

Ipswich School Committee
MS/HS Ensemble Room
134 High Street, Ipswich
Thursday, October 20, 2022
7:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Present: Mr. Stevens, Ms. Eliot, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Cannon, Mr. Poirier, Ms. Freehan, and Ms. Donahue

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

Absent: Jimmy Bornstein, High School Student Representative

2. Reading of the District Mission Statement

Ms. Freehan read the mission statement.

3. Announcements- see handout, Twig committee meeting on October 26th,

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 3rd at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS ensemble room.
- Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 25th at 7:00 PM in the Dolan Performing Arts Center at the MS/HS.
- Staff listening sessions on the future of the elementary schools will be held remotely from 5:00-6:00 PM and 6:30-7:30 PM on both Wednesday, October 26th and Thursday, October 27th.
- The Elementary Building Project Working Group will meet remotely on Wednesday, November 2nd at 5:00 PM.
- The Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee will be meeting on October 26th.

4. Special Acknowledgements

Dr. Blake shared that the Paul F. Doyon Memorial school received an award focused on augmented and alternative communication. He read from the press release below:

McLean Yoder Award for Professional Excellence (MYAPE) Presented to Paul F. Doyon Memorial School and Family Health West Pediatric Rehabilitation

The National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC) recently honored two recipients of the 2022 McLean Yoder Award for Professional Excellence (MYAPE). Recipients were the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School in Ipswich, Massachusetts and a team within Family Health West Pediatric Rehabilitation in Fruita, Colorado. The MYAPE was named after Drs. James McLean and David Yoder, preeminent research scientists in the area of communication and intellectual disability. The award was established to honor a team that exemplifies high quality professional service to individuals with severe disabilities. Nominations were solicited from throughout the United States and judged according to the NJC's published quality indicators specific to communication assessment, goal setting, and program implementation. Two teams met these high standards, and were both chosen to share this honor.

Dr. Rose Sevcik and Dr. Andrea Barton-Hulsey, Co- chairs of the NJC felt that this year's award winners were particularly noteworthy given each team's commitment to school and community-wide inclusive practices. The team at Paul F. Doyon Memorial School stood out for the role that everyone in the school has had in the success of a student who uses augmentative and alternative communication. Training in augmentative communication has been provided school-wide, including all teachers, staff and students, resulting in positive outcomes for all students.

5. Citizen' Comments

There were none.

6. High School Student Representative Report

Mr. Bornstein was not present to give his report.

7. Presentations

A. IEA Lesson Snapshot Presentation: The Poetry Stand

Carla Panciera, high school English teacher, talked about the Poetry Stand. This project started in 2011 and has continued to present day. The idea behind the poetry stand is that customers can order poems on any topic and students write the poems on the spot. Ms. Panciera talked about the different places the Poetry Stand has traveled to and the different types of poems that have been written. She estimates that over 10 years, 168 students have participated in the Poetry Stand and collectively written over 800 poems.

B. Ipswich Athletic Association Introduction

Brian Baise, member of the Ipswich Athletic Association (IAA), first introduced himself and other members of the leadership board. Ms. Baise gave an overview of how the IAA was formed. He shared that over the course of last summer, a series of meetings were held with stakeholder groups representing HS athletics and youth sports in town. During these meetings, the group found common ground through shared experiences, and agreed that a commitment to high school athletics and the youth sports that feed into them was important. The group believes in the “education through athletics” model and that a positive experience through participation in sports plays an important role in character development. As meetings went on, the group identified areas in need of growth or change and as a result, the Ipswich Athletic Association was developed. The group was coming to the School Committee tonight to ask for recommendations or advice on how this collective voice could be most useful. Would representation on the Athletic Subcommittee make sense or participation through another venue?

Mr. Stevens through the IAA was a great initiative and acknowledged there was a gap between youth sports and high school athletics. He thought the School Committee should talk about where to use the IAA. He thought it was good to have an organized parent group to look at what is going on in town.

