

Ipswich School Committee  
Thursday, January 9, 2020  
MS/HS Ensemble Room

Meeting Minutes

**Call to Order:**

Mr Whitten, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:11 PM.

**Present:**

Mr. Nylen, Ms. Gilliam, Dr. O’Flynn, and Mr. Stevens. Ms. Kneedler joined the meeting at 7:22 PM.

**Also Present:**

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools; Joanne Cuff, Director of Finance and Operations; and George Gallagher, High School Student Representative

Mr. Gallagher read the District Mission Statement.

**Announcements:**

- The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 23rd at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The Communications Working Group will meet on Tuesday, January 14th at 5:00pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.
- The Feoffee Policy Working Group and the Policy Subcommittee will hold a joint meeting on Thursday, January 14th at 6:00pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.
- The Policy Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, January 21st at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.
- All schools and district offices will be closed on Monday, January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

**Citizens' Comments:**

There were no citizens’ comments.

**Special Acknowledgments:**

There were no special acknowledgements.

**High School Student Representative Report:**

Mr. Gallagher first reported that the students were all very appreciative of the two week winter vacation. He then reported on the North Shore Community College acceptance event, Hat Day sponsored by the Global Languages Club to raise funds to support immigration, and that a Vision Screening was taking place on January 14th. The indoor track team recently took 2nd place and the math team took first place at an event earlier in the day. Lastly, students at the high school were shown a movie called “If They Had Known” which discussed drug and alcohol use.

### **Superintendent's Administrative Report:**

Dr. Blake reported on his schedule since the last School Committee meeting in December. He continued with his monthly updates from both the Facilities Director and Athletic Director, participated in a conference call with the Chairs of the School Committee, Select Board and Finance Committee to discuss an upcoming Triboard meeting, met with the Ipswich Education Foundation Board, and participated in two classroom observations. Dr. Blake held a meeting with a parent, attended several subcommittee meetings, went to a North Shore Superintendent Round Table meeting and attended several holiday concerts in the district. He held a leadership team meeting, met with both Chris Rais and Tony Marino to discuss the Capital Plan and attended a planning meeting for an upcoming legislative meeting with the North Shore Superintendent's Round Table group. Dr. Blake participated in a conference call with the legal team to discuss an ongoing personnel issue, attended a Town Strategic Plan meeting and reviewed the budgets submitted by the leadership team as part of the FY21 budget process.

### **II.B. Donation Presentation: Ipswich Sustainable Education:**

Student members of the Green Team and two adult representatives, Amy Borgman and Nicole Whitten, presented a check for \$5,000 to the Ipswich School District to be used towards green cafeteria efforts. The donation came from money raised at the Town Electronic Recycling Events over the past two years. This event is a collaboration with the town to reduce electronic and plastic waste. Along with the check presentation, students from the Green Team shared a number of facts around sustainability.

### **II.C. Superintendent Mid-Year Review:**

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting on January 23, 2020.

### **II.D. Visioning Exercise:**

Mr. Nysten, member of the Vision 2030 Working Group, first discussed what the working group has discussed at their most recent meeting. He said that currently, the documents that are in place as part of the working group look at the present state of the district, but not the future. It was the hope of the Vision 2030 Working Group to begin a discussion about the future of the district and what that looks like. The process for that discussion would include a series of exercises with various interest groups both in the district and community. Each group would be asked a similar set of questions. Once the working group has collected that data, they would compile it into the current document, with hopes of this eventually becoming the District Strategic Plan.

Mr. Nysten then read the series of questions that were created by the Vision 2030 Working Group and would be used during tonight's exercise. Those questions were:

1. What does "great" mean to you in the context of public education?
2. What would that mean for the Ipswich Public Schools? Are we there now? If so, provide evidence to support your position? If not, what are we lacking?
3. Looking ahead to 2030, what exactly is it that our community wants for our schools, our students, and our graduates?
4. What do we want our graduates to know and be able to demonstrate?

