

Ipswich Public Schools

Secondary Educational Program

2020

District Overview and Objectives¹

The Ipswich Public School District has a rigorous plan in place for the implementation and alignment of 21st Century Learning. Through the District's Successful Habits of Mind, emphasis on authentic learning, and STEAM, Ipswich Public Schools strives to create and foster a learning environment that prepares all our students to be successful in their future college and career endeavors.

Ipswich Public Schools have identified the following six Successful Habits of Mind. These Successful Habits of Mind are the District's 21st Century learning expectations, and are embedded in curriculum and instruction:

1. **PERSEVERANCE:** With perseverance we persist through challenges, manage pressure and maintain an optimistic outlook.
2. **COLLABORATION:** Through collaboration we demonstrate mutual respect and shared responsibility as we work with others to accomplish a task and achieve shared goals.
3. **CRITICAL THINKING:** Through critical thinking we reason abstractly, concretely, quantitatively, and resourcefully for a purpose.
4. **CREATIVITY:** With creativity we imagine and explore possibilities, challenge existing structures and develop novel thoughts and forms of expression.
5. **SELF-MANAGEMENT:** With self-management we take responsibility for our own behavior and success by setting goals, organizing our resources and revising our strategies based on self-reflection.
6. **COMMUNICATION:** Through communication we exchange ideas using a variety of formats while considering the audience.

Through the integration of these Habits, Ipswich Public Schools supports students in developing the skills they will need to be successful in our rapidly changing world. While it is critical for students to be knowledgeable and competent in each individual content area, we are committed to having students acquire these essential, transferable skills in order to be successful in college and the 21st century workforce.

By integrating Powerful Learning tenets into curriculum and instruction across the District, IPS works to ensure high student achievement in rigorous, vibrant and joyful learning environments. IPS has developed the following descriptors of Powerful Learning for its students:

- engaging in meaningful, authentic, and challenging tasks.
- thinking deeply, taking risks, and demonstrating understanding.
- being supported in an environment that fosters confidence and competence.

¹ For the sake of consistency and vertical alignment of the district's educational vision, the Secondary Education Plan has adopted and adapted significant portions of the Elementary Education Plan.

- taking ownership of their learning, making appropriate choices, and engaging in self-reflection.
- working independently or collaborating with peers as valuable members of the learning community.

There are several instructional mediums in which the Ipswich Public School invests in order to bring our 21st Century Vision to fruition. Ipswich is committed to taking an integrated approach to education by focusing on Humanities and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) in our Kindergarten through high school education program. Project-based Learning is central to the district's instructional approach where students work with the teacher, other adults, and each other to solve real world problems. Given its rich, local natural resources, the Ipswich Public Schools district remains committed to teaching sustainable practices through hands-on and "place-based" learning opportunities for all students in the community. Finally, education in Ipswich reflects a commitment to all students accessing a rigorous curriculum. We are committed to multiple modalities of teaching and learning: place-based learning, co-teaching, transdisciplinary learning, personalized learning plans. Co-teaching models maximize the combined strength of professionals to propel the learning of all students. These and other instructional strategies create a learning environment that builds strong content knowledge and Habits of Mind in a Powerful Learning environment.

"STEAM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) and Humanities are the primary transdisciplinary avenues in which the Habits of Mind align with content in Ipswich Public Schools. In STEAM curriculum, secondary students are engaged with a sense of wonder about our ever-changing world through questioning, collaboration and innovative problem-solving. This integrated approach to learning demands conditions that supports students to participate in hands-on, minds-on projects. In Humanities curriculum, students investigate the human experience through exposure to multiple perspectives evident in the creative expressions of the artists, authors, historians, and musicians of our varied pasts. Students read critically from a wide variety of texts in order to identify patterns throughout history and apply them to the world today. Throughout the Humanities curriculum, students are thinking critically and creatively, making observations and identifying and drawing from multiple credible sources as they synthesize the vast amounts of information available to them. Students are taught to express original thoughts, evidence-based arguments, and ideas through powerful written word across all content.

Ipswich Public Schools aspires to provide students with increasing numbers of authentic tasks as they progress through our secondary sequence. For example, Project-Based Learning enables our students to build knowledge and skills by working on extended projects that require investigation into complex problems. Elements of PBL instruction include the use of a challenging problem or question, sustained inquiry, authenticity, student voice and choice, reflection, critique and revision and creating a public product. As another example, the Bridge

internship program at Ipswich High School offers students the opportunity to receive workplace learning. Throughout the secondary program, an emphasis on community service shows students the importance of engaging in the wider community in order to effect change and make a difference. This is another area where collaborative relationships with the community help bring interesting projects to fruition.

Sustainability education is a perfect medium for the real world problem solving that the Ipswich Public Schools is committed to integrating into our children's education. Our current Generation Growers gardening initiative, a joint effort between the schools, parent volunteers and local senior citizens, has created a garden and reflection space that may be used by classes throughout the school day. Produce from the garden is used in both school lunches provided by the cafeteria as well as in community farm-to-table dinner events. Activities supporting strong stewardship of the world are integrated into many units of study and extended day opportunities. The schools, as a reflection of the values of our community, strive to create thoughtful stewards of the Earth. From school-wide recycling efforts to composting, students are engaged in daily conservation actions. For example, student-led initiatives have resulted in a community ban of single-use plastic bags and styrofoam cups and students are currently engaged in other local projects to benefit the environment.

To ensure that school-based learning remains relevant and meaningfully connected to the real world, technology integration is an essential component of today's instruction. Embedded technology use can be seen across grade levels and disciplines in a variety of ways, allowing students to connect with experts from around the world. The Ipswich Public Schools continue to invest in technology tools while supporting teachers in using these tools to enhance teaching and learning in the district.

