

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021
SUSSEX CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

MINUTES

Call to Order

President Rodney Layfield called the Regular Meeting of the Indian River School District Board of Education to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members present: Mr. Derek Cathell, Mr. Scott Collins, Mr. Rodney Layfield, Mr. Gerald Peden, Mrs. Connie Pryor, Dr. Heather Statler, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Member Late: Dr. Donald Hattier (6:30 p.m.)

Executive Session

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to go into Executive Session at 6:02 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel, student hearings, negotiations, and litigation.

The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Reconvene - Regular Session at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – April 26, 2021

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Approval of Minutes

Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – March 22, 2021.

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Board of Education Executive Session Meeting Minutes – March 22, 2021.

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Public Comments

Molli Carter, an IRSD parent, spoke to the Board about the inclusion of all students in the district with regards to attending school for half days on Wednesdays. Lord Baltimore Elementary is beginning this Wednesday with cohorts A and B attending on alternating Wednesdays for half days. Ms. Carter feels this is discrimination and all students should be able to attend on Wednesdays not just Lord Baltimore Elementary students.

On behalf of Dr. Rhen, Mrs. Blannard read a letter regarding Wednesday instruction in the district:

Dear IRSD Board Members,

I am special Master for the Carver Consent Order, appointed November 2019 to oversee consent order implementation. Under the order, the district closed the Carver Center Program in June 2020 and established student supports in IRSD schools to serve the 19 students who remained when Carver was closed. Those supports and interventions are also designed to eliminate the need for any other Carver-type of program in the future. Over the long term, the work is targeted to improve graduation rates and reduce disciplinary exclusions, all of which relates to equity and impacts student success.

It is important that implementation of the Carver Consent Order is transparent, that is, that the board supports the order and the administration develop plans to move forward while securing community and school input. The other aspect of transparency is providing information to schools, families and the community once those plans are in place.

Tonight, I am sharing specific concerns about the lack of information and transparency related to the return of elementary students for additional classroom time in their schools. Recent “collective decision making” that enables each elementary school to determine whether they can bring in students each Wednesday raises concerns. Lord Baltimore Elementary, the school with the least racial diversity in IRSD (84% of students are white) is going to bring in its elementary students every other Wednesday, ie., group AA comes in one Wednesday and BB the next Wednesday. The other elementary schools are not doing the same; the other elementary schools have greater racial and ethnic diversity and are not providing this opportunity for their students.

The decision to allow collective decision making at each elementary school eliminates the level playing field, that is, what is provided as the basic program in each school, ie., the number of minutes of face to face instruction available to all students. While some students who need targeted supports come into their schools for various periods of time on Wednesdays, not all students have that opportunity. Those targeted supports should supplement and support the students’ basic program, not be offered instead of the basic program, the regular classroom opportunity. The lack of a level playing field for all students in each school appears discriminatory when the school with the least racial and ethnic diversity has an opportunity the other elementary students do not have.

COVID has put severe strain on all schools, their boards, administrators and faculty, however, IRSD must have a plan to address all students. We urge you to take responsibility and adopt a district plan, approved by the board and implemented by the administration that provides the Wednesday option for all elementary students. We strongly recommend that you communicate with families and the community on the options available for the balance of the school year and seek community input and communicate on the plans for the Summer.

Thank you for your attention.

/S/ Linda O. Rhen

Linda O. Rhen, Special Master for the Carver Consent Order.

Melissa Abbott, an IRSD teacher and resident of District #1, spoke to the Board about District #1 IRSD Board of Education applicant Dr. Beth Conaway. She voiced her concerns with Dr. Conaway becoming a board member. She feels she would not be a good candidate.

Recognition

- 2020-2021 Georgetown Middle School Teacher of the Year – Eric McGuire
- Carson Scholar Recipient - Southern DE School of the Arts – Maria Gutierrez Carcamo
- 2020 Division I State Football Champions

New Business

School Choice Applications 2020-2021 (April 2021)

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Dr. Statler, to accept school choice applicants 2020-2021 (April 2021) as presented by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

School Choice Applications 2021-2022 (April 2021)

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to accept school choice applicants 2021-2022 (April 2021) as presented by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Appointments for Indian River School District Board of Education District #1

It was moved by Mrs. Wright, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to allow each Indian River School Board of Education District #1 candidate 5 minutes to speak to the Board about themselves and why they chose to be a candidate for the Board. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, to have each board member choose his/her top 3 candidates, followed by motions for the two district #1 appointments. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

The following applicants were given five minutes to speak to the Board regarding their candidacy for district #1:

- Mrs. Lisa Briggs
- Dr. Beth Conaway
- Mr. James Fritz
- Ms. Madeline Moses

Each Board member submitted his/her top 3 candidates for consideration. Mrs. Briggs received 6 votes, Dr. Conaway received 5 votes, Mr. Fritz received 5 votes, and Ms. Moses received 5 votes.

