

Ipswich School Committee  
8/13/20 at 6:00 PM  
Turner Hill Clubhouse, 3 Manor House Lane, Ipswich

1. Call to order at 6:33 PM. Present: Emily Cannon, Sara Gilliam, Pavica Kneedler, Carl Nylén, Hugh O'Flynn, Greg Stevens, Chub Whitten, Brian Blake.

2. School Committee norms - all review them as Chub reads them aloud. Vote to reaffirm the norms is unanimous; the date on the document will be updated and it will be added to the Orientation packet for new members. Brian will ask Heidi or Laura to add them to the website.

3. Reopening plans - all agree that the School Committee will meet weekly until 9/3/20, then see where we are and if the weekly meetings should continue. Brian presents the Reopening plans to the School Committee.

The plan is to be released to all school families today or tomorrow. There will be a Zoom forum on Tuesday, August 18th, for parents, followed by a Zoom meeting with staff. After the families have had a chance to review the plan and ask questions in the forum, they will be asked to commit to a decision about whether or not their children will be attending IPS school this year.

Hugh asks why we are planning to send Pre-K, K and 1st graders 4 days a week but not second graders. Brian says that they are still trying to find a way to make it work, but it is simply a matter of numbers and not having enough space.

EDP is still in a holding pattern for the moment, as well as school sports. Some sports may still be able to run this year. EDP looks doubtful due to the possibility of a "super spreader event" with such a large group of 150 kids together.

There have been two tents ordered to be set up outside of each building and two additional tents to be set up, one at Powderhouse and one on the other side of town, for kids who need additional help outside of their in-school hours. The tents will arrive the week of August 24. They are doing mitigation and spraying for mosquitos to make it safer for outdoor learning - the spraying has already started.

Routine testing of students and staff would be cost prohibitive (\$60,000 for one round of testing for everyone). Ipswich is currently in the green zone with the MDPH and we will monitor that closely.

Emily suggests that separate parent forums are done for each grade level, and Brian says that they will try to figure out a way to do this. Maybe a Zoom webinar? We could pull the questions from the last School Committee meeting chat, answer those to start, and then welcome more questions.

New calendar - Thursday early release days have been removed from the calendar and they are trying to move the PD scheduled for 11/13 to a Wednesday. Could snow days be remote learning days? Discussion of "Blizzard bags" and how they work.

4. School Committee self-assessment - is this the time to do this? Brian suggests that we bring in Dorothy from MASC to discuss roles and responsibilities of the School Committee vs. the Superintendent. The feeling is that it is worth doing a self-assessment, possibly at another retreat/workshop session instead of trying to fit it into a regular School Committee meeting. We could use the MASC one as a template and have the Operations sub-committee review and modify it for our use.

5. School Committee Goals - review of last year's goals: the budget goal was met, Vision 2030 is still going (delayed due to COVID-19), communications goal made good progress. 2 out of 3 "Meet and Greet" were done, that last canceled due to the pandemic. More newsletters were done than had been planned. The website has been largely updated and the meeting packets are now available on the website. We still need to work on expanding our social media presence. The school facilities group/goal turned into operation oversight (due to pandemic). Most goals were met, they were about to reevaluate whether our goals/wants in elementary school(s) are still the same.

Discussion of a possible Community Engagement working group - invite different groups into discussion in a grassroots process. The COVID-19 crisis has heightened and sharpened certain topics. Outreach groups: how is remote learning going for you? Work towards building and repairing relationships to help when we reenter the MSBA process.

The three goal areas we will focus on in the 2020-21 school year will be budget, Vision 2030, and communication.

6. Working groups and sub-committees - review of the assignments to sub-committees and liaison positions. Working groups for the year ahead to include: Feoffees report, Vision 2030, Reopening oversight, and Race and Equity. The Race and Equity WG should include members of the community, teachers, and students, and should include a review of all policies which touch on these issues, as well as a larger discussion of these issues in our schools, community, and the world.

7. Adjourned at 9:00 PM.