Effective teacher planning and collaboration is the cornerstone of high quality education for children. It is critically important for adult learners to be in a vibrant and joyful work setting. Ipswich Public Schools has made a dedicated investment in professional development, designed to build strong internal capacity in planning and collaboration. Teacher leadership and professional collaboration is an expectation. The collaborative effort between professionals fosters a positive and dynamic adult learning environment. Founded on training in protocols meant to facilitate meaningful, robust collaboration efforts, teachers employ these techniques as they hone their leadership abilities.

The Ipswich Public School District has devoted time and resources to developing internal professional capacity for high level collaboration. Opportunities for teacher leadership positions are numerous, including Professional Learning Community facilitation, curriculum development (Compass Committee), instructional technology integration (Technology Specialists), Cluster Coordinators, Department Heads and Program Managers. Educators are trained as leaders in

these areas to help facilitate highly effective professional collaboration to benefit student learning.

All faculty members participate in a district-wide Professional Development day in the fall, during which the entire district meets together to work towards an identified element of our common district vision. Ipswich Public Schools hosts district-wide professional development each summer. Teachers work both independently as well as interdisciplinary and cross-grade in these professional development sessions. Additionally, secondary faculty members are supported in collaborating in vertically-aligned teams throughout the school year. Empowering teacher-leaders begins with respecting their expertise. As leaders of learners, teachers are important decision-makers in the functioning of our schools.

Foundational Tenets

Mission of the Ipswich Public Secondary Schools

The mission of Ipswich Middle School: Our mission is to create a nurturing community where students are encouraged to develop confidence as lifelong learners with the awareness and flexibility necessary to adapt to a changing world. We strive to bring out the best in every student and adult in our learning community.

The mission of Ipswich High School: Ipswich High School is a collaborative community that fosters equity among learners. We engage in the personalized acquisition of the skills and knowledge essential to becoming successful, contributing, and responsible citizens.

Social-Emotional Learning

Ipswich Secondary Schools recognize that students learn most effectively when they are feeling confident and emotionally stable. We recognize the importance for programs and offerings that promote sound social-emotional health among our pre-teen and young adult populations. Both schools have responded to the increase of mental health issues challenging students by expanding school counseling services and support. Students and their families have access to school psychologists, social workers, school counselors, and school adjustment counselors. Utilizing data from the Youth At Risk Survey, we have planned school-based and evening programs for students and their families. Professional development for secondary staff members is critical at this time. Teachers must have the skills to work successfully with all students, including those dealing with unique mental health issues. Teachers have been offered workshops and presentations focused on anxiety, mindfulness, social emotional learning, and depression. In addition, the school counseling staff supports educators by offering mindfulness activities and tools. The Ipswich Secondary Schools utilize a Response to

Intervention (RTI) model with a weekly meeting of the Student Support Team. These teams discuss students who need additional support to be successful and implement intervention plans. Data such as attendance rates, current grades, and standardized testing is used consistently to drive decision making.

At the middle school, all 6th grade students participate in a trimester course, Transition And Growth (TAG), a co-taught class facilitated by a school counselor and health teacher. The course focuses on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks, weaving in dynamic activities and discussions that give students opportunities to dialogue about current issues, while proactively introducing them to the school counseling staff.

To address a growing issue, the high school has implemented the BRYT program: Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition. This program offers a supportive transition back to high school courses after a prolonged absence from school. With the increase among students suffering from mental health crises and a national rate of 10% of high school students experiencing an extended leave from school, this program is necessary and effective.

Family and Community Partnerships

The Ipswich Schools remain strong because of the support and commitment from our families and the greater community. The secondary schools rely on the continued partnership with parents and guardians to maintain, develop and grow vibrant schools. Active school councils help lead and guide initiatives and provide a sounding board for administrators. Parents volunteer, fundraise, and share their time and expertise within groups that support athletics and the fine arts. Partnerships with local organizations, such as the YMCA and Ipswich Aware, have supported enrichment ideas and initiatives. Community businesses invest in our youth through a variety of school programs and after school offerings. Additionally, they provide internship opportunities and real world expertise and connections for students. IPS also greatly benefits from the support and engagement of area organizations such as the Rotary Club as well as financial support from the Ipswich Education Foundation and the Feoffees. We realize that the future success of our schools is dependent upon strong family and community partnerships and welcome the wider Ipswich community in the educational process.

Student Empowerment and Leadership

Ipswich Public secondary schools believe in empowering students to find and enjoy their passions and interests. We seek opportunities for students to grow as leaders and life-long learners. We understand that students who participate in a variety of activities are honing skills for their future. To encourage participation, we offer a variety of extra-curricular activities, many

of which were proposed by students. Both schools are proud of the number of students seeking out athletic and musical endeavors. Often unusual for secondary students to be able to do both, a large percentage of students move easily from a uniform on a playing field to concert attire on the stage.

Students in both schools have multiple opportunities to become peer leaders. Middle school students seeking leadership opportunities can join the Student Leadership Senate. These students organize the school dances, the Thanksgiving Food Drive, The Holiday Wrapping Paper Drive, and the spring Walk for Hunger. One student each year is selected to be a representative to the state's Project 351, a service-oriented project for young leaders. High School students who desire leadership work, can run for class office or participate in Model United Nations or Project Close Up. Students in the Interact Club plan successful community events such as the Jingle Bell Walk and Polar Plunge.