5. What will our schools look like in 10 years?
6. What will our classrooms look like in 10 years?
7. What will teaching look like in 10 years?
8. What will authentic learning look like in 10 years?

Mr. Nysten then asked School Committee members, Dr. Blake, Joanne Cuff, and George Gallagher to form groups of three to discuss the questions. Each group was then tasked with writing their answers on post-it notes, which would be added to a larger sheet of paper with the question written on it. Once the group had completed their small group exercise, they would come together for a larger discussion.

After each small group finished their discussion, they each took turns sharing their answers to the questions provided. Answers were recorded and provided below:

- What does “great” mean to you in the context of public education?
  - fully funded budget
  - balance between tech and tradition
  - Focus on good social/emotional health
  - teach to the whole student, not just to the test
  - Project based learning/ place based learning
  - college and career readiness
  - Love of learning, life long learners
  - Civically engaged students
  - citizenship- civically responsible people
  - achieve success through a variety of means/ways
  - teach everyone, fill all student needs
  - engaging and exciting place for students
  - pervasive innovation and creativity across the board
  - community is proud of the schools
  - individualized learning
  - advanced guidance
  - optimization of potential
  - maximize potential of individuals, individualized learning
  - prepared for 21st century economy
  - appropriate guidance, student/teacher ratios
  - pathways within the schools, pathways for individuals
  - continued to gather data to support individual
  - strong community engagement
  - technology to identify student needs early on
    - customize learning based on student needs
  - eliminating barriers to success for students- equal opportunity for all students
  - assessing success beyond standardized test scores
  - real time feedback on whether teaching is working for individual students and tailor to help
- What would that mean for the Ipswich Public Schools? Are we there now? If so, provide evidence to support your position?
  - Excellent graduation rate
  - good test scores

- good focus on music/arts
- good focus on service learning
- good support for social/emotional learning
- If not, what are we lacking?
  - need to close achievement gaps
  - increase rigor
  - elementary alignment
  - strengthening ties to groups that tie into the schools
  - structural infrastructure
  - comfortable learning environments
  - meeting the needs of all learners
  - choice and course selections
  - availability for all learners and interest levels
  - advanced guidance
  - test prep
  - course options to meet student needs
  - prepare students for high achievement in extracurriculars
- Looking ahead to 2030, what exactly is it that our community wants for our schools, our students, and our graduates?
  - strong schools keep community vibrant
    - young families move in with strong schools
  - schools continue to be an integral part of community
  - security and safety
  - proud of students/schools- recognizable
  - demonstrated success beyond test scores- preparing students for a career track that meets their interests, goals
  - teaching general life skills like financial literacy, personal interactions, thinking skills, project management, etc.
  - students to be engaged, challenged
  - engaged parents and families
  - extended year opportunities
  - extended day opportunities
  - Citizen Schools
- What do we want our graduates to know and be able to demonstrate?
  - foundational knowledge
  - critical thinking skills
  - independent thinkers
  - global/ local awareness
  - focus on tech/ steam skills
  - don't lose arts
  - strong communication skills
  - creativity and innovation
  - adaptable and resilient
  - self motivated
  - love of learning

- ability for graduates to have skills they'll use in jobs
  - know what skills they need to learn to make them good candidates for jobs
- confident learners, empowered
- good problem solvers in real world situations
- teach kids how to fail, work towards something and move ahead
  - learn to cope with emotions, unrealistic expectations
- Continued focus on SHOMS
  
- What will our schools look like in 10 years?
  - flexible
  - transdisciplinary practices continue to grow
  - innovative teaching methods
  - more environmentally responsible
  - more diverse student body with programs to support them
  - flexible teaching
  - individual learning
  - less focus on grade levels, more focus on how to maximize ability
  - outside school learning
  - world engagement, global perspective
  
