent Item: HS donation.pdf 



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 13.Consent Item: Robotics Donation.pdf 



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 Copy of 8.E.Control Sheet - 2024 ATM School Comm.xlsx 

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 FY23-24 Rev\_Gift\_Stab balances SC mtg 04.04.24.pdf 

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 FY24 YTD Budget 04.04.24 SC report.pdf 

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