Structure

Class Size and Personalized Learning

Ipswich Public Secondary Schools have several programs and structures in place that allow us to better personalize students' educational experiences. Every student at Ipswich Middle and High School has a trusted adult to whom he or she can go to when they need extra support. School counselors at the middle school follow students through their three years. Ipswich High School has adjusted the advisory program such that students will have the same advisory for each of their four years of high school. This structure reflects our belief that trusting relationships need time to develop as student needs change as they progress through the stages of secondary school.

At the secondary level, we have remained committed to delivering a personalized learning environment so that students' individual learning needs are identified and met from grades 6 through 12. Personalized learning takes many shapes: for some students, it means inclusion with two licensed co-teachers working collaboratively to address the needs of all of their shared students, not just those on IEPs. For others, it means simply taking advantage of classes that are reasonable in size and whose curricula include high and clear expectations and taught by caring and competent professionals. Research on class size in Tennessee (the STAR study) found that a 33% reduction was equal to an additional three months of education after four consecutive years in that smaller class size. The Brookings Institution later confirmed that research. We have made it a priority to keep class sizes at a level that is conducive to the development of trusting relationships between staff and students; in turn, these relationships form a foundation for higher academic achievement as well as social-emotional development.

At the middle school, the focus is on more than simply preparing students for success at the high school. IMS seeks to empower its students with the appropriate social, emotional, and academic skills that will enable students to be happy, healthy, and successful young people. To accomplish these complex goals, the middle school created grade-based learning communities that prioritize relationship-building with students as a way to help them navigate this challenging stage of adolescence. The middle school has committed to staffing levels that empower groups of teachers to exercise leadership in shaping programs and interventions to meet the individual needs of students in their charge. Each team has time scheduled each day to meet and discuss the needs of students and plan effective curricular practices for their benefit. A focus on transdisciplinary education -- the exploration of a relevant concept, issue or problem that integrates the perspectives of multiple disciplines in order to connect new knowledge and deeper understanding to real life experiences -- affords students opportunities to understand the interconnectedness of curricular topics and view learning from a holistic perspective. At Ipswich Middle School this might look like an art teacher working alongside a math teacher in a Geometry lesson or Social Studies and English standards taught in a Humanities lesson.

Ipswich Middle School has committed a block of learning time for additional support of student needs and enrichment activities. Students use this time to meet with other students, consult with teachers about upcoming exams or projects, and get additional support in a challenging area of study. Some students meet in performing arts groups during this time, while others engage in activities with Related Arts teachers.

Dedicated to reaching all students, Ipswich Secondary Schools have designed programs to effectively support the most vulnerable learners. The middle school's SAIL (Students Achieving Independent Living) program is an inclusionary curriculum that focuses on the unique needs and goals of students who require more specialized learning. The high school's SAIL and YACHT (Young Adult Community/Career Home Training) programs are designed to help our students with the most intensive learning needs to gain more independence socially, vocationally, and physically as they transition to adulthood. Our English Learner students benefit from small class sizes and instructional models designed to best suit their language acquisition needs.

To further address students' personal learning needs, the high school offers honors and a wide variety of Advanced Placement courses for students to explore their interests in challenging, college level courses in subjects in which they may wish to major in higher education. Provided they meet the course requirements, students are free to take a mix of college prep level and honors level courses so long as the courses fit into their schedules. Approved seniors can also become peer mentors, working as teacher's assistants in a variety of content areas. Students have the additional opportunities to customize their transcripts through our Virtual High School offerings and Pathways designed to provide students with learning experiences to prepare

them for success in the workforce after leaving IHS. Other means of personalizing the student experience include the option for students to explore Independent Studies in academic areas that interest them but are not otherwise offered in the program of studies. Similarly, the high school has a class period three days per week when they can sign up with teachers to receive extra help, make up work, and get more individualized attention.

School Scheduling

Ipswich Public Secondary Schools strive to build school schedules that accommodate students' learning needs while also scaffolding the time, structure and support of caring adults with whom students interact and learn throughout the school day.

The middle school believes in the philosophy that the best educational structure for early adolescent students centers around small teams of students surrounded by adults who know them well. Within this structure, students receive the academic and emotional support they need. Each trimester, students engage in a core curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and a rotation of related arts classes. Classes are scheduled with an eye toward transdisciplinary learning and integrated curriculum. The school has prioritized a schedule with longer blocks of learning time, focusing on instructional strategies that highly engage students in dynamic learning opportunities.

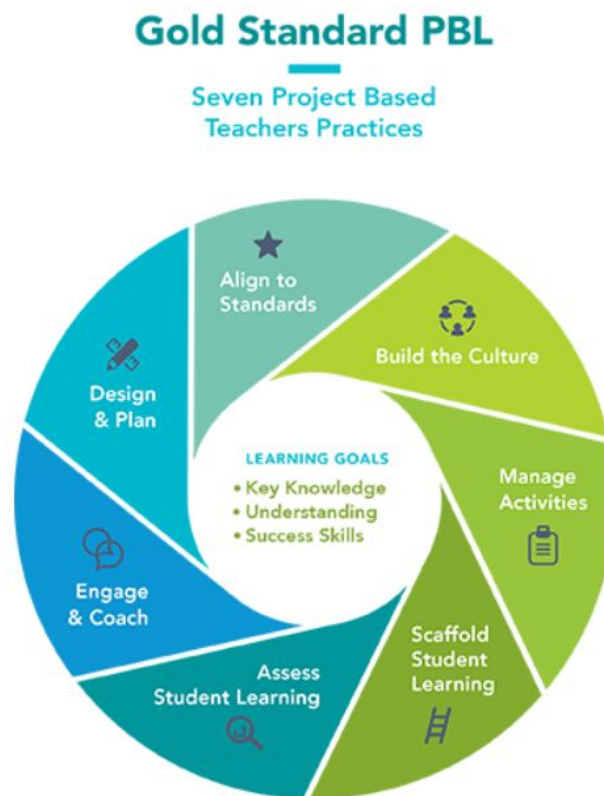
At the high school, the schedule of courses is driven by student course requests. Despite the relatively small size of the school, Ipswich High has been successful in providing students not only with the courses required for graduation, but also a rich variety of electives to enable students to pursue their diverse academic interests. As evident in its rotating block schedule, the school prioritizes longer periods of time to allow for deeper and more collaborative learning opportunities for students. While elective classes typically run for a semester to allow for a broader variety of experiences, core classes are scheduled for the full school year to allow for greater continuity of learning.

