

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026
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. Lisa H. Briggs, Mr. Derek Cathell, Mrs. Kelly Kline, Mr. Ivan Neal, Dr. Michelle Parsons, Mr. Gerald Peden, Mr. Mark Steele, Mrs. Kim Taylor, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Member Attending Virtually: Mrs. Anita West-Werner.

Executive Session

Mrs. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Reconvene Regular Session at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – March 23, 2026

Mrs. Briggs, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the agenda for March 23, 2026. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Pledge of Allegiance/Presentation of Colors

Student Government

Payton Richie, Sussex Central High School student representative shared with the Board events, activities occurring at Sussex Central High School.

Approval of Minutes

Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2026

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

Board of Education Executive Session Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2026

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

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, David Maull, Jason Macrides, Mike Williams, Jenna Argo, Brad Breasure, Brandon McCabe, Todd Fuhrman, Laura Walter, John Planchart, John Kopf, Sarah Kopf, Melody Oneschuk, Avery Bare, Elizabeth Bare, Jesse Bare, Maggie Bare, Jeff Bunting, Catherine Bunting, Dallas Freezer, Morgan Cushing, Clayton Riepen, Brayden Polito, Farrah Stigall, Richard Stigall, Magdalene Stigall, Amanda Howard, Rick Radatovich, Maribella DiCenzo, Linda Kopf, Luke Hevner, Molly Hevner, Sharon DiCenzo, Marie Cammarota, Carl Freezer, Kristin Miller, Cullen Miller, Sam VanZee.

Recognition

- 2026 Sussex County Honors Band (SM): Sarah Kopf, Kamilla Santo De Luna, Morgan Elliott, Magdalena Hudson, Samuel Van Zee, Michael Stoehr, Brayden Polito, Cullen Miller.
- 2026 All-County Band (SDSA): Kaleah Braun, Magdalene Stigall
- BPA State Leadership Conference Winners (IRHS): Maggie Bare, Catherine Bunting, Karhime Castillo, Morgan Cushing, Molly Hevner, Kaitlyn Kopf, John Planchart, Harper Stanlry, Dallas Freezer, Maribella DiCenzo.
- Sussex Central High School FFA

Public Comments

- Lee Freeman, teacher at Indian River High School, addressed the Board with regard to the 2026-2027 district calendar. She questioned the number of remote work days, teacher work days, teacher conferences.
- Rick Radatovich addressed the Board and appreciated the curriculum enhancements particularly the integration of increased instruction in cursive writing. Evidence based strategies delivers the greatest outcomes.
- Blair Caitlin Brown addressed the Board regarding the 2026-2027 district calendar.

New Business

School Choice Applications 2025-2026 (March 2026)

Dr. Parsons, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to accept 2025-2026 school choice applicants (March 2026) as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

School Choice Applications 2026-2027 (March 2026)

Mrs. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to accept 2026-2027 school choice applicants (March 2026) as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

2025-2026 Teacher Updates – Amanda Howard

Amanda Howard, 2025-2026 IRSD District Teacher of the Year, shared with the Board that teachers are extremely versatile. Teachers work daily to enhance and support both academic and disciplinary needs for all students. There are numerous academic success stories in our district, teachers sustainability concerns.

2026-2027 District Calendar

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to table the 2026-2027 District Calendar until the April 27, 2026 board meeting. The motion passed unanimously (10-0)

Indian River High School Girls Flag Football

Indian River High School Girls Wrestling

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Dr. Parsons, motioned to approve the Indian River High School Girls Flag Football and Indian River High School Girls Wrestling as presented by Mr. Todd Fuhrman. The Board stated the district will not fund these sports. Funding is to be provided through fundraising with no expense to the district. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Georgetown Middle School Field Hockey Uniforms

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Georgetown Middle School Field Hockey Uniforms as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Artesian Water Utility Easement Request - Howard T. Ennis

Dr. Parsons, seconded by Mrs. West-Werner, motioned to approve the Artesian Water Utility Easement – Howard T. Ennis, with the stipulation that Mr. Dooley negotiate compensation funds received. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Air Quality Complaint Incident

Mr. Dooley shared with the Board the results of an air quality complaint. After investigating the complaint, the classroom was determined to not have an air quality problem.

Sussex Central Middle School GAGA Pit

Dr. Parsons, seconded by Mrs. Taylor, motioned to approve the Sussex Central Middle School GAGA Pit as presented by Eagle Scout Landon Anthony Hall. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Sussex Central High School Change Order Notifications

Mr. Neal, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to approve the 11 Sussex Central High School Change Orders as presented by Mr. Dooley totaling \$123,149.69 with a credit of \$10,935.00. The motion passed (10-0).

