

Ipswich School Committee
Thursday, November 21, 2024
MS/HS Ensemble Room
134 High Street, Ipswich
6:45 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

DF called the meeting to order.

2. Executive Session:

Motion and Vote to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose:

- (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the AFSCME Food Services Union

3. Return to Open Session

Present: Mat Perry (MP) Dianna Freehan (DF)
 Jenny Connolly (JC) Kate Eliot (KE)
 Haley Rist (HR) Sasha Sopic (SS)

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools (BB)
 Tom Markham, Director of Finance and Operations (TM)
 Edwin (Charlie) Quimby, HS Student Representative (CQ)

4. Reading of the District Mission Statement

CQ read the mission statement.

5. Announcements and Special Acknowledgements

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, December 5th at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The Feoffees Policy Working Group is meeting on Thursday, December 5th at 5:30 PM.
- Elementary School students will be dismissed at 11:50 AM on Wednesday, November 27th.
- Middle and High School students will be dismissed at 11:20 AM on Wednesday, November 27th.
- All schools and district offices will be closed on Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th.
- DF acknowledged the National Honors Society, as she attended their induction ceremony recently.
- BB acknowledged the Girls Varsity Volleyball team for their recent State Championship win.
- High School Winter sports registration closes soon

6. Public Comments¹

DF read the School Committee statement of public comment. No public comments were made.

7. Community Presentations

A. Strategy for District Improvement/School Improvement Plan Presentation

BB first reviewed the framework that was used to first develop the Strategy for Student Success document. Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, then discussed the creation of and review process for the Strategy for District Improvement. Dr. Wagner explained that the individual School Improvement plans are closely aligned with the Strategy for District Improvement.

¹ Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority. While the Committee and/or administrators will not typically respond during Public Comment, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may choose to if s/he seems it expeditious. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue falls outside the purview of the School Committee, s/he may request that citizens direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given proper consideration. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person and a total of 15 minutes, overall.

Paul F. Doyon Memorial School:

Goal 1:

- The Paul F. Doyon Memorial School will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Aligns to District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

Principal Adam Whitehouse-Mullen then discussed action items and forward growth for this goal.

Goal 2:

- The Paul F. Doyon 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.
- Aligns with District Objective #2: Creating innovative learning environments.

Mr. Whitehouse-Mullen then discussed action items and forward growth for this goal.

Goal 3:

- The Paul F. Doyon 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. As a community, we will continue to embrace the cultural, ethnic, and gender identities of our students and families; honor identities and amplify marginalized voices within the school; integrate cultures, ethnicities, and other diverse backgrounds into the curriculum; and explore creative ways to build awareness of diversity.
- Aligns with District Objective #3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Whitehouse-Mullen then discussed action items and forward growth for this goal.

Resources and supports used throughout Doyon were then shared.

Winthrop School

Goal 1:

- Winthrop School will ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Aligns to District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students.

Principal Amy Sullivan then discussed action items for this goal.

Goal 2:

- Winthrop 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.
- Aligns with District Objective #2: Creating innovative learning environments.

Ms. Sullivan then discussed action items for this goal.

Goal 3:

- Winthrop 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.
- Aligns with District Objective #3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ms. Sullivan then discussed action items for this goal.

Resources and supports used throughout Winthrop were then shared.

Comments/Questions:

- HR: How are you aligning professional development or things at the programmatic level that students at Winthrop might be getting and Doyon is not?

- AS: Our schools do have their own identities. We are far more aligned now then even three years ago with the help of team meetings across grade levels and Compass Committees.
- TW: All professional development is offered district-wide and is done through the Office of Teaching and Learning.
- KE: Amazing things are happening at both schools. Going forward it's important to continue to align on things as much as possible.
- TW: We are at the point where we have the same curriculum in both schools.

Middle School:

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.
- Aligns to District Objective #1: Meeting the needs of all students.

Principal Peter Ginolfithen reviewed the action items for this goal.

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.
- Aligns with District Objective #2: Creating innovative learning environments.

Mr. Ginolfi reviewed the action items for this goal.

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.
- Aligns with District Objective #3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Ginolfi reviewed the action items for this goal.