Since music education is a source of pride for the Ipswich Secondary Schools and community, the school schedules time during and beyond the school day to allow for student-musicians to work in multiple groups to hone their musical talents.

Academics

Teaching Methodology

We have found in Ipswich Secondary schools that in an educational environment traditionally driven by standardized testing, it is critical that we continue to support opportunities for authentic learning. This authentic learning is necessitated upon a teaching methodology that balances foundational knowledge with student voice, choice and academic depth of knowledge. We know that students who are engaged in their learning -- especially through transdisciplinary, standards-based instruction -- perform at high levels on important measures of student learning. As such, we seek to build an instructional pathway that supports hands-on, collaborative work grounded in 21st Century college and career connections. In this way, we work to provide students with the opportunity to connect with their peers as they work together to solve authentic problems that will make a real impact in students' community and world. In all, we are compelled to seek ways to constantly increase the deeper learning and student engagement in all our secondary classrooms. The following chart from PBLWorks shows the balance of teaching practice elements we seek to provide for our secondary students.



Secondary educators regularly meet in vertical and horizontal teams to investigate problems of practice, align and give feedback to curriculum and look at data and student work together. This collaboration happens in both school and secondary-wide groups. Through these collaborations,

our faculty are supported in building and implementing curriculum that is transdisciplinary, project-based, inclusive and rigorous.

Assessment of Student Progress

Ipswich Public Schools uses a district-wide “Understanding by Design” curriculum writing template that incorporates common assessment and benchmark measures in order to chart and support students’ learning growth. All curriculum is grounded in the Massachusetts State Frameworks and Standards. Students are assessed formatively throughout their course of study so that educators may check in with their students’ learning in order to best differentiate and personalize curriculum for students. Frequently using formative assessments supports students in being able to reflect on their own learning growth and set next steps. Students are assessed summatively at the end of a unit or course of study so that they are able to apply their learning and demonstrate competency. Throughout, educators utilize a wide variety of student progress assessment measures in order to scaffold student learning growth, reflection, mastery and ownership of learning. Student progress is regularly reported to parents/guardians.

Technology Integration

Technology has changed the way our students will live, work, and interact and is continuing to evolve at an accelerated pace. Students now need to be equipped with a unique skillset to prepare for the post-secondary experiences and careers of the future. When integrating technology we must design learning experiences that promote creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, evaluation and responsible use. As consumers of technology, students need to be provided the opportunities to effectively locate, use, and evaluate digital resources. We also must weave experiences into our core curriculum where our students are active users of technology, creating products and communicating with digital tools. Having the knowledge, skills and dispositions to not only use technology but to enable it as a creation tool to solve complex problems is an essential literacy skill our students must now graduate with. We will discover that the essential learning outcomes of the DLCS Standards are woven throughout all post-secondary opportunities and careers our students will encounter.

Ipswich Public Schools continues to invest in and integrate updated technology systems. IPS has dedicated funds and time into technology updating and integration, the goal of which is to bring cutting-edge technology to every classroom in the district. In 2014 the district embarked on a comprehensive technology improvement plan which transformed the school’s technology services. This plan included six core areas of technology, all needing improvement: infrastructure, account and file management, information services, technology support, applications and user equipment. Additionally, the district sought to effectively increase the professional development for classroom integrated technology.

Investment and integration of technology has evolved to include providing teachers and students with modern, functioning hardware and software to harness the power of 21st Century tools and to provide students with a 21st Century curriculum. The development and integration of school-based Technology Specialist teacher leader roles, facilitated by the district's Digital Learning Specialist, serves as an avenue for teachers to gain support in integrating digital tools. Currently, a new Technology Plan (2020-2023) is being developed to evaluate and guide us in all aspects of our technology department: infrastructure, budgeting, curriculum, resources, staffing, and professional development. This plan is using the MA DESE technology planning benchmarks as a framework and will be shared in June of 2020.

English Language Arts/Literacy

The 2017 Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy standards include four strands of literacy development: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Literacy development occurs both in the English Language Arts classroom and throughout students' other courses throughout the school day.

The grades 6-12 English department seeks to create lifelong readers and writers who appreciate the joy, power, and art of the English language. The program builds a strong foundation of literacy by providing students with authentic opportunities to read critically and write skillfully for a variety of purposes and audiences. Students are expected to independently read a progression of increasingly complex texts from a variety of genres during their years of required English courses. Throughout, students are provided with opportunities to develop the joy and appreciation of reading for pleasure and writing as an art and craft.

Through both teacher-directed and student-centered instructional strategies -- including Socratic seminars, literature circles, close reading, modeling, project-based learning, and conferencing -- the department strives to create empathetic young adults who collaborate well as team members and write with distinct and confident voices. Teachers will empower students to reflect upon and assess their own continuous growth through formative and summative assessment strategies. Our graduates will be able to participate respectfully and articulately in public discourse as they evaluate, analyze, and create arguments that contribute to their communities in a positive way.

