

## 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

MS/HS Ensemble Room

134 High Street, Ipswich

Thursday, November 18, 2021

6:00 PM

Link to watch live: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhKXDhjXnmY>

## AGENDA

### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Whitten called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Present: Mr. Whitten, Dr. O'Flynn, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Eliot, Mr. Poirier and Ms. Cannon (arrived at 6:11 PM while in executive session)

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools and Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Operations

### 2. Executive Session:

- *Motion to enter into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purposes: (3) to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the Ipswich Educators' Association because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and (1) to discuss complaints brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (OML Complaint – I. Josephson) was made by Mr. Whitten and seconded by Dr. O'Flynn.*

### Roll Call

**The motion passed unanimously in favor**

### 3. Return to Open Session

After a brief recess, Mr. Whitten called the meeting back to order at 7:03 PM.

Caroline Jepsen, High School Student Representative, joined the meeting.

### 4. Reading of the District Mission Statement

Ms. Jepsen read the mission statement.

### 5. Announcements:

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, December 2nd in the MS/HS ensemble room.
- The following subcommittees will be meeting:
  - Mutual Concerns: Tuesday, November 23rd at 5:00 PM in the MS/HS guidance conference room
  - Negotiations: Tuesday, November 30th at 3:45 PM in the MS/HS ensemble room
- Students will be dismissed according to the following schedule on Wednesday, November 24th:
  - Middle and High School: 11:20 AM
  - Elementary Schools: 11:55 AM
- Schools and district offices will be closed Thursday, November 25th and Friday, November 26th

## 6. Special Acknowledgements

Dr. Blake acknowledged Catherine Morris, art teacher at the high school, for launching the “Art All Over” project. This ongoing project will highlight student work on display throughout Ipswich.

Dr. Blake also acknowledged Lori Lafrance who is the recipient of the Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators.

Dr. Blake also reviewed the high school sports teams that were playing in the postseason.

## 7. Citizens’ Comments

Ipswich Town Moderator, Tom Murphy, addressed the committee to ask if they had given consideration to putting a non-binding question regarding Bialek Park as a potential site for a school building project on the ballot, rather than on the warrant for Town Meeting. He felt that more people would vote by ballot than attend Town Meeting, leading to a more accurate barometer as to whether the Town is in favor of releasing the park.

## 8. High School Student Representative Report

Ms. Jepsen gave a report on the happenings through the high school which included the following:

- Volleyball, field hockey and boys cross country were all heading into postseason competitions.
- A review of the clubs and extracurriculars activities taking place
- The symphony orchestra rehearsed in-person together for the first time since 2019.

## 9. Presentations

### A. School Improvement Plans- Doyon, Winthrop, IMS, IHS

Dr. Blake began the presentation by reviewing the Strategy for Student Success document created by the Vision 2030 Working Group. This document outlines how the School Improvement Plans feed into the overall District Improvement Plan.

Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, then reviewed the Strategy for District Improvement document. She explained that the administrative team looked at the document through a fresh lens after the past year of pandemic learning. After some edits to both the content and formatting, they believe the new version is a strong match to the district’s needs. She then went on to review the Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Theory of Action. Within the document, she explained there were main objectives with connecting priorities. Each priority has action steps associated with it. A noted change was the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) objective. The original improvement document included a “Global Awareness” objective, however the group felt that exchanging that for a DEI objective was more aligned with district needs. Of note, this is the first year that both elementary schools are using the same action steps in their improvement plans.

### Paul F. Doyon Memorial School:

Sarah Goodale-O’Brien, principal, shared the school’s Mission Statement. She explained that this was year one of a two year plan.

#### Goal 1:

The social emotional health of students will continue to be at the center of instruction and community support at Doyon. We recognize that the pandemic has affected our students in ways that we may not fully understand. In order for students to pursue academic development, social-emotional needs must be met and faculty will pursue a continued examination of the social emotional curriculum.

