

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM
(School Committee Members only)

Present: Mr. Whitten, Mr. Nylan, Ms. Gilliam, Ms. Cannon, Ms. Kneedler, Mr. Stevens, Dr. O'Flynn, Dr. Blake, and Ms. Cuff

I. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - Mr. Whitten, Chair

6:35pm

Ms. Gilliam made a motion to meet in executive session, seconded by Ms.Kneedler, and the roll call vote passed unanimously in favor.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

7:06pm

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT - Mr. Stevens

ANNOUNCEMENTS - TriBoard Meeting next week on 9/2 at 6:30pm in tent at Town Hall, School Committee meeting on 9/3 @ 7pm

CITIZENS' COMMENTS - none

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Dr. Blake would like to recognize the Negotiating Team team. It was a long 2 weeks to reach the tentative agreement to support staff for this school year, which will be voted on this evening; IEA to vote to ratify next week. Many thanks to Chub Whitten, Sara Gilliam, Emily Cannon, IEA President Becky Slawson, Lowell Murray, and Laurie (Fabiszewski) Colitti for their hard work.
- Thank you to the Administrative Team for working hard to get things at the schools squared away for teachers to report on Monday.
- Today was New Teacher Orientation, this year held via a special Zoom meeting. Mr. Whitten stated it was a beautiful, refreshing moment, impactful.

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

7:10pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent

- Strategic Planning Working Group met
- Survey data review (class sizes, # of students, transportation data)
- Attended MASS legal PD Center (re: different leaves under COVID guidelines)
- Attended IEF Board meeting w/Ms. Gilliam
- Numerous conversations with legal counsel re: MOU
- Met with Ms. Cuff re: grants
- Met with Ms. Wagner re: PD offerings
- Impact bargaining & planning to develop MOU took a lot of time, meeting every day including today
- Oversight Committee met
- Policy Subcommittee
- Met with the Race & Equity/Social Justice Working Group
- Met with Administrators several times
- Met with nurses to discuss the health/safety presentation
- Met with the Facilities Director
- Great new teacher orientation via Zoom (9 staff members) to discuss district, community. It was well received. They usually meet in person with all departments, but will be able to do it next week once the doors open.

Ms. Gilliam made a motion to add an item to the agenda for this evening (Vote on MOU with IEA), seconded by Ms. Cannon.

B. VOTE ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Ms. Gilliam made a motion to accept the MOU (w/condition of ratification), Ms. Cannon seconded, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor with 2 abstentions.

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

A. RETURN TO LEARN UPDATE

7:15pm

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

- Total case count is 86, less than 5 in last 14 days, .74% positivity rate last 14 days
- Facilities
 - Summertime cleanup completed, buildings look really good, floors look better than ever
 - Ready to open except removal of furniture, which will be done next week
 - Storage trailers being delivered next week
 - Adding secondary hand sanitizers throughout buildings
 - Adding paper towel dispensers, disconnecting hand dryers
 - Doyon replacement of exhaust fans & air handler
 - HEPA filters/air purifiers - estimated delivery 9/8-9/14
 - UV disinfection lights on order, expected prior to 9/14
 - Tents ordered, installation next week
- Transportation
 - Met w/Salter today, #s by 4pm Wed 9/2 (Cohorts figured out in Aspen to pull lists next week); families needed to commit to riding bus since assigned seats.
 - Routes will not be in newspapers; as soon as established, routes w/times will be posted on District website.
 - Handling differently this year; adding a student after seats are assigned will cause the entire bus to shift (back to front loading). Will establish a waiting list immediately, then look at ridership, may be able to make adjustments.
 - No final decision as to bus monitors
- Schools
 - Doyon (continue to interview for school nurse, hired one in March then shut down, decided not to take position; offered to another candidate last week - did not take; continuing to interview. There is also a "float nurse" position open. 3 TAs, SpecEd teacher, and regular ed teacher positions are vacant; reassigning teachers/staff to balance remote learning; 60+ SpecEd students need space, looking at class sizes, staffing, & traffic patterns
 - Winthrop: reviewed survey data, called parents who did not respond to get status. Made adjustments to all 4 schools to balance cohorts. ID vulnerable students in need of additional days of service. Looked at # staffing models at both elementary schools - will look different at each school. Teaching teams currently working on teaching structure. Moving furniture, taping floors to maintain social distancing.
 - IMS - divided into 2 clusters at each grade level w/4 cohorts. Schedule keeps cohorts together throughout the day minimizing exposure. Longer blocks. MS staff very pleased with schedule. Plan to use 8 days for collaboration on curriculum, assess social/emotional needs, gaps.
 - IHS - taking lead on childcare issues (6 teachers interested) - working on location for staff's children to be held until they need to go to elementary school. We cannot accommodate children of teachers for 4 days, purely because of a space issue of expanding cohorts between regular classes, SpecEd students needing

to be here for their services; but are trying to work out a way to accommodate. Student schedules will be ready mid-week, working to simplify view since it is a block schedule, teachers to coplan, PD opportunities in 8 days

