

# Ipswich Middle-High School

## Ipswich Public Schools – Massachusetts

Ipswich High School is a collaborative community that fosters equity among learners. We engage in the personalized acquisition of the skills and knowledge essential to becoming successful, contributing, and responsible citizens. Middle School Mission Statement: Our mission at the Ipswich Middle School is to create a nurturing community where students are encouraged to develop confidence as lifelong learners with the awareness and flexibility necessary to adapt to a changing world. We strive to bring out the best in every student and adult in our learning community. The Ipswich School system and the surrounding community are passionate about educating students in a way that creates citizens who are admirable examples of the above mission statements. The Middle/High building, constructed in 1999, is relatively new and students come up with new ideas to make it greener every year.

### **Pillar 1: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs**

#### **Pillar 1, Element 1A: Improved energy conservation/energy-efficient building(s).**

The Ipswich Public School district owns one third of a wind turbine that is located about three miles from the Middle/High school building. The school district sells this energy to the town's electric light department that then uses the energy to power the electricity needs of the school buildings. The Ipswich Middle/High school was constructed in 1999 and is heated by a boiler which is fueled by natural gas. The boiler also heats the hot water for the facility. Only 30% of the building is air-conditioned and all of the classrooms are able to open windows to cool the rooms off naturally. All windows and doors are fitted with weather stripping and are maintained so that they open and close properly limiting the amount of energy that is lost when heating or cooling the building. A new air conditioning system was installed in 2016 and boasts a 90% efficiency rate. The months of October and May are both "Zero Energy Months" and the building does not use any heat or air conditioning during this time. Currently, as interior lights stop working, they are replaced with energy-efficient, long-lasting LED lights. The parking lot lighting has also been upgraded to LED. Timed motion sensors are in place in every classroom to prevent lights from being on when they are not needed. Many teachers opt to have only one set of lights on, or both sets off while teaching and allow the room to be lit by natural light. Kitchen appliances are turned off when not in use, including being off for the entirety of the summer break.

#### **Pillar 1, Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation**

The Town of Ipswich owns its own water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities. Students in Engineering and Environmental Science classes tour these facilities as part of the curriculum. Water quality reports are read and analyzed as an Environmental Science assignment.

Working together, the high school Environmental Club and the middle school Green Team fundraised, purchased, and installed four water bottle refilling stations around the school. These stations filter the tap water and cool it for student consumption. These fillers also have drinking fountains as part of their design and are in locations that are easily accessible to students and staff. During each lunch block, dispensers are filled with ice water and plastic cups are available for students to fill. These efforts have

greatly reduced the amount of single-use plastic water bottles being used in the schools. Outdoors, there are no sprinklers for watering school property. The school's outdoor garden is hand watered. Rain barrels have been put in the garden to collect rainwater for use in watering. Our athletic fields are watered simply by the rain. The fields are not fertilized. The main athletic field is made of synthetic turf that was installed in 2016. The synthetic turf field is Shaw Sports Turf. It is the Legion Turf System with a monofilament fiber. The infill is Envirofill, a silica coated sand product. Envirofill is currently the most durable fill on the market with a 16-year warranty, meaning it won't need to be replaced for a long time. The turf is extremely permeable; water does not pond or sit on top at all. Games have been played in torrential rains and seen no puddling or flooding. The permeability report lists the field with an average of 9 on a 5-16 scale.

