

Ipswich School Committee

MS/HS Ensemble Room

134 High Street, Ipswich

Thursday, June 1, 2023

6:30 PM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM.

Present: K. Eliot (KE) J. Connolly (JC)
 J. Poirier (JP) M. Perry (MP)
 D. Freehan (DF) J. Donahue (JD)
 S. Sopic (SS)

Also Present: B. Blake, Superintendent of School (BB)
 T. Markham, Director of Finance and Operations (TM)
 J. Bornstein, High School Student Representative (JB)

2. Executive Session for the following reasons: (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel

- *Motion to enter into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel was made by JP and seconded by DF.*

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously

3. Return to Open Session

The meeting resumed in open session at 7:22 PM.

4. Reading of the District Mission Statement

JB read the district mission statement.

5. Announcements- See handout. Operations on 6/6 at 6pm.

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 7:00 PM.
- The last day of school for all students is Friday, June 16th. Schools will be dismissed as follows:
 - Middle and High School: 11:20 AM
 - Elementary School: 11:50 AM
- District offices will be closed on Monday, June 19th.
- The Operations Subcommittee will meet on June 6th at 6:00 PM.

6. Special Acknowledgements-

BB congratulated Gabby Archanbault, EL teacher at the HS for her work with the Multilingual Leaders Club. BB talked about the recent Multilingual Leaders Showcase which celebrated student work and involved family members.

KE acknowledged the 8th Grade Civics Fair, the 18 year old voters on election day, and BB on the security audit.

7. Citizens' Comments

There were none.

8. High School Student Representative Report

JB and the Student Advisory Council sought feedback from the student body about how the year has been and how things could go differently. Responses included:

- A need for better communication between faculty and students
- Concern that R block, a time considered valuable to students, is often taken away for events, presenters, etc.

9. Presentations

A. IEA Snapshot

High School Special Education teacher, Jared Harvey, discussed the School to Work Program at the high school. The program currently consists of three branches:

1. Career Day in Grade 9
2. Job Shadow Day in Grades 10 and 11
3. Bridge Program in Grade 12

Mr. Harvey then discussed the addition of a fourth branch of the program which places high school students on education plans into non profit jobs in the school district. The program was piloted last summer. This year, the district received \$16,000 in grant funding to place 6 high school students into jobs in the three schools over the summer.

B. MS Handbook Change- Dress Code

This agenda item was not discussed.

C. Paine Grant Presentations

In the Paine Grant Committee Chair's absence, JP presented the committee recommendations for grant approval. He first thanked the members of the committee for their work and reviewed open positions for FY24. The presentation included a brief history of the establishment of the Feoffee Trust and the mission statement of the Paine Grant Committee. The total disbursement allotted for Paine Grants was \$739,353. The total amount of funds requested through grant applications was \$723,796.

College Boot Camp

- Total Funds Requested: \$13,000
 - Goal of Proposal: Provide a free enrichment opportunity for rising seniors to complete the Common App, get a head start on the college essay, and create a resume.
 - Financial Aid- application process, net price calculators, FAFSA4caster, range of college cost
 - Interview Skills & Demonstrated Interest
 - Only 25% said they would participate if there was a fee associated with the camp
 - Increased importance of the essay with continuation of optional SAT/ACT scores
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support
- *Motion to approve the College Application Boot Camp Paine Grant was made by JD and seconded by DF. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Heart Rate Monitor Grant

- Total Funds Requested: \$13,916.76
- Goal of Proposal: These monitors will help our students and the teachers better measure the quality and intensity of their exercise during any given time. They will allow the student to spend more time in their target heart rate zone as well as track the participant's heart rate during physical activity.
- Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous Support

Several questions and concerns were discussed relating to this grant which included:

- Would teachers be trained on heart rates and would plans be established should the monitor pick up an irregular/abnormal heart rate?
- How was information being shared?
- Could parents opt out of this activity?
- How is the information displayed?

It was ultimately decided that JP would bring these additional questions to the grant applicant for clarification. A vote on the grant was postponed until more information could be provided.