Ms. Eliot liked the idea of aligning youth sports with high school sports. She asked if the IAA was replacing other groups in town.

Mr. Baise said the IAA would not be replacing anything. They would like to partner with other organizations in town including high school athletics.

Mr. Stevens asked if the IAA plans to work with youth sports groups in town to coordinate efficient and equitable field use.

Jamie Satter, member of the IAA, said the group has talked about facilities and field usage in town.

Ms. Cannon thought this was an exciting opportunity and asked how community members could get involved.

Andrea Morris, member of the IAA, said the group has reached out to all the directors of the youth leagues in town and the booster clubs at the high school. The IAA will also be presenting at an upcoming Select Board meeting. Once the group gets support, they will introduce themselves to the community and share out information on how to get involved.

Ms. Cannon said the School Committee has been asked by outside groups about the use of facilities, school grounds, etc. to use in various ways. The IAA could be a great resource to connect with the School Committee and let them know how the fields and facilities are being used. Ms. Cannon also talked about connecting with the Ipswich Education Foundation to talk about scholarship opportunities for families.

Ms. Morris said the IAA is looking at partnership opportunities with places like the YMCA and the Ipswich Education Foundation. The group would like to enhance what people in the community are already doing. They feel there is so much potential and opportunities to collaborate to better support youth and high school athletics.

Ms. Donahue asked for clarification on where the IAA would fit in. She felt that they could, at the very least, have a seat on the Athletic Subcommittee. They should also be working with the Ipswich Education Foundation.

Ms. Eliot thought that a liaison position with the Athletic Subcommittee would make sense.

Mr. Stevens said that he and Dr. Blake would be in touch with the IAA to discuss how best to work together moving forward.

C. MCAS Presentation

Ms. Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, presented a slideshow outlining the MCAS results from the previous school year.

What state standards did the 2022 MCAS assess?

- Grade 3: English Language/Arts and Math
- Grade 4: English Language/Arts and Math
- Grade 5: English Language/Arts, Science, Technology and Engineering
- Grade 6: English Language/Arts and Math
- Grade 7: English Language/Arts and Math
- Grade 8: English Language/Arts, Science, Technology and Engineering
- Grade 10: English Language/Arts, Science, Technology and Engineering

What was different about the spring 2022 MCAS tests?

- The 2022 school year was the first full MCAS administration for grades 3-8 since 2019.
- Grade 10 students in 2022 had not taken an MCAS test since 2019, when they were in the seventh grade.
- In 2019, the full MCAS test was administered.
- In 2020, no MCAS test was administered.
- In 2021, half the MCAS was administered.
- In 2022, the full MCAS test was administered.

Overall Ipswich Public Schools MCAS trends:

- Math scores were up in grades 3-8
 - Ms. Wagner believes this is in correlation with the Illustrative Math program that has been implemented in the district.
- English Language/Arts scored in grades 3-8 and grade 10 have dropped slightly, especially in writing.
- Science scores are up in grades 5, 8 and 10.
- Math scores in grade 10 are holding steady.
- There are similar trends statewide, especially in English Language/Arts and writing.

Student Growth Percentile:

- With the return of the full test in 2022, there is enough data to allow for the return to a cohort model for student growth percentile (SGP) calculations.
- The 2022 SGP should not be compared with the 2021 SGP because the data sets were not the same.
- The old standards for understanding SGP are still applicable:
 - Mean SGP of 1-19= Very low growth
 - Mean SGP of 20-39= Low growth
 - Mean SGP of 40-59= Typical growth
 - Mean SGP of 60-79= High growth
 - Mean SGP of 80-99= Very high growth
- The district wants to see all SGPs equal 40 or higher. This year, they were in that group or above.

Indicators of Learning Gaps and Recover:

- The district, based on the scores, is seeing a recovery period in math and science.
- The district, based on the scores, has identified the need for additional supports in the English/Language Arts.