Mathematics

The secondary Mathematics pathway at Ipswich Middle and High Schools seeks to develop students with "persistence, conceptual understanding, and procedural fluency; [as] they develop the ability to reason, prove, justify, and communicate. They build a strong foundation for applying these understandings and skills to solve real world problems" (DESE Mathematical Frameworks 2017). The Mathematics program supports students in modeling with mathematics and making sense of complex problems as they persevere in solving them. Students use words, numbers, logical reasoning and estimation to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. Throughout, the secondary Mathematics program supports students in

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using appropriate tools strategically, attending to precision and looking for and making use of structure. Secondary Math courses also utilize a high level of writing in order to develop students’ mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Mathematics Teaching Practices
Establish mathematics goals to focus learning. Effective teaching of mathematics establishes clear goals for the mathematics that students are learning, situates goals within learning progressions, and uses the goals to guide instructional decisions.
Implement tasks that promote reasoning and problem solving. Effective teaching of mathematics engages students in solving and discussing tasks that promote mathematical reasoning and problem solving and allow multiple entry points and varied solution strategies.
Use and connect mathematical representations. Effective teaching of mathematics engages students in making connections among mathematical representations to deepen understanding of mathematics concepts and procedures and as tools for problem solving.
Facilitate meaningful mathematical discourse. Effective teaching of mathematics facilitates discourse among students to build shared understanding of mathematical ideas by analyzing and comparing student approaches and arguments.
Pose purposeful questions. Effective teaching of mathematics uses purposeful questions to assess and advance students’ reasoning and sense making about important mathematical ideas and relationships.
Build procedural fluency from conceptual understanding. Effective teaching of mathematics builds fluency with procedures on a foundation of conceptual understanding so that students, over time, become skillful in using procedures flexibly as they solve contextual and mathematical problems.
Support productive struggle in learning mathematics. Effective teaching of mathematics consistently provides students, individually and collectively, with opportunities and supports to engage in productive struggle as they grapple with mathematical ideas and relationships.
Elicit and use evidence of student thinking. Effective teaching of mathematics uses evidence of student thinking to assess progress toward mathematical understanding and to adjust instruction continually in ways that support and extend learning.

*From the
NCTM
“Principles to
Actions”*

The Ipswich Secondary Mathematics departments embrace the Mathematics Teaching Practices outlined by the NCTM (see chart above), using a variety of instructional methods in order to support students in rich mathematical learning. These methods may include direct instruction, modeling, Project Based Learning, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), frequent formative assessments, peer feedback, group discussion, interactive notebooks, and estimation. Students develop mathematical thinking through real-world application, such as through Hour of Code and other programming activities, hands-on collaboration, exploration and analysis of problem-solving strategies and interdisciplinary lessons grounded in problem-based learning. Financial Literacy instruction is incorporated across multiple course content for students, including through college and career planning with the guidance department.

Science & Technology Engineering

According to the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Curriculum Framework, “By the end of grade 12, *all* students must have an appreciation for the wonder of science, possess sufficient knowledge of science and engineering to engage in public discussions on related issues, and be careful consumers of scientific and technological information and products in their everyday lives.” As such, the Ipswich Public Schools Secondary STE program fosters scientifically and technologically literate citizens who support claims with evidence, persevere through the scientific process, practice the precision needed in lab research, and apply the knowledge and understanding of both STE content and skills in authentic ways. Students in Science, Technology and Engineering are problem solvers, effective communicators, curious, self-directed, and independent in their thinking, learning and problem solving.

Ipswich Public Schools supports a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) transdisciplinary program that engages students with a sense of wonder about our ever-changing world through questioning, collaboration and innovative problem-solving. In this way, Ipswich Public School Secondary students frequently conduct scientific inquiry and apply findings across disciplines and they work with others efficiently to solve scientific/technological problems.

STE educators provide the rigor, problem solving skills and lab opportunities needed to prepare secondary students for civic participation, post-high school careers and/or college-level science courses. As stated in the STE Framework, “Knowledge is not enough; students need to be able to act on that knowledge.” The Ipswich Public Schools Secondary STE program seeks to not only provide students with scientific knowledge, but to provide students with opportunities to apply that knowledge to complex, real-world problems.

History & Social Sciences

As stated in the 2018 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for History and Social Studies, all students “will be educated in the history of the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world. They will be prepared to make informed civic choices and assume their responsibility for strengthening equality, justice, and liberty in and beyond the United States.” Ipswich Secondary History and Social Science teachers want to empower each student with the knowledge and skills necessary to be a thoughtful and engaged citizen who thinks critically and independently. For example, the History/Social Studies department will focus its teaching and learning so that students understand how geography influences human settlements and cultures; the history of the origins, growth, and struggles of democratic societies on earth; how the economic, social, cultural, religious, and international conditions have helped to shape democratic practices, researching key issues that impact the community. Ipswich Public School Secondary schools feature a revitalized curriculum that emphasizes civic engagement and student-led projects that lead to a great understanding of the functions of our government, the dynamic nature of the

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Constitution as a living document, and the ways for citizens to participate actively in our democracy at all levels of government.

In pursuit of these objectives, students actively participate in learning activities that require them to write persuasively using evidence. Students will closely read primary and secondary sources of information in order to make effective and coherent arguments. Through the use of evidence and primary sources, students will learn to discuss diverse opinions and perspectives respectfully, using facts and sound reasoning to support their positions. By synthesizing information gleaned from reliable sources, Ipswich Public Secondary School students will learn and appreciate the history of their town, state, country and world.