### **Pillar 1, Element 1C: Reduced waste production and improved recycling and composting programs**

Ipswich is home to many environmentally conscious groups such as Ipswich Sustainable Education. Volunteers in this group work with school administrators and students to bring green programs into all schools in the district. A major focus has been on reducing and managing waste in the cafeteria. Approximately eight years ago, they introduced composting to the building and since then the program has continued to grow with student involvement. Last year three students from the sustainability class inventoried the compost, recycling, and trash bins over a week-long period in the cafeteria. They then interviewed cafeteria staff and custodians to see where improvements could be made. After finding that compost bins were filling up days before a scheduled weekly pick up, the students reached out to the compost haulers and negotiated to get four more compost bins and a twice a week pick up. These students then went a step further and, with the support of administration, held an assembly that was mandatory for all students to attend. The assembly presentation reviewed what items should go in which bins in a friendly and fun manner and was well received. Custodians reported less contamination of bins in the weeks following. This year, students built sturdy wooden lids with smaller holes that were placed on the recycling and trash bins to prevent students from depositing their entire tray in the wrong bin. Thanks to Ipswich Sustainable Education, all of the plates that food is served on are compostable. Each year the organization donates money to the cafeteria for the purchase of these plates. These continued efforts have reduced the weight of the trash and increased our composting and recycling amounts. In addition to the cafeteria, there are single stream recycling bins in every middle/high school classroom. This encourages recycling of paper, plastic, and cans as well. Students are not allowed to bring in single-use plastic or Styrofoam coffee cups which also reduces the amount of waste. Students are only allowed to have beverages, such as coffee, in reusable bottles or mugs that can be refilled. There are four water bottle filling stations in the school building which also makes it easy for students to bring their own water bottles. As of September 20th, 2018, there have been 130,418 plastic water bottles avoided by using these stations. This coming spring, the middle school will kick off a campaign to give out stainless steel water bottles to students who pledge not to use single-use water bottles. The high school Environmental Club has reusable water bottles for sale in the high school office as well as in the cafeteria. In all of the student bathrooms, there are hand dryers rather than paper towels. By using dryers instead of paper towels the amount of waste created in the bathrooms is greatly reduced. The middle/high school technology department recycles old electronics. They work with a company that then resells the old electronics to be used or broken down for parts. The company is on standby to pick up electronics whenever needed. Twice a year, the school holds an electronics drive where town residents can drop off old electronics for recycling. These drives benefit Ipswich Sustainable Education.

### **Pillar 1, Element 1D: Use of alternative transportation to, during, and from school**

The Ipswich Middle/High School is conveniently located for students walking and biking to school. There are bike racks at each entrance which are freely accessible for student use. Students are also allowed to keep skateboards in their lockers. Bike to School Day is an annual event at the school and always results in an increased amount of bikers and enthusiasm. The Environmental Club is working with the physical education department to increase the participation in this event. Many high school students that drive to school do not drive alone, whether it is with a sibling or a friend, carpooling is encouraged. There are signs in the drop-off/pick-up zones to prevent cars from idling, which is punishable by a fine. The school resource officer enforces this law. District-wide transportation has direct bus routes that get students to and from school efficiently. There are six school buses that cover the school district. As of November 2018, 453 students in HS and MS combined ride the bus daily. A wheelchair van was purchased in April 2018 replacing a less fuel-efficient older vehicle. Another older vehicle used by the special education department will be replaced this coming spring. A data collection device has been placed in the vehicle to see if it makes sense to replace it with an electric vehicle. The Town of Ipswich is in the process of becoming a Green Community under the leadership of a new Town Manager and with guidance from the Climate Change Committee. Townspeople voted to adopt the stretch energy code at Town Meeting in October 2018 which brought the town another step closer to fulfilling the requirements needed to apply to be a Green Community.

### **Pillar 2: Improved Health and Wellness**

#### **Pillar 2, Element 2A: An integrated school environmental health program**

Athletic fields, grassy areas, and plants on-campus are not fertilized or treated with pesticides. Only local compost is used in the school garden. The school is located in an area that experiences extreme winter weather and therefore the parking lots and sidewalks are treated with Greenscapes de-icer when it snows or where there is ice. Greenscapes uses a lower chloride content than competitors making it a better alternative environmentally. Its green coloration makes treated areas evident causing less use of the product. The treatment also helps keep students and staff safe.

Every three years the building is tested for overall air quality. The school has also been tested for radon and no issues have been found. There are rarely any problems with humidity, and in the few instances when there has been a problem that causes mold or mildew, that area is quarantined and treated to safely remove the mold or mildew. All custodians are trained in proper usage of cleaning supplies and know how to properly dilute products used in the school. Students in 2017 began working with the town facilities director and the school committee to start using cleaning supplies that are more environmentally friendly. This project is still in the works and is aimed to be completed before the next order is placed this February. It is hoped that the Facilities Director will start using Envirox, a concentrate made of hydrogen peroxide and orange oil. This product can be diluted and can be used for greater than 90% of cleaning.

