

Ipswich School Committee
Thursday, February 6, 2020
MS/HS Ensemble Room, 134 High Street
6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

1.OPEN SESSION

Call to Order:

Mr Hopping, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Present:

Mr. Hopping, Mr. Nylen, Mr. Stevens, Dr. O'Flynn, Mr. Whitten, Ms. Kneedler and Ms. Gilliam.

Also Present:

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

Mr. Gallgher read the District Mission Statement.

Announcements:

- The next School Committee meeting will be on Thursday, February 27th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room. This meeting will include a Public Hearing on the FY21 School Budget.
- There will be a joint Feoffee Working Group/Policy Subcommittee meeting on Monday, February 10th at 7pm in the Town Manager's Conference Room at Town Hall.
- The Mutual Concerns Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, February 11th at 5:30pm at Town Hall in Meeting Room B-2.
- The Communications Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, February 11th at 7pm at Town Hall in Meeting Room B-2.

Special Acknowledgements:

Mr. Hopping acknowledged Sheila Halloran and the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School for a job well done at their recent STEAM Family Night.

Citizens' Comments

None

2.SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

A. FY21 Budget Presentation:

Mr. Hopping began by explaining that at this time, the School Committee was going to hear from Dr. Blake who was presenting the FY21 Superintendent's budget. During this meeting, the

School Committee will vote to take the budget under advisement. At the Public Hearing scheduled for February 27th, the public is invited to ask questions about the proposed budget. The School Committee will then vote to approve the budget.

Mr. Hopping then asked that Dr. Blake present his budget, stopping after each cost center for questions and for the School Committee to entertain a motion to take the cost center under advisement.

Introduction:

Dr. Blake started the FY21 budget presentation by stating that this was created through a collaborative effort with the leadership team to meet the current and future needs of the students, as well as set the stage for the future as the stabilization fund is depleted. He then explained that in preparing the budget, the leadership team met on two occasions with the Budget Subcommittee to discuss programs, plans, and budget concerns.

This year, the Budget Subcommittee allowed the leadership team to build a budget without “backing into a number”, as it has been done in years past. Dr. Blake’s instruction to the leadership team was to build a budget that includes all the items that the district would need in the future to meet the needs of the students and reach the goals outlined in the district’s various plans.

IPS Strategy for District Improvement:

Vision-Ipswich Public Schools inspires all students to embrace the power, wonder, and joy of learning.

Mission Statement-Ipswich Public Schools aspires to empower ALL students to be global citizens who are effective communicators, analytic problem solvers and savvy consumers of information. We propose to do this through an emphasis on communication, critical thinking, creativity, self-management, perseverance, and collaboration. Students will be active partners in authentic learning, offering voice and choice in demonstrating competency.

Dr. Blake explained that the Strategy for District Improvement is a document that was developed by the leadership team and endorsed by the School Committee last year. This document continues to be one of the guiding documents for their work in the district.

Objectives:

1. Meeting the needs of all students: IPS will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

2. Creating innovative learning environments: IPS will ensure that all students are immersed in an engaging and challenging academic program built on authentic, profound learning experiences driven by the Successful Habits of Mind.
3. Building a connection to the global community:IPS will ensure that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world.

These objectives are interwoven throughout the budget. From changes in special education programming and programming to meet the social and emotional need of the students, to the project-based learning opportunities and career pathways at the high school, to the expansion of the world language program, this budget aligned closely to the stated objectives.

Vision 2030: Framework for Student Success:

In addition to the Strategy for District Improvement, a subcommittee of the School Committee has worked to develop the Framework for Student Success that pulls together the individual School Improvement Plans, the Strategy for District Improvement, the Elementary and Secondary Education Program Guides and various other studies.

This current budget takes into account the individual improvement plans and is in line with both the Secondary and Elementary program guides.

In an effort to further dive into the Framework for Student Success and look to the future of education in the district, the Vision 2030 Working Group formulated a series of essential questions that were presented to the School Committee several weeks ago and later this week, will be presented to the leadership team. In the coming months, the same questions will be presented to the faculty and staff at each school and finally, the greater community. It is the hope of the working group that the responses to these essential questions will help guide future budgeting decisions.