World Languages

The Ipswich Public School's Secondary World Language program is committed to creating programs of study that encourage students to find their voice and to gain communicative confidence in their language of study to effectively communicate in another language, both in speaking and writing. The program, beginning at the middle school, focuses on the appreciation of other cultures and perspectives as globally responsible and aware citizens. The goal is for students to use the district's Successful Habits of Mind to become resilient adaptors to real-world challenges and situations. Students will develop the confidence to extend their knowledge of language and culture beyond the classroom into the local or broader community. Various opportunities for cross-cultural experiences are available through authentic exchanges and travel or like collaboration.

In order to achieve these learning experiences, the World Language staff has created simulated immersion classrooms where students communicate in the target language and use authentic materials, prompts, technology, and resources. Moreover, students are offered many opportunities to apply their growing language skills in their everyday lives through the in-depth study of a variety of thematic units. Students are expected to attain at least an intermediate level of proficiency per the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) guidelines upon completing a four year sequence of study. The current pilot program allows for the expansion of World Language offerings at the early elementary grade levels, with the goal of having every student graduate from Ipswich High School fluent in two languages at the intermediate level. Being fluent in two languages is a 21st century skill that will prepare our students to thrive in an increasingly global and interconnected society.

Music

Ipswich Public Schools prides itself on a deep and valued practice of engaging students in music education. The 2019 Massachusetts Arts Frameworks delineate the Standards of Artistic Practice, specifically "the development of artistic ideas to create original work aligned to the artist's intent, present or perform artistic works to others, respond to the structure and context of artistic works, and to make connections about the impact of the arts on oneself, history, and culture." Ipswich Public Secondary Schools develop a life-long music appreciation in students

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as performers, consumers, audience members and patrons of the arts. The program strives to support musicians who find joy in music-making that includes the creative, spiritual, emotional and personal expression of all involved. Students develop performance and presentation skills while practicing leadership, initiative and organizational abilities. To best accomplish this, students develop the skills needed to be able to effectively collaborate with musicians in similar and different communities, while also practicing the art of self-management and persistence in order to accomplish difficult tasks. This value continues throughout the secondary schools with all students in the middle school taking a trimester of music coursework, in addition to music ensembles. At the high school level, Music instruction becomes more personalized, with students being able to participate in a wide variety of ensembles and courses. Students of all abilities and learning styles are welcome and encouraged to participate, and can be successful in Ipswich Secondary Schools' musical offerings.

Secondary music educators draw from a toolbox of instructional techniques in order to guide young musicians. These techniques include individual and group/ensemble instruction, varied performance opportunities, performance-based assessments, self-evaluation and assessment, guided listening activities and authentic performance experiences. Secondary Music educators provide students with the historical and cultural contexts of music in order to build understanding of artistic intent. As such, secondary educators provide musicians with a nuanced and appropriate repertoire built on interdisciplinary connections and collaborations. Secondary students are encouraged and allowed to create their own music and performance opportunities to best learn the multi-facets of artistic literacy.

Visual and Media Arts

A rich, deep and engaging Visual Arts program of study continues to be a strength of the Ipswich Public Schools. Guided by the 2019 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts, students in the Ipswich Secondary Visual Arts program create art with artistic intent; present artistic works to evoke, express or communicate, respond to art through intellect and emotion, and connect the arts to the self, society, history, culture and other disciplines. Students in the Visual Arts programs are encouraged to envision, explore, and stretch beyond their capabilities to playfully problem-solve and learn from mistakes. Students of the Secondary Visual Arts will observe, reflect, question, discuss, document, and critique their own working processes and products. Students will reflect on questions related to the larger world and culture in which they live, expressing and interpreting visual communications. Such students become informed consumers and contributors to the wider local and global community.

Whether through Media Arts such as web design and photography or Visual Arts such as painting, ceramics and printmaking, the Visual Arts program supports students in expression and exploration through visual representation and interpretation. Visual Arts teachers draw from a variety of instructional techniques in order to best support students' artistic learning,

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including Design Thinking Strategies; Visual Thinking Strategies; critiques; portfolio development; artist statement preparation; peer review; reflections and exhibitions. Visual Art also plays an important role in the district's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) program, which guides students to use a variety of means of expression and entry points in order to address complex, real-world problems. In this way, IPS Secondary students may employ the important skills and knowledge from their classes in a wide array of coursework, (career) pathways and professional standard practices.

Digital Literacy & Computer Science

Ipswich Public Schools has embraced the understanding that Digital Literacy and Computer Science are key components and essential skills in preparing students for college and career readiness in the 21st Century. Technology has changed the way our students will live, work, and interact and is continuing to evolve at an accelerated pace. Students now need to be equipped with a unique skillset to prepare for the jobs of the future. They must graduate with the ability to collaborate, think creatively and critically, communicate effectively, reflect on their own learning and problem solve. Students must have meaningful learning experiences with technology that allow them to design and share information with greater global communities.

In 2016 Massachusetts DESE released the new Digital Literacy and Computer Science curriculum standards "to prepare students for personal and civic efficacy in the twenty-first century and to prepare and inspire a much larger and more diverse number of students to pursue innovative and creative careers of the future. The abilities to effectively use and create technology to solve complex problems are the new and essential literacy skills of the twenty-first century" (DLCS Framework). Integrating DLCS standards should not be seen as "stand-alone" subject area curriculum work. Future curriculum work will more seamlessly integrate digital learning standards across students' coursework.