Ms. Wagner shared the overall scores for grade 3 in Math and English/Language Arts. She then shared the score for grade 3 by school.

Ms. Eliot said it appeared that one school was outperforming the other elementary school. Ms. Wagner said that yes, that is what the data shows. She said when looking at the comparisons, she also looks at the overall trends and the demographics of students taking the test at each school.

Mr. Stevens said that one or two kids who score lower on the test can greatly affect the overall percentage.

Ms. Wagner reassured the School Committee that the administrative team acknowledges the difference in scores. She also added that one school has a co-teaching model and one school is a Title 1 school that receives additional funding and supports.

Ms. Wagner shared the scores for grade 4, first by overall grade and then by school. The School Committee, again, acknowledged the difference in scores at each school. Ms. Wagner did acknowledge that the district is looking at bringing additional supports and curriculum to strengthen the English/Language Arts and writing at the schools.

Ms. Wagner then presented the English/Language Arts scores for grade 5. She said that the writing portion of the test really affected the scores. She then talked about the way in which writing is typically taught and how it differs from the test.

Ms. Wagner shared the math and science scores for grade 5 and 6, as well as the scores for grade 6 English/language arts. Once again, there was a dip in the writing scores for grade 6.

Ms. Wagner then shared the MCAS scores for grade 7, grade 8 and grade 10. Again, the writing scores were lower for grade 10. Ms. Wagner noted that this was the first year that grade 10 took the “next generation” version of the science MCAS, so there were no scores to compare for that test.

MCAS is just one a year. Ms. Wagner shared examples of how the district measures student learning all year long:

- Renaissance Star Math
- i-Ready
- Lexia
- DIBELS
- DRA 3
- Local assessments

Ms. Cannon, while acknowledging the importance of assessing students, asked if the district may be taking too much time away from teaching/learning to assess students.

Ms. Wagner felt that question could be better answered by teachers. She did also say she felt strongly that students should not be put in front of devices more than they should be. Some of the assessments are on screens, but so are the MCAS.

Ms. Donahue asked about a Paine Grant at the middle school to look at writing. Ms. Wagner explained that the writing model at the middle school moved into a workshop style that has morphed into a part of the humanities model.

Data in action. How is the Ipswich Public Schools using MCAS and other data?

- Data review in faculty and curriculum meetings
- Administrative deep dives
- As part of the Curriculum Review Cycle
- By specialists and coaches
- For identifying professional development needs

Overall Ipswich Public Schools MCAS Trends: Next Steps:

- Math, grades 3-8: continue with Illustrative Math
- Math, grade 10: grade 8 and 9 have an Algebra curriculum review this year
- ELA, grades 3-8: starting curriculum review
- ELA, grade 10: starting the scope and sequencing portion of the curriculum review cycle
- Science, Technology, Engineering, grades 5 and 8: starting curriculum review
- Science, Technology, Engineering, grade 10: starting the scope and sequencing portion of the curriculum review cycle

DESE Guidance: Accountability Data:

- Ms. Wagner shared the data used to determine the accountability percentile per grade. She then shared the accountability percentile for each school. This information is available on the DESE website.

Ms. Wagner finished her presentation by sharing links to where the community can get more information on the MCAS data.

Ms. Eliot asked how often students are taking local assessments. Ms. Wagner said the assessments vary. She knows of one math assessment that is taken three times per year and may be roughly 30 minutes in length each time. MCAS is once a year, so it isn't helpful for real time interventions. Ms. Wagner believes that teachers and administrators are mindful not to over assess.

Ms. Eliot then asked if a coaching model, similar to the math model, could be applied to ELA. Ms. Wagner said the district is currently using a Paine Grant to research that type of model.

