

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025  
INDIAN RIVER HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Mrs. Wright 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: Mrs. Lisa Briggs, Mr. Derek Cathell, Mrs. Kelly Kline, Mr. Gerald Peden, Mrs. Connie Pryor, Mr. Mark Steele, Mrs. Kim Taylor, Mrs. Anita West Werner, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Member Absent: Mr. Ivan Neal

Executive Session

Mrs. Taylor, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:01 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel, negotiations, litigation, and student hearings. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Reconvene Regular Session at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members present: Mrs. Lisa Briggs, Mr. Derek Cathell, Mrs. Kelly Kline, Mr. Gerald Peden, Mrs. Connie Pryor, Mr. Mark Steele, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Anita West Werner, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Member Absent: Mr. Ivan Neal

Approval of Agenda – May 19, 2025

Mrs. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Peden, moved to approve the agenda for May 19, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2025

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Board of Education Executive Session Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2025

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Student Government

Indian River High School's student government representative Logan Truitt reported on events occurring at Indian River High School.

Visitors and Staff in Attendance

Jay Owens, Karen Blannard, Celeste Bunting, Renee Jerns, Kelly Dorman, Tammy Smith, Melissa Whisted, Jennifer Troublefield, Dan Mann, Preston Lewis, Joe Dooley, Suzanne Timmons, Blair Catlin Brown, JR Emanuele, Cassie Queen, Neil Stong, Andy Davis, Kathleen Wilson, Melissa Kansak, Christy Kerr, Pamela Webb, Lauren Kirk, Carolyn Fries, Beth Illian, Jason Macrides, Monica McCurry, Allisa Booth, Rick Evans, Katelyn Fanaris, Brad Cowen, Drake Meyer, Terri Snowden, Edgar Paxtor Excalante, Adriana Villalbos, Jeff Bunting, Ana Mendosa Rodriguez, Jermaine Cannon, Isis Valerio, Sara Parker, Melody Oneschuk, Heather Gardoski, Vicki Macrides, Kaitlyn Kopf, Sarah Kopf, Rick Radatovich, Michelle Parsons, Mayor John Reddington, Kenneth McLaughlin, Carol Houck, Molli Carter, Kia Watts, Alexander Watson, Liubon Straltsova, Stephanie Durstine, Angie Masa, Liya Morrison, Maria Esmeralda, Kennedy Megee.

## Recognition

- All County Honors Choir (SDSA): Ava Johnson, Ziya Morrison, Sasha O'Neill, Aaliyah Cannon, Briella Masci, Kennedy Megee, Kaitlyn Turak, Jonathan Kohr, Trenton Larsen, Xander Watson, Frederick "Fritz" Bird, Armando "AJ" Sanchez, Drake Meyer.
- All State Honors Choir (SDSA): Ava Johnson, Ziya Morrison, Sasha O'Neill, Aaliyah Cannon, Kennedy Megee, Ellie Tantiangco, Kaitlyn Turak, Trenton Larsen, Frederick "Fritz" Bird, Armando "AJ" Sanchez, Drake Meyer.
- Sussex All-State Band (SDSA): Caiden Hernandez, Lesly Benavides, Ruby Ramirez.
- BPA National Leadership Conference (SM): Hayden Benner, Molly Hevner, Chase Durstine, Tristan Matthews, Kevin Yang, Sarah Kopf, Katelyn Prenderville.
- BPA National Leadership Conference (IRHS): Kaitlyn Kopf, Wilson Mendoza Velasquez, Ashly Benavides, Catherine Bunting, Dasahni Coleman, Emily Davis, John Planchart, Harper Stanley, Zerkyah Yarbrough.
- National Distinguished Principal of the Year (JMC): Dr. Allisa Booth.
- Multilingual Learner Language Achievement (Southern Schools).

## Public Comments

- Molli Carter spoke to the Board regarding the identifying of students in special education and feels the district is departmentalizing students.
- Carol Houck approached the podium and asked to speak during the SRO presentation. She told the Board that she is here to answer any questions they may have during the SRO presentation/discussion.