Comments/Questions:

- CQ: Acknowledged the improvements to the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Are you working to increase the caliber of MS writing?
- PG: That's part of the benchmark assessments. Highest scores in MCAS are in writing and we want to continue to leverage that.
- KE: It would be great to share opportunities for School Committee members to visit/participate in school-wide events at the Middle Schools like the Probability Fair.
- PG: We can share the MS event calendar with the School Committee.

High School

Goal 1:

- Ensure that all students are provided supportive and rigorous educational experiences that meet their social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Aligns with District Objective 1: Meeting the needs of all students

Principal Jonathan Mitchell shared the action steps and progress updates tied to this goal.

Goal 2:

- 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
- Aligns with District Objective #2: Creating innovative learning environments

Mr. Mitchell shared the action steps and progress updates tied to this goal.

Goal 3:

- 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.

- Aligns with District Objective #3: Building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion

Mr. Mitchell shared the action steps and progress updates tied to this goal.

8. Superintendent's Administrative Report

Recent activities included:

- Technology update with the Tech Director and Digital Learning Specialist
- Subcommittee meetings
- Educator Evaluation Committee meeting
- Ipswich Aware meeting- reviewed recent crisis response and ongoing mental health needs of students
- Readiness phone call with the Massachusetts School Building Authority
- Reviewed and submitted a revised Capital Plan to the town
- Meeting with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group
- Tri-Board meeting
- A meeting with Ipswich Educators Association leadership to review starting dates for new contract provisions
- Planning for the Middle School Extended Day Program (EDP)
- Discussion with other regional superintendents about the potential to regionalize some Special Education programs/services
- An update on the status of the Winthrop School classroom that was closed due to a foul smell
- Reviewed plan for flooring project at the MS/HS

KE asked if the Facilities Director was involved in the revised Capital Plan and had there been consideration to doing another SchoolDude report. BB said that the district has not addressed enough projects in the current report for there to be a need for a new report to be completed at this time. BB also confirmed that he did meet with the new Facilities Director as part of revising and updating the Capital Plan.

KE then asked if the new EDP position was an expense to the district. BB talked about details for the program and the potential costs and/or fees for the program.

9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- **Budget Subcommittee:** Talked about input for the administrative team as they begin to prepare their budgets. Discussed the Stabilization Fund, budget increases, and reducing administrative fees for students and families that may be in need. The subcommittee will meet with the Admin Team on December 17th. The budget calendar has been finalized.
- **Communications Subcommittee:** The draft November newsletter was reviewed and updated.
- **Mutual Concerns Subcommittee:** In the process of scheduling a meeting.
- **Feoffees Policy Working Group:** Dug into the procedures around the Paine Grants and figured how to address issues with the application process. Looking at ways to streamline the process and implement workflow systems.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group:** Continues to discuss problem areas for cyclists and pedestrians. The group would like to be added to a future School Committee agenda to discuss high priority areas.
- **Paine Grant Committee:** HR would like to meet with Peter Ginolfi to discuss the process ahead of the upcoming grant cycle.

10. High School Student Representative Report

CQ joined the Massachusetts Association of Student Representatives (to the School Committee). Ipswich is hosting the 18th annual Ipswich/Georgetown Model UN Conference. Student Advisory meets tomorrow to discuss how to encourage students to reply to student surveys.

11. Finance Report

No report was presented.

12. Presentations

A. Review and Approve the 24-25 School Committee Goals

HR reviewed the updated 24-25 School Committee Goals. Goals were discussed prior to approval. Goals included:

1. **Facilities Management/Maintenance**

- a. *Prepare and plan for a **new Community Elementary School Building** considering the following:*
 - *Ensure the District's **educational planning needs** are met as set forth by the superintendent and the elementary school principals, including accommodation and flexibility.*
 - ***Financial impact** to the town.*
 - *Manage **risk and timing**, and support **equity for all students**.*
 - *Drive **awareness and engagement** with the entire community.*
- b. *Communicate with the Superintendent to **ensure building upgrades, maintenance, and environment initiatives** are in good standing for elementary, middle and high school and athletic fields and facilities.*
 - ***Address ongoing maintenance** needs for existing elementary school buildings.*
 - *Ensure necessary **safety upgrades and repairs** are completed to increase the safety and security of Ipswich Public School students, teachers, administrators, and staff.*
 - *Ensure completion of indoor and outdoor learning **facilities enhancements and** approved and funded **maintenance projects**, including those funded through Paine Grants.*