During the 2019-20 school year the Ipswich Middle School received a Massachusetts Digital Literacy Now Grant. This grant funding allowed us to assemble a team of educators to develop a DLCS Implementation Plan using the SCRIPT planning process. During this planning process we chose code.org to use as our curriculum as well as purchase the hard goods materials necessary. We also began to draft a plan as to how computer science would be embedded into science, math, technology engineering and library media classes. The grant also allowed us to offer a weeklong training in the code.org curriculum to eleven middle school teachers. Our goal for the 20-21 school year is for them to begin to write and embed some lessons into existing curriculum units. The IMS Computer Science curriculum will be aligned to the IHS Computer Science curriculum and Pathways in the goal of ensuring equity and opening up opportunities for students.

College & Career Planning Education

The Ipswich Public Secondary Schools support students in developing the interests, passions and questions needed to guide and form potential college and career choices. At the middle school level, this often looks like crafting curriculum and opportunities that allow students to learn more about the world and their roles as thinkers, creators, innovators and problem-solvers within it. It is a goal to have students leave their middle school years with clearer ideas around what issues and topics they are passionate about, as well as to have some of the building blocks of content needed to start developing creative solutions to those issues. As such, college and career planning at the middle school level involves exposing students to the many different career paths available to them and the skills, coursework and Habits of Mind needed to bridge to those career paths.

Understanding that all students will enter a career whether they attend college or not, Ipswich High School provides all students with career planning opportunities beginning in the 9th grade. Students create accounts in Naviance, a web-based database and counseling resource, enabling them to take career inventories, develop and use appropriate search criteria for higher education programs, and manage their college application process. The high school continues to work with local industries to identify high-need work opportunities in the area with the goal of matching students with careers that will pay a livable wage in the North Shore. To ensure that students have a keen awareness of the colleges and universities that match their qualifications and interests, IHS organizes college fairs and visits from admissions officers. The school has also offered summer programming around the college application process that has received positive feedback from students and parents both. Students may also pursue vocational and agricultural opportunities at partner schools such as Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School and Essex Agricultural and Technical High School.

Library/Media

The Library Media Center is the hub of secondary learning environment, where students from grades six through twelve often gather around a shared project, curl up with the latest fiction, stop by to pet a therapy dog, collaborate on a green screen project, or take a class on research skills and digital literacy research sources. Responding to an increasingly more digital world, the Library/Media Center has transformed into an access point for information. The American Association of School Library Standards (AASL) provides the framework for skills taught through our Library Media program. This framework recommends that a school library, “provides all members of the school community access to information and technology, connecting learning to real-world events.” The Ipswich Public School Library Media Specialist regularly works with faculty and students to curate a collection of literature and digital resources that address local interests while enhancing a culture of reading, collaborating and deep thinking. By providing

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access to these intellectual materials, the Ipswich Secondary Library Media Center plays an integral role in ensuring equitable access for all students.

Physical Education & Comprehensive Health

Physical Education is an integral part of the total educational experience which creates the whole child. Utilizing the Successful Habits of Mind, the focus of Physical Education at the secondary level is to offer a variety of learning experiences through structured, sequential activities which are designed to improve the physical, social and cognitive needs of adolescents. We utilize a fitness based and skills development experience to foster positive attitudes toward lifelong fitness and sportsmanship. We promote the importance of a safe, organized environment where students can feel comfortable participating in physical activity. We believe students should be successful regardless of starting fitness or skill level and encourage them to show progress developmentally as they progress through our program. Within a supportive environment we encourage them to step out of their comfort zone to experience challenge and personal success, all the while improving self-confidence and learning valuable life skills.

Secondary Health and Wellness programs are designed to provide students with the skills and health literacy necessary for proper and informed decision making throughout the various developmental stages of their life. Utilizing the Successful Habits of Mind, students learn the essentials of physical, mental/emotional and social health (also known as the “Health Triangle”). The central focus of Wellness (or total health) is promoted within each of our units utilizing the Health Triangle as the common connector. Secondary Health and Wellness courses focus on developing the knowledge, attitudes, and appreciation necessary to meet the present health needs of youth and society. The exploration and development of these concepts creates a pathway that is essential as students strive to achieve wellness and develop optimal health habits throughout their lifetime. Secondary health classes stress responsible decision making, cooperation, communication, prevention, refusal skills and self-management as means for developing these necessary life skills.

Extra Curricular

Ipswich has built an educational community that understands life-long learning is more than just academics. Students learn enduring life lessons beyond the walls of the classroom, and the Ipswich Public Secondary Schools strive to create both academic and extra-curricular opportunities for all students to participate after the dismissal bell rings. To illustrate, it is not unusual for the captain of the football team to have to leave practice early, grab his trumpet case, and stroll into a jazz concert at the PAC.

To achieve this goal, both the middle and high school have robust after school programs for students to explore their passions and their interests. In addition to our exemplary performing arts and athletic choices, a wide variety of unique interest-based clubs and activities run throughout the school year. All told, many opportunities exist for budding thespians, scientists, engineers and sustainability leaders, to name a few, to grow their interests beyond traditional school hours. Extra curricular opportunities continue to evolve and expand as guided by students' interests.

Specialized Learning/Special Education/Therapies/Tiered Levels of Instruction

Ipswich Public Secondary Schools provide special education services for eligible students who require specially designed instruction in order to make effective progress. The goal is to meet the academic, social-emotional and physical needs of each student in the least restrictive environment. Both schools believe in the inclusion model, while also providing a range of services, from full and partial inclusion, as well as substantially-separate settings or partial inclusion, as indicated as the least restrictive learning environment for a student. Both secondary schools utilize an effective co-teaching model that allows students with special needs to access a rigorous general education curriculum in a classroom with a general and special educator, which provides specially designed instruction in a least restrictive environment. For students with disabilities needing more individualized instruction, the SAIL classroom at the middle school and the Students Achieving Independent Living (SAIL) and Young Adult Career/Community Home management Training (YACHT) programs at the high school provide highly supportive instruction to learn within the school community. The creative use of technology, classroom furniture, and structures have transformed traditional classrooms into flexible, responsive learning environments for all students.