D. Chapter 70 Funding Discussion

Mr. Stevens believed that the Chapter 70 money that the district will be receiving this year will be a topic of debate at the Special Town Meeting. The district is getting in excess of \$500,000 from the state this year. The district anticipated the increase in funds and factored them into the override calculation. This contribution was not included in the FY23 school budget. The warrant article for the Special Town Meeting is asking for approval to move these funds into the FY23 school budget. Mr. Stevens shared that the Finance Committee would like Chapter 70 funding to move directly to the Stabilization Fund.

The Director of Finance, Ms. Herrick-Stella, looked into the legalities of such a move to see if it was possible. She explained that in order to move the funding into the Stabilization Fund, there would need to be a warrant article that would first move the funding to the appropriated budget and a second warrant article would be needed to then move the funding from the appropriated budget to the Stabilization Fund. She clarified that districts cannot move state aid directly into a savings account. The town could have also moved the state aid directly to Free Cash and once certified, moved the money to the Stabilization Fund. At this point in time, it was too late to add any additional warrant articles.

Ms. Stevens explained that eventually the Chapter 70 funding will move to the Stabilization Fund. At the Special Town Meeting, the funding would be moved to the appropriated budget. In the spring, any unspent funds would move to the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Stevens planned to speak with the Finance Committee and explain why the state aid could not move directly into the Stabilization Fund.

Ms. Herrick-Stella did speak with the Town accountant and Town counsel to confirm the process.

E. Elementary Building Project Update

Ms. Eliot started by sharing that the School Committee finished up the final round of community listening sessions with the Logue Group. They are now waiting for the report. The Logue Group will be facilitating listening sessions for the staff beginning next week. The Elementary Building Project Working Group had not met since the last School Committee meeting. At their last meeting, there was a conversation about creating a flier to distribute at a Special Town Meeting.

The School Committee discussed the flier that was included in their meeting packet and what would be included in the flier. The School Committee was going to have a table at the Special Town Meeting where they would distribute the informational flier. There would also be signs located on the table with a QR code that, if scanned, would direct people to the Elementary Building Project Working Group website. It was also decided that the School Committee would add a section on the Elementary Building Project Working Group website that allows the public to submit feedback directly to the School Committee and also sign up for the newsletter.

Ms. Eliot then asked the School Committee to consider how the group was going to move forward from the listening sessions and the factual information brought forward from the last project to decide what the next steps would be. She asked for opinions about creating a document with guiding principles that all members agree on, such as elements of the project. This document could be used to help guide the group's discussions.

Ms. Kneedler asked for clarification on what would be included in the document. Would it be abstract things like values or more concrete ideas?

Ms. Eliot felt it would include more things that resonated with all members from the listening sessions, the survey feedback, or based on each member's own opinions. It could be elements of a project that the group could all agree on.

Mr. Stevens said he liked the idea. He felt that at some point soon, the School Committee will need to take a leadership role in the school building process. He said the group needs to decide on what was learned from the listening sessions, what was learned from feedback from a broader taxpayer group, and what do School Committee members feel individually is the best path forward.

He thought of Ms. Eliot's idea was a good first step to help think things through. Mr. Stevens shared that there was a Triboard meeting tentatively scheduled for November 15. At that meeting, the School Committee had agreed to look to the Triboard for their thoughts on this project. They will want to know from the School Committee what the next steps are to address the wider community, whether it be at a Special Town Meeting or a non-binding ballot vote. While Mr. Stevens acknowledged that the group may never come to a consensus on every detail, it was important to begin these hard conversations and get people's thoughts on the table.

Ms. Cannon felt that some things needed to be clarified. First, the School Committee has intentionally not had these tough conversations yet so they could hear from the community. She then talked about using a workshop model to breakdown locations, values, pros and cons of site/configurations and discuss other considerations.

Ms. Eliot felt that the guiding principles document would help members of the School Committee start with some common ground. She acknowledged that members had different ideas on the end product for the school building project, but believed that there were also things that all members had in common. The document could be used to help stay true to the values and elements that the group agrees are most important.

Ms. Cannon felt that this work would not all be accomplished in one workshop.

Ms. Eliot added that the group seems to be "spinning its wheels" and it is time to move forward.

