

# **Ipswich School Committee**

Remote via Zoom

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

7:00 PM

## **MINUTES**

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Present: Mr. Stevens, Ms. Eliot, Dr. O’Flynn, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Cannon (7:19 PM), Mr. Whitten and Mr. Poirer

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

### **Reading of the District Mission Statement**

Mr. Whitten read the mission statement.

### **Announcements**

- The School Committee will meet tomorrow, February 3rd at 6:00 PM in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.

### **Special Acknowledgements**

There were no special acknowledgements.

### **Citizens’ Comments**

There were none at this time.

### **High School Student Representative Report**

There was no High School Student Representative report.

### **Presentations**

#### **A. FY23 School Budget Presentation**

Dr. Blake began his presentation by sharing that the FY23 budget represented a collaborative effort with the Administrative Team to meet the current and future needs of Ipswich students, as well as set the stage for the future as the Stabilization Fund and ESEER funds are depleted. Dr. Blake then outlined the process for which the budget was created. The Administrative Team was tasked with building a budget that included the items needed in the future to address student need and reach the goals outlined in various district plans. Once the initial proposals were submitted, Dr. Blake and Ms. Herrick-Stella met with the Administrative Team and collectively reduced the budget by eliminating items altogether or shifting items from the operating budget to alternative funding sources.

Dr. Blake then thanked the Administrative Team for the work they did to develop their budgets and for their presence at the meeting.

#### *Vision and Mission Statement*

The Vision and Mission Statement, taken from the Ipswich Public Schools Strategy for District Improvement, was shared.

#### *Framework for Student Success*

In addition to the Strategy for District Improvement, the Framework for Student Success pulls together individual school improvement plans, the elementary and secondary program guides, and various other studies and reports to create an overall vision for the district . These guiding documents help to shape the budget and have all been vetted and approved by the School Committee.

#### *School Budget Summary*

One of the most significant changes to the FY23 budget is that out-of-district placements have been moved from individual school budgets to the Central Office budget. The percentage increases at each school vary significantly and are based on individual need.

- Overall, the operating budget shows an increase of 4.78%.
- The projected budget total is \$34,930,486.
- The Town is scheduled to contribute \$33,051,365.
- A total of \$1,879,121 will come from the Stabilization Fund.

Dr. Blake noted that the budget presented tonight did not include the negotiated increases for the various collective bargaining units in the school budget lines. They are kept in the district-wide lines until all contracts are ratified.

#### *Grand Total*

- There is an overall increase of 5.14 FTE included in the operating budget
- The district will be utilizing many outside sources of funding to support the budget
- Dr. Blake reviewed the account balances of the outside funding sources used to support the budget.

#### *Federal and State Grant Funding*

- The total Federal and State grant funding is estimated to be \$1,721,295.
- This funding supports positions, supplies, materials, and related expenses.

#### *Choice Funds*

- The current balance in this fund is \$1,280,204.
- There are currently 46 Choice students in the district.
- The School Committee opened 73 Choice seats for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Planned expenditures utilizing Choice funds include:
  - Health insurance
  - District-wide hardware
  - Building level expenses in accordance with the School Choice policy
- It is anticipated that the fund balance will be approximately \$1,031,040 at the end of FY22.

#### *Circuit Breaker Funds*

- The current balance of this fund is \$686,241.
- \$685,000 is planned for expenditure from Circuit Breaker for FY23 which is based on the expected FY22 reimbursement amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

#### *Fixed Cost Expense*

- The district has a number of fixed costs totaling \$2,035,665 made up of the following:
  - Retirement
  - Medicare
  - Worker's Compensation
  - Unemployment
  - Insurances
  - Sick Leave

#### *Health Insurance Expense*

- Health insurance expenses show an increase of \$258,801 due to a number of factors such as personnel and the types of plans taken.
- This year, the budget was created using an estimated 8% increase on the cost of plans.

#### *Special Education Expense*

- Special Education costs have decreased due to a decrease in the number of out-of-district placements.
- The decrease in the budget equates to \$310,596.

#### *Compensation for All Staff*

- Salary for all staff including stipends are included in this total.

### *COVID Funding*

Since the pandemic began, the district has been eligible and received funding to offset costs incurred. The district has received a total of \$3,198,265. Dr. Blake highlighted the summary of expenditures, both actual and projected which included:

- HEPA air filtration systems outfitted in each classroom early into the pandemic
- PPE and cleaning supplies
- The anticipated Assistant Principal at the elementary level
- Significant repairs to the aging heating and ventilation systems

### *Positions Funded Through Other Funding Sources*

The slide presented listed the positions funded outside of the appropriated budget through resources like ESSER grants, Title 1, and the Special Education accounts and grants.