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Wright, to nominate Mrs. Briggs for the District #1 appointment. The motion failed (4-2-2).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Dr. Hattier, Mrs. Wright.

Against the motion: Mr. Peden, Dr. Statler.

Abstained: Mr. Layfield, Mrs. Pryor.

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Collins, to nominate Mr. Fritz for the District #1 appointment. The motion failed (5-0-3).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Dr. Hattier, Mr. Peden, Dr. Statler.

Abstained: Mr. Layfield, Mrs. Pryor, Mrs. Wright.

It was moved by Dr. Statler, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, to nominate Dr. Conaway for the District #1 appointment. The motion failed (4-1-3).

For the motion: Mr. Peden, Mrs. Pryor, Dr. Statler, Mrs. Wright.

Against the motion: Dr. Hattier.

Abstained: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Mr. Layfield.

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mrs. Wright, to nominate Ms. Moses for the District #1 appointment. The motion passed (6-1-1).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Dr. Hattier, Mrs. Pryor, Dr. Statler, Mrs. Wright.

Against the motion: Mr. Peden.

Abstained: Mr. Layfield.

It was moved by Mr. Layfield, seconded by Dr. Hattier, to nominate Mr. Fritz for the District #1 appointment. The motion passed (6-0-2).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Dr. Hattier, Mr. Layfield, Mr. Peden, Dr. Statler.

Abstained: Mrs. Pryor, Mrs. Wright.

2020-2021 District Calendar Changes

- Change Indian River High School Prom Grand March on May 1, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. followed by outdoor prom 7:00 p.m. to 10:00.
- Change Sussex Central High School Prom from May 1, 2021 to May 15, 2021 with Grand March at 5:30 p.m. followed by Outdoor Prom from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Sussex Central High School graduation times of 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on June 1, 2021.
- Change the SDSA Dance Performance from May 4, 2021 to May 25, 2021 and May 27, 2021 with both performances at 7:00 p.m.

2021 Indian River School District Summer Hours

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Collins, to approve the 2021 Indian River School District summer hours as presented. Summer hours will begin on June 14, 2021 until August 20, 2021; Monday – Wednesday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed Friday. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

New Sussex Central High School Educational Specifications

It was moved by Dr. Statler, seconded by Dr. Hattier, to approve the new Sussex Central High School educational specifications as presented by Mr. Booth. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Long Neck Elementary Playground Funding Request

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Dr. Hattier, to approve the Long Neck Elementary playground funding request for the projected cost of \$134,241.09.

The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Sussex Central High School- Modular Units Repair

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve the Sussex Central High School modular units repair as presented in the amount of \$16,950.00 as presented. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Grant for New Access Control System

Mr. Ruggiero shared with the Board the possibility of a grant for funding of a new access control system.

Indian River Educational Complex Roof Repair - Department of Instruction Area

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve IREC/Dept. of Instruction roof repair in the amount of \$15,120.00. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Student Activity Funds – Prom Tents

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Dr. Statler, to approve use of student activity funds towards the rental of tents used for outdoor proms at both Indian River and Sussex Central High Schools. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Millsboro Middle School Girls Soccer Uniforms

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Dr. Statler, to approve the Millsboro Middle School girls' soccer uniforms as presented. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Georgetown Middle School Uniforms – Football, Volleyball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Track, Girls Track

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, to approve the Georgetown Middle School uniforms (football, volleyball, boys basketball, girls basketball, boys track, girls track) as presented. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Old Business

Major Capital Planning

Dr. Owens updated the Board on the new Sussex Central High School. Architects are working on design schematic that will incorporate the education specifications into drawings for layout purposes.

Howard T. Ennis

Dr. Owens updated the board on Howard T. Ennis construction. Construction is progressing well with a substantial completion date of May 2022. Work on the pad is continuing with utilities being run with footers and pads being poured.