Ms. Cannon suggested that the group needs to also consider putting together a committee to write the SOI. Once the committee is formed, they can begin work on gathering some of the information needed for a submission while the School Committee sorts out other information.

Mr. Poirier asked if the creation of a guiding principles document and a workshop could happen together. He then asked what the timing was for hearing back from the Logue Group regarding the last of the listening session data. Dr. Blake shared that the Logue Group is working on compiling the data from the last of the community listening sessions.

Ms. Eliot then asked what was needed to prepare for the upcoming Triboard meeting. Mr. Stevens said the School Committee need to be able to show that they are making progress towards an SOI.

The discussion continued around the timing of a non-binding vote on the school building project and what that may look like. It was decided that the School Committee would discuss what a vote may look like at their upcoming workshop. The group then discussed the date of the workshop and agreed to hold it on Monday, November 7, 2022 from 5:00-8:00 PM.

Ms. Eliot gave a brief overview of the MSBA, highlighting information from the School Committee newsletter article, "What is the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)? - An Introduction to the MSBA and Various Pathways to Funding". She felt it was important for the School Committee and community to understand what the MSBA is and what programs they offer. She then gave a synopsis of the article, which pulled information directly from the MSBA website. The article stated:

*The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has been around since 2004, and is a quasi-independent government authority created to reform the process of funding capital improvement projects in the Commonwealth's public schools. They strive to work with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools. MSBA funds are targeted towards projects and districts that are ready and able to make the financial commitment and move forward in a timely manner. They accept districts into their programs based on need and urgency, as expressed by the district in a Statement of Interest (SOI) and validated by the MSBA. The paths available for school districts to obtain MSBA funding are accessed through the **Core Program**, and the **Accelerated Repair Program**.*

*The **Core Program** could be either new construction or addition/renovation of an existing building. The MSBA states that due to the volume of SOIs submitted for the Core Program, they request that each district identify a Priority SOI for consideration. This enables the district and the MSBA to focus financial and staff resources on completing a project and ensures an opportunity for a grant for as many districts as possible. Additionally, this narrows down the pool of potential projects if districts have submitted multiple schools within the district for consideration. Districts accepted into the Core program could also take advantage of the MSBA's **Model School Program**. These model schools are efficient in design and easy to maintain, contain optimal classroom and science lab space, can easily accommodate higher or lower enrollments, incorporate sustainable, "green" design elements when*

possible and are flexible in educational programming spaces while encouraging community use. Goals for the Model School Program include compressed project schedules and accelerated construction start times, and shortening and streamlining the design process to reduce design fees.

*The **Accelerated Repair Program** involves replacement of roof, windows, and/or boiler for buildings that are otherwise structurally sound. Repair projects are designed to materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that is otherwise capable of supporting the required educational program. These projects follow a shorter, more aggressive project timeline to complete projects limited to specific scope items and may allow districts to repair more than one school at a time. MSBA outlines multiple factors in which a district should not file an SOI for Accelerated Repair Program, including but not limited to:*

- *the school is judged by the district to be over-crowded*
- *the district is considering the facility for potential consolidation*
- *the SOI itself seeks construction beyond roofs, windows/door, or boilers*
- *the district plans a future construction project for MSBA participation going beyond roofs, windows/doors, and boilers for the school.*

A potential timeline for a building project(s) was also included in the School Committee newsletter. If a project was approved right away, the completion of the project may not occur until 2028 or later.

Ms. Eliot then clarified that any vote at the ballot or at a Special Town Meeting this winter will just be to support the School Committee in submitting an SOI to the MSBA. An SOI submission is the very first step in a long process. The vote would be to support the submission of an SOI demonstrating the need for a new elementary school(s).

Mr. Poirer commented on the Model School Program versus the Core Program. He said it appears that the MSBA does not differentiate the two when you submit an SOI. It appears that you are either applying for the Core Program or the Accelerated Repair Program. He suggested that the newsletter article be edited so as not to give the impression that a model school program is a separate program from the Core Program.