### *Enrollment Information 2020-2021*

This slide showed the enrollment information pulled directly from the DESE website.

### *Enrollment by School*

As of January 20, 2022, the district has 1664 students enrolled.

### *Enrollment Total*

Dr. Blake talked briefly about the ebb and flow of enrollment from students graduating and new enrollments to parents withdrawing their children to homeschool during the pandemic. He shared that recent home sales and new construction across Ipswich are leading to increasing enrollments.

### *Changes to Budget Presentation*

- Out-of-district tuitions have been moved out of individual school budgets to district-wide lines.
- There is the addition of budget lines to break out costs more clearly.

### *Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Mission Statement*

Ms. Goodale-O'Brien shared the mission statement.

### *Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Educational Goals*

The goals closely align with the Strategy for District Improvement document and their school improvement goals.

### *Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Student Enrollment*

- The projected kindergarten enrollment for Doyon is 45.
- While enrollment appears to be decreasing at Doyon, the district is looking to address the increased enrollment at Winthrop by utilizing space at Doyon.

### *Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Budget Highlights*

- Net Budget Increase: \$66,326
- Net Budget Increase: 1.6%
- Response to Intervention:
  - Increase of 1.0 Math Teaching Assistant
  - Increase of 1.0 Reading Teaching Assistant
- Special Education:
  - Increase of 1.0 Special Education Teacher
  - Decrease of 1.75 Special Education Teaching Assistants (FTE shifted into Kindergarten and reading/math)
  - Increase of 0.3 Speech Therapist
  - Decrease of 2.0 RBTs
  - Out of district tuition shifted to central budget
- Administration
  - 0.5 Assistant Principal (covered through ESSER)
- Teaching Materials
  - Some decreases in consumables, particularly in social studies and science

*Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Budget Breakdown and Comparison*

The slide highlighted the total budget amounts and percentages that make up the Doyon budget. It also highlighted the comparison from the FY22 budget.

*Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Other Funding Sources*

- ESSER III
  - .5 FTE Assistant Principal \$47,500
  - .5 FTE Music Teacher \$41,976
  -
- IDEA Grant
  - 1.0 FTE Teacher Salary \$70,360
  - 0.3 FTE Therapy Professional \$22,500
- Total Funding for Fiscal Year 2023
  - FY23 Appropriated Budget Request \$4,203,485 (96%)
  - Other Funding Sources \$ 182,336 (4%)
- Actual Funding for FY23 \$4,385,821

*Winthrop School: Mission Statement*

Ms. Sullivan shared the mission statement.

*Winthrop School: Educational Goals*

The goals closely align with the Strategy for District Improvement document and their school improvement goals.

*Winthrop School: Enrollment*

- There is a projected increase to preschool enrollment by 20 students in FY23, resulting in an additional classroom.
- Kindergarten projections have increased, resulting in an additional section.
  - Depending on final enrollment numbers, this additional section could be placed at Doyon.
- Due to an increase in the current kindergarten class, there is an additional section added to the FY23 grade 1 class.

*Winthrop School: Budget Highlights*

- Budget Increase: \$361,992
- Net Budget Increase: 8.0%
- Increase in student enrollment at the early childhood grades in Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grade 1, which are reflected in the following additional FTE's:
  - 1.0 Preschool Teacher, 1.0 Preschool Teaching Assistant
  - 1.0 Kindergarten Teacher, 1.0 Kindergarten Teaching Assistant
  - 1.0 Grade 1 Teacher
- Increase a Speech and Language Assistant by .5 FTE and increase a Math Teaching Assistant by .5 FTE to support student needs
- Additional funding for screening assessment tools in literacy and early childhood
- Additional funding for English Language Learner materials and instructional supplies due to the increasing EL population

*Winthrop School: Budget Breakdown and Comparison*

The slide highlighted the total budget amounts and percentages that make up the Winthrop budget. It also highlighted the comparison from the FY22 budget.