Plimoth and Patuxet Museums

- Total Funds Requested: \$5,429.20
- Goal of Proposal: This grant would provide funding for a 3rd Grade extended day field trip to Plimoth & Patuxet Museums and the Mayflower II replica. The trip to these living history museums aligns directly with our 3rd grade Massachusetts History & Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks study of Massachusetts history including the Pilgrims and Native Peoples. It would provide the perfect opportunity for us to connect the history we teach with Massachusetts historic sites.
- Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support. The Paine Grant Committee also strongly encouraged the School Committee to use excess funds to spread this to both elementary schools if Winthrop would be open to the experience.

There was a brief discussion on the history of this trip at Winthrop. Committee members were in support of approving the grant for both elementary schools. A question was raised about why this field trip would not fall under the Place Based Learning Grant. It was clarified that the trip was still new and could move to that grant in future years.

- *Motion to approve the Plimoth and Patuxet Museums Grant for the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***
- *Motion to approve an additional \$5,429.20 from previously returned Feoffee funds for the purpose of funding the Plimoth and Patuxet Museums Grant, pending approval from Winthrop Grade 3 teachers, was made by JP and seconded by KE. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Place Based Learning

- Total Funds Requested: \$143,000
 - Goal of Proposal: Funds from this grant will allow all Ipswich students to have equitable access to the many field trips and unique learning opportunities that our schools offer regardless of learning needs and socioeconomic status.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support
- *Motion to support the Place Based Learning Grant was made by JD and seconded by KE. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

DEAR/SAW

- Total Funds Requested: \$8,510.67
 - Goals of Proposal:
 - Re-invigorate the humanities classrooms in our pod by adding furniture, revamping our supplies and classroom libraries;
 - Establish regular independent reading (Drop Everything and Read- DEAR) and writing practices (Stop and Write-SAW.) An exciting highlight of the SAW program will be arranging pen-pals for our students with students in more diverse communities, like Lawrence.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support
- *Motion to support the DEAR/SAW Grant was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Doyon Playground Phase 2

- Total Funds Requested: \$90,000
- Goal Proposal: In order for the Doyon playground to serve the needs of its community, it needs additional accessibility options. In 2007, additions to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) placed additional requirements on public playground spaces, which dictates means of access and how many ground level components a play area must have. Approximately, for every two elevated components, the area must have a ground level equivalent unless a component is ramp accessible. This grant proposal is specifically geared toward the poured pathways that would allow access to playground structures and improve the currently poor ground surfacing, as well as equipment for our youngest (Pre-K) students.
- Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support

- *Motion to support the Doyon Playground Phase 2 Grant was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

High School World Language Department France Trip

- Total Funds Requested: \$56,601
 - Goal of Proposal: The goal is to alleviate costs and help make this trip accessible to all students. This trip will give students the chance to put the language skills they have been learning and practicing in the classroom into use in real world situations. They will also have the opportunity to experience the food, culture and history of France through first hand, authentic experiences. The trip will take place during April vacation in 2024.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support
- *Motion to support the World Language Department France Trip Grant was made by DF and seconded by MP. **The motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 abstention.***

High School World Language Trip to Spain

- Total Funds Requested: \$67,262
- Goal of Proposal: Our department seeks to extend an enriching global cultural experience to all students of Ipswich High School with the opportunity to experience authentic learning and increase global citizenry. This trip offers the opportunity to travel internationally and share the rich cultural and authentic linguistic experience of Spain. The trip being offered is February 17th through February 24, 2024 to juniors and seniors regardless if they are currently enrolled in a Spanish class. I would like to seek a 50% reduction in cost of the trip and a 65% reduction for students who meet the “Free and Reduced” lunch criteria and families who will be sending multiple siblings.
- Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support

This trip is open to any high school student who would like to attend.