Ms. Cannon thought it was important that the community knew that the model school program was an option, but agreed that the article could use some wordsmithing.

Ms. Donahue thought the article, in a more concise way, should be included in the pamphlet that will be distributed at the Special Town Meeting. She felt it was very informational. The discussion continued on what portions of the article would be included in the “overview” section of the pamphlet.

Ms. Freehan asked the group if they had any additional requests for the Elementary Building Project Working Group ahead of the workshop. She shared that she has been looking at what other towns on the North Shore have done in terms of their school buildings.

Ms. Donahue thought it was important to know, when schools combine, what are the enrollment numbers that they are combining to. She said that having that information will help impact her decisions.

Mr. Stevens asked that members send Ms. Freehan an email if they would like additional information ahead of the scheduled workshop.

F. NESDEC Enrollment Projection Discussion (Taken out of order)

Mr. Poirier started by asking how the School Committee plans to use the NESDEC enrollment projections to convey data on enrollment with regard to the school building project. He wanted clarification on whether the School Committee would be using the 5 year estimate provided by NESDEC or would the School Committee want to also include enrollment projections for building projects in town that have not started yet. What specific number would the School Committee use when talking about enrollment? He felt the School Committee should vote to accept the NESDEC enrollment study or agree to a projected enrollment number prior to submitting an SOI to the MSBA.

After some discussion about the importance of these enrollment projections, Dr. Blake agreed to reach out to NESDEC to get some clarification on the data presented in the report. This agenda item will be discussed again at a future meeting when additional and clarifying information is available from NESDEC.

G. Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group- Potential SOI Submission Discussion (Taken out of order)

Mr. Poirier is the School Committee liaison to the Public Safety Facility Re-Use Committee. The committee has formulated an SOI form that any private parties or town entities can use to express their interest in using either the fire station or the police station. Those SOI submissions are due on November 15, 2022. In preparation of these SOI submissions, a survey went out which had over 300 respondents. Of those who responded, a majority said they did not want either site to be sold or leased for commercial use. Using the space as additional municipal office space was one of the least desirable uses of the building. The preschool was raised as a potential use for the fire station.

Mr. Poirier shared that Winthrop School and the fire station sit on a combined parcel with an assessed value of \$5.3million. The re-use committee felt the fire station would make up about 20% of that cost. Mr. Poirier also shared that the committee had a presentation on potential funding sources/grant opportunities for any potential project.

At this time, the committee has not received any SOI submissions for the fire station. At their last meeting, the re-use committee acknowledged that the School Committee was going through a process in determining a path forward for the elementary school building project(s). They felt that what the School Committee decides to do will have an impact on the use of the fire station. One recommendation from the committee was to do nothing/put off any decision making until the School Committee decides what they want. Mr. Poirier shared that the School Committee received some communication from parents who had discussed the potential for a preschool at the fire station.

Mr. Stevens asked for clarification on any potential ownership changes to the parcel that the fire station sits on. He asked if the fire station, because it is included in the one lot where Winthrop School is located, is also considered school property. Mr. Poirier said that the current lot is listed under general municipal purposes.

Mr. Stevens said he was curious about the logistics. If the school department took control of the fire station, would the School Committee need support from Town Meeting or a ballot vote? Mr. Poirier said the re-use committee had not had those types of discussions yet.

Ms. Cannon felt it was important to have that information prior to an SOI submission. She asked what it would cost the school department to take ownership of a building that is not structurally sound, not ADA compliant, and in need of significant remediation. While she likes the suggestions for potential use, Ms. Cannon said she was unsure how the School Committee could ask the town to support a new school building(s) and also support a project at the fire station.