Budget Considerations:

- This will be year 6 of the override
- Federal grant funding (Title I) is being significantly reduced
- Social/emotional issues continue to be a significant concern
- The Recreation Department now contributes \$0.00 to support our youth
- Aging facilities need to be maintained
- Two Payne Grants from last year are now included in the appropriated budget as planned.

Dr. Blake explains that this will be the sixth year of the override. Currently, the district has met its five year obligation and has been a good steward of these public funds. The FY21 proposed

budget will begin to significantly draw down the Stabilization Fund.

This coming year, the Federal Title 1 Grant is expected to decrease by \$81,000 and therefore, these costs have been absorbed into the Winthrop School budget.

The mental health needs of the students in Ipswich are exploding and the district is tasked with finding ways to continually support the students and staff.

Grants received from the Town Recreation Department will no longer be available, therefore all programming is funded by the schools.

There is a great need to take better care of our school buildings. At this time, the district does not know how or when the building situation will change, so it is important to make sure that what the district does have is well-maintained.

Dr. Blake explained that with the support of a Payne Grant this year, a World Language Program has been instituted at both elementary schools. Currently, there is one teacher that splits their time between the two schools. Next year, the program will expand to have one teacher per elementary school and two years from now, the plan will be completed by adding an additional World Language teacher to teach grades 5 through 7.

Another Payne Grant that is being absorbed into the budget is funding for the BRYT program at the high school. Currently, the grant is funding a teaching assistant and certified social worker. These two positions will be moved to the appropriated budget for the upcoming year.

A Word About FTE (Full Time Equivalent):

Who makes up FTE's? Teachers, support staff, clerical staff, custodial staff, and specialists. Reported together, but serve very different purposes based on very different needs!

Dr. Blake talked about the focus on FTEs in the district and emphasized that although we often talk in global terms, we must exercise caution. Most changes in FTEs occur in the professional, support staff, or specialist positions. In each of these cases, it is based on the needs of the students. Dr. Blake felt that the leadership team does a great job moving FTEs around to maximize the impact on the student population. He also stressed that decreasing FTEs for teachers does not balance FTEs for support staff and vice-versa. In the proposed budget, there is an overall increase of 7.8 FTEs across the district.

Use of Outside Funding:

Dr. Blake showed a slide of outside funds that are used to support the budget. Those outside funds include Special Education tuition, bus pass revenue, Tiger Tots, the Extended Day

Program, Integrated Preschool, Athletics, School Choice, Circuit Breaker Funds, and the Town Capital Plan.

Dr. Blake went on to explain that the current fund balance in the Integrated Preschool account is \$17,000 and the decision has been made not to utilize any of the preschool revolving account this upcoming year because of the instability of preschool funding. It is also anticipated that at the end of this current year, the fund balance will be at zero due to salaries being paid out. Going forward, the plan is to let the fund grow over the next one or two years before utilizing it again to offset the budget.

Ipswich Budget Schools FY21 Budget:

The total FY21 school budget is \$32,701,698. Compensation and benefits make up 79.81%, debt makes up 1.33% and other expenses make up 18.86% of the total budget.

FY21 Budget Funding Plan and the Impact to Stabilization Fund:

Dr. Blake walked the School Committee through the funding plan for the FY21 budget. He explained that the budget is comprised of the Town contribution of \$31,477,041 and the Stabilization Fund contribution of \$1,224,657, totaling \$32,701,698.

As of February 2, 2020, the current balance in the Stabilization Fund is \$2,227,051. The district plans to use \$1,224,657 for the FY21 budget, which will leave an estimated fund balance of \$1,002,394. The estimated balance left does not account for any future deposits.

At this time, Mr Hopping asked on average, what does the district generally contribute each year to the Stabilization Fund. Ms. Cuff replied that \$300,000 plus interest is typically deposited.

Dr. Blake went on to discuss how the district is looking at a potential override in the next year or two and that the budget was built knowing there was an override coming in the future. His hope is that this budget lays the foundation and identifies the district's needs for future years in the school system.

Federal and State Grant Funding:

This next slide shows the federal and state grant funding from 2018 through 2021. As he stated in his earlier comments, Dr. Blake said that the district is anticipating a significant decrease in federal funding, Title 1 in particular. All of these costs have been absorbed into the appropriated budget.

Choice Fund:

The current cash balance in the Choice Fund is \$1,076,763. The expected total revenue in FY20 is \$339,670. Currently, as Dr. Blake explained, there are 48 in-district Choice Students- 38 regular ed. Students and 10 special education students. There are currently 14 tuitioned out students with an estimated assessment of \$97,004.

The planned expenditures for FY21 from the Choice Fund include \$300,000 for health insurance, \$60,000 for district-wise hardware and approximately \$76,000 is slated to be spent at the building level in accordance with the Choice Policy. It is anticipated that the fund balance will be approximately \$700,604 at the end of FY21.

Circuit Breaker Funds:

This slide shows the Circuit Breaker revenue and expenditures from 2018 through 2021. The current cash balance is \$863,458. \$800,000 is planned for expenditure from the Circuit Breaker fund for FY21. This amount is based on the expected FY20 reimbursement amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Fixed Cost Expense Excluding Health Insurance:

Dr. Blake talked about what makes up the district's fixed costs, which include retirement, Medicare, sick leave, worker's compensation, unemployment, and insurance. This coming year, the district anticipates a decrease due to a decrease in worker's compensation claims.

Health Insurance Expense:

Health insurance expenses show a decrease of \$62,740 in FY21 due to a number of factors such as changes in personnel and types of plans taken.

Special Education Expenses:

Dr. Blake explained that the district is looking very closely at special education costs and they are anticipating some changes, but he is not ready to discuss those in depth at this time. Drivers of the special education expenses are the tuitions for out-of-district placements. As stated before, the needs of the students are becoming more significant and there are some students for whom Ipswich cannot provide the education they are entitled to in our system. Although the district is diligent in the referral process and evaluations, a lot of these students are placed by their parents.

Compensation for All Staff:

This slide, as Dr. Blake explains, illustrates the salary cost for all staff which include regular salary and contractual additional compensation like stipends. There shows a significant increase

for FY21 due to a large number of professional staff members who are having category or lane changes. In FY21, there are 33 teachers slated to make category changes at a cost of \$142,302.

School Committee Question and Comments:

Both Mr. Whitten and Dr. O'Flynn discussed the timing of the next override and the need to determine when to start planning for it. Should there be no override, Dr. O'Flynn explained, the district will spend down everything it has in the stabilization fund in FY22.

Mr. Hopping discussed the starting salary for incoming staff members. Dr. Blake explained that the district budgets for \$55,000 for new employees, but there are times when they need to come in at a higher rate to ensure that Ipswich is getting the most qualified candidate for the position. He also explained that this could mean that some staff may max out their salary sooner if they were brought in at a higher rate.

Paul F. Doyon Memorial School Budget- Educational Goals:

Innovative Learning Environment- Our students are engaged in innovative learning environments where creative thinking, critical problem solving, and risk-taking are at the forefront of learning. Targeted professional development focuses on increasing student achievement.

Support Social/Emotional Learning- We continue to focus on the social/emotional well-being of our school community. As a school, we embraced the Responsive Classroom approach to enhance our strong school culture.

Building a connection to the global community- Students interact with a global community of learners through our involvement with Global Read Alouds, Global Play Day, Skyping with authors, Once Community Read and Virtual Reality Expeditions. Our new World Language professional will enhance our cultural awareness and school vision of becoming more compassionate citizens of the world.

Dr. Blake talked about how these educational goals tie directly back to the Strategy for District Improvement and their School Improvement Plan.

Paul F. Doyon Memorial School Budget- Enrollment:

Dr. Blake read from the slide the total number of students in each grade currently and the projected enrollment and class sizes for 2020-2021. In FY21, the school is projected to have a decrease of 11 students across the six grades.

Paul F. Doyon Memorial School Budget- Budget Highlights:

- Total budget increase of 3.88% (\$154,227)
- 1.71 FTE increase
 - 1.0 World Language Teacher
 - .71 shift/additional special education support
- Lexia program for the whole school
- Math program professional development
- Budgeting for two Fellows from local colleges

Dr. Blake talked about the Lexia program. Currently, this program is being successfully offered at Winthrop School and Doyon has a limited number of licenses. They are looking to increase to a school-wide program. Lexia is a research-proven program that provides personalized learning in the six areas of reading instruction, targeting skill gaps and providing teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small-group instruction.

The Illustrative Math program has been piloted successfully this year at Doyon. Professional development in this area will help to improve the instruction.

Dr. Blake then explained the Fellows program, stating that the district has partnered with Endicott and Merrimack Colleges to have fellows working the elementary schools. Winthrop School has been doing this for years and this is currently the first year at Doyon. The Fellows are all educators working on advanced degrees and work under the supervision of appropriate staff. Past Fellows have been hired in the past as permanent staff members.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Ms. Gilliam asked Dr. Blake and Sheila Halloran, principal at Doyon, to elaborate on the World Language Program. Dr. Blake explained that currently, there is one teacher that spent the first half of the year at Winthrop School and will spend the second half of the year at Doyon. The current program introduces world language in kindergarten through grade 2. Next year in FY21, the elementary schools are looking to expand their program by introducing a teacher at each school and extending instruction through grade 4. In the third year of the program, additional staff would be added to provide world language to all students through seventh grade.

Mr. Nylen then asked to have the World Language Program summarized with an explanation as to what it looks like currently in the schools and what it will look like in the future. Sheila McAdams, principal at Winthrop School, explained that the children in the current program are learning Mandarin. The purpose of a world language program in grades K through 2 is exposure- to learn sounds and culture like greetings, colors, and customs. The goal will be proficiency in the upper grades when the model and schedule expands.

Mr. Hopping asked Ms. Halloran to speak briefly to the Responsive Classroom work that is being done at Doyon. She explained that Responsive Classroom is now part of the culture at Doyon. Last summer, staff participated in a four day training and newer staff are now being trained. This allows for a common language and common approach to be used throughout the building. She emphasized that this approach was making a difference because situations are handled the same throughout the school.

Mr. Nysten moved to take the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.

Winthrop School- Educational Goals

Providing a path to success through a coherent curriculum, effective instruction, and student agency.

Strengthen the learning experience for every student through cohesive curriculum, articulated measure of progress, and student agency.

Access to and success in relevant, meaningful educational experiences have been proven to change lives. To ensure that all students are offered a common educational path, we seek to crystalize learning priorities, hone instructional practices to promote transferable, high-level critical thinking skills, and effectively and continuously assess the progress of each student. Structures and resources such as professional development, common meeting time, instructional coaching, and co-teaching merge with ample, up-to-date teaching resources to achieve this end.

Foster connections and a sense of belonging through the joys and wonders of learning.

At its best, learning is a social endeavor. Sharing passions, seeking clarity of different points of view, and gaining understanding through discussions with others enriches and transforms learning experiences. Additionally, learning does not begin and end with the ring of a bell. Through extended day experiences, resources that offer alternative perspectives and global cultural exchanges, students strengthen their foundation as global citizens.

Winthrop School- Enrollment:

Dr. Blake read from the slide the total number of students in each grade currently and the projected enrollment and class sizes for 2020-2021. Class sizes at Winthrop continue to be good at each grade level and are well within the district's guidelines.

Dr. Blake did point out the preschool is now housed completely at Winthrop which ties into the increase in the school's budget.

Winthrop School- Budget Highlights:

- 9.71% increase (\$393,002)
- 4.99 FTE increase
 - 1.0 World Language teacher
 - 1.75 Picked up preschool staff salary due to instability of revolving account
 - .1 due to decrease in Title 1 funding
 - 1.0 TA in Kindergarten due to safety and support in Kindergarten classrooms
 - Other changes based on student need in special education and funding source.
- Supplies, books, and materials lines up in several areas
- Elementary summer special education program fully in Winthrop budget (\$47,450)

Dr. Blake first pointed out the addition of the World Language teacher in this budget, once again highlighting the Payne Grant from this year and the plans to expand the program using the appropriated budget going forward.

He explained that other staffing changes are due to reduced grant funding, programmatic needs and the instability of the revolving fund for preschool.

Supplies, books and material lines have been increased in several areas to replace worn out materials, build collections and provide the necessary consumables for their curriculum.

Lastly, this year, the entire elementary special education summer program is in the Winthrop budget.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Ms. Gilliam first asked to clarify why the preschool revolving account is so unstable. Dr. Blake explained that the number is dependent on the number of typical students enrolled in the program and the typical students who participate in the free or reduced lunch program. At this point, it is difficult to gauge how many paying students will be entering the program this fall.

Ms. McAdams then spoke to the increase in teaching materials and supplies in the budget. She explained that she has budgeted for supplies for the new Social Studies curriculum. She is also focusing on diversifying teaching resources and library materials to address current needs and up-to-state social issues.

Ms. McAdams spoke about the shift in special education services seen in her budget. She explained that there was no actual change in staff, but rather creative ways to meet the needs of her programming. Adding a second classroom to the preschool along with changing the preschool configuration to mixed age group classes were some examples of the shift.

Mr. Hopping asked what “student agency” meant in Winthrop’s educational goals. Ms. McAdams discussed accountability for learning and students having a voice and choice in their learning. Both parents and the school council wanted to see more leadership opportunities at all age levels.

Mr. Hopping then addressed the common learning times planned for Winthrop, stating he thought that was great. Ms. McAdams continued that her and her staff were talking about strengthening the RTI program, as well as allowing kids time in the day to pursue interests that were not in the curriculum. Her team is always looking at ways to enhance the schedule so kids have time to do more.

Ms. Kneeder moved to take the Winthrop School FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously.

Middle School- Educational Goals:

Humanities- The middle school staff will study the effectiveness of the newly developed model of Humanities, integrating Social Studies and English/Language Arts curriculum standards in grades 6-8.

Report Cards- The middle school staff will study the possibility of implementing a new report card/feedback system for students and parents, possibly using a standards-based approach that best matches the school’s instructional model and emphasis on Successful Habits of Mind.

Self-Management- Acknowledging the increase of mental health concerns among students, specifically anxiety and depression, the middle school staff will examine, plan and implement ways to address these needs.

Middle School Model- IMS staff will study current practices and structures to make informed decisions about future approaches.

Middle School- Enrollment Numbers:

Dr. Blake read from the slide the total number of students in each grade currently and the projected enrollment and class sizes for 2020-2021. He explained that the projected enrollment will be down by about 30 students in the upcoming year. As such, there will be a decrease in the staffing patterns and overall FTEs in the budget.

Middle School- Budget Highlights:

- Budget is up 4.64% (\$226,592)
- FTE Reductions of 7.52
 - 1.0 ELA teacher

- 1.0 Social Studies teacher
- 1.5 TA nurse and CNA position to High School
- 1.0 Special Educator
- 1.0 RBT
- 1.0 TA
- Stipends reduced 16% to reflect actual hours
- Reduction of special education summer programming
- Significant increase anticipated in Out of District (special education) tuitions

Dr. Blake reviewed the budget highlights, making note of the reductions in FTEs. He also commended Kathy McMahon, middle school principal, on her attention to detail when reviewing and creating the FY21 budget, resulting in a \$12,000 reduction on summer special education program costs. Dr. Blake did discuss the significant increase in the anticipated out-of-district special education tuitions which total \$351,698.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Mr. Hopping asked if the Special Education Stabilization Fund could help with these anticipated cost increases in special education. Dr. Blake explained that this particular fund is created to help with unanticipated costs and was not designed to account for foreseeable problems.

Ms. McMahon then spoke to the reductions in staffing due to the declining enrollment. The middle school is going to continue with the humanities model at all grade levels and she is confident that services will still be delivered with the reduction in staff.

Mr. Whitten commended Ms. McMahon for making difficult decisions to accommodate the declining enrollment, rather than trying to use the Choice program as a supplement.

Dr. O'Flynn stressed the importance of providing quality English Language Arts education and writing even with the humanities model. His hope is that students are not "short changed" in writing skills with the current model.

Ms. McMahon responded to Dr. O'Flynn by explaining that she and her staff have thought deeply about how to best deliver the ELA standards and writing skills. She is bringing in training for humanities teachers and writing as professional development to help with this. The middle school also plans to bring in Lexia to help identify those students who need support in reading.

Ms. Gilliam asked about the reduction of teaching materials in both science and ELA. Ms. McMahon responded that the science department is not using textbooks at all and that the ELA department is still using books from last year.

Ms. McMahon then spoke about what is happening with regard to social and emotional supports

for students, saying she is proud of what the middle school is doing. She said that the middle school is currently not seeing a lot of the problems that other area schools are facing.

Beverly Hegedus, Pupil Personnel Services Director, then spoke to the middle school special education expense lines which include out-of-district placements. She stressed that the middle school may inherit problems automatically. The goal of the district is to return students to the least restrictive environments as possible. The special education department, as well as the administrative team, look closely at the needs of the students and work hard to find a balance of being less restrictive, but also not stint on their needs.

Dr. O'Flynn moved to take the Middle School FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.

Ipswich High School- Educational Goals:

Support Students' Social Emotional Learning- IHS will strive to foster a more supportive learning environment that is more flexible and personalized to meet students' dynamic learning needs. Teachers will apply newly-learned, research-based strategies designed to increase student collaboration and overall sense of self-efficacy through thoughtfully scaffolded learning opportunities.

Improve Career Pathways- IHS will continue to develop and refine career pathways to enable interested students to personalize their course of studies with authentic, hands-on learning opportunities designed to prepare them to enter the workforce. We will work with local employers to identify both areas of need as well as necessary skills and credentials to find careers that pay a livable wage in our community.

Improve Achievement Through an Enhanced Learning Environment- We will update our curriculum, create common performance assessments that yield actionable data on student learning trends, and share best practices through a revamped system of peer observation. We will more thoughtfully integrate the Successful Habits of Mind into our curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices such that students are afforded more regular opportunities to develop transferable 21st century skills.

Ipswich High School- Enrollment:

Dr. Blake read from the slide the total number of students in each grade currently and the projected enrollment and class sizes for 2020-2021. The high school anticipates a drop of only 9 students next year. Dr. Blake also shared the class sizes at the high school.

Ipswich High School- Budget Highlights:

- Budget increase of 15.16% (\$1,009,764)
- 5.29 FTE Increase

- .6 FTE Technology (Robotics, etc)
- .6 Health teacher
- 1.0 Social Worker for BRYT program (grant funded in FY20)
- 1.0 TA position for BRYT program (grant funded in FY20)
- .5 Nurse position
- 1.0 Hall monitor (from Educational)
- .1 music shifted from middle school
- Increase in stipends

Dr. Blake explained that the majority of budget increases at the high school are due to staffing changes. He then referenced those changes which were laid out of the slide.

Dr. Blake talked about how Jonathan Mitchell, high school principal, was looking to increase and reinvestigate the robotics program by increasing the robotics position to a 1.0 FTE and also purchase a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine. It is Mr. Mitchell's hope that they can establish a CNC curriculum and create a pathway for students to take towards earning a certificate along with direct skills needed to enter the workforce post graduation.

The 0.6 health teacher will allow Tom Gallagher to become a full time Athletic Director. It will also reduce class sizes in biology, as now there is a teacher who teaches both health and biology. This addition would allow the current teacher to teach more biology.

The social worker and TA for the BRYT program were originally funded this year through the Payne Grant. Those positions will be absorbed into the appropriated budget.

Lastly, the increase in stipends comes from an increase to the Community Service Coordinator position which is no longer grant funded.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Ms. Gilliam asked if the special education supports moving from the middle school to the high school are reflected in the budget. When Dr. Blake answered that they were, she then suggested that they also be included in the slide presentation.

Dr. O'Flynn thanked Mr. Mitchell for making the Athletic Director position full time. He stated that the hall monitor position is well worth it. Overall, he felt that these FTE additions are appropriate, thoughtful and needed at the high school.

Mr. Stevens said that he was happy to see the increase in the guidance budget and followed up by asking what the increase in purchased services in guidance represents. Mr. Mitchell explained that those increases were to expand the "Gateway to College" program at North Shore Community College. Participants in the program can transfer credits they earn towards an

associates or bachelors degree. The increase is the cost of tuition for students in the program. The increase also represents tuition to Recovery High School and the Action, Inc. program.

Mr. Mitchell then addressed Mr. Whitten's question about vaping at the high school. He feels that there has been a decrease in the number of students who are vaping or starting to vape. There have also been far fewer suspensions due to vaping this year.

Mr. Mitchell further explained the career pathways program. He talked about how most often, the focus is college readiness, but there needs to be a place for those students who are not attending college right away and are looking for a career path right out of school. He talked about putting more emphasis on a technical pathway with the purchase of a CNC machine. He stated that machinists are now lucrative and in-demand positions in a growing industry, which is why Mr. Mitchell felt this was a good new pathway to introduce.

Mr. Nylan asked what sort of demand there was for post secondary opportunities. Mr. Mitchell thought there were at least 20-30 students per grade that would benefit from these pathways. Ms. McMahon also added that there they are seeing an increase of students applying to vocational/technical high schools. Mr. Mitchell finished by saying that this career pathway does not have to be just for technical careers, but could also benefit those students who are interested in engineering.

Mr. Hopping asked Mr. Mitchell to discuss the Bridge Program. Mr. Mitchell explained that it is a work program for seniors in their fourth quarter. Students are required to work 30 hours per week, unless taking AP classes, and present on their experience at the end of the school year.

Mr. Mitchell spoke to the supply lines not increasing by explaining that most teachers spend the same on supplies each year. With the new Social Studies standards, he does anticipate a need for supplies the following year.

Lastly, Mr. Mitchell spoke about the Community Service Coordinator stipend and explained the duties of that person. This position was originally paid for by the Recreation Commission, but must now be funded differently.

Mr. Stevens moved to take the High School FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.

District-Wide Building Operations- Budget Highlights:

- Increase of 10.43% (\$198,054)
- FTE Increase of 2.2
 - 1.0 at Elementary levels (.5 each building)
 - 1.0 at Middle/High School

- .2 increase in secretarial support for Facilities Department
- Increases for supplies, materials and equipment throughout district
- Increase in electrical, water and gas rates
- Increases do not include what is in the Capital Plan or Green Communities

Dr. Blake explained that this was Chris Rais' first budget. Mr. Rais not only evaluated the needs of the buildings, but is also looking to bring his staffing to a more appropriate level to better maintain the buildings. He has also increased lines for supplies, materials and equipment throughout the district to meet anticipated building needs.

Ms. Kneedler moved to take the District Wide Building Operations FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Mr. Nysten. The motion passed unanimously.

District Wide and Central Office- Budget Highlights:

- 3.89% Decrease (-\$2,906,717)
- 1.2 FTE increase
 - .5 ESL TA based on student needs
 - .5 payroll person
 - .2 secretary salary shifted from IDEA Grant
- Able to decrease the budget because contract amounts are known
- Technology professional development increase for 3 staff members
- Technology budget down overall (\$13,809)
- Curriculum development lines down due to grants
- Special education transportation decreased by (\$72,000)
- Unemployment compensation decrease (\$130,000)
- Long term (MS/HS) debt came off (2,586,181)

Dr. Blake talked about the overall decrease in this budget. He explained that there was a decrease of \$205,000 in compensation since all contracts have been settled for next year.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Mr. Stevens asked if the decrease in special education transportation was attributed to having less students or if costs were lowered. Beverly Hegedus, Pupil Personnel Services Director, answered that the decrease in cost was from significant man hours put into finding lower prices, bids were distributed early and a lot of lower prices were negotiated.

Mr. Hopping asked why the Facilities Director's salary was less than his Assistant Facilities Director. Dr. Blake explained that part of his salary is paid by the Town, so only what the district contributes is represented in the budget.

Lastly, Mr. Nysten asked if this budget reflects the work Dr. Blake is doing with the English Language Learner (ELL) program. Dr. Blake answered that yes, the budget does reflect that work. In the past two months, the district has brought on an ELL teaching assistant to meet student needs and that position will continue next year.

Mr. Nysten moved to take the District Wide and Central Office FY21 budget under advisement, seconded by Ms. Kneeder. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hopping thanked Dr. Blake and the leadership team for this work on the budget. He then opened up the meeting to questions and comments from the School Committee.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Dr. O'Flynn wanted clarification on why there was such a dramatic increase in out-of-district special education placements. Both Dr. Blake and Dr. Hegedus addressed this question. They agreed that there are many factors that can contribute to this increase including students who move in district who are already outplaced, some students needs and level of services cannot be met in district and sometimes parents choose to have their children placed elsewhere. Dr. Hegedus reassured the committee that the district works diligently and mindfully to keep students in the district when possible. She said that introducing the BRYT program this year and an increase in counselors has been helpful.

Mr. Mitchell joined the conversation, saying that they do their best to keep students in-district.

Dr. O'Flynn continued by saying that he wants to be able to provide the district with programs and policy to support the special education program and asked if there were other programs to consider to better serve these students. Dr. Hegedus replied that there needs to be a balance of making students feel comfortable and not isolated, while still supporting them with significant supports. She emphasized that the current programs in the district are providing supports, but society and students can be complicated.

Mr. Hopping followed up by asking how the RTI programs have been working. Dr. Hegedus responded that she felt they are extremely effective. The effectiveness may not always be visible when looking at the budget spreadsheets, but the program is effectively working to build non special education supports to address student needs.

Mr. Hopping then shifted the conversation to preschool enrollment. He said that based on the chart in the budget book, there is a significant percentage of students with high needs, ELL, special education, etc. He asked if certain students are identified in more than one category. Dr. Blake responded that yes, that was the case.

Mr. Hopping then said that these percentages should not be a surprise if the students show up

in multiple categories. He continued by saying he thinks the district is seeing an increase because they do a good job with early intervention and identifying needs. Mr. Hopping finished by saying that other groups may not understand that every child is different and has different needs, therefore it will be important to emphasize that during presentations to other committees.

Mr. Hopping ended this portion of the night by explaining that the School Committee has taken the proposed budget under advisement and in three weeks, at their next meeting, they will open up the meeting for a public hearing. At that time, the public is invited to ask questions and comment on the budget. Once that public has been heard, the School Committee will vote to approve the budget.

III.SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Vouchers and Bills- Complete
- B. Budget Subcommittee- They met prior to this budget presentation to review the presentation and final numbers.
- C. Athletics Subcommittee- They have not met.
- D. Communications Subcommittee- They have an upcoming meeting. The third installment of the newsletter will be released on February 13th.
- E. Payne Grant- They have not met.
- F. Mini Grant- They have a meeting scheduled for after February break.
- G. Operations Subcommittee- They have not met.
- H. Policy Subcommittee- They met on February 4th and plan to release several policies for approval at the School Committee meeting on February 27th. The subcommittee brought forward Policy JKAA: Physical Restraint of Students. The current district policy is a general overview, while this new policy outlines required specifics from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Mr. Whitten moved to approve policy JKAA: Physical Restraint of Students as presented, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Feoffee Policy Working Group- There is a joint meeting with the Policy Subcommittee scheduled for February 10th.
- J. School Facilities Working Group- This group met recently and talked at length about the elementary school buildings. They discussed the process to submit a project again to the MSBA, as well as a timeline for submission. They also discussed activities to get the conversation started again.
- K. Town Strategic Planning Committee- This group met this morning. It was the first opportunity to look at the preliminary financial scenarios. The Town is working to try and account for major investment decisions they will be facing in the next 10 plus years and marry that up with that potential tax impacts. The group is starting to build a picture of the financial effect of those projects. The placeholders for the district were the

operational override and a new elementary school building project.

- L. NEW BUSINESS- Mr. Hopping told the committee that he and some other members were approached by the Ipswich Education Foundation (IEF) who are looking for participation from the School Committee on their advisory board. He wanted to put this idea before the committee to get their thoughts prior to responding to the IEF. After some discussion, it was agreed that a vibrant IEF is good for the district and can help ensure that their work is aligned with the district's goals and priorities. It was also agreed upon that acting as a liaison, rather than a voting member would help keep the distance that some members wanted.

Dr. O'Flynn moved to appoint Ms. Gilliam as a School Committee liaison to the Ipswich Education Foundation, seconded by Mr. Nylen. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nylen then asked about the budget presentation to the Finance Committee and wanted to know what role the School Committee will play. Mr. Hopping explained that he will take on presenting the introductory slides from the presentation and will sit alongside Dr. Blake to help present.

Ms. Gilliam reminded the committee that the Day on the Hill will be Tuesday, May 6th at the State House.

Mr. Nylen asked to have Brad Hill and Bruce Tarr attend an upcoming School Committee meeting to present a legislative update.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hopping moved the Ipswich School Committee to accept the School Committee Open Session meeting minutes from Thursday, January 23, 2020, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. The motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. O'Flynn moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 PM, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.