Old Business

Major Capital Planning

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

Committee Reports

Buildings and Grounds

Mrs. Wright reviewed the minutes from the March 9, 2026 meeting.

Comprehensive School Safety

No report.

Finance

Mr. Peden reviewed minutes from the March 9, 2026 meeting.

Curriculum

Mr. Neal shared with the Board the minutes from the March 9, 2026.

DSBA Board of Directors

Mrs. Kelly Kline shared with the Board updates from the January and February DSBA Board of Directors meetings.

DSBA Legislative

Mrs. Briggs shared with the Board the February Legislative meeting updates.

Special Education Committee

Mr. Neal shared with the Board highlights from the March 20, 2026 meeting. The next Special Education meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2026.

Policy

Ms. Taylor reviewed the minutes from the March 9, 2026 meeting.

Mrs. Taylor shared the following policies for first readings: BD School Board Meetings, BF Board Policy Development, JEDB Student Dismissal Precautions, KH.1 Use of online Donations Accounts.

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the following policies for second readings: DID Inventory and Fixed Asset, EEA.1 School Bus Driver and School Bus Aide Salary Increases, GCBE.1 Dock Pay, JO Student Records First and Second Readings: CB School Superintendent, GBCB.2 Staff Conduct – Sexual and Unlawful Harassment, JG.1 Bully - Cyberbullying Prevention.

The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Futures Committee

Dr. Owens shared with the Board the next Futures Committee meeting possible dates will be discussed after Spring Break.

Community Advisory Board

Dr. Whisted shared with the Board the next community advisory board meeting will be May 21, 2026 at Howard T. Ennis.

IREA Representative

Ms. Blair Caitlin Brown shared with the board that IREA met with the district calendar committee to review and provide input with the 2026-2027 district calendar. She also stressed the importance of school funding reform with House Bill 245 and House Bill 246.

Superintendents Report

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

District Calendar Change

- Change the John M. Clayton Elementary Color Run from May 23, 2026 to May 16, 2026.
- Change the Long Neck Elementary Drama Production from May 6, 2026 to April 30, 2026.

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Dr. Parsons, motioned to approve the district calendar changes as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Financial Summaries for month ending February 28, 2026

Mr. Cathell, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to accept the financial summaries for the month ending February 28, 2026 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Detail Information for month ending February 28, 2026

Mrs. Briggs, seconded by Mrs. Wright, motioned to approve the Detail Information for the month ending February 28, 2026 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Major Capital Improvements for month ending February 28, 2026

Mr. Peden, seconded by Ms. Taylor, motioned to approve the Major Capital Improvements for the month ending February 28, 2026 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Minor Capital Improvements for month ending February 28, 2026

Dr. Parsons, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the Minor Capital Improvements for the month ending February 28, 2026 as presented by Mr. Parker. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Use of Facility Requests

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Neal, motioned to approve the following use of facility requests as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

- Use of Sussex Central High School Cafeteria on April 19, 2026 (Sunday) by Sussex Central Wrestling Boosters.
- Use of Sussex Central High School Football Stadium on March 29, 2026 (Sunday) by United Church.

Field Trip Requests

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the following field trips as presented by Dr. Owens. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

- Overnight trip by Selbyville Middle School BPA on May 5-10, 2026 to Nashville, TN.
- Overnight trip by Indian River High School BPA on May 5-10, 2026 to Nashville, TN.
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central High School BPA on May 5-10, 2026 to Nashville, TN.
- Overnight trip by Sussex Central Middle School BPA on May 5-10, 2026 to Nashville, TN.
- Overnight trip by Phillip C. Showell 5th Graders on May 19-20, 2026 to Cape Henlopen State Park.
- Overnight trip by Indian River High School band/Choir on March 26-29, 2026 to Williamsburg, VA.
- Overnight trip by Indian River High School Educators Rising on June 19-24, 2026 to Portland, OR.
- Overnight trip by Selbyville Middle School Drone Team on May 13-16, 2026 to Fairmont, WV.

Executive Session

Mr. Peden, seconded by Mrs. Kline, motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:58 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Reconvene Regular Session at 10:25 p.m.

Personnel Agenda for March 23, 2026

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Peden, motioned to approve the Personnel Agenda for March 23, 2026 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Personnel Addendum for March 23, 2026

Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the Personnel Addendum for March 23, 2026 excluding item #1 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mrs. Wright, motioned to table item #1 on the Personnel Addendum for March 23, 2026 for a future board meeting. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Contractual Agenda for March 23, 2026

Mrs. Wright, seconded by Mr. Cathell, motioned to approve the Contractual Agenda for March 23, 2026 as presented by Mrs. Bunting. The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Notification of Retirements

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

Public Comments

No comments.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 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