Dr. Blake asked Mr. Poirier to clarify whether the SOI would be binding, should the School Committee submit one. Mr. Poirier said the re-use committee anticipated the new public safety building to be completed in 2024. That means that the fire station and police station could be available in two years. Mr. Poirier said the re-use committee is charged with reporting the best options to the Select Board as a way of weeding out the applications that make sense and meet the community values. He said the School Committee does not need to be specific about a single use for the fire station. Submitting an SOI just states that the School Committee is interested in something.

Dr. Blake said that anyone could apply for an SOI and in many cases, those entities would come in, look at the engineering and work needed. Those groups have the funds to do that. The school district does not.

Ms. Cannon said the fire station would then become part of the conversation (regarding the elementary school building project). If the School Committee was going to commit to preserving the building, they would need to fully commit. The School Committee should not be submitting an SOI as a placeholder without really understanding what it would take to make the building a usable space. She did not feel that taking on the fire station was fiscally responsible.

Dr. Blake acknowledged that the elementary schools and preschool was in desperate need of additional space now. The district could not wait to address that need for two or more years. If the SOI was non-binding, he suggested the district submit an SOI for the fire station, but also continue to move forward with an SOI submission to the MSBA.

Ms. Kneedler felt that submitting an SOI for the fire station was sending the wrong message. She thought using the fire station for a preschool was a terrible idea, highlighting that remediation costs alone would probably be in the millions of dollars. She felt the district could build new for significantly cheaper than that.

Ms. Donahue felt it would not harm the district financially to submit an SOI for the fire station. She said that at some point, funds will be needed to create a new preschool space whether it is at the fire station or elsewhere.

Ms. Cannon said the School Committee needs to plan ahead and look at the work that was already done to evaluate the fire station. She wanted to know how the School Committee could get some answers ahead of submitting an SOI.

Ms. Kneedler thought that by submitting an SOI for the fire station, the community may perceive the decision as the School Committee looking to do three separate building projects.

After some discussion about the need for additional parking if a combined school was to be placed at Winthrop, Mr. Poirier then asked the School Committee if they were going to take the fire station SOI off the table.

Ms. Cannon said she would need more information about the fire station and the work needed if the School Committee were going to consider taking on another expensive building.

It was decided that a decision to submit an SOI for the fire station would be deferred until the November 3, 2022 meeting.

Public Comment:

Ana Laguarda, Winthrop Parent: Said that a conversation about the fire station took place at the last Winthrop School Council meeting. She said that parents believe the School Committee should consider submitting an SOI for that building. Some parents suggested selling the building off and using the money for additional preschool space. She said that both schools are in crisis in terms of space needs. She felt that the School Committee is not talking about preschool and the increasing needs of the preschool population. She felt it was horrible to have students with high needs not have space available for their services. Ms. Laguarda felt it would be beneficial for the School Committee to “put their hat in the ring”. She asked the School Committee to show families that they are doing something about the space needs at the schools.

Mr. Stevens, in response to Ms. Laguarga, said he wished there was a quick fix. Taking control of the fire station could take years and the overcrowding issue needs to be dealt with much sooner than that.

Ms. Cannon said that the School Committee is aware that the elementary schools and preschool need more space. They are looking for additional space, talking about it, trying to plan for it. She just wanted to be sure that they are fiscally responsible when doing so.

Ms. Eliot asked Mr. Poirier to reach out to the re-use committee to see how likely they will be to push off the deadline for SOI submissions. Mr. Poirier asked why the School Committee would not be proactive and tell the re-use committee they are interested in submitting an SOI, but need more time.

Any further discussion was tabled until a future meeting.

