

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025
MILLSBORO MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Mr. Steele 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. Kelly Kline, Mr. Ivan Neal, Dr. Michelle Parsons Mr. Gerald Peden, Mr. Mark Steele, Mrs. Kim Taylor, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Member Late (6:30 pm): Mr. Derek Cathell. Board Members Absent: Mrs. Lisa H. Briggs, Mrs. Anita West-Werner.

Executive Session

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel (consideration of renewals, non-renewals, and extensions of administrative contracts). The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Reconvene Regular Session at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – December 15, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to approve the agenda for December 15, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

Board of Education Meeting Minutes – November 3, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Board of Education Executive Session Meeting Minutes – November 3, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – November 24, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Board of Education Executive Session Meeting Minutes – November 24, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Visitors and Staff in Attendance

Jay Owens, Renee Jerns, Celeste Bunting, Kelly Dorman, Melissa Whisted, Chris Parker, Jennifer Troublefield, Dan Mann, Joe Dooley, Blair Catlin Brown, Brad Cowen, Rick Radatovich, James Wheatley, Jason Macrides, Eric Tsavdar, Chris Megee, Glenn Rolf, Laura Walter.

Recognition

Sussex County Junior Honor Choir (SM): Mason Altevogt, Reagan Carlson, Eileen Coldiera, Andzhelina Iardova, Sofi Iardova, Trinity Phillips, Simon Sandoval, Maddison Smith, Angelina Tinelli, Brooklyn Townsend, Amma Walker, Carly Wharton.

All State Choir (SM): Simon Sandoval, Mark Succarrotte.

Public Comments

- Rick Radatovich spoke to the Board regarding cursive writing instruction in our schools. He cited various studies showing a correlation with better student test scores after being taught cursive writing.

New Business

School Choice Applications 2025-2026 (December 2025)

Mr. Cathell, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to accept 2025-2026 school choice applicants (December 2025) as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Donations: GIANT Foods - \$9,448.19, Selbyville Middle School Athletics (Anonymous)- \$7,000, Selbyville Middle School PBIS (Anonymous) - \$8,000

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to accept the three donations as presented. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Sussex Central High School Softball Uniform Request

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the Sussex Central High School Softball Uniform Request as presented and funded by the softball boosters. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Sussex Central High School Courtyard Update

Mr. Dooley updated the Board on the status of the Sussex Central High School Courtyard. The district is working with the architects regarding options to limit sun reflection and heat concerns in the courtyard.

Sussex Central High School Exterior Signage Package Bid Results

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the Sussex Central High School Exterior Sign Package lowest bid from JD Sign Co., LLC in the amount of \$205,110.85 and should there be a suggestion for a change order for it this will come before the board for approval. The motion passed (7-1-0).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mrs. Kline, Mr. Neal, Mr. Peden, Mr. Steele, Ms. Taylor, Mrs. Wright

Against the motion: Dr. Parsons

Sussex Central High School Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE)

Mr. Dooley shared with the Board the list of remaining purchases for furniture, fixtures and equipment for Sussex Central High School totaling \$352,683.00.

Sussex Central High School Change Order Notifications

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the 12 Sussex Central High School Change Orders as presented by Mr. Dooley and Mr. Cowen totaling \$161,374.01 and a credit for \$19,480.00. The motion passed (8-0).

Indian River School District Survey

Mr. Steele, Ms. Taylor and Mr. Neal shared the results of Indian River School District Survey questions.

Old Business

Major Capital Planning

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

Committee Reports

Buildings and Grounds

Mrs. Wright reviewed the minutes from the December 8, 2025 meeting.

Comprehensive School Safety

Mr. Cathell shared that one of districts constables, Mr. DeBlasis is retiring, he has been with the district since the constable program began in 2013.

Finance

Mr. Peden reviewed minutes from the December 8, 2025 meeting.

Curriculum

Mr. Neal shared with the Board the minutes from the December 8, 2025.

DSBA Board of Directors

No report.

DSBA Legislative

No report.

Special Education Committee

Mr. Neal shared with the Board that the next Parent Information Meeting will be held January 22, 2026 at Sussex Central Middle School at 6:00 pm.

Policy

Taylor reviewed the minutes from the December 8, 2025 meeting.

Mrs. Taylor shared the following policies for first readings: BCB Board Officers, BHA New Board Member Orientation, DI Internal Controls for Financial Accounting, GDG Support Staff Probation, J Athletic Policy, KBG Social Media Monitoring.