#### **Pillar 2, Element 2B: High standards of nutrition, fitness, and outdoor time**

Within the school curriculum, all students are required to take physical education class from 6th to 10th grade. Middle school students participate in a general gym class during two trimesters of each school year. In high school, students must take a PE9, general gym class, their freshman year. This course, as well as the middle school course, helps students stay active and learn "lifetime sports." Lifetime sports are leisure sports, such as tennis, badminton, pickleball, and many others. In 10th grade, students participate in a Project Adventure class. The Project Adventure is held on indoor and outdoor Project Adventure elements. This class focuses on teamwork and trust. Many students, especially in Ipswich, participate in at least one season of a team sport. In the school year of 2017-2018, 333 students out of 529 enrolled participated in at least one sport. Once they have reached 11th grade, if students are not participating in a full season of a team sport they must continue to take a physical education class. These advanced level classes include Fitness and Nutrition, Advanced Project Adventure, Lifetime Sports, and the opportunity to be a teaching assistant in a PE9 class or a Project Adventure class. Along with general gym classes, these classes help keep students fit and encourage lifelong fitness.

Each student is required to take health classes throughout their education. Health classes are required one trimester each year in the middle school. These classes focus on the harmful effects of drugs, eating disorders, how the body works, and how adolescent bodies change. Health at the high school level is a semester-long course and is required for graduation. High school health focuses on healthy eating habits, staying active throughout your life, staying away from drugs and alcohol, as well as learning more about the systems of our body and their functions. Biology and Chemistry are required for graduation and also reinforces these concepts. Anatomy is a very common science elective for juniors and seniors in which students learn more deeply about the human body.

In 2017, the middle school Green Team raised over \$20,000 in order to build a school garden in front of our building. The garden consists of raised beds for vegetables and flowers as well as fruit trees and an outdoor classroom. Food grown in the school's garden is brought directly into the cafeteria for consumption and extra produce is delivered to our local food pantry, which also helps some of our students in need. In our cafeteria, salads and soups use the kale, chard, and carrots which food service workers pick and serve the same day. Ipswich is fortunate to have many family-owned farms and some of their locally grown food is used in school lunches. For example, apples are provided by Russell Orchards and are grown just minutes away from our campus. The cafeteria lunches are all served with proper portions and servings of fruits and vegetables and follow the nutrition standards of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Breakfast is served every morning for students who either prefer or need to eat this meal at school.

Social-emotional health is supported by the guidance department, our school adjustment counselor, and a clinician who is grant funded through the Lahey Behavioral Student Assistance Program (SAP). SAP hires master level clinicians to be onsite at local high school and middle schools for 30 hours per week. SAP clinicians use a collaborative, strength-based approach to address a wide range of obstacles that interfere with student's ability to succeed academically. They provide a safe place for students to seek help, offer valuable input to parents and school staff and are able to provide outside referrals and resources. Our adjustment counselor sees students for preventative care as well as seeing students who are in crisis. She visits health classes and works with community groups to ensure students receive services outside of school.

The high school guidance department has implemented a mandatory curriculum for students which incorporates social and emotional wellness in freshman, sophomore, and junior years. Students read and respond to prompts having to do with these topics online every other week. Another valuable offering is a freshman seminar which is held for incoming students in small group settings. Students are given an overview of the social services available to them and where they can go in the building to access those services.

### **Pillar 3 – Environmental and Sustainability Education**

#### **Pillar 3, Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems**

Many courses throughout the middle/high school curriculum incorporate topics in environmental issues, renewable and nonrenewable energy, and human systems into their courses. Human body systems are covered in Health, Biology, and Anatomy, as described in the previous section. Courses that incorporate discussions of the environment and energy are diverse and cover many disciplines. Sustainability is the theme of the sixth grade and all projects and units have a component of sustainability in them.

The high school has a sustainability course in which students spend the year working individually or in small groups to tackle local sustainability issues. The first year of the sustainability class was during the 2014-15 school year when the class became a way to channel the activism of a group of students who had traveled to Costa Rica for a sustainability conference. The Environmental Science class studies the integration of physical, biological, and informational sciences by examining the ecology, physics, chemistry, economics, and social implications of human impacts on the environment. The Earth and Space class examines natural resources, climate change, and energy use. Marine and Coastal Science looks at human impacts on the ocean such as sea level rise and acidification, as well as positive impacts on protected areas.

Each year students in their tenth grade English class read a short story titled, *And of Clay Are We Created*. This short story is a retelling of the 1985 volcanic eruption of Nevado del Ruiz, in Armero Colombia. After reading students spend time making connections to the real world. Many students, year after year, choose to explore natural disasters and climate change. As a result, many students are taking a stand on the issue, crafting editorials and opinion pieces, and having thoughtful discussions about real-world issues regarding sustainability. This takes the reading of fiction beyond simple literary analysis and grounds it in real-world sustainability issues. The AP Seminar class has a unit entitled "Science and Nature" which incorporates topics from the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the fate of island nations such as Kiribati in light of rising sea levels. The class also does background readings on Charles Darwin, Rachel Carson, and Karl Popper, all of whom focus on the scientific method, environmental issues, species development, or a combination of the three. Our Global Studies course introduces students to the past, present, and future trends of globalization with a unit on sustainability which discusses population, energy, and the environment. The AP World History class revolves around five themes of equal importance – focusing on the environment, cultures, state-building, economic systems, and social structures of the major geographical regions of the world.