- *Motion to support the World Language Trip to Spain Grant was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Doyon Lego Robotics

- Total Funds Requested: \$10,767.54
 - Goal of Proposal: The purpose of this grant is to secure funding for a LEGO robotics program for second grade. The grant will cover 36 of the LEGO SPIKE essential sets. The LEGO Education sets will encourage STEAM concepts and 21st Century skills.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support. The Paine Grant Committee also strongly encouraged the School Committee to use excess funds to spread this to both elementary schools if Winthrop would be open to the experience.
- *Motion to support the Doyon Lego Robotics Grant was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***
 - *Motion to approve an additional \$10,767.54 from previously returned Feoffee funds for the purpose of funding the Lego Robotic Grant at Winthrop School was made by JP and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

VEX EXP Classroom Bundles

- Total Funds Requested: \$8,997
 - Goal of Proposal: Small pilot of newest generation industry-leading VEX robotics educational platform for Ipswich High School robotics program. Current robotics platform is outdated (discontinued & unsupported) and inconsistent.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support
- *Motion to support the VEX EXP Classroom Bundles Grant was made by JD and seconded by DF. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Professional Development

- Total Funds Requested: \$103,340
- Goal of Proposal: Provide teachers of all grade levels the opportunity to grow as learners. Examples of potential PD include
 - Responsive Classroom at the elementary school level
 - Innovative math practices at the secondary level
 - Content-area focused PD around authentic assessment practices
- Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous support

KE suggested that this could be another area for future School Committee discussion.

- *Motion to approve the Professional Development Grant was made by KE and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Innovation in Elementary Literacy Practices

This grant was originally submitted as one grant, however, the Paine Grant Committee requested the authors rewrite the grant in the three main components.

1. Innovation in Elementary Literacy Practices: Professional Development
 - Total Funds Requested: \$58,600
 - Goal of Proposal: This foundational professional development would happen in the 2023-2024 school year and would be funded through this grant. We would partner with a consultancy group who are experts in the Science of Reading, and coordinate thoughtful and comprehensive professional development so that all our elementary teachers develop common understandings of the brain-based ways in which children learn to read.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Unanimous Support
2. Innovation in Elementary Literacy Practices: Geodes Reading Kits
 - Total Funds Requested: \$69,503
 - Goal of Proposal: There are tools and resources needed for classroom teachers to use to implement Science of Reading. While we were able to fund professional development for teachers on the Wilson Foundations program in this 2022-2023 school year, teachers did not have access to the kits stocked with decodables to truly put their learning into action. The Geodes kits are comprehension packages that include books organized into four modules/topics of study. Our K-3 teachers currently use the Wilson Foundations curriculum to teach through a structured literacy approach. We are lacking the innovative curricular kits ("Geodes") to truly put this Science of Reading-based approach into action.
 - Paine Grant Committee Recommendation: Committee Does Not Support with 1 abstention. Committee sees tools as a curriculum resource, so it does not meet the Grant Purpose/Intent.
3. Innovation in Elementary Literacy Practices: Literacy Coach
 - Total Funds Requested: \$74,769
 - Goal of Proposal: This Paine grant would fund a pilot year with an IPS Elementary Literacy Coach. This position would be modeled on the lauded math instructional coaching roles. This person would be an expert in Science of Reading best practices, and will be instrumental in supporting teachers in bringing their learning about Science of Reading into their classrooms.
 - Paine Grant Recommendation: Unanimous Support with guidance that this position should only be grant funded for 1 year pilot, if successful it should be planned to be integrated into the operating budget

There was a discussion about whether, under the current Feoffee Policy, the School Committee could vote to approve a grant that was not first approved by the Paine Grant Committee. JP said the Paine Grant Committee spent considerable time discussing the request for the Geodes kits and it was his impression that sending the grant back for reconsideration would not change the opinion of the Paine Grant Committee members.

The discussion continued on whether the materials were considered "core curriculum". BB felt that the grant could be ineffective without the materials. It was also suggested that the materials could potentially not be "core curriculum" if they were being used as part of a pilot program. KE added that it should be up to the administrative team to determine what materials are considered "core curriculum".