2. **Budget**

- a. *Accountability and collaboration with administration to responsibly manage the fiscal year '25 budget and develop a budget and strategy for the upcoming years.*
 - *Pass a **budget for fiscal year '26 at town meeting**, that meets educational priorities, financial constraints, and ensures we meet the needs of recently settled contract negotiations.*
 - *Drive engagement with other town boards during the **budget review process and schedule** regular and transparent communication with a focus on early and frequent updates and feedback.*
 - *Approve **long-term capital plan**.*
 - *Seek opportunities to reduce administrative fees for families (for example place-based learning, music, athletic fees).*
- b. *Accountability for Responsible Financial Management of Educational Stabilization Funds (override funds)*
 - *Collaborate with the Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations to implement a sustainable financial strategy to ensure educational override funding lasts 5 years from initial passage, including the following considerations:*
 - ☐ *FY26 through FY28 budget*
 - ☐ *Community engagement on spending ahead of future overrides*

3. **Feoffee Policy Review**

- a. *In depth review of and update the district policy **DDA: Principle Elements for Future Feoffees' Distributions**, in order to assure there is guidance to cover all grant requests, and the mission of the trust is being best fulfilled, including the following considerations:*
 - *Eligible grant types*
 - *Allocation of the annual distribution,*
 - *What constitutes a "qualifying request"*
 - *Usage of previously returned funds*
 - *A standardized approach for grant recipients to report out the impact the Trust is having on students.*

4. **Student Achievement and Social Wellbeing**

- a. *Provide strategic guidance and support to initiatives that improve academic performance, including the following considerations:*

- *Test scores*
- *Extracurricular and club activities*
- *Progress monitoring*
- *Address Post-Pandemic Academic Performance and Social-Emotional Issues*
- *Equity and access*

5. ***Student Safety Awareness***

- a. ***Foster a safe and trusting school environment*** for all students with a focus on bullying prevention, gun safety, and discrimination prevention, including the following considerations:
- ***Collaborate, communicate and partner*** with local agencies, staff and administration on consistent messaging about school safety measures
 - ***Build community*** awareness and engagement

6. ***Community Engagement***

- a. ***Identify and review communication practices*** between the school committee and community, including the following considerations:
- ***Proposed recommendations*** for monitoring achievement aligned with the Strategy for District Improvement
 - ***Awareness of school committee activities and priorities***, specifically our established ***goals and outcomes***
 - ***Foster positive relationships*** between students, families, staff, community partners
 - ***Increase awareness of and opportunity for committee appointments***

➤ Motion to approve the 2024-2025 School Committee goals as outlined was made by KE and seconded by HR. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

B. Review and Approve the 24-25 Superintendent Goals

BB shared that the superintendent goals were built off of the School Committee goals for alignment purposes. Feedback from the committee was incorporated into this new draft. BB reviewed his goals. The School Committee discussed the goals ahead of approval. Goals included:

1. Facilities: Develop a Plan for New Elementary School and Facilities Upgrades

School Committee Goal:

- *Develop a plan and build consensus for new elementary school building, including considerations of financial impact, risk, timing, equity, and educational planning.*
- *Ensure ongoing maintenance and upgrades for all school facilities, including safety and security.*

Superintendent Goal:

Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard II: Management and Operations

- *Overseeing facilities and ensuring a safe environment*

Objective 1:

- *Ensure that all identified safety upgrades and repairs are completed on time and within budget for the district's schools and athletic fields*

Measure:

Target:

Completion of selected safety upgrades and repairs outlined in the safety audit and Capital Plan		Complete 100% of the scheduled safety upgrades for FY25 and FY26	
Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard II: Management and Operations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allocating resources for facility improvements and maintenance			
Objective 2:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure completion of all ongoing maintenance projects and enhancements funded through Paine Grants, with a focus on improving indoor and outdoor learning environments			
Measure:		Target:	
Progress reports and completion of funded maintenance projects.		Complete and/or schedule completion of all existing indoor and outdoor learning facility enhancements by the end of the fiscal year.	

2. Budget: Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Planning

School Committee Goal:

- Manage the FY25 budget and plan for the following years, ensuring alignment with educational priorities and financial constraints.
- Ensure accountability for financial management, including educational stabilization funds and the long-term capital plan.