#### **Pillar 3, Element 3B: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills**

In April, Ipswich Public Schools host an annual STEAM Showcase (please click for a short video or cut and paste [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=ISdckd6n58g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=ISdckd6n58g)) where students K - 12, community members, and businesses all exhibit together to demonstrate work being done in these fields. The high school robotics team never disappoints, with a hands-on robot on display. The high school racing team allow participants to drive the 3D printed and hand-built RC race cars that they have used in competitions that year. Each year, their challenge is to create a new way of charging the vehicles sustainably. For example, one year they used a solar panel, and the next a human gerbil wheel to charge the batteries. In 2016, Ocean Alliance of Gloucester had a problem of being able to hover their Snot Bot (an alternative way of collecting DNA from whales without being invasive to the creature) at just the right height over a whale to capture mucous released from its blowhole. Using lasers, seven Ipswich high school students developed a way to inform the drone operator of the distance while flying which led to a better way to monitor whale health.

In the seventh grade, students spend two weeks on field trips learning about the history of the coastal town and how the environment has impacted it. Students visit Crane's Beach, which is owned and managed by the Trustees of Reservations, a group that many students go on to work for in high school. During this week, students also visit Appleton Farms, another site owned by the Trustees. Students go on a whale watch where they learn about whale migration and get to see these wonderful creatures up close. One of the favorite trips of the week is the two days spent canoeing on the Ipswich River. Students study the natural habitat of the river and perform tests on the river's water quality. Students learn ways to protect our local treasures. These trips serve to deepen the passion students have for sustainability.

Another example of a middle school STEAM project is the "putting green assignment." Innovated by the art department, sixth graders must create a mini golf style putting green using math concepts (angles and equations), topography, writing, and science (wetlands impacts, using pesticides and fertilizers, maintaining habitats). At the end of the project, the students assemble a mini-golf course and invite other grades to test it out. The results are quite impressive.

In the high school sustainability class, many students choose to partner with local organizations and government committees such as the Ipswich River Watershed Association and the town's Waste Reduction Advisory Committee. Past projects have included passing a bylaw banning plastic bags and Styrofoam town-wide, an initiative to have our school's cleaning supplies be changed to a greener option, 'SmART drain' sidewalk art educating on drains leading to ocean, solar panels installed on the school's garden shed, a bird disturbance study for the Trustees of Reservations, building a hydroponics station that grows herbs for the school's cafe, building an interactive trail on town-owned open space property, working with Ipswich River Watershed Association to assess where contaminants were entering the river, feasibility study of putting solar panels on the school's roof, and reducing invasive green crabs by developing new uses for them.

The high school Marine and Coastal class studies how changes in our climate will change our coasts. Having an abundance of natural landscapes in our town such as forests, beaches, and marshes open up hands-on opportunities for students to explore. One project includes tracking future sea level rise at a local beach and creating GIS maps of how the town will look years from today. In previous years, this information has been shared with town officials and business owners through a presentation that was also open to the public. One year, students shared their findings at the Sustainable Communities and

Campuses Conference held at Endicott College. In the high school Environmental Science class, students take part in a yearly study of how invasive species and climate change affects their local marshes. They collect data, analyze the data, and present their findings at Mass Audubon's Coastal Science Conference to an audience of Woods Hole and US Long Term Ecological Research scientists as well as nearby schools. The high school Earth and Space Science class has partnered with Mass Audubon and the Ipswich River Watershed Association to bring students to the river for hands-on studies. Their real-world examination of the role of 19th-century farming practices on marshes has uncovered various places in our town where ground disturbances are still evident and still affecting plant and wildlife diversity. This work has proven useful to local scientists and state agencies.