8. Superintendent’s Administrative Report

- Recorded the introductory video for the second round of listening sessions
- Dealing with significant bussing issues- there is a shortage of drivers
- Discussed the eventual electrification of the bus fleet- the meeting was with Mary DeLai, Carl Nylen and representatives from Salter’s parent company Beacon
- Met with the administrative team- discussed an equity case study from the book, *Diversity and Social Justice Education*, as well as participated in an educator evaluation calibration exercise
- Attended a CREST Collaborative Board of Directors meeting
- Attended server subcommittee/working group meetings
- Participation in at North Shore Superintendent’s Round Table meeting- discussed staffing concerns, legislative updates and MCAS accountability

- A meeting with the Athletic Director and the Director of Finance and Operations to discuss the lease of an athletic bus
- Attendance at the first of four Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion workshops sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
- Met with Mary DeLai, the town's Climate Resiliency Manager, to discuss the building projects that she has been involved in.
- The district's DEI Team held its first meeting and discussed their focus for the year- the district will be launching "No Place for Hate", a program created by the Anti-Defamation League
- Met with the Geothermal exploration group in town
- Attended a Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Executive Board meeting- discussed FOIA requests, accountability data, and a new partnership with the principal's association
- Met with the Ipswich Educators Association president for a monthly meeting
- Met with Nat Pulsifer regarding the Feoffees and grant outcomes

Dr. Blake then discussed school safety and read the following statement:

School safety continues to be on everyone's mind these days as we hear about the latest school tragedies around the country. Here in Ipswich, we take the safety and security of our students and staff very seriously.

To that end, all of our staff participate in ALICE (Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate) training on an annual basis. ALICE training is "a civilian shooter response training that is delivered with a trauma informed approach in an age and ability appropriate way." To learn more about ALICE Training please go to www.alicetraining.com. Grade level/age appropriate discussions are also held with students at all levels on how to respond to critical incidents.

In addition to the ALICE training, all staff have access to emergency protocol manuals for different types of emergencies. The manuals have been updated this year.

In addition to yearly training and ongoing conversations, Ipswich takes day to day precautions as well. Our school buildings remain locked during the day and visitors must be granted access by the respective main office. All staff members are required to wear ID badges on their outermost clothing, so visitors are easily identified. We also have drills of different types built into the school year (fire drills, evacuations, shelter in place).

Ipswich continues to have a strong, positive relationship with both our police and fire departments. In addition to our SRO (School Resource Officer), it is not uncommon to see police cruisers around our buildings during the day as they patrol or conduct walk-throughs of the grounds. We are fortunate that many of our police officers have children in our schools.

Any time an issue of security arises concerning our school community, Superintendent Blake is in immediate contact with our SRO or Ipswich Police Chief Nikas. Working together, they determine the best course of action based on the information they have at the time. Depending on the situation, parents/guardians are notified with as much information as they are able to share which is determined by the nature of the emergency and status of any resulting investigation. This information is updated as events unfold or as necessary.

Our high school students have voiced, through the School Committee Representative, that they would also like to be notified when there is a safety concern as information is often relayed to them on an inconsistent and unreliable basis (eg. second and third hand retellings). This request is something that is being considered for the future.

As I have reported in the past, the safety of our students and staff is always of utmost importance and we work closely with local authorities to ensure everyone's safety to the greatest extent possible.

Dr. Blake then talked about the continued upgrades to the school security systems. The district recently installed additional security cameras at the football stadium, press box and in the schools. Additional badging entrance pads and some system upgrades took place at the schools.

Dr. Blake talked about the mental health of students. He felt that the district was in a better place than last year. The district is fully staffed in the school counseling departments at each school and have added a District Family Liaison position to offer additional assistance. There are still students dealing with mental health issues, struggling with anxiety and school avoidance.

Dr. Blake said the high school is experiencing an uptick in vaping. They are working on ways to reduce/eliminate the issue.

9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- **Communications Subcommittee:** The group met this week to review the October newsletter which is scheduled to go out on Friday, October 21st.
- **Policy Subcommittee:** This group finished reviewing Section C of the policy manual and have started to look at the policies in Section J. Policies will be presented at the next meeting for review and approval.

10. New Business*

No new business was presented.

11. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.

12. Consent Agenda

- *Motion to accept the consent agenda with approved edits to the meeting minutes was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Ms. Kneedler. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

13. Adjournment

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