The Ipswich Public Secondary Schools understand that partnerships with our families make our programs stronger. Parents are included as active members of the team when making decisions about best practices and programs for students. The goal is to provide ongoing, consistent, and clear communication about the student's progress.

We employ a highly-trained special education staff and have provided professional development opportunities to general educators in differentiation strategies. Staff members at both schools adhere to the Response to Intervention Model, which is "a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs" (RTI Action Network). Through the use of data and Child Study Teams, educators identify students who may need additional support to access the curriculum and to make progress with general education learning objectives. Each secondary school has a standing team, made up of school administrators, school counselors, adjustment counselors, school nurse, and other support staff, who meet weekly to follow up on existing cases and introduce new students who need

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additional supports and interventions. Instructional staff members consult with members of the student support teams to receive updates, implement accommodations, and refer students.

The Ipswich District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is intended to guide principals and teachers in ensuring that all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms and support teachers in analyzing and accommodating the wide range of student learning styles and needs that exist. The DCAP describes accommodations and instructional supports and strategies that are available in general education.

English Language Education

The Ipswich Public School District is committed to providing English Learners (EL) the opportunity to become proficient in English through complete access to curriculum, co-curricular activities and interscholastic sports. To that end, the English Learner Education (ELE) program ensures students are screened and assessed carefully, instructed appropriately, and monitored diligently. General Laws c. 71A, §2(d) defines "English Learner" as "a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary class work in English." EL students enter the district at various stages of proficiency in oral language and literacy development. The development of essential skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English may be required. In order to attain these skills, English Learners will participate in a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program which consists of Sheltered Content Instruction and English as a Second Language instruction in accordance with state and federal laws. SEI addresses concepts and skills required in the curriculum as well as assisting students with language development and acquisition. Massachusetts is part of the World-Class Instruction Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium and has adopted the WIDA curriculum standards.

The goal of the SEI program in Ipswich is to teach English Language Learners (ELs) to use English to demonstrate academic achievement in all content areas. Under state and federal law, English language learners must be taught to the same academic standards and be provided the same opportunities to master such standards as other students. More information may be found in the [Ipswich Public Schools EL Services Manual](#).

All Ipswich High School students, whether or not English is their first language, are eligible to earn a Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the importance of being bilingual in an increasingly global society.

School Counseling/Mental Health and Wellness

Ipswich Middle and High Schools offer comprehensive school counseling, mental health and wellness programs in order to provide students with a well-rounded, supportive education. These services provide students with post-secondary preparation and the skills of self-advocacy, independence, resilience, emotional intelligence, self-care and balance, goal setting and integrity. This is done in both individual and group counseling formats.

The secondary team of school counselors and nurses work collaboratively to provide students with the support for both mental and physical well being. The group coordinates to implement state mandated screenings such as vision and hearing, postural, SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment), and the Youth at Risk Survey.

The Ipswich Public Schools Secondary Guidance Departments engage, inform and coordinate guidance resources and supports for the whole family. Recognizing the difficulty and complexity of modern parenting, information sessions are made available for parents/guardians and students on topics ranging from college financing to social-emotional health. School counselors offer in-class seminars such as Transition and Growth (TAG) (Grade 6); Social/Emotional Workshops (Grades 7 and 8); and Freshman and Sophomore as well as Junior and Senior Seminars (Post-secondary planning). An Academic Support Class is available for students needing this scaffolding.

The Ipswich Middle and High School counseling departments also offer additional services for students, including extracurriculars to empower female students such as Girls on the Run and RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) classes, as well as mindfulness opportunities and attendance remediation. Counselors coordinate 504 Accommodation Plans and participate in both Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings.

Summary

The Ipswich Public Secondary Schools provide students with mindfully-aligned pathways, creative enterprises, critical thinking journeys and, throughout, real-world applications of learning. Through building standards-based curriculum and assessment measures, educators create innovative learning environments and guide students' progress and goals. Students in turn become partners in this coursework, applying content in order to navigate real-world dilemmas as they build towards a development of college and career.

In the future, we seek to continue to build alignment and pathways, both in a cohesive secondary (middle to high school) program and also for students to follow more personalized curriculums. For example, we seek to focus on the 8th-to-9th grade transition in order to best support all our learners in this success. By building a coaching model and using digital portfolios to archive students' work, we seek stronger integration of our Successful Habits of Mind, with aligned assessment methods and regular student metacognition on their growth in

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these 21st Century skills. Expanded community and business partnerships, as well as advanced coursework and a Capstone program where students regularly share their learning to the wider Ipswich community would encourage further growth and connections for students and their learning. Furthermore, launching an innovative Computer Science pathway program would provide students with the foundational computer science literacy needed to learn new approaches to creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Using digital literacy as a tool for learning and creating across multiple disciplines will foster skills in Ipswich Public School students to become active participants and problem-solvers in a world where technology plays an undeniable role.

Educators at both Ipswich Middle and High Schools recognize the vital role they have in creating citizens who will lead future community, national, and perhaps world-wide endeavors. With this important work in mind, the Ipswich Public Schools strives to keep core values and the Successful Habits of Mind in the forefront of educational decisions. The goal is to continuously look to the future to inform the creation of dynamic and responsive educational opportunities that address the unique needs of students and the Ipswich community.