

**Mission**

Ipswich Public Schools aspires to empower ALL students to be global citizens who are effective communicators, analytical 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.

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021  
6:30 PM  
MIDDLE/HIGH ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**I. OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. O'Flynn called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Present: Dr. O'Flynn, Mr. Whitten, Ms. Stevens, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Cannon, Ms. Eliot and Mr. Poirier

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools and Bill Frangiamore, Interim Director of Finance and Operations

- *Motion to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purposes: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**II. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**III. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

**Returned to open session at 7:22 PM**

**A. ELECTION OF IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
CHAIRPERSON, VICE CHAIRPERSON, AND SECRETARY**

- *Motion to nominate Mr. Whitten as the School Committee Chair was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Kneedler.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- *Motion to nominate Mr. Stevens as the School Committee Vice Chair was made by Mr. Whitten and seconded by Ms. Kneedler.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- *Motion to nominate Dr. Blake as the School Committee Secretary was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Ms. Kneeder.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

Mr. Whitten read the District Mission Statement

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, July 15th at 7:00 PM
- The School Committee Retreat will be held on Tuesday, August 10th

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

There are none at this time.

**SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Mr. Whitten began by reading the names of all district staff that retired this school year. He then thanked Mr. Frangiamore for his work this year as the Interim Director of Finance and Operations.

<b>IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS</b>
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**B. FEOFFEE DISTRIBUTION CHECK PRESENTATION**

Mr. Stevens notified the Committee that the disbursement check from the Feoffees had been delivered to Central Office. He shared that the district was very fortunate and appreciative of the Feoffees. This year's distribution amount was just under \$900,000 thanks to the function of the management of the funds and the conservative distribution over the years. Should funds go unspent, the Feoffees have allowed the district to return those funds and access them in years going forward.

**C. IPSWICH WATERSHED ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION**

Patrick Lynch, Director of Policy and Planning for the Ipswich River Watershed Association, presented information on two initiatives the association is working on.

In a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, the Ipswich River Watershed Association is offering unlimited use of their canoes and kayaks for free. This is a little known resource for families both in and around Ipswich that the association would like to broadcast to a greater audience. Memberships are free for any person interested.

The association is also working on prioritizing growing their education program to include year-round education curriculum and services. The hope is to educate the public about the opportunities of the Ipswich River. The association would like to find ways to connect to the schools and work collaboratively with them on this initiative.

Dr. Blake asked Mr. Lynch to share information on the paddling membership with him so he can then forward that information to the district. He also encouraged Mr. Lynch to connect with Tracy Wagner and the building principals directly to discuss educational opportunities. Ms. Cannon also suggested reaching out to the Extended Day Program Director.

Mr. Whitten felt this was a welcomed opportunity for diverse populations who do not otherwise have opportunities to connect to the river.

#### **D. APPROVAL OF BENCH DEDICATION AT WINTHROP**

School Resource Officer Joe Perna was seeking approval to place a permanent bench at Winthrop School dedicated to Howie Berman. Mr. Berman has recently retired after serving 18 years as the crossing guard at Winthrop School.

- *Motion to approve the permanent placement of a bench at Winthrop School dedicated to Howie Berman was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Dr. O'Flynn.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **E. PAINE GRANT COMMITTEE NEW MEMBER APPROVAL**

A new Paine Grant Committee member application was submitted by Ted Spinale. Heather Leonard, current chair of the Paine Grant Committee, also submitted an application to continue her work on the Committee.

- *Motion to approve Ted Spinale as the Secondary Parent member on the Paine Grant Committee was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Dr. O'Flynn.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- *Motion to reappoint Heather Leonard to the Paine Grant Committee was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Mr. Stevens.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **F. WILLIAM PAINE ENHANCEMENT GRANT APPROVAL**

Paine Grant Committee Chair, Heather Leonard, began her presentation by thanking the volunteer members of the committee for their time reviewing and carefully considering each grant application. She then reviewed the Paine Grant allocation for FY22 which totaled \$656,454. The total requested amount was roughly \$670,000 and the total amount approved was roughly \$653,400.