This goal aligns to District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

#### Action steps for Goal 1:

- Teaching staff will continue to implement and reflect upon current and potential SEL programs, such as Responsive Classroom and ‘Think Social!’.
- The Student Support Team will modify and enhance interventions at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels, and special educators will continue in the co-teaching model to support students, including those receiving Tier 3 interventions.
- Positive Behavioral Support models will be investigated, and Doyon community members, faculty, and parents alike, will engage in discussion regarding the behavioral and developmental growth of students.

- An updated policy, with a goal to positively reinforce behavior, and avoid bullying, will be established at Doyon.
- Implementation of Professional Development opportunities for all staff, in pursuit of their own social-emotional health and a positive school climate, conducive for professional growth.

#### Goal 2:

Faculty will investigate the current schedule by conducting data analysis of how academic time is allocated at each grade level. Feedback on schedule formats and adjusted time on learning will inform a new schedule, more conducive to student needs and innovative learning, including opportunities for interdisciplinary and personalized learning.

This goal aligns with District Objective 2: Creating innovative learning environments.

#### Action steps for Goal 2:

- Faculty will use data to inform instruction in reading and in math, working to adjust the schedule accordingly.
- The Doyon faculty will study the effectiveness of writing across the curriculum. The faculty will comprehensively examine current writing methods and time spent on instruction.
- Continued examination of the IM math curriculum as it relates to scheduling and time on learning. Teachers will continue to encourage students to explore math identities and productive struggles.

#### Goal 3:

As a community, we will continue to embrace the cultural, ethnic, and gender identities of our students and families. We will continue to develop ways to honor identities and amplify marginalized voices within the school. Exposure to cultures, ethnicities, and other diverse backgrounds will be continuously integrated into the curriculum, and teachers will explore creative ways to build awareness of diversity.

This goal aligns with District Objective 3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### Action steps for Goal 3:

- Opportunities for professional development regarding Doyon's growing English Language Learners will be established.
- The Doyon community will embrace the consistent implementation of the World Language Curriculum. Exposure to the Spanish language and Hispanic culture will be increased throughout the school day and accompanying holidays or cultural traditions will be integrated.
- Previous work on understanding and using multicultural literature will be a focus with all teachers. Programming and resources will be created to assist classroom teachers in making connections between the MA Social Studies standards and the core curriculum.
- Continued exploration and integration of field trips and in-school presentations will be designed to enrich students' cultural experiences.

#### Goal 4:

At the Doyon School, we recognize that communication and collaboration are at the core of all educational strategies. The last decade has spurred an increase in connection through educational technology, social media, and other communication platforms. The faculty at Doyon will investigate current communication strategies with the intention of increasing family partnerships and student engagement. Furthermore, community collaboration will inform group efforts designed to improve our physical spaces for optimal learning.

This goal aligns with District Objective 1 and 2: Meeting the needs of all students and creating innovative learning environments.

#### Action steps for Goal 4:

- Enhance consistent and cohesive communication techniques in the form of newsletters, possible social media narratives, and sharing of curricular information.
- Outdoor education and playground Initiatives
- Enhancement of Student Leadership Team (SLT) in grades 4 and 5 to create numerous leadership opportunities, supporting community efforts.
- Community-based art projects

#### Resources and Supports:

- Positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Student support team
- Responsive classroom
- District DEI Committee
- Lynn Lyons
- COMPASS
- Teacher mentors
- FRIES

Questions and comments:

Ms. O'Brien talked about preventative measures she hopes to implement to avoid bullying at school. She clarified that these action steps would help to reinforce positive behavior and set expectations for staff and students in hopes to prevent bullying from occurring.

Ms. O'Brien, along with Ms. Wagner also discussed the elementary World Language Program. While each elementary school is learning a different language, the curriculum was designed and written collaboratively by the two World Language teachers. From a standards perspective, World Language at the elementary level is focused more on cultural awareness and less on the acquisition of a new language.