- What will our classrooms look like in 10 years?
  - possible declining enrollment
  - new developments may bring more students
  - no desks, moving around
  - healthy relationship with technology
    - where, how and when is it useful
  - maker movement- more hands on
  - identifying big issues and how to solve them
  
- What will teaching look like in 10 years?
  - teaching students to filter out misinformation
  - learning how to research, get more information to become better learners/workers
  - more teachers as guides and mentors, not just instructors
  - have real world experience- from teachers, community, people in industry to connect why and what they are learning and why it is important
  - delivery style matches the needs of the students
  - problem solving
  - internships
  
- What will authentic learning look like in 10 years?
  - Open
  - fluid
  - mobile
  - self-directed

Once the group share was complete, Mr. Nylen reviewed the next steps. The Vision 2030 Working Group will next present this exercise to the leadership team and then to the faculty. Once they have analyzed the

feedback and generated themes, the working group plans to take that information to the community for feedback. Ideally, this process would be complete by the end of this year.

### **II.E. Student Advisory Council School Committee Member Assignment:**

As stated in School Committee policy JIB: Student Involvement in Decision Making, *“the School Committee will meet at least once every other month while school is in session with its Student Advisory Committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The chair of the Student Advisory Committee shall be an ex-officio non voting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.”*

Currently, the School Committee does not have a member assigned to the Student Advisory Council. Ms. Kneedler volunteered to participate this school year.

### **II.F. School Calendar Exploratory Committee Member Assignment:**

Dr. Blake explained that the Ipswich Educators’ Association would like to form an exploratory committee to look at future school calendars. They would be reviewing start times, vacations, etc. They have asked for School Committee member participation in the group.

Greg Stevens and Chub Whitten both volunteered to participate in the exploratory committee.

### **III.A. Vouchers and Bills:**

Vouchers and bills were completed and signed.

### **III.B. School Committee Reports:**

1. **Athletic Subcommittee-** This group has not met.
2. **Budget Subcommittee-** This group has not met. The next meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2020.
3. **Grant Subcommittees**
  - a. **Payne Grant-** This group has not met.
  - b. **Instructional Mini Grant-** This group has planned to meet at the end of the month.
4. **Operations Subcommittee-** This group has not met.
5. **Policy Subcommittee-** This group met on December 10th. They also met jointly with the Feoffee Policy Working Group on December 16th. They hope to present recommendations to the School Committee on January 23rd.
6. **Turf Field Subcommittee-** This group has not met. They may opt for a temporary suspension on this subcommittee.
7. **Communications Subcommittee-** This group met on December 10th. The second installment of the School Committee newsletter was distributed on December 12th. The next letter will be sent out on February 13th. Members of the School Committee will participate in a Meet and Greet with Rotary on January 23rd.
8. **SEPAC-** This group has not met.
9. **Birth to Three-** At their last meeting, Doyon teachers presented information on their kindergarten readiness program.

## **10. Working Groups**

- a. Vision 2030-** Already discussed during the Vision Exercise agenda item
- b. Facilities-** This group will meet on January 30th at 6pm.
- c. STEAM Team-** This group mt recently. There are currently 30 sign-ups for the showcase in April

## **11. New Business:**

Dr. Blake and Sara Gilliam presented School Committee Policy BCG: Policy Revision and Review for approval. This policy outlines the policy review cycle for all School Committee policies.

*My. Nysten moved to accept Policy BCG: Policy Revision and Review as presented, seconded by Ms. Kneedler. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **IV. Consent Agenda:**

*Mr. Whitten moved the Ipswich School Committee to accept a donation for \$500 from the Ascension Memorial Church to enhance and support the work done at the Birth to Three Program and accept a check for \$902.00 from Geskus Studios for the Middle School Fall Picture Day Commission to be deposited into the Student Activities Account, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **V. Adjournment:**

*Mr. Whitten moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 PM, seconded by Ms. Kneedler. The motion passed unanimously.*