

BOARD OF EDUCATION

IRVINGTON, NEW JERSEY

VIRTUAL – Annual Reorganization Meeting

The Annual Reorganization Meeting was held Virtually on Wednesday, May 6, 2026. This meeting was called to order by Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary Craig Smith, QPA, followed by a flag salute.

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary Craig Smith, QPA reported that in accordance with P.L. 1975 Chapter 231, adequate notice of this meeting was posted in the Administration Building and copies of said notice sent to the Irvington Herald, the Star Ledger and the Township Clerk.

RESULTS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF IRVINGTON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION
(UNOFFICIAL) – APRIL 21, 2026

Budget Question -	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
	515	132
Three (3) Year Term - Board Members Results:		
Syesha Benbow	Jordan Geffrard	Audrey Lyon
723	686	694

OATH OF OFFICE

The Oath of Office was administered by Craig Smith, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary to Syesha Benbow, Jordan Geffrard and Audrey Lyon. All were congratulated on their return to the Board to continue their service to the Irvington School District.

Present were: Shante Barr
 Annette Beasley
 Syesha Benbow
 John Brown
 Jordan Geffrard
 Janelle Lowery
 Audrey Lyon
 Joseph Sylvain
 Joel Wanamaker

Other: Dr. April Vauss, Superintendent of Schools
 Craig Smith, QPA, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary
 Dr. Matin Adegboyega, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
 Sean Evans, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
 Roger Monel, Associate School Business Administrator
 Dr. Edna Correia, Assistant to the Assist. Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruct
 Farah Irving, Human Resources Manager
 Ronald Hunt, Board Attorney
 Several administrators, other interested citizens and newspaper reporters.

7. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

a. President

Nominee: Syesha Benbow

Nominated by: Annette Beasley

Seconded by: Shante Barr

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

b. Vice-President

Nominee: Janelle Lowery

Nominated by: Annette Beasley

Seconded by: Shante Barr

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

8. RESOLUTION REGARDING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING NOTICES

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education shall send notices including annual notices giving a time, date, location and to the extent known, the agenda of any regular, special or rescheduled meeting to either or both of the following newspapers; the Irvington Herald, the Star Ledger; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the official newspapers of the Irvington Board of Education shall be the Irvington Herald and the Star Ledger; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education shall file all notices of any regular, special or rescheduled meetings with the Township Clerk for the Township of Irvington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education shall post all notices of any regular, special or rescheduled meeting on the District website and in the Administration Building; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education shall send all notices to any individual requesting to be placed on a mailing list as provided by law in accordance with Board Policy.

ACTION:

Motion by: Audrey Lyon, Seconded by: Joel Wanamaker

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

9. INTERNAL SCHOOL ACCOUNTS

BE IT RESOLVED, that two signatures are required, the Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal and the principal's designee of each school be authorized to sign checks or documents necessary to continue the Internal School Accounts of each school in the banks or savings and loan institutions wherein school funds are deposited. Such funds need to be in an Interest-Bearing account.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that two signatures are required on each authorized check. The signors must be the Principal and either the Vice Principal, Assistant Principal or the principal's designee.

ACTION:

Motion by: Shante Barr, Seconded by: Joel Wanamaker

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

10. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING DATES FOR BOARD MEETINGS

BE IT RESOLVED, that meetings of the Irvington Board of Education will be held VIRTUALLY until further notice at 6:00 pm on the following dates. **(Subject to change)**

Wednesday, August 19, 2026
Wednesday, September 16, 2026
Wednesday, October 14, 2026
Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Wednesday, December 16, 2026
Wednesday, January 20, 2027
Wednesday, February 17, 2027
Wednesday, March 17, 2027
Wednesday, April 14, 2027
TBD - Re-Organization
Wednesday, May 19, 2027
Wednesday, June 9, 2027
Wednesday, June 23, 2027

ACTION:

Motion by: Annette Beasley, Seconded by: Audrey Lyon

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

11. RESOLUTION FOR DESIGNATION OF DEPOSITORIES FOR FUNDS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that Citizens Bank, Bank of America, PNC Bank, TD Bank, Wells Fargo and Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) be designated as depositories for school monies of the Irvington Board of Education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the funds of the Irvington Board of Education deposited in the above-cited depositories be subject to withdrawal and warrants or other orders for the payment of money when signed on behalf of the Board of Education by the President, or Vice President, the Board Secretary and the Treasurer of School Moneys; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that available funds may be invested in certificates of deposits in the above-cited depositories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary is directed to deposit all such funds in the aforementioned banks or the State of New Jersey Cash Management Fund and a copy of this resolution is sent to each of the institutions herein designated.

ACTION:

Motion by: Janelle Lowery, Seconded by: Audrey Lyon

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll vote.

12. BOARD POLICY BOOK

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Policy and Regulation Manuals of the Irvington Township Board of Education be re-adopted. The Board Policy Book can be viewed on the District website.

ACTION:

Motion by: Audrey Lyon, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

13. IRVINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the mission of the Irvington Public Schools is to inspire and instruct all students to think critically, creatively and responsibly embrace diversity and pursue their dreams with purpose.

ACTION:

Motion by: John Brown, Seconded by: Joseph Sylvain

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

14. REQUEST FOR TAXES FROM THE TOWNSHIP

RESOLVED, that the amount of District taxes including the debt service requirement needed to meet the obligations of this Board of Education for the 2026-2027 school year is \$17,459,529.00, and the Township of Irvington is hereby requested to transfer the proceeds to the Irvington Board of Education as listed: Funds are due by the 1st day of each month.

July, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
August, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
September, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
October, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
November, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
December, 2026	\$ 1,454,960.75
January, 2027	\$ 1,454,960.75
February, 2027	\$ 1,454,960.75
March, 2027	\$ 1,454,960.75
April, 2027	\$ 1,454,960.75
May, 2027	\$ 1,454,960.75
June, 2027	<u>\$ 1,454,960.75</u>
	\$17,459,529.00

ACTION:

Motion by: Joel Wanamaker, Seconded by: John Brown

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

15. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL OF BILLS

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-2, approved authorizing the Chief School Administrator or her designee to administratively approve the payment of bills for students' needs, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4.1. Payments approved by the Chief School Administrator or her designee shall be reported to the Board, ratified and duly recorded in the minutes at a subsequent meeting of the Board.

ACTION:

Motion by: John Brown, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

16. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICE THROUGH STATE AGENCY FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

WHEREAS, TITLE 18A-18A-10 provided that the Board of Education, without advertising for bids may by resolution purchase any goods or services pursuant to a contract or contracts for such goods or services entered into on behalf of the state division of purchase and property; and

WHEREAS, the Irvington Board of Education desires to authorize its purchasing agent for 2026-2027 to make any and all purchases necessary to meet the needs of the school district throughout the school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Irvington Board of Education does hereby authorized the district purchasing agent to make purchases of goods and services entered into on behalf of the State by the Division of Purchase and Property by utilizing the various vendors approved by the state.

ACTION:

Motion by: Annette Beasley, Seconded by: Jordan Geffrard

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

17. APPOINTMENT OF TREASURER OF SCHOOL MONIES 2026-2027

RESOLVED, that the Irvington Board of Education approved the appointment of Julyana Ortiz, 440 Shearer Avenue, Union, NJ 07083 as the Treasurer of School Monies, to complete bank reconciliations for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, at a fee of \$2,500.00, per month, not to exceed \$30,000.00. Said services are to be paid from account number 11-000-230-339-00-31, in accordance with the terms and conditions of a contract to be executed by the firm and the Irvington Board of Education.

ACTION:

Motion by: Joel Wanamaker, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

18. AUTHORIZATION FOR PURCHASING OF GOODS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Irvington Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3(a), designated, Craig Smith, QPA, Assistant Superintendent/Board Secretary, as the Qualified Purchasing Agent for the Board of Education and authorized him to award contracts, in full accordance with the law, for purchases that do not exceed in the aggregate in a contract year the total sum of \$53,000.00, (bid threshold) without public advertising) for bids. Furthermore, is authorized to solicit competitive quotations pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(a) and to award contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(c).

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. S:34-8.3, et seq., the Irvington Board of Education further authorizes the Qualified Purchasing Agent to seek either competitive quotations or competitive bids when original determination of aggregation are found to be more than anticipated or incorrect.

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A.18A:18A-2(b), the Qualified Purchasing Agent, is designated to have the power to prepare advertisements, to advertise for and to receive bids. In accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:18A-21(b) is authorized to publicly receive bids, unseal them and announce the contents.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all purchases made by the Irvington Board of Education shall be done through the purchase order system. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 18A-2(v), a purchase order is a document issued by the purchasing agent authorizing a purchase transaction with a vendor to provide goods or to perform services.

ACTION:

Motion by: John Brown, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

19. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR SAMUEL KLEIN AND COMPANY 2026-2027

BE IT RESOLVED, that Samuel Klein and Company of Newark, New Jersey be appointed to audit the school district's 2026-2027 accounts and financial transactions in accordance with federal and state auditing requirements and to perform other special services as required and authorized by the Board in accordance with the terms and conditions of a contract to be executed by the firm and the Irvington Board of Education for the 2026-2027 school year. Amount not to exceed \$103,500.00 to be paid from account number 11-000-230-332-00-31.

ACTION:

Motion by: Shante Barr, Seconded by: Annette Beasley

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

20. APPOINTMENT OF HUNT, HAMLIN & RIDLEY AS GENERAL AND LABOR COUNSEL TO THE IRVINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION 2026-2027

WHEREAS, the Irvington Board of Education is desirous of retaining General Counsel and Labor Negotiations Counsel to represent the school district in a variety of legal matters; and

WHEREAS, the Irvington Board of Education is desirous of appointing the law firm of Hunt, Hamlin & Ridley in the capacity of General Counsel and Labor/Negotiations Counsel in the amount not to exceed \$425,000.00, for all matters related to the duties and responsibilities as General Counsel and Labor/Negotiations Counsel in accordance with the terms and conditions of a contract to be executed by the firm and the Irvington Board of Education;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Irvington Board of Education approved the appointment of the law firm of Hunt, Hamlin & Ridley as General Counsel and Labor/Negotiations Counsel for an amount not to exceed \$425,000.00, for all matters related to the duties and responsibilities as General Counsel and Labor/Negotiations Counsel in accordance with the terms and conditions of a contract to be executed by the firm and the Irvington Board of Education effective July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. Total cost not to exceed \$425,000.00, to be paid from account number 11-000-230-331-00-31.

ACTION:

Motion by: Annette Beasley, Seconded by: John Brown

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

21. LEGAL EXPENSES – HUNT, HAMLIN & