

Mission

The Ipswich school community is committed to developing in all students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed and excel throughout life.

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

7:00 PM

MINUTES

I. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - Mr. Whitten

7:09pm

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT - Ms. Gilliam

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next School Committee Meeting: Thursday, 8/27/2020, 7pm via ZOOM hybrid
- Policy Sub-Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 8/25/2020, 1pm
- Race Equity Social Justice Working Group Tuesday, 8/25, 2pm
- Communications Sub-Committee
- New Teacher Orientation: 8/27/2020, time TBD
- Teacher first day: Monday, 8/31/2020
- Student first day: Monday, 9/14/2020

CITIZENS' COMMENTS - none

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: To everyone trying to figure out best way to bring back school including administrators, teachers, parents, technology department

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

7:14pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent

- Hyperfocus has be on reopening all the time
- Met at least weekly with Administrators, IEA President, Nimble Systems Committee, & Oversight Committee
- Attended many Zoom meetings with DESE & MASS
- Met with the Tech team, transportation provider, Jen Reed, IMS school nurse, and Chris Rais, Facilities Director
- NEC Board of Directors to discuss their reopening plans
- CREST Collaborative
- Met w/Nat Pulsifer re Feoffees
- Zoom call with Merrimac College re: its reopening plan
- Roundtable
- Bargaining sessions
- Retreat
- MASS conference call
- Tri-Board Chairs conference call
- Met w/elementary principals regarding EDP possibilities
- MA Superintendents regarding requests for leave or not returning
- Held Parent Question/Answer forum
- Held Staff Question/Answer forum

- Responded to hundreds of emails
- Regular normal reopening duties

Mr. Whitten thanked Dr. Blake and the district for their hard work on the Reopening Plan.

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

B. FALL SCHOOL REOPENING UPDATE

7:25pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

- Parent survey sent for commitment (missing 100 responses). 85.5%-hybrid, 13.5%-remote (210 students), 15 students unenrolling, 20% require transportation
- Staff survey sent for commitment - close to 100% received. 74.9%-return in person, 9.8%-don't plan to return in person but will do remote; 15.3%- "singletons" with varying responses. Will close this survey tomorrow then analyze data to see if there are enough people to work in the buildings.
- Parent forums went very well. Tracy did great job moderating. Feedback via email was quite positive.
- Staff forum went well; Tracy moderated. Answered as many questions as he could; some issues are still be worked out. .Mr. Mitchell was able to answer HS questions as they came up.
- MOU progress - ongoing negotiations. School Committee was flooded with emails from teachers' union just before this meeting. Everything is in negotiation, many meetings, reviewing information, and scheduling more sessions next week. Must be done by 8/30 before 8/31 return.
- New state guidance that came out yesterday included flu shot requirement for all students. December 31st is that deadline; we will work into our plans.
- Discrepancy between CDC and DESE protocols has be worked out. DESE agreed to the CDC guidelines, so updating our protocols - most regarding test rates.
- MIAA Board of Directors announced the office start date of Fall sports as 9/18/2020. Football & competitive cheering are considered high risk and will not be run until new "Fall 2 season" from 2/22/2021-4/25/2021. More info to follow. Modifications will be made to other fall sports (cross country, field hockey, golf, soccer, and volleyball) to meet EEA guidelines and the MIAA Board of Directors will review and potentially approve them on 9/1/2020. Cape Ann League is reporting some issues with some hybrid, some fully remote and whether those teams should be playing. It may be up to individual school committees to decide. There will be no formal statewide tournaments. The Athletic Director needs to make changes to his plans before the school committee votes, so this will be put on a future meeting agenda.
- Grade 2 decision will be made next week when all numbers have been analyzed. Administrative decision will be based on numbers of students in each school and whether they can manage in the space. Current plan for Grade 2 is the same as Grades 3-5 (M/T Cohort A in person, W all remote, Th/F Cohort B in person).
- Key health metrics: Current Ipswich number (August 5-12) - 5 confirmed cases, 1% positivity rate. Trending down since last report. We will continue to monitor. State metrics: White (less than 5 reported cases); Green (>4 cases/100,000); Yellow (4-8 cases/100,000); Red (>8 cases/100,000).
- Transportation - data suggests we will be ok w/current # of buses. 25% (less than 300 students) of students would require transportation, cut that in half because of cohorts. Will start looking at addresses and routes once data is in. Joanne is meeting with Salter on Tuesday 8/25 to put together routes. They will be posted on IPS website (not local

papers). Have not decided whether or not adjustments to bell schedule will be made in order to get everyone on time. Regular education routes are usually well over 900 students. Hot issue: Requirement of parents waiting at bus stops has become a community issue. Dr. Blake said that current guidance requires parents must be at the stop in case there are symptomatic students who will not be allowed to ride. Maybe a few changes can be made such as high school students being allowed to board without a parent present. Will routes change significantly and what is time? Ms. Cuff stated it looks like routes will stay basically the same based on geography. As far as timing goes, we try to keep routes between 45-55 minutes and under - will all depend upon where people are located. School Committee voted to SUSPEND bus fees at the last meeting, if we do find that we need additional buses, the School Committee could reconsider their vote. Will be reaching out to families for bus registrations. Special education transportation in good shape, bids sent out.

- EDP is not going to run because of lack of space to keep cohorts within grades separate in order to limit contacts within the school. We are looking to work with community groups to set up programs (Y anxious to help us); elementary principals actively looking for alternatives. Some EDP staff will be kept employed to help with students before & after school.
- As the Return to Learn plan is updated, how will details be communicated? Dr. Blake will communicate to parents via email & Blackboard Connect calls, posting on IPS website, and on the document itself. He wants to update several changes at once rather than one at a time, then post.
- Where has grant money to offset some costs gone? District & Town both have received grants: PPE has been purchased, hired an additional school nurse floater, purchased technology equipment, licenses for tech platforms, HEPA filters, bipolar ionization generator to actively improve air quality in MS/HS, UV light sterilization units, and additional virtual HS seats; leased tents for each of buildings; and hired extra substitute custodians.
- Ms. Cuff to provide a financial update on COVID funding and year-end close out at next school committee meeting.
- It has been great to see all departments within the district & town working together, specifically the health and facilities departments, to make sure buildings are as safe as possible.
- Next meeting topics: Transportation update, reopening, financial report, sports

C. VOTE ON REVISED SCHOOL CALENDAR

8:05pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

- 1st day of school 9/14/2020
- October Professional Development Day was moved to Wednesday, 10/14/2020 so as not to impact in-person learning.
- Thursday early release was removed from the calendar
- Came to agreement with teachers to move 1st day to 9/14/2020. "Teacher workshop" days of 8/31, 9/1-3, and 9/8-11 is for staff & administration to work together to prepare for the arrival of students. In those 8 teacher days, time will be spent with staff and administrators reviewing protocols for distancing, different scenarios, etc.; teacher planning, collaborating, and preparing rooms; and doing some professional development around new tech tools, etc. (Ms. Wagner and Ms. Gregory are currently developing a video series.)

- December 23 will be left as is on the calendar since it is a remote learning day for students, with the superintendent being able to make a decision as to whether it will be an early release as it gets closer.
- Wednesday early release will continue through the year regardless of model.

Dr. O'Flynn made a motion to support and approve the 2020-2021 school calendar changes as presented, Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

D. SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUILDING INSPECTION ASSIGNMENTS 8:12pm

Chub Whitten, Chair

- Building inspections need more rigor this year than in past years. Should be a checklist for everyone. Chris Rais to be on board with inspections. Checklists could include circulation patterns, PPE supplies, COVID-19 isolation rooms, distanced classrooms, security measures, amid other things. Mr. Whitten wants others to sign up for inspections, not just him. Mr. Nylen asked who will develop the checklist and this opportunity should be used to collect information to release to the public. Discussion regarding scheduling the inspections; any School Committee members can attend. Typically done on or before the 1st day of school. Dr. Blake said the easy answer is to do them next week before school starts, but they couldn't see classrooms in session. Adding people to the building who are not in regular cohorts is not feasible; maybe schedule after school closes for the day. Mr. Whitten suggested Thursday, 9/3/2020, inspecting all 3 buildings on the same day, trying to capture as many members as possible. Mr. Whitten will send a poll to members. The School Committee will meet that night, so the visits could be done before as well. Tri-Board meets on 9/2/2020.

E. VOTE ON STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT PLAN FUNDING 8:22pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

- Additional monies from Chapter 70, prior to pandemic, Student Opportunity Act, for funding available to districts depending on population & need. Each district received X number of dollars. Ipswich rec'd \$49,000, but no funding has yet been received. The state extended deadline for applications. The most recent deadline was this week, our plan was submitted 2 weeks ago. It is very prescriptive to close achievement gaps, focusing on student sub-groups. This plan seeks to help provide additional educational support for higher needs students, with structures in place for students to thrive in remote learning and set up community learning centers to provide support, The deadline was extended again until January, but the School Committee must approve the plan. If this funding does not become available, we could adjust this application later and utilize other COVID-19 funds to support his initiative.

Dr. O'Flynn made a motion to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan as written and presented, Mr. Nylen seconded, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

F. TITLE IX POLICY REVISION 8:26pm

Sara Gilliam, Policy Committee

- Federal Title IX released new regulations requiring changes to ACAB Sexual Harassment policy. New one is a lot more extensive and specific, seven pages of policy versus the original two. MASC wrote a template, then asked school districts to have it vetted by

legal counsel). Copies of original, redlined version, and final are in the folder. School Committee approval of the revised policy is required.

Dr. O’Flynn made a motion to approve the updated Title IX, ACAB Sexual Harassment policy as written and presented, Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS	8:29pm
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- A. VOUCHERS/BILLS All set
- B. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS
 - ATHLETICS has not met
 - BUDGET need to meet, probably not enough time before 8/25 SC meeting
 - OPERATIONS - Onboarding of Ms. Cannon with Mr. Whitten, Mr. Nylen, and Ms. Kneedler went well
 - POLICY - voted on Title IX, meeting on 8/25 to make policy adjustments due to COVID-19, MASC sent memo pointing to all policies needing be changed including specific mask policy, Ms. Gilliam will be attending MASC workshop
 - MUTUAL CONCERNS - not met
- C. WORKING GROUP REPORTS
 - Created Oversight, been meeting since the spring
 - Ended Feoffees Policy
 - Feoffees Report - Mr. Stevens was added
 - Finishing work with Vision 2030
 - Race & Equity (title is still in works) focus on race equity & social justice, how to handle issues, looking at current policies, develop new policies, will meet next week, will be recruiting members from community including students at all levels, staff, faculty, parents, community groups. Will bring conversations/dialog to school committee meetings.
 - No working group on equity between elementary schools, but could tackle at a later date given the amount of work to do already this year. The Elementary Ed Plan was developed from a similar working group 2 years ago. MS document was also developed and will be presented to the school committee soon. Ms. Keedler stated this issue could be addressed in ways other than a working group - because it needs to be addressed - such as bringing people together and listening (School Committee will look at this later in the fall)
- D. LIAISON REPORTS -
 - Birth to 3 - Ms. Gilliam - have not met, will reach out to the director
 - Community Development Plan - Mr. Nylen - Active group working on revision of the goals & vision; draft done, currently revising.
 - Feoffees - Mr. Stevens - nothing new; formally accepted policy for returned funds; meeting quarterly; portfolio has come back nicely since the end of last quarter
 - Ipswich Education Foundation - Ms. Gilliam - will meet 8/24; elected Brian Satter as new treasurer, now has a full board, ready to start new year
 - SEPAC - Ms. Cannon - met today with Dr. Hegedus to discuss anxieties of parents of children on IEPs, lost services due to COVID-19 closure, what to expect this year. Much is still being worked out, but so much good work is going on. “District wide implementation, school wide customization”. Services in all new formats in which children will learn, working with families to make sure they are comfortable, offering

support, proactive outreach that needs to be done, is already being done, will continue to be; testing schedules, early remediation. Possibility of doing ZOOM forum with Dr. Hegedus

- STEAM team - Ms. Gilliam - not met, no showcase this year, will reach out to Ms. Wagner
- Strategic Planning - Mr. Nylan - ZOOM meeting at 7:30am on 8/21 prepping for Tri-Board meeting
- Student Advisory Council - Ms. Kneedler - doesn't usually meet until school year begins, will contact Jonathan Mitchell

E. NEW BUSINESS*

- School Committee next Thursday, 8/30/2020 at 7:00pm, Zoom hybrid
- Tri-Board Meeting at 6:30pm on 9/2/2020 at Town Hall outside (it will be sprayed beforehand). If the tent doesn't work out, it will be held socially distanced in Room A.
- School Committee Meeting on Thursday, 9/3/2020 at 7:00pm, Zoom hybrid
- Mr. Whitten to check on Bean Counting 9/19 posted on a calendar - doesn't believe that was correct.
- Any IPS warrant articles? One is a placeholder for budget adjustment (may not have info from state) in time. If not, it will be on May warrant. 2nd warrant article has to do with releasing overlay funds - where change will be taken to fund budget (mechanics of bookkeeping - net 0 change.) If there are any others, please get to Ms. Cuff; warrant articles are due next Friday 8/28/2020.

IV. CONSENT	8:59pm
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A. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Nylan made a motion to approve the August 6, 2020 School Committee Open Session minutes, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

V. ADJOURNMENT	9:00pm
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Mr. Nylan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the hand vote was unanimous in favor.