Mr. Cathell, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the following policies for second readings: GCBD Professional Leaves and Absences, GCJ Professional Staff Time Tables, IGBG Supportive Instruction – Homebound, JC Student Discipline. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Carver Consent Update/Community Advisory Board

Dr. Whisted shared with the board the Carver Consent Update and Community Advisory Board Updates:

Recommendation to Dismiss Carver Consent Update

- Submitted on November 24, 2025
- Signed by judge on December 3, 2025
- Combined Principal Meeting
 - January 13, 2026
- Coordinator Meeting
 - January 15, 2026

Consent Order Requirements

- Board of Education President at CAB Meeting
 - Annually
- CAB (Community Advisory Board) members Public Comment at BOE meetings
 - On the agenda
- CAB updates after each meeting

Re-occurring Request of the Consent Order

- Use of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Document
 - Hold a meeting within 15 days of the placement to review Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Letter sent annually to former Carver students
 - Informing of Parent Information Center (PIC) services
 - Informing of Disabilities Law Program, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.
- Document CAB meeting with formal notes

Procedures and Policies

- Create system and structures
- Ensure implementation
- Monitor future student placements
- Academic

- Behavior
- Mental Health

Future Community Advisory Board Meeting Dates @ 4:00 p.m.

- February 12, 2026 (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2)
 - Howard T. Ennis
- May 21, 2026 (Quarter 3 data)
 - Howard T. Ennis

IREA Representative

Ms. Blair Caitlin Brown shared with the board the IREA Dine and Donate at Chipotle restaurant in Rehoboth Beach will be held on January 13, 2026. She shared the "Spirit of Unity" reference regarding staff, district, and the Board and wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

Superintendents Report

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

District Calendar Change

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the calendar addition of the John M. Clayton Elementary Winter Band Performance on January 14, 2026 at 6:00 pm. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Financial Summaries for month ending November 30, 2025

Mr. Parker reviewed the financial summaries, major and minor capital improvement financials for the month ending November 30, 2025.

Mr. Peden, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to accept the financial summaries for the month ending November 30, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Detail Information for month ending November 30, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the Detail Information for the month ending November 30, 2025 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Major Capital Improvements for month ending November 30, 2025

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the Major Capital Improvements for the month ending November 30, 2025 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Minor Capital Improvements for month ending November 30, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the Minor Capital Improvements for the month ending November 30, 2025 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Student Activity Fund

Dr. Parsons, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve option #1 funding in the amount of \$67,850.47 for the student activity fund as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Field Trip Requests

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the following field trips as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

- Overnight trip by Indian River High School Educators Rising on February 10-11, 2026 to Newark, DE.
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High Educators Rising on February 10-11, 2026 to Newark, DE.
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High TSA on June 21-26, 2026 to Washington, DC.
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High Baseball on March 12-15, 2026 to North Carolina.

FY 2026 State Giveback Alternative Plan

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to accept the FY 2026 State Giveback Alternative Plan as presented by Mr. Parker in the total amount of \$2,007,369.38. The motion passed unanimously (8-0)

Personnel Agenda for December 15, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to approve the Personnel Agenda for December 15, 2025 excluding agenda item #13 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Mr. Peden, seconded by Dr. Parsons, motioned to approve personnel agenda item #13. The motion passed (7-0-1).

For the motion: Mr. Cathell, Mrs. Kline, Mr. Neal, Dr. Parsons, Mr. Peden, Mr. Steele, Ms. Taylor.

Abstained: Mrs. Wright

Personnel Addendum for December 15, 2025

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the Personnel Addendum for December 15, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Personnel Administrative Contracts – motions to renew, non-renew, or extend as presented for December 15, 2025

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to take no action on Personnel Administrative Contracts – motions to renew, non-renew, or extend as presented for December 15, 2025. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Contractual Agenda for December 15, 2025

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to approve the Personnel Addendum for December 15, 2025 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Notification of Retirements

Notification of retirements was presented to the Board. Mr. Steele thanked retirees for their hard work and dedication.

Public Comments

Ms. Taylor thanked the district's Technology Supervisor Mr. Mann for all his assistance with the Indian River School District Survey.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark L. Steele
President
Board of Education
Indian River School District

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

MLS/JFO:jmt