Before presenting each grant for approval, Ms. Leonard reviewed the Feoffees Mission Statement and purpose of the Paine Grants. Ms. Leonard then outlined the process to which grants are reviewed and sent to the School Committee for approval. Prior to their first meeting, all grant committee members are trained on the role and purpose of the grant program. Applications are submitted and then committee members utilize a common rubric to evaluate. Any questions are forwarded to applicants. All grant applicants are then asked to present their proposal to the Paine Grant Committee. The committee meets for one final meeting to review notes and make final recommendations to the School Committee.

Ms. Leonard then presented each grant for approval by the School Committee.

- Middle School/High School Outdoor Recreation Space
  - Submitted by Sean Fitzgerald, Tom Gallagher, Jake Patterson, Alan Laroche and Jeff Carovillano
  - Total Requested Amount: \$192,500
  - Purpose: This is a joint project between the middle school and high school staff. We are looking to create an outdoor recreation area on the middle/high school campus with multiple components involved. The components include: a basketball court, four-square

courts, multi-purpose wall for wall ball (lacrosse, tennis, handball) and a gazebo with tables that can be used as both an outdoor cafeteria and teaching space.

There was some discussion about the size of the outdoor space and whether it would interfere with fields and track.

- *Motion to approve the MS/HS Outdoor Recreation Space Paine Grant was made by Ms. Kneedler and seconded by Ms. Eliot.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Winthrop Flexible Seating
  - Submitted by Lauren Gouzie and Marty Daignault
  - Total Amount Requested: \$31,659
  - Purpose: Flexible seating and learning is an adaptation of classroom furniture and furnishings that provide students motor input, sensory relief, and choice.

There was discussion about the lifespan of the furniture and if it could be used in a new building. The furniture is meant to be flexible and collaborative and could fit in other spaces. Some furniture with softer materials may have a shorter lifespan.

- *Motion to approve the Winthrop Flexible Seating Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Place-Based Learning
  - Submitted by Kathy McMahon on behalf of the building principals
  - Total Amount Requested: \$108,000
  - Propose: To provide continued funding for a wide variety of place-based learning experiences that offer physical exercise, stewardship of natural resources, cultural connections, and historical understanding. The rise of transportation costs and the lack of budgeted funds for field trips can create barriers for students and families. Funds from this grant open these valuable learning opportunities to all students of the Ipswich Schools.

This grant has been requested and approved in past years. Due to restrictions with the pandemic, not all funds were spent from last year's grant.

- *Motion to approve the Place-Based Learning Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- College Bootcamp
  - Submitted by Justine May and Claire Powers
  - Total Amount Requested: \$12,250
  - Purpose: This camp has run at Ipswich High School for the past five years, for three mornings in early August. This year, due to the changing landscape of college admissions, we are proposing to extend the camp to five days. The camp provides time,

support, expert insight, and advice to rising seniors, allowing them to complete the Common Application and develop and refine their college essays.

This grant has been approved in years past. The program will be offered and accessible to all students.

- *Motion to approve the College Bootcamp Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Kneeder.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Secondary Science Labs
  - Submitted by Kathy McMahon, Tracy Wagner and Jonathan Mitchell
  - Total Amount Requested: \$16,500
  - Purpose: Bringing in a consultant to provide a design recommendation to update IMS and IHS Science labs with the goal of outfitting learning spaces to meet the need.

This grant is to work with a consultant to identify the needs of a science lab and is a result of feedback from the most recent NEASC accreditation review. Any future construction costs could be incorporated into the Capital Fund or in a Paine Grant.

- *Motion to approve the Secondary Science Labs Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Ipswich Middle School Writing
  - Submitted by Kathy McMahon and Tracy Wagner
  - Total Amount Requested: \$30,580
  - Purpose: This grant will provide Literacy Professional Development & Coaching, Units of Study (Writer's Workshop) curriculum for the IMS Humanities team, and Materials for IMS students and teachers to use to enhance writing curriculum pilot.

This grant will help to align the elementary school and middle school in the area of writing.

- *Motion to approve the Ipswich Middle School Writing Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Understanding Higher Education
  - Submitted by Claire Powers
  - Total Amount Requested: \$13,000
  - Purpose: This proposal would fund a partnership between Ipswich High School and North Shore Community College to offer a Dual Enrollment class, at Ipswich High School. Students would take the course during the school day as a scheduled semester-long class in the spring of 2022. They would earn honors high school and college credit for the course, which is counted as part of the MassTransfer block. A North Shore professor would co-teach the class along with a high school counselor.