- Professional Development
 - Agreed to split time with teachers (not strictly administration driven) to work collaboratively in teams, organize, plan lessons for both remote & in-person, specialized trainings (health & safety).
 - Working through welcome back address using Zoom webinar (Monday at 9am); administrators have planned their own activities in buildings. Parts of day on Monday & Tuesday, 1 building at a time will meet in PAC. In between sessions, custodial staff will clean & sanitize the PAC.
 - Purchased PD video series around remote & hybrid learning models, developed our own opportunities (staff will receive a grid from which to choose 8-10 required hours of PD within 8 days: preselection process, select PD, then reflection & checkout. Great opportunities for staff pinpointing what they feel they need to work on, so we have expectation they are ready to go if pivot to remote. Amy Gregory put together her own video & resources and worked with Ipswich Public Library as well. Emma Pass will present on 9/11 - video sessions of culture & linguistic diversity issues in district - at each different level.
 - State update - mandatory flu shots for all students Kindergarten through college. Needed clarification - need to be immunized by 12/31/20 unless medical exemption. Will be messaging out to community that it will be encouraged. CVS only immunizes above age 14. Tuesday, Dr. Blake received an email from CVS Health to do clinics in school systems, covered by health insurance - option available to us should the school committee choose to do it. Beverly Hospital mandated flu shots or mask wearing over the last several years. It is very important. Every pediatrician should have a vaccine readily available. District immunization policy states that students be vaccinated against regular and other communicable diseases as DPH mandates. The school committee wants Dr. Blake to pursue a flu clinic including uninsured; children are all covered by MassHealth.
 - 9/14 open school to students
 - Managing expectations for 1st day of school (in person and remote). Over the next 2 weeks, we will be working on them, but they will come directly from school principals as they are all different. Some grade levels will be bringing in small groups into the buildings during the next 8 days. 1st days of school for each cohort will be reviewing the required safety and health training (handwashing, mask wearing, etc)
 - Security, especially with outside learning, has remained important and there have been conversations with the police department for presence on campuses - will continue to look at it. Dr. O'Flynn asked if campus can be closed to non-students including track & tennis courts during school day. Dr. Blake responded that under these conditions, they can be closed and it was already done at Winthrop School (dog walkers) during the summer when ESY was held outside.
- Building Inspections: Ms. Kneedler/Doyon, Mr. Stevens/Winthrop, Ms. Gilliam & Mr. Nylen/IMS-IHS on 9/2 and 9/3. Mr. Whitten will reach out to Chris Rais (schedule at the end of the day so as not to extend his day).

B. ATHLETICS UPDATE

7:55pm

Tom Gallagher, Athletic Director

- Vote next week
- Overview of traditional fall sports schedule

- MIAA fall sports moved to 9/14 during summer; MIAA changed to Friday 9/18 as fall sports opening. MIAA formed COVID task force to get athletics up and running. Recommendations on 8/19, created a 4th sports season.
- Fall 9/18-11/20, Winter 11/30-2/21, Fall 2 2/22-4/25, Spring 4/26-7/3
- Determined no fall state tournaments, but others may be potential for last 3 seasons
- DESE & MIAA following EEAA guidance so created HIGH, MODERATE, LOW
 - HIGH: no games (football/comp cheer moved to Fall 2)
 - MODERATE: games with modifications - little or no contact - field hockey, soccer, volleyball
 - LOW: games with modifications - usually socially distanced by nature and no contact - golf, cross country
 - Presenting recommendations next week, with MIAA Board vote on 9/2
 - Recently started meeting w/ Cape Ann League principals & ADs
- Votes for Remote, Green, Yellow designations require school committee approval before participating. MIAA has not heard anything from remote only schools.
- Registration numbers are slow - well behind where usually are, probably because of 1st communications. No discussion from CAL to move all to Fall 2 like Northeastern Conference.
- Mr. Whitten thanked Mr. Gallagher for his presentation..