GW Carver Consent Update

Dr. Brittingham shared with the Board the most recent updates on GW Carver Academy.

Committee Reports

Buildings & Grounds

Dr. Hattier reviewed the minutes from the April 12, 2021 Buildings & Grounds committee meeting.

Comprehensive School Safety

There was no report.

Finance

Mrs. Smith reviewed the financial reports.

Curriculum

No report.

DSBA Board of Directors

No report.

DSBA Legislative

No report.

Mary Bailey Scholarship

There was no report.

Special Education Task Force

Dr. Statler shared with the Board that the next Special Education Task Force will be held on May 17, 2021.

Policy

First Readings:

GCBA Professional Staff Salary Increases, GCN Evaluation of Professional Staff, BDDG Procedure for Audio Tapes, KBB Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Collins presented the following policies for a first reading: GCBA Professional Staff Salary Increases, GCN Evaluation of Professional Staff, BDDG Procedure for Audio Tapes, KBB Freedom of Information Act. He requested that any changes should be reported to the Policy Committee.

Second Readings:

JHCS Wellness/Nutrition, GBCB Staff Conduct/Drug Free Workplace, GDP Support Staff Termination of Employment, EHAA Telecommunications Access

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve policies JHCS Wellness/Nutrition, GBCB Staff Conduct/Drug Free Workplace, GDP Support Staff Termination of Employment, EHAA Telecommunications Access. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

IREA Representative

JR Emanuele congratulated the new board members. He hopes the teacher contract ratification will be approved by the Board. Donations for the IREA scholarship has been extended.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Owens shared his monthly activities with the Board.

Dr. Owens recommend to the Board increased instructional time on Wednesdays for all students by alternating cohorts and providing a modified day from approximately 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, now this would vary from school to school, some schools start up a little earlier, some a little later than 8:00 a.m., but around 5 hours to mirror what we are doing at one of our other schools. The district would survey our families and generate interest on these alternating Wednesday's plans and we would work with our transportation team to determine services as needed. Dr. Owens met with principals today and debriefed on this option and will ask principals along with district office staff to support our schools. The district does recognize it would be difficult for the plan to begin this Wednesday, thus we would recommend that we begin on May 5th with the B Cohort, May 12th A Cohort, May 19th B Cohort, the 26th is a teacher work day so no opportunities there. We would resume on June 2nd with cohort A and June 9 with Cohort B.

Dr. Owens shared with the Board this amended plan because the topic cannot be deferred to a future board meeting because it arose from the most recent conversations. We would need a motion to add the return plan for Wednesdays to the agenda this evening since it is not specified on there.

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Collins, to accept the modified return to school on Wednesdays plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Financial Reports

Regular Invoices for month ending March 31, 2021

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Dr. Hattier, to approve the payment of the Regular Invoices for the month ending March 31, 2021. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Finance Committee

Mrs. Smith reviewed with the financial summaries, major and minor cap improvement financials for the month ending March 31, 2021.

Personnel Agenda for April 26, 2021

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve the Personnel Agenda for April 26, 2021, excluding candidate No. 42. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to approve candidate No. 42 on the Personnel Agenda for April 26, 2021. The motion passed (7-0-1).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Dr. Hattier, Mr. Layfield, Mrs. Pryor, Dr. Statler.

Abstained: Mr. Peden

Personnel Addendum for April 26, 2021

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, to approve the Personnel Addendum for April 26, 2021 excluding candidate No. 21 and No. 26. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Dr. Statler, to approve candidate No. 21 on the Personnel Addendum for April 26, 2021. The motion passed (7-0-1).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Dr. Hattier, Mr. Layfield, Mr. Peden, Mrs. Pryor, Dr. Statler, Mrs. Wright.

Abstained: Mr. Collins.

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, to approve candidate No. 26 on the Personnel Addendum for April 26, 2021. The motion passed (7-0-1).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mr. Collins, Mr. Layfield, Mr. Peden, Mrs. Pryor, Dr. Statler, Mrs. Wright.

Abstained: Dr. Hattier.

Contractual Agenda for April 26, 2021

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Collins, to approve the Contractual Agenda for April 26, 2021. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Adjournment

President Layfield adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jay F. Owens, Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Rodney M. Layfield
President
Board of Education
Indian River School District

Jay F. Owens, Jr. Ed.D.
Secretary
Board of Education
Indian River School District

RML/JFO:jmt