Superintendent Goal:	
Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard II: Management and Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Managing the district budget and finances responsibly	
Objective 1:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and present a balanced FY26 budget in collaboration with district leadership, focusing on educational priorities and sustainability.	
Measure:	Target:
Submission of a finalized budget to the School Committee for approval.	Finalize and submit the FY26 budget to the School Committee by February 2025 ensuring alignment with district goals.

Superintendent Goal:	
Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard II: Management and Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Managing the district budget and finances responsibly	
Objective 2:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and gain approval for the Capital Plan moving forward. 	
Measure:	Target:
Submission of a 5 year Capital Plan	Finalize revision to the Capital Plan and submit to Town for inclusion in the town-wide plan.

3. Feoffee Policy Review

School Committee Goal:

- Review and update the district's Feoffee Policy to ensure proper guidance for grants and the Trust's mission.

Superintendent Goal:	
Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard II: Management and Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overseeing policies and ensuring their alignment with district goals 	
Objective 1:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead a thorough review and update on the district's Feoffee Policy to ensure it meets the needs of the district and aligns with the goals of the Trust. 	
Measure:	Target:
Completion of the Feoffee Policy review, including stakeholder feedback and draft of updated policy.	Finalize and submit updated Feoffee Policy for School Committee approval by March 2025.

4. Student Achievement and Social Wellbeing

School Committee Goal:

- Improve academic performance and support social-emotional learning and equity in access to education.

Superintendent Goal:	
Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard I: Instructional Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring equity in access to educational opportunities 	
Objective 1:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure equitable access to academic resources and extracurricular opportunities for all students, with a focus on eliminating achievement gaps. 	
Measure:	Target:
Equity audits, achievement data by subgroup, and participation in extracurricular activities	Identify existing gaps and develop a plan to decrease these gaps.

5. Student Safety Awareness

School Committee Goal:

- *Foster a safe and trusting school environment, focusing on bullying, gun safety, and discrimination prevention.*

Superintendent Goal:

Alignment with MA Rubric: Standard IV: Professional Culture, Standard III: Family Engagement

- *Promoting a positive and safe school culture*
- *Communication and addressing concerns*

Objective 1:

- *Collaborate with local agencies and staff to ensure that school safety measures are consistently communicated to students, parents, and the school community.*

Measure:

Safety awareness campaigns, community forums, and school safety audits

Target:

Hold two safety awareness events and ensure families report understanding of school safety measures.

- Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Superintendent Goals as presented was made by HR and seconded by SS. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

C. Policy Update

DF first presented Policy JICJ, which is currently a concept of a policy not to be voted on at tonight's meeting. The policy overarching district-wide technology policy. Any feedback can be shared with DF.

Policy ACE was reviewed and updated per a request from the Food Services Director. Policy KF-R and KF were held during the last policy cycle while it was reviewed by the building scheduler and BB.

EBACA is the sustainability policy. There were minor grammatical changes made from the last review of the policy. KE asked how this policy will be implemented through the district once approved. BB said it would be shared with the Admin Team and implemented at the school level through staff meetings.

The following policies were presented for approval with minor wording changes: EB, EBAB, EBB, EBC, EBCD, EBCE, EC, ECA. It is recommended that the following policies be removed from the policy manual as they are Covid/Pandemic specific: EBC-Supplemental Policy and EBCFA.

HR asked what type of training could be shared with volunteers who are regularly in the building. BB will look into how to share that information out.

- Motion to approve the changes to the policy manual as presented with the exception of policy JICJ was made by KE and seconded by JC. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

D. Discussion and Vote on the AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement for Food Services

- Motion to ratify the AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement for Food Services as discussed in executive session was made by KE and seconded by JC. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

E. Elementary School Building Project Discussion

DF thanked the working group for putting together the Tri-Board presentation. The Finance Committee sent their letter to the MSBA. BB talked about the potential for a school tour at the newly opened Swampscott elementary school. KE talked about consensus building around the elementary school building project, if invited into the MSBA program and HR talked about the needs for a robust communication plan. CQ asked how much the bus contract would increase bussing students in the Winthrop district to Doyon. HR shared the estimated cost of a bus route. Potential next steps were discussed if Ipswich is invited into the program.

13. New Business

No new business was presented.

14. Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by DF and seconded by HR. *The motion passed with 5 in favor and 1 abstention.*

15. Adjournment

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