*Winthrop School: Other Funding Sources*

- Title I Grant
  - 0.40 FTE Reading and 0.4 FTE Math Specialis \$74,936
  - 0.83 FTE Reading Teaching Assistant \$18,693
  - Family outreach /admin oversight/ .15 FTE Secretary \$ 6,431
  - Admin Stipend \$ 2,500
- Preschool Revolving
  - 1.0 FTE Teaching Assistant \$22,522
  - Supplies \$ 3,000

- IDEA Grant
  - 1.0 FTE Special Ed Teacher Salary \$72,221
- Special Ed Tuition Revolving
  - 0.40 FTE Special Ed Teacher Salary 35,249
- ESSER III
  - 1.0 FTE Preschool RBT \$39,074
  - 1.0 FTE Reading Teaching Assistant \$23,549
  - 0.5 FTE Assistant Principal \$47,500
- Total Funding for Fiscal Year 2023
  - FY23 Appropriated Budget Request \$4,869,359 (93%)
  - Other Funding Sources \$ 345,675 ( 7%)
- Actual Funding for FY23 \$5,215,034

*Middle School: Mission Statement*

Ms. McMahon shared the mission statement.

*Middle School: Educational Goals*

The goals closely align with the Strategy for District Improvement document and their school improvement goals.

*Middle School: Enrollment*

The projected enrollment will decrease by six students in FY23.

*Middle School: Budget Highlights*

- Net Budget Increase: \$126,061
- Net Budget Increase: 2.7%
- Increase 1.0 Grade 8 Humanities Teacher
  - Needed to create two instructional blocks for full ELA and Civics courses for grade 8 students
- Increase from .5 to 1.0 Reading Teacher (from ESSER Funds)
  - Needed to meet the needs of students with IEP reading goals and to remediate reading skills loss due to the Covid pandemic
- Increase Math materials lines
  - Needed to implement the newly adopted Illustrative Math Curriculum
- Increase 1.0 Teaching Assistant
- Increase in adaptive special education equipment and services

*Middle School: Budget Breakdown and Comparisons*

The slide highlighted the total budget amounts and percentages that make up the Middle School budget. It also highlighted the comparison from the FY22 budget.

*Middle School: Other Funding Sources*

- IDEA Grant
  - 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher Salary \$76,569
- ESSER III
  - 0.50 FTE Reading Specialist \$38,285
- Special Education Revolving Fund
  - 0.20 FTE Psychologist Salary \$16,515
- Feoffees Grant
  - 1.0 FTE Computer Science Teacher Salary \$76,569
- Total Funding for Fiscal Year 2023
  - FY23 Appropriated Budget Request \$4,745,574 (96%)
  - Other Funding Sources \$ 207,938 (4%)
- Actual Funding for FY23 \$4,953,512

### High School: Mission Statement

Mr. Mitchell shared the mission statement.

### High School: Educational Goals

The goals closely align with the Strategy for District Improvement document and their school improvement goals.

### High School: Enrollment

The high school is projecting a decrease in enrollment by 33 students. The average class size is 11.7 students.

### High School: Budget Highlights

- Net Budget Increase: \$208,168
- Net Budget Increase: 3.2%
- Undistributed
  - Online Purchased Services: -5.01% streamlined subscriptions
  - HS Tech Purchased Services: +46.46% additional costs Chromebooks, tablets, etc.
  - HS Print Management Services: +36% new contract w/ 4 new copiers
- Music
  - Professional Salaries: +7.2 % step & lane changes
- Phys Ed & Health Instruction
  - Other Supplies: -70.59% purchased new equipment FY22, reduced need FY23
- Library/Media Center
  - Textbooks/Library Books: +175% (\$3,500) Additional books, subscriptions, etc. (no grant this year)
- Health Services
  - Professional Salaries: +103.93% new RN for high needs student
- Guidance
  - Teacher Salary: +49.82% changing TA to licensed teacher in BRYT program
  - Teacher Assistant Salaries: -100% changing TA to licensed teacher in BRYT program
  - Secretaries Salary: +40.23% due to increase in FTE by .12 to support growing department
- Special Education
  - Professional Salaries: +17.78% reflects increase by .5 FTE to reduce class size and caseloads
- Athletics
  - HS Athletics Support Salaries: +26.32% first increase in athletic trainer hours to reflect increased actual hours

### High School: Budget Breakdown and Comparison

The slide highlighted the total budget amounts and percentages that make up the High School budget. It also highlighted the comparison from the FY22 budget.