Concern was expressed about not passing any portion of the grant. There is a need for a reading specialist in the district. During the budget discussion, the School Committee was reassured that the position would come out of a Paine Grant in the form of a literacy coach. There was also concern expressed over the Paine Grant Committee's recommendation of only funding the literacy coach for one year. JD talked about other positions that have been grant funded for more than one year. There was nothing stopping applicants from applying for this position as a Paine Grant in future years. Members felt that the position was needed and having it for one year was better than not having it at all.

Alicia Thomas, Winthrop teacher, spoke to the grant, specifically talking about the professional development piece. She shared that the professional development is separate from the kits and will be used to update educators with best practice ways to teach reading. This form of teaching literacy is innovative. The text and materials are supplemental, not part of the core curriculum. This method of teaching is supported by research.

MP felt that Ms. Thomas' input gave sufficient enough information to ask the Paine Grant Committee for reconsideration.

Questions were raised as to why the application was for one shared literacy coach, rather than one coach per elementary school. Clarification from Mr. Wagner was requested.

- *Motion to support the Innovation in Literacy Practices: Professional Development Grant was made by KE and seconded by MP. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***
- *Motion to support the Innovation in Literacy Practices: Literacy Coach was made by KE and seconded by MP. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

The School Committee took no action on the Innovation in Literacy Practices: Geodes Kits Grant and asked that it be brought back to the Paine Grant Committee for reconsideration.

D. Summer Meeting Schedule

Members agreed to meet on July 20th from 6:00-9:00 PM for a retreat. The first regularly scheduled School Committee meeting for the 2023-24 school year will be held on Thursday, August 24th.

E. School Calendar Approval

This agenda item was not discussed.

F. Administrative Contracts

- *Motion to approve the Superintendent salary adjustments for FY24 as discussed in executive session was made by KE and seconded by SS. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***
- *Motion to approve the Administrator salary adjustments for FY24 as discussed in executive session was made by JP and seconded by JD. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

G. Financial Update

TM discussed the year-to-date report, noting the percentage of the FY23 budget that remains as of June 1st. TM shared that the business office has been processing the approvals from Town Meeting and has already shifted money over to the Stabilization Fund. The district is also looking at what Special Education tuitions they could potentially prepay for FY24.

TM then reviewed the revolving accounts. TM briefly discussed the Food Service account, sharing that the fund balance will be lower by September after the purchase of some new kitchen equipment.

JD asked how the district will pay for any suggestions/recommendations that come out of the security audit. BB said it will be up to the School Committee to decide what the district can fund.

10. Superintendent's Administrative Report

BB reported on the work he had done throughout the district since the last School Committee meeting. His report included:

- Hosting small group safety meetings
- An Administrative Team meeting with a representative for the security audit
- A preschool team meeting to discuss the logistics of an additional classroom
- Multilingual leaders forum
- CREST Collaborative Board of Directors meeting
- A Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Executive Board Meeting
- Security Audit walkthroughs of each building
- Middle School principal finalist meetings
- Senior week activities
- Policy Subcommittee meeting
- Preparing for graduation

BB shared that the elementary principal position had been posted and that an interview committee will need to be formed. The assistant principal positions will be hired at the building level.

11. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- Policy Subcommittee: met this evening and approved two policies which will be presented for approval at the next School Committee meeting. The policy review cycle was not completed, but a plan was made on how to move forward next school year.
- Communications Subcommittee: The last School Committee newsletter was drafted and will be sent out on June 2nd. Members of the School Committee reviewed the draft document and made some edits to an article. JD suggested including information on the approved Paine Grants in a future edition of the newsletter.
- DF drafted an addendum to the School Committee Social Media Norms. After some discussion, it was suggested that this be reviewed and discussed as part of the School Committee summer workshop.

12. New Business*

The next School Committee meeting was moved from June 15th to June 8th.

13. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.

14. Consent Agenda

- *Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by KE and seconded by DF. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

15. AdjournmentM

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by KE and seconded by MP. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 PM