Winthrop School

Amy Sullivan, principal, explained that Winthrop was in year two of a two year plan. She then shared the school's Mission Statement.

Goal 1:

Employ a variety of assessment methods to identify instructional weaknesses caused by disrupted learning.

This goal aligns with District Objectives 1 and 2: Meeting the needs of all students and creating innovative learning environments.

Action steps for Goal 1:

- In-depth data analysis of student performance across grade levels.
- Develop consistent tiered supports for all students to address needs.
- Use of progress monitoring tools.
- Create a budget that supports academic interventions using all available resources.
- Educate parents about support resources and processes as students are referred for tiered supports.

Resources and supports:

- Revise RTI procedures and student intervention plans
- Analyze data to determine 'acceleration' areas
- Align instruction with MTSS- Tiered Levels of Support
- Create classroom schedules with intervention blocks school-wide
- Explore tutoring models

Goal 2:

Create a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters caring relationships between and among adults and peers, provides emotional check-ins and strengthens self-regulation strategies.

This goal aligns with District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

Action steps for Goal 2:

- Develop routines and structures for continuous communication between teachers and the mental health team.
- Provide SEI learning opportunities in response to stress or negative behavior.
- Explore social coaching opportunities

- Offer time for self-regulation strategies; such as, mindfulness, physical exercise
- and reflection
- Support initiatives that address basic needs; such as food support, clothing swap.
- Use communication platforms to post resources for families
- Explore Family Programming

Resources and supports:

- Reestablish weekly Mobile Mart
- Research PBIS models
- Build student leadership opportunities
- Embed mindfulness practices into daily school life
- Create and post a pamphlet of local resources, programs, and supports for families in need
- Integrate SEI curriculum across all grade levels, teams and practices

Goal 3:

Develop common understanding through the use of shared readings, deliberate discussions, and protocols meant to engage respectfully in productive and challenging conversations about social justice issues.

This goal aligns with District Objective 3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Action steps for Goal 3:

- Establish, broaden, and strengthen communication methods and systems for sharing information.
- Explore various platforms for communication - newsletters, social media, videos, and Winthrop website.
- Brainstorm and plan revised and/or alternative after school programming plans such as ACE which meet the safety requirements of today.

Resources and supports:

- Develop, publicize, and analyze the results of the school council needs assessment survey to inform future goals and action items.
- Unpack History Social Science Framework with a focus on the integration of the national social justice standards.
- Utilize grants to enhance DEI resources, books, special programs and author visits

Goal 4:

Create, strengthen and extend ways in which students, families, and faculty can connect within and among each other.

This goal aligns with District Objective 1, 2 and 3: Meeting the needs of all students; creating innovative learning environments; and building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Action steps for Goal 4:

- Establish, broaden, and strengthen communication methods and systems for sharing information.
- Explore various platforms for communication - newsletters, social media, videos, and Winthrop website.
- Brainstorm and plan revised and/or alternative after school programming plans such as ACE which meet the safety requirements of today.

Resources and supports:

- Enhance translation services for EL families and students; such as, the use of S'more newsletters, Talking Points App, and phone services
- Use videos and pictures to share school happenings
- Provide families with clear and consistent communication and reminders with 'look-aheads' for upcoming events and dates.
- Utilize zoom and/or google meet to enhance and increase parent participation
- Develop and implement before and after school tutoring programs
- Partner with local organizations and families to expand ACE Offerings

Questions and comments:

Ms. Cannon thanked both principals for their work with the students and families in their schools.

Ms. Sullivan talked about the need to hire an additional English Language Learner (ELL) teacher. The position was originally posted for a .5 FTE, but was increased to 1.0 FTE.

### Middle School

Kathy McMahan, principal, shared that the middle school was beginning year one of a two year improvement plan. She then shared the school's Mission Statement.

#### Goal 1:

Ipswich Middle School will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.