## New Business

### School Choice Applications 2024-2025 Good Cause (May 2025)

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to accept 2024-2025 school choice applicants good cause (May 2025) as presented by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

### School Choice Applications 2025-2026 (May 2025)

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to accept 2025-2026 school choice applicants (May 2025) as presented by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

### School Choice Applications 2025-2026 Good Cause (May 2025)

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Briggs, motioned to accept 2025-2026 school choice applicants good cause (May 2025) as presented by Mr. Lewis. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

## Proposed 2026-2027 Boundary Changes

Mrs. Briggs, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the 2026-2027 boundary changes as presented that impacts 28 families and 39 students. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

## 2025 Indian River School District Summer Work Hours

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the 2025 Indian River School District Summer Hours as presented. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

- *June 16, 2025 to August 21, 2025.*
- *Monday – Wednesday 7:00 am - 5:00 pm, Thursday 7:00 am - 4:30 pm, Closed Friday.*
- *Closed June 19, 2025 and July 3, 2025.*

## Discipline Disproportionality Improvement Plans

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Discipline Disproportionality Improvement Plans as presented by Dr. Jerns. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

## Sussex Central High School Uniforms: Fall Cheer, Competitive Cheer, Volleyball Alternative, Girls Basketball

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the Sussex Central High School Uniforms for Fall Cheer, Volleyball Alternative, Girls Basketball as presented by Dr. Davis. The motion passed (8-0-1).

For the motion: Mrs. Briggs, Mr. Cathell, Mrs. Kline, Mr. Peden, Mr. Steele, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. West-Werner, Mrs. Wright.

Against the motion: Mrs. Pryor.

#### CTE & Music Positions/Additional Work Days

Mrs. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Steele, motioned to approve the CTE & Music Positions/additional Work Days as presented. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Extra Work Pay Rates

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to table discussion of Extra Work Pay Rates. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### School Resource Officers (SRO) Contracts and Financial Projections

Mrs. Blannard shared with the Board an overview of the SRO contracts for the 2025-2026 school year as well as our constable program (17 constables, one at each school with 2 at each high school). Mrs. West-Werner made a motion to keep the constable program and have 1 DE State Police SRO at Indian River High School and 2 DE State Police SRO's at Sussex Central High School and table discussion of municipality SRO's at our other schools. Mrs. West Werner rescinded her motion to wait for additional SRO information.

#### Sussex Central High School Change Order Notifications

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Sussex Central High School Change Order Notifications as presented by Mr. Dooley and Mr. Cowen totaling \$176,213.96, a credit change order of \$13,140.00 and a correction of \$19,359.00. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Old Business

##### Major Capital Planning

Dr. Owens shared with the Board the most recent construction updates at the new Sussex Central High School.

##### Referendum

Dr. Owens shared with the board the upcoming public informational meetings discussing the referendum on June 5, 2025.

##### G.W. Carver Consent Update

Dr. Whisted shared with the board the following:

##### Quarterly Updates on Former Carver Students

- Quarter 4 will be due at the end of the school year.

##### Continuation of Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- Next Meeting will be June 5, 2025 @ Howard T. Ennis

##### Monitoring of District Plans

- Disproportionality of Graduation Rate
- Disproportionality of Discipline

#### Committee Reports

##### Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Steele reviewed the minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting.

##### Comprehensive School Safety

No report.

#### Finance

Mr. Peden reviewed minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting.

#### Curriculum

Ms. Dorman, Dr. Jerns reviewed the minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting.

#### DSBA Board of Directors

No report.

#### DSBA Legislative

No report.

#### Special Education Committee

No report.

#### Policy

Mrs. Taylor reviewed the minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting and the following policies for a first reading: ECB Integrated Pest Management Policy, IKEA Recovery or Original Credit Opportunities, IKF Graduation Requirements, JO Student Records.