Throughout high school, students have many opportunities to learn from and work with professionals in the Environmental and Sustainability Sciences fields. As freshmen, students participate in Career Day. This is a time where students choose two career paths they are interested in to learn more about. Professionals in these fields create a presentation showing what a day in the life looks like and what job opportunities this path may hold, leaving time for questions at the end. Each year, there is a professional from the environmental sciences field. In past years, there have been professionals who work at the New England Aquarium and this year, the director of the Ipswich River Watershed Association will be attending. As sophomores and juniors, students may participate in job shadow day. Students are given many areas of work where they can shadow professionals throughout their day. Students often job shadow at local places such as the Ipswich River Watershed and New England Biolabs. These places are very sustainably-oriented and the day of shadowing can inspire a lifetime of work in an Environmental Sciences field. After the two years of job shadowing, seniors who are passing all of their classes are given the opportunity to participate in an internship for the last quarter of the school year. The BRIDGE program is a 26 hour per week program where students intern at local places. Students are given a list of existing community partners who have hosted former BRIDGE interns at the site, however, if there is an additional site where students would like to complete their BRIDGE internship, they are more than welcome to do so. Past sites have included the Ipswich River Watershed Association, New England Biolabs, Mass. Energy and Environment Office, as well as a multitude of other sites in the Technology and Engineering fields. For more information on any of the three programs, click the link or copy and paste (<https://sites.google.com/ipsk12.net/ihsschooltowork/home>). All of these programs help ready students for future careers, whether they fall right after high school or after time spent in college. Students are given opportunities to try out jobs they are interested in before committing to these jobs. Students may not have originally wanted to go into a certain field but may become inspired after these programs.

### **Pillar 3, Element 3C: Development and application of civic engagement knowledge and skills**

Ipswich Schools have a strong tradition of community involvement especially in regard to environmental issues. Guest speakers from the community are frequently found in classrooms. The Ipswich Electric Light Department, Water Department, Shellfish Constable, Recycling Coordinator, Ipswich River Watershed Association, Mass Audubon, Salem Sound Coastwatch, Climate Cafes, Seaside Sustainability, and Ipswich Sustainable Education are just some of the groups that partner with the schools. These groups provide opportunities for students to learn, apply, and practice knowledge of sustainable practices in real-world situations. Students have held internships on the Waste Reduction Committee,

Eight Towns and the Great Marsh, and the Climate Change Committee where they helped to write a Climate Action Plan for the town in 2017.

During the 2015-2016 school year, five students passed a bylaw banning the use of single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam food containers in our town. This project involved the students meeting with many town officials, discussing the issue with local and national businesses, doing effective research, networking, and an abundance of problem-solving. The students themselves wrote the bylaw that was approved for the town warrant and brought it before the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee, garnering overwhelming support. At the Annual Town Meeting, they made their case for the unsustainability of plastic bags and Styrofoam and received a standing ovation from the more than 600 townspeople attending. The Town Moderator declared that their petition passed unanimously, the law was approved by the State Attorney General's office and went into effect the following year.

Ipswich HS was one of 3 high schools asked to present alongside colleges and business professionals at the 2017 Sustainable Campuses and Communities Conference held at Endicott College. They presented on their field study of sea level rise, completed with the help of Mass Audubon's educational coordinator. Students have been Coastal Science Conference presenters for the last 22 years as well as 2018 Boston Urban Farming conference attendees. Students have held informational presentations for town officials on the impact of sea level rise on our coastal town. They were able to not only make suggestions for mitigation and adaptation but also ask questions of officials. Students are part of an invasive green crab monitoring program with the town's Shellfish Constable and a local nonprofit, the Green Crab R&D Project. Green crabs are studied by Marine and Coastal classes and students teach others in the community about the harmful effects these crabs have on our native clam populations. Students also collect data on anadromous fish passage for the Ipswich River Watershed Association. Studying how useful the ladder is to fish has contributed to data that is being used to determine if the Ipswich Mills Dam should be considered for removal. Students also volunteer at town events, such as the Chowderfest, to monitor and assist with composting and recycling. With students teaching the community about good recycling and composting habits, these habits will be incorporated into people's daily lives, thus reducing the overall amount of waste created by our town. Students also have a table at the Ipswich Farmer's Market to showcase sustainable practices.