This goal aligns with District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

#### Action steps for Goal 1:

- Promote the consistent use of data among staff members by holding regularly scheduled data meetings.
- Work collaboratively with IHS to create a comprehensive transition plan from grade 8 to grade 9.
- Continue to provide support for emotional health among students and staff.

#### Goal 2:

Ipswich Middle School 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.

This goal aligns with District Objective 2: Creating innovative learning environments.

#### Action steps for Goal 2:

- Implement Illustrative Math curriculum in gr. 6-8, including Algebra classes in grade 8.
- Provide professional development to strengthen written language instruction within the Humanities model.
- Use budgetary resources to support student access to Computer Science in grades 6-8.

#### Goal 3:

Ipswich Middle School will ensure that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world that is more diverse than our immediate learning community.

This goal aligns with District Objective 3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### Action steps for Goal 3:

- Plan collaborative Learning Cycles with IHS to study and discuss issues of diversity and social justice.
- Support the newly expanded World Language program: French in grades 6 and 7.
- Utilize resources to support students with diverse backgrounds through professional learning for staff and guidance for students.

#### Resources and supports:

- Support student needs related to pandemic recovery
- Support staff in adoption of new programs and curriculum
- Continue to read, discuss and explore issues of social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion

#### Questions and comments:

Mr. Whitten was happy to hear that the recurring theme was a return to normalcy despite the pandemic. Ms. McMahan said that a return to normalcy for students and staff is focusing on education again, looking at curriculum and making educational systems better.

### High School

Jonathan Mitchell, principal, explained that the high school was in year two of two for the improvement plan. He then shared the

school's Mission Statement.

Goal 1:  
Provide students with alternative coursework that will prepare them for livable wage without college matriculation.

This goal aligns with District Objective 2: Creating innovative learning environments.

Action steps for Goal 1:

- Increase student enrollment in new tech pathways courses
- Clarify language included in student handbook and POS
- Create a Pathways coordinator position (stipended)

Goal 2:  
Improve the transition between 8th and 9th grades.

This goal aligns with District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

Action Steps for Goal 2:

- Develop student mentoring program
- Improve student preparation for increased academic demands

Goal 3:  
Address the recommendations as highlighted in the 2018 Decennial Visit Report from NEASC

This goal aligns with District Objective 2: Creating innovative learning environments.

Action Steps for Goal 3:

- Better integrate the Successful Habits of Mind into daily lessons
- Update curriculum documents to include objectives centered on the SHOMS

Goal 4:  
Identify age-appropriate social justice curriculum to augment the planned peer mentoring program

This goal aligns with District Objective 3 (from 2020-21): Ensuring that all students will be prepared to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world that is more diverse than our immediate learning community.

Action steps for Goal 4:

- Train peer mentors
- Incoming 9th graders will have peer-led opportunities to explore issues around diversity and social justice

Questions and comments:

Mr. Mitchell discussed in further detail his plans for the peer mentor group, sharing that there was customizable programming and training for the students. He felt that oftentimes, students listen better to their peers.

Mr. Mitchell also shared that the high school has reinstated the attendance policy from pre-pandemic times. With that policy being enforced, he is seeing improvements to chronic absenteeism.

Dr. O'Flynn then asked if the district has a policy around hiring people with diverse backgrounds. He said that it is more effective to have role models in place for our students with diverse backgrounds.

### **B. School Committee Response Related to Conduct and DEI**

Dr. Blake shared that this agenda item was in response to the events that have taken place throughout surrounding communities in the past weeks and months with regard to conduct unbecoming and issues of race. It is important to review the preventative measures the district has in place so these types of situations do not arise. It is also important for the district to put methods in place for reporting of any incidents.

Ms. Kneeder reviewed the list of School Committee policies that are directly related to conduct, hazing, bullying and discrimination. These policies will be reviewed in the upcoming months by the Policy Subcommittee.