### High School: Other Funding Sources

- |                                      |                         |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ● Athletics                          | \$ 236,015              |
| ● Special Ed Tuition Revolving Fund  |                         |
| ○ 2.0 FTE TA Salary                  | \$46,500                |
| ○ Purchased Services                 | \$26,000                |
| ● IDEA Grant                         |                         |
| ○ 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher  | \$72,221                |
| ● ESSER Funds                        |                         |
| ○ 1.0 FTE Guidance                   | \$ 62,542               |
| ● Total Funding for Fiscal Year 2023 |                         |
| ○ FY23 Appropriated Budget Request   | \$ 6,723,459 (94%)      |
| ○ Other Funding Source               | <u>\$ 443,278</u> ( 6%) |
| ● Actual Funding for FY23            | \$ 7,166,737            |

### District Wide Building Operations: Budget Highlights

- Budget Increase: \$17,945
- Net Budget Increase: 0.84%
- Includes funding for a part-time non-benefit eligible custodian for the HS

- Increased cleaning & sanitation required for the buildings
- Utility cost increases are offset by revolving funds
- Includes additional money for building maintenance & repairs, including playground repairs
- Continued repairs in buildings & systems due to the age of the buildings

*District Wide and Central Office: Budget Highlights*

- Net Budget Increase \$1,190,373
- Net Budget Increase 12.1%
- Reserve funding encompasses two years of salary increases for CBAs
- Funding for a shared sustainability/grant writer position
- New line added for course reimbursement for administrators (per contract)
- Long term subs increased to match actual spending
- Increases for fixed costs
- Increase in Munis cost for upgrades and Tyler Content Manager
- Now includes Out of District tuitions for the entire district
- HR Department moving to central office in FY22, includes hiring of part-time HR coordinator in FY22
- ESSER Funding of IT costs transitioning back into appropriated budget/capital/choice
- Health Insurance anticipate 8% increase, due to cost increases and census changes

**Comments:**

Mr. Stevens began the question and comment portion of the meeting, by thanking the elementary principals for their explanation of the Assistant Principal request during the Budget Subcommittee meeting and suggested that the School Committee could also benefit from their explanation.

Ms. Sullivan said that each elementary school is seeing an increase of enrollment and student need. With one person in the administrative role at each building, it can be difficult at times to effectively manage all aspects of their jobs without assistance. Ms. Goodale-O'Brien added that the Assistant Principal position would allow all teachers and staff to also receive the additional supports they deserve.

Mr. Kneeder said that while most of the budget goes to the staff, there are a lot of positions that seem to be paid from ESSER or Feoffee grant funding at the High School. She asked what would happen to these positions should the grant funding go away?

Dr. Blake shared that it is the expectation that some of the grant funded positions utilizing ESSER funding would not be necessary in two years when those funds are no longer available. Similar to the World Language position or the BRYT Program, if the Feoffee funding positions are successful, they may be moved to future operating budgets.

Ms. Cannon shared Ms. Kneeder's concern over the ESSER funded positions in light of the override ask this year. She talked about the need for early interventions across the state given the pandemic and with early intervention, she said, comes the need for more qualified staff. Ms. Cannon expressed concerns over a shift to teaching assistants without the educational background or credentials needed to best support students.

Ms. Goodale-O'Brien shared there was significant thought around those decisions at Doyon. The addition of teaching assistants is to add support and provide more collaboration to create better programming for students. These are not just extra bodies in the building. She also added that these staffing additions could assist with Tier Two support.

Ms. Sullivan also added that Winthrop is in need of support for an expanding EL population, as well as additional RBTs, but there has to be a balance with what could realistically be brought forward in the budget. She explained that if the schools are seeing an additional 7-8 students in a class that need additional support, it would no longer be considered an intervention, but instead an adjustment to instruction.

Mr. Whitten expressed concern over the Assistant Principal request utilizing ESSER funding for FY23. He felt that if an override did not pass, this position would be an early cut from the budget. He asked if a shared Assistant Principal would help to create a great alignment between the two schools.

Dr. Blake explained that the intent is to have the Assistant Principal in the ESSER funding for the next year. If successful, the position would be moved to the appropriated budget. The goal of this position is to work between the two schools and assist with the supervision and evaluation of educators.

Mr. Whitthen then asked Ms. Herrick-Stella what the remaining balances would be in the revolving accounts after they are drawn down for FY23. She said that if no other revenue was received, there would still be a healthy balance of approximately \$2.3 million.

Mr. Whitten asked Mr. Mitchell what the ideal class size would be at the high school. Mr. Mitchell responded that class size is calculated from the total number of students divided by the total number of staff. Ideally, you would like class sizes of 18-24 students. Right now, class sizes look smaller because they are co-taught.