The Environmental Club hosts many events to encourage sustainability in our town such as seasonal cleanups of our local beaches, textile drives so textiles can be worn again and not put in landfills, and Climate Cafes to give the town a platform to speak about our climate. Climate Cafes are guided discussions about topics such as our marsh, rivers, or climate change. These discussions take place in many different locations throughout the town and surrounding communities. Members of the Ipswich Climate Cafe Team works with students from the Newburyport team, to plan such events. Students and community members who attend talk about the assigned topic. These Cafes are great ways for students and adults to learn from each other and voice their opinions in a respectful way. Students this year attended the Great Marsh Symposium which hosted a series of speakers talking about many aspects of the Great Marsh. The students then led the 170 adults in their own Climate Cafe. This gave the students the opportunity to meet and work with adults in the community. The Environmental Club also hosts an Earth Day Festival which is an event held to promote environmental awareness and provide fun activities for kids and adults of all ages. There are tables presenting information on topics such as bees, recycling, and marine debris. Other tables are set up for activities such as planting seeds, painting pots, and making recycled t-shirt bags, along with seeds and small plants being sold. The middle school Green



Team's garden project is aptly named Generation Growers because it connects students with local gardeners of all ages. This program allows older gardeners from the community to work alongside the younger students and collaborate on the challenges and rewards of a common garden.

## **Highlights – Ipswich Middle-High School; Ipswich Public Schools; Ipswich, MA**

Ipswich High School is a collaborative community that fosters equity among learners. We engage in the personalized acquisition of the skills and knowledge essential to becoming successful, contributing, and responsible citizens. Middle School Mission Statement: Our mission at the Ipswich Middle School is to create a nurturing community where students are encouraged to develop confidence as lifelong learners with the awareness and flexibility necessary to adapt to a changing world. We strive to bring out the best in every student and adult in our learning community. The Ipswich School system and the surrounding community are passionate about educating students in a way that creates citizens who are admirable examples of the above mission statements. The Middle/High building, constructed in 1999, is relatively new and students come up with new ideas to make it greener every year.

To get to school, many students take buses or carpool with friends, family, and neighbors to save energy. The school also has a spring bike to school week where many students opt to walk or bike to school to help raise awareness for the energy usage we take for granted every day. This week teaches students that it's just as easy to use an alternate form of transportation to get to school. The Environmental Club has put four water bottle fillers through the school and sells reusable water bottles to limit the use of plastic water bottles. Our garden out front of the school, run by students, grows vegetables that are brought right to the school's cafeteria. Seeing food go right from the ground to their meal inspires healthy eating habits for students. Beautiful outdoor fields as well as strong sports programs and physical education classes get students outside and active during their school day.

The high school's sustainability class is a cutting-edge class that allows students to self-manage while they make positive changes in their surrounding community. In the 2018-2019 school year, students are working on projects such as analyzing wind turbine data, installing water bottle fillers downtown, improving waste management in the cafe and on athletic fields, reducing straw use town-wide, creating art from recycled materials for educational purposes, interning with the town's Recycling Coordinator, and amending the plastic bag/Styrofoam bylaw to include thicker plastic bags. Students are currently working on a cross-discipline project between art club and the sustainability class to paint a mural on a wall bordering the main parking lot in the downtown business area. This painting will depict the importance of pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Students learn lifelong skills and develop a passion for the environment, essentially becoming stewards of the natural places where they grew up.

As our mission statement says, Ipswich is a town where students leave for life after high school as well-rounded people. Ipswich has one of the best music programs in the area. To add to that, many of these musicians play on the award-winning sports teams. Not only are students participants in both sports and music programs, but the number of students enrolling in AP and Honors level classes is also only increasing. After the school day has ended, or sometimes even before it begins, there are many student formed clubs and groups that meet. The middle school Green Team works with the high school Environmental Club to tackle projects around the school and town to encourage sustainability and environmental awareness in the community. Many local businesses turn to these groups with questions. A local coffee shop with a heavy environmental focus went to the high school environmental club to learn more about how to limit the consumption of single-use plastic straws. Teachers incorporate cross-discipline projects to build connections between the learning material and the outside world. With the town located right on the Atlantic Ocean, students come into school with a natural curiosity for the environment. Starting in elementary school, students take field trips highlighting out town's natural

resources. All the way from kindergarten to senior year, students take trips to visit the natural beauty around them. Two weeks of the seventh-grade curriculum revolve around these local trips. The residents in Ipswich voted to put away \$10 million to purchase open space properties, natural areas that will always be protected. This land is available for public use and is a popular place for students and families. A favorite tradition in Ipswich is Crane's beach day. In 1911, the Crane family invited the entire town to Crane's beach for their son Cornelius' birthday. Every year since that day, elementary and middle school students and families of the all go to the beach instead of school one day in June. The love Ipswich students have for their environment is shown even in something as small as the senior portraits that the students take, often on protected lands such as the local beaches, Strawberry Hill, and the Crane Estate.