Mr. Steele, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, motioned to approve the following policies for second readings: IF Curriculum Development, KGC Tobacco Free Environment. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### IREA Representative

Ms. Blair Caitlin Brown shared with the board the "Meet & Greet" with IREA, board members, staff will occur on May 27, 2025 at Grottos in Millsboro. She attended (along with 600 signatures of support) the Sussex County Council meeting addressing impact fees in the County that would benefit school districts in Sussex County. She also suggested a survey to staff and parents regarding discipline in the district.

#### Superintendents Report

Dr. Owens shared with the Board the Superintendent monthly activities.

#### District Calendar Changes

Change the remote half grades, half teacher work day to June 12, 2025, change the classroom breakdown day to June 13, 2025, and change the Infinite Campus Training Day to remote on June 16, 2025. Mrs. Pryor, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the district calendar changes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Financial Summaries for month ending April 30, 2025

Mrs. Smith reviewed the financial summaries, major and minor capital improvement financials for the month ending April 30, 2025.

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, motioned to accept the financial summaries for the month ending April 30, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Detail Information for month ending April 30, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Detail Information for the month ending April 30, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Smith. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Major Capital Improvements for month ending April 30, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Major Capital Improvements for the month ending April 30, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Smith. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Minor Capital Improvements for month ending April 30, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Minor Capital Improvements for the month ending April 30, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Smith. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

### FY 2026 Financial Projections

Mrs. Smith shared with the Board the most updated FY 2026 financial projections for the district.

### FY 2026 Local Tax Rates

Mrs. Smith shared with the Board the preliminary FY 2026 Local Tax Rates.

### Communications

#### Field Trip Requests

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the following field trips. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High School Yearbook Editors on July 27-29, 2025 to Gettysburg, PA
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High School Wrestling Team on June 19-23, 2025 to Manchester, NH
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central School TSA on June 27-July 1, 2025 to Nashville, TN

#### Use of Facility Request

Mrs. Kline, seconded by Mrs. Briggs, motioned to approve the use of facility request as presented. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

- Use of Lord Baltimore Elementary playground, parking lots, cafeteria and restrooms on May 31, 2025 with a rain date of June 1, 2025 (Sunday) by Special Olympics.

#### Personnel Agenda for May 19, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Pryor, motioned to approve the Personnel Agenda for May 19, 2025 excluding personnel agenda #2, #9, and #91. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Steele, motioned to approve personnel agenda #2. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve personnel agenda #9. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Mr. Cathell, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to table personnel agenda #91. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Personnel Addendum for May 19, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Steele, motioned to approve the Personnel Agenda for May 19, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

#### Personnel Contractual Agenda for May 19, 2025

Mrs. Taylor, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to approve the Personnel Contractual Agenda for May 19, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

### Notification of Retirements

Notification of retirements was presented to the Board.

### Executive Session

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to go into executive session at 9:24 pm. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

### Reconvene Regular Session at 10:18 pm

#### Personnel Agenda for May 19, 2025

President Wright asked for a motion regarding Personnel Agenda #91 for May 19, 2025. No motion was made.

#### School Resource Officers (SRO) Contracts and Financial Projections

Mrs. West-Werner, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to approve 3 Delaware State Police SRO's, one at Indian River High School and 2 at Sussex Central High School and keep the constable program intact. The motion passed (7-0-2).

For the motion: Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Kline, Mr. Peden, Mrs. Pryor, Mr. Steele. Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. West-Werner.  
Abstained: Mr. Cathell, Mrs. Wright.

#### Public Comments

Ocean View Police Chief Kenneth McLaughlin spoke to the Board concerning the municipality SRO's in the district. He feels it is a disservice to the community not to continue with SRO coverage at Lord Baltimore Elementary. He has concerns with the accuracy of the municipalities report prepared by Millsboro Police Department. He hopes the district will amend this vote by the next school year and feels it is a security risk not having an SRO at Lord Baltimore Elementary.

#### Adjournment

Mrs. Pryor, seconded by Mrs. West-Werner, motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 pm. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Leolga T. Wright  
President  
Board of Education  
Indian River School District

Jay F. Owens, Jr.  
Superintendent  
Board of Education  
Indian River School District

LTW/JFO:jmt