Mr. Poirier shared concerns over the Assistant Principal position, as well as the additional sections in preschool through grade 1 at Winthrop. He felt that having additional sections or an Assistant Principal in place of specialists or EL support is concerning. He also asked if the overall decrease in Special Education spending was a result of positions being cut or if they are actually being recalculated.

Ms. Goodale-O'Brien responded to Mr. Poirier, stating that the decrease in overall spending is not a result in loss of staff, but a shifting of resources.

Mr. Poirier then asked for an explanation for the decreased Special Education spending and increase in summer Special Education spending. Dr. Hegedus explained that the decrease in the budget is in relation to the out-of-district placements. The district is also utilizing IDEA grant funds, as well as Circuit Breaker. Ultimately, the true costs of Special Education are not reflected in the appropriated budget. As for the summer, services are not routine. They differ from year-to-year and are crafted through thoughtful consideration of student needs and data.

Mr. Poirier then asked if there was a reduction of expenses for cleaning and PPE.

Ms. Herrick-Stella first talked about the increase in preschool summer spending, noting that the increase is actually not as big as it appears. All summer programming moved into the Winthrop budget lines. As for the cleaning supplies, she explained that those supplies are funded through the ESSER 2 and ESSER 3 grants.

Mr. Poirier asked for clarification on some of the district-wide lines like financial software, transportation and course reimbursement. He wanted to know if those were one time or ongoing expenses.

Mr. Herrick-Stella explained that the financial software lines were the same expenditures, but broken out to be more transparent. The transportation line represents the contract with Salter Transportation and the course reimbursement is in line with the administrator contract.

Dr. O'Flynn was appreciative that the out-of-district placements were moved to the district budget. He felt that allowed for more clarity in the budget. He then asked when the kindergarten registration process would be completed.

Ms. Sullivan responded, explaining that kindergarten registration is ongoing.

Dr. O'Flynn then asked what the basis was for increasing enrollment at Winthrop and whether that was actual or just a prediction.

Ms. Sullivan replied that based on current kindergarten numbers, Winthrop knows they will need an additional section in grade 1. She explained that the class sizes for these early education classes were already large. The district also already knows how many students they will be receiving in preschool and as structured now, there is not enough space or staff.

Dr. O'Flynn asked if the administration had given any thought to moving part of the preschool back to Doyon. Dr. Blake responded that the district was having those conversations and looking at what space is available. He said that reconfiguring the district would certainly make the conversation easier.



Ms. Eliot first thanked the administrators for their presentation. She said the School Committee needs to keep a watchful eye on these additional positions. While she shared her support for the addition of sections at Winthrop, Ms. Eliot did suggest that the district may not need the additional sections if the NESDEC Demographic Study comes back with lower enrollment predictions.

Dr. Blake said while that is possible, it is important to start with those positions in the budget.

Ms. Eliot then asked for the breakdown of co-teaching classrooms at both elementary schools. Both Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Goodale-O'Brien responded with their total number of classrooms and said they would redistribute teachers based on student need and placement.

Dr. O'Flynn reminded the committee that Dr. Blake was presenting the Superintendent's budget tonight. As of tomorrow, the budget then becomes the School Committee's budget. He stressed the importance of the committee having a clear understanding of what is in the budget for when they need to defend it to the other boards and committees in Town. He said it was important to understand the challenges the schools are facing, the supports needed and the data to back these decisions. Dr. O'Flynn said that an override year is an exceptional year and the School Committee should be willing to jump in with both feet.

Ms. Cannon wanted to ensure that the current budget was reflecting the adequate training of teaching assistants, should they be in roles as quasi interventionists. She felt that teachers were responsible for training the teaching assistants. Ms. Cannon was concerned that teaching assistants were going to be delivering services that should be delivered by someone with more experience.

Dr. Hegedus shared that significant training occurs on Thursday afternoons to build capacity and enhance the ability of teaching assistants. Ms. Goodale-O'Brien added that most teaching assistants carry certifications. Ms. Goodale-O'Brien then acknowledged the program managers who also provide additional training and support to teaching assistants.

Dr. O'Flynn felt that most people would be surprised at the number of teaching assistants who are qualified, certified teachers and have had former teaching experience. People in these roles provide incredible contributions to the classroom and are a huge part of the success in the district.

#### **New Business\***

There was no new business.

#### **Adjournment**

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