Dr. Blake then read a statement from Athletic Director Tom Gallagher which outlined expectations for athletic teams. It read:

*At the beginning of each sport season, all coaches are required to attend a meeting run by the athletic director. There are a lot of items covered in this meeting, included is a section on policies and procedures. The relevant policies to this topic which we cover are: Bullying, Hazing, Sexual Harassment, Mandated Reporter, Non-Discrimination and Implicit Bias (NFHS Course).*

*The other policies coaches sign-off on are: COVID, Emergency Action Plan, Concussions, CPR/AED, HIPAA, Coaches Education, Opioid Prevention and Chemical Health.*

*There is a paper sign-off for an Annual Statement of Acknowledgement For Student Groups, Teams and Organizations regarding the Anti-Hazing Law (MGL Chapter 269 Subsections 17-19). The other policies and procedures we share are signed-off electronically through FamilyID. Coaches have full access to all of this information through a shared Google Drive Folder.*

*Starting this winter, all parents, student-athletes, coaches and administrators must take and complete a free online course through the NFHS called Implicit Bias. The description of this course is as follows:*

*Implicit biases are the automatic reactions we have toward other people based on our past learning and expectations. Studies show that Implicit Bias affects the experiences of students in school athletic and activity programs. The NFHS has partnered with Project Implicit to bring you this course, Implicit Bias. Studies support that there is a relationship between implicit bias and real-world behavior; which highlights the importance of being aware of and managing your bias. This course defines and illustrates examples of Implicit Bias and provides research on how it impacts our society.*

*There are sections in the Coaches Handbook that describe a coaches responsibilities preseason, in-season and postseason. This section talks about supervision of the team as well as the requirement of having an adult/coach present at all times when the team assembles. The two paragraphs below are taken directly from our Coaches Handbook:*

*Teams are required to have adult/coach supervision at all times in all locations. This includes but is not limited to: locker rooms, buses, fields, gyms, weight room, aerobics room. Teams without an adult/coach present are not to engage in any form of activity (organized or otherwise) until an adult/coach is present.*

*Coaches with teams using the locker room facilities are responsible for their athletes and should be present and/or supervising regularly. The locker room is for changing and storing gear only and should not be used as a hangout.*

*Student-Athletes and Parents are also required to sign-off on the student-athlete handbook which contains their acknowledgement of Sportsmanship, Anti-Hazing, Personal Conduct and a Good Citizen's Rule.*

There was a discussion among the committee about broadening this type of conversation to all clubs and extracurricular activities.

Ms. Cannon said that she would like to see the district take more proactive steps to ask the school community if or how events taking place in other communities are affecting them. She said that situations like those happening in other towns could be triggering for families or students. She wants our students to feel safe, seen and heard.

Ms. Cannon then read a statement on behalf of the School Committee. It read:

*The Ipswich School Committee is committed to promoting policies that support an atmosphere that is inviting and safe for all students and employees both during school hours and while participating in extracurricular activities. Recent events have highlighted and reminded us of the continued existence of hatred and hazing in our schools. While we understand that these events are being investigated by the Districts they occurred in we, the Ipswich School Committee, wanted to take the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to abide by our anti-hazing and anti-discriminatory policies and remind the public that any individuals found to be in violation of those policies will be held accountable to their school and town communities as well as to those victimized by such actions. As always, the members of the Ipswich School Committee encourage students and staff to come forward as engaged citizens and report any violations of the policies reviewed here tonight.*



While this statement started as a recognition of what has been happening in other districts, some felt that it would be foolish to think it is not also happening in this district at some level. Ms. Cannon reminded the committee that the events taking place in other towns do directly affect the students in our district.

- *Motion to support the School Committee statement on anti-hazing and anti-discriminatory policies was made by Dr. O’Flynn and seconded by Mr. Poirier. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

### **C. Bi-Board Meeting Review**

Mr. Whitten asked for feedback from the recent bi-board meeting held with the Select Board to discuss the potential release of Bialek Park for a school building project.