- *Motion to approve the Understanding Higher Education Paine Grant was made by Ms. Kneedler and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

## **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- **Creating Innovators**
  - Submitted by Kathy McMahon, Tracy Wagner, Amy Gregory and Jonathan Mitchell
  - Total Amount Requested: \$93,611
  - Purpose: This grant will fund the innovation space (the IMS "Zoom Room"), personnel (a Computer Science Coach for grades 6-8 to lead inquiry-based computer science curriculum), digital tools and equipment, and extra-curriculars (Esports) IPS Secondary Schools.

Ms. Leonard provided clarification on the Computer Science Coach position, stating that the staff member would not act in a teaching capacity. The role would be funded for one year through the grant. The staff member would be responsible for working with kids to learn to code, possibly facilitating an E-Sports program, along with a variety of other job responsibilities. The staff member would be working during the school year and helping general education teachers facilitate the code.org program. If successful, the middle school may look to incorporate a computer science specialist into their budget in future years.

Dr. Blake further explained that this idea came from what was learned over the pandemic. The room would have a variety of uses relating to computer science.

Dr. O'Flynn emphasized that the Committee should look rigorously at staffing through the mechanism of Paine Grants. He hopes that if this is a successful year, the district would look at incorporating this position into the budget prior to the override.

- *Motion to approve the Creating Innovators Paine Grant was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Ms. Kneedler.*

## **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- **Poet in Residence**
  - Submitted by Heather Chang and Carla Panciera
  - Total Amount Requested: \$14,050
  - Purpose: There are tentative plans with Mass Poetry to identify and collaborate with a Massachusetts poet to be a "poet in residence" at Ipswich High School next year. This poet would meet at least 3 or 4 times throughout the second semester with any English classes where the teacher has signed up to participate. Additionally we would offer an after school poetry club during the month of April to give students extra opportunities to immerse themselves in the poetry writing and reading experience.

- *Motion to approve the Poet in Residence Paine Grant was made by Ms. Kneedler and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

## **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- **Composer in Residence**
  - Submitted by Michael Coelho and Marissa Scarano
  - Total Amount Requested: \$12,750

- Purpose: This grant would have a musical piece commissioned by a nationally recognized composer specially for Ipswich Public Schools. This piece would be written to support the various levels (elementary, MS, HS) of orchestra, allow students to meet and learn from a composer, and perform this piece for their community.

There was a discussion regarding the ownership rights to the piece that was composed. While it would be the intellectual property of the owner, it is the expectation that the district could use the piece indefinitely.

- *Motion to approve the Composer in Residence Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Eliot.*

### **Role Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Artist In Residence
  - Submitted by Gerry Dolan and Virginia Eaton
  - Total Amount Requested: \$53,491
  - Purpose: This grant would fund a position to support additional Visual and Media arts classes at the Ipswich High School level (needed due to significant increase in course requests.) This position could help to support and repair the enormous content gap experienced at the elementary schools level where art classes were essentially cancelled due to the pandemic.

This position would be a one year hire, 1.0 FTE to fill a gap due to higher interest in Visual and Media arts programming.

- *Motion to approve the Artist in Residence Paine Grant was made by Ms. Kneedler and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- Tiger Tots Playground
  - Submitted by Meg Finnegan, Trish Kubaska and Elizabeth Murray
  - Total Amount Requested: \$15,000
  - Purpose: To fund the development of a fenced splinter-free playground area located on the Ipswich Middle/High School.

It was explained that 76% of children who attend the Tiger Tots program enroll in Ipswich Public Schools. Mr. Whitten felt this grant supported the students because Tiger Tots helps qualified teachers remain in the district. The Tiger Tots program plans to fundraise for the remaining balance needed to fund the project.

Dr. O'Flynn chose to recuse himself from this vote because a family member is currently employed by Tiger Tots.

- *Motion to approve the Tiger Tots Playground Paine Grant was made by Mr. Stevens and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 abstention.**

- IPS Website
  - Submitted by Keith Borgen and Amy Gregory
  - Total Amount Requested: \$77,600
  - Purpose: This grant would fund working groups to collect information about community needs, pay for a redesign, and pay for the annual cost of hosting a website.