C. FINANCIAL UPDATE

8:06pm

Joanne Cuff, Director of Finance and Operations

- Close Out of FY '20 - despite unbelievable circumstances, appropriated budget closed at 0; were able to move \$1.9m million into Stabilization Fund. Revolving & gift accounts were positive cash balances. We were able to prepay a small number of tuitions. Funds moved to stabilization represented about 58% savings in personnel/benefits, 42% savings in supplies, materials, utilities. Took fairly from every department. Revolving & Gift Accounts: quarterly negative shifts in athletic fees, EDP tuition, and preschool tuition because of refunds due to COVID closure. Change in insurance proceeds account of \$61,000 because Chris was able to do HVAC system maintenance/upgrades and access funds. New Food Services Manager Meghan Persson did a wonderful job, and through 1st three quarters of the year, had developed a large profitability margin prior to closure, after closure there was no income to provide for food during closure. Despite that, the overall annual change is -\$13,000, quite good under circumstances. This year, unpaid balances were only \$1,995 - one of the lowest in many years.
- FY '21 - been busy establishing new lines & purchasing related to COVID response. Hired a new AP/PR clerk. Savings in health insurance: MIAA offered credit for health insurance costs for July. Town Manager advises that we put the warrant article off until May because we won't have the figures. Town auditors were in for 2 weeks - she thinks we did very well. Tracking COVID expenditures, briefly reviewed COVID relief funding document - already expended FEMA \$61,362 and Cares Act \$367,910, grant awards in place and will start to pay for those items; to date between budgeted items & expenditures there are \$982,000 worth of COVID expenditures covered from grants and Cares Act.
- Will meals served outside of school be funded after start of school in September? Petitioned Congress for waivers, but have not heard whether they have been granted. We have been receiving funds for this during closure. COVID meals expenses so far this year have been covered by the federal government. This would have been detrimental to the system if we did not receive these funds. It is hard to project if food services will continue - not known if parents will use the service. Costs may be higher or lower given that meals would be premade/packaged and we will need to provide meals for days not in school.

D. TOWN STRATEGIC PLAN WORKING GROUP UPDATE 8:19pm

Carl Nylan, School Committee

- Reviewed document that will be presented at 9/2 Tri-Board Meeting
- Looked at each investment area, what cost benefits are (schools: override, school elementary buildings) - benefits of passing, impacts of failing
- Need comments tonight or before Monday
- 6 year override cycle - Override FY 2023 & FY 2029, Building Project FY 2024 feasibility study & 2026 big project (optimistic). Because of previous project, will be funded by town.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS 8:27pm

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS - none

B. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- POLICY - Ms. Giliam
 - Met on Tuesday - draft of EBCFA face covering policy originated from MASC template and teacher request. Elementary school principals agreed that everyone over age of 2 must be masked, policy was heavily vetted. Face covering should cover nose, mouth, chin (no valves, gators, bandanas, etc.) and tied to dress code policy.
 - Questions/suggestions: a. 2nd paragraph "face coverings must be worn by . . ." should say ALL INDIVIDUALS in school buildings " b. Clarification about the statement regarding specifics at building level exemptions (MASC template policy) lists why individuals would be excluded from mask wearing. Administrators with nurses will make the determination. If applying for exemption, must have physician order. Clarify language regarding outdoor activities to "as specified in the Return to Learn document." Could be issues with mask wearing, so families should reach out to building principals for solutions.

Mr. Stevens made a motion to approve the EBCFA: Face Covering policy, Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the vote passed unanimously in favor.

C. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

- Race & Equity Social Justice - Ms. Cannon
 - Decided to reach out to the community to determine what is missing, what should come out of it, and reached out to educators, community members to form goals.

D. LIAISON REPORTS

- IEF is willing to assist however it is able regarding financial needs for back-to-school
- Birth to 3 will meet mid-year
- STEAM will meet beginning October - plans for a virtual showcase this year

IV. CONSENT 8:42pm

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. O'Flynn made a motion to approve the 8/20/2020 Open Session meeting minutes, Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the hand vote passed unanimously in favor.

V. ADJOURNMENT 8:45pm

Dr. O'Flynn, made a motion to adjourn the Open Session Meeting, seconded by Ms. Cannon, and the hand vote passed unanimously in favor.