Ms. Cannon shared that rather than a bi-board meeting, she had hoped that the committee started with a public forum. Dr. O’Flynn thought that would have scared off the Select Board.

Mr. Whitten had hoped there would be more advocates in favor of Bialek Park represented at the meeting. Ms. Cannon said that maybe the reason there were few advocates at the meeting is because this is not what the public wants. She stressed the importance of listening to the community first.

Ms. Eliot felt there was a lot of information put out in the community that was not based on facts. She felt it was important to get the data and messaging clear. When talking about data, Mr. Whitten suggested bringing Ethan Parsons in to talk about the development in town. It was also suggested that preschool numbers be addressed.

Mr. Poirier suggested firming up the enrollment data and holding at least one listening session prior to the end of the year instead of Ethan Parsons presenting.

Dr. Blake suggested working with Bill Logue around establishing listening sessions and the format of the meetings. There was some discussion among the committee about ways to approach the first listening sessions. It was decided that Dr. Blake would reach out to Bill Loue and begin the process of organizing listening sessions for the near future.

### **D. Ipswich Educators’ Association- ESP Contract**

The Ipswich Educators’ Association (IEA) has established a new unit, the Education Support Professionals (ESP). Their first contract has been negotiated and ratified by the IEA.

- *Motion to approve the collective bargaining unit between the Ipswich Educators’ Association, ESP Unit and the Ipswich Public Schools was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Ms. Kneedler. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

### **E. FY23 Budget Timeline**

Ms. Herrick-Stella reviewed the FY23 budget timeline. While the formatting of the worksheet looked different, the dates outlined were in line with years past. The timeline would be shared with the administrative team at their next meeting.

### **F. Finance Update**

Ms. Herrick-Stella shared the current Revolving, Gift and Stabilization fund balances, as well as the overall year-to-date budget. She noted the budget and fund balances were in good shape and tracking as expected.

## **10. Superintendent’s Administrative Report**

Dr. Blake reported on his work throughout the district in weeks since that last School Committee meeting. His report included:

- A webinar and planning for the district review being done by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- A meeting with Seth Moulton regarding student mental health
- Two administrative team meetings
- An Ipswich Aware meeting
- Conversations with community members
- A Middle School Council meeting

- A meeting with Chub Whitten and the Fire Chief to discuss any concerns about the potential use of Bialek Park as a school building site
- Work on some personnel issues
- Meetings with the Athletic Director, Technology Director and Facilities Director
- A luncheon at Whittier Tech to discuss the expansion of opportunities for seniors who would like to explore the trades
- Several subcommittee meetings
- A meeting with the Digital Learning Specialist to review goals
- A Bi-Board meeting between the Select Board and the School Committee
- Participation in High School Career Day
- A bi-weekly meeting with the ELL teachers
- A DEI Committee meeting
- A North Shore Superintendents Roundtable meeting

#### **11. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports**

- A. Budget Subcommittee:** There is an initial meeting scheduled on Tuesday, November 30th to discuss the override and get some community leader involvement. There was discussion about delaying the override for another year, however it was decided to continue with the current timeline.
- B. Communications Subcommittee:** Newsletter content was finalized at this meeting. The newsletter will be distributed on Friday, November 19th. There are Meet and Greets scheduled with various School Committee members. There was also a discussion about developing a public relations plan.
- C. MASC Delegate Assembly:** Mr. Poirier attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Delegate Assembly on November 6th. All resolutions passed.

#### **12. New Business\***

The School Committee is in receipt of an Open Meeting Law complaint and is in the process of addressing it now with legal counsel.

#### **13. Vouchers and Bills**

All were reviewed and signed.

#### **14. Consent Agenda**

- *Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by Mr. Whitten and seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

#### **15. Adjournment**

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dr. O'Flynn and seconded by Ms. Cannon. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

**Meeting adjourned at 9:57 PM.**