The Paine Grant Committee unanimously voted to not support this project because they felt it was not student-facing and that the annual fees should be part of the operating budget. Ultimately, there were too many questions about the need and what the right steps are to approve this type of grant.

The School Committee disagreed with the Paine Grant Committee's perspective and felt that a better website could connect families and make information more accessible. The proposal was in direct response to ongoing negative feedback about the current website.

It was decided that Keith and Amy would come before the School Committee at the next meeting to discuss the grant proposal and answer any outstanding questions.

The vote on this grant was tabled until the next meeting.

Ms. Leonard ended her presentation by sharing the open seats that need to be filled on the Paine Grant Committee. She encouraged the community to apply.

There was some discussion about having a presentation on the Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grants at an upcoming meeting.

#### **G. MOTION AND VOTE ON THE SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT**

Mr. Whitten reviewed the Superintendent's contract request that was previously discussed in executive session. The request included the following:

- 2% salary adjustment
  - 2% salary increase
  - \$2,500 added to his annuity
  - 1 year contract extension
- *Motion to approve a 2% salary adjustment, 2% salary increase, \$2,500 added to his annuity and a 1 year contract extension for Dr. Blake was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Mr. Stevens.*

#### **Roll Call**

**The motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 abstention.**

#### **H. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

Prior to Dr. Blake's administrative report, Mr. Frangiamore presented a financial update. He stated that as of June 22nd, there was \$7,000 left in the budget and unencumbered. The Food Services department has a positive balance of \$13,437. He then reviewed the quarterly report, announcing the totals that would be deposited into the Stabilization Fund and Special Education Stabilization Fund.

Dr. Blake shared his schedule in the weeks leading up to tonight's meeting. He reported:

- The school year has ended for all students. Going forward, the biggest challenge will not be learning loss, but focusing on the social and emotional toll that the pandemic has taken on students and staff.

- Joe Gill has been hired as the new Extended Day Program Director. Program registration has been completed and all families will be accommodated in the program. Joe is now in the process of hiring for the upcoming school year and developing the program.
- Cheryl Herrick-Stella, the new Director of Finance and Operations began her transition into the district this week. She will begin working full time on July 6th.
- Work is being done with Tracy Wagner and the elementary school math specialists around the Illustrative Math program. Tracy will present on the program this fall.
- The School Facilities Working Group met with Bill Logue at their most recent meeting to discuss next steps and the community survey.
- The CREST Collaborative held their final Board of Directors meeting.
- The North Shore Superintendent's Round Table met in person for a luncheon and final meeting of the year.
- Negotiations with the teacher's union are ongoing.
- There was a call with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Commissioner.
- Discussions and a review of the ESSER funding took place with Tracy Wagner and Bill Frangiamore.
- The two elementary principals are transitioning out of the buildings and meeting with the new principals to review various subjects prior to leaving.
- There were several end of year events that took place leading up to the end of school.

<b>V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	9:10 PM
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**A. VOUCHERS/BILLS**

All were reviewed and signed.

**B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. **ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE:** Group has not met. No update.
2. **BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE:** Group has not met. No update.
3. **GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES:** Grants were reviewed and approved.
4. **OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE:** Group has not met. No update.
5. **POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE:** Group has not met. No update.
6. **WORKING GROUPS:**
  - **School Facilities:** The group plans to meet with the Town to discuss locations. Next steps include a community survey and outreach.
  - **Race and Equity:** While this group has not formally met, a group is forming in Ipswich that may be looking for a School Committee liaison in the future. The future of this working group is unknown at this point. Policy issues should go back to the Policy Subcommittee and more attainable goals for this working group should be established before moving forward.
7. **LIAISONS:**
  - **SEPAC:** The group held its final meeting of the school year. After an exhausting year for special education, they are looking forward to a more robust schedule in the fall.
  - **Ipswich Education Foundation:** There is a meeting scheduled.
8. **NEW BUSINESS:** None at this time.

<b>VI. CONSENT</b>	
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**A. CONSENT AGENDA**

- *Motion to approve the School Committee Open Session meeting minutes from June 2, 2021 was made by Mr. Whitten and seconded by Ms. Kneedler.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

<b>VII. ADJOURNMENT</b>
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- *Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 PM was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Ms. Cannon.*

**Roll Call**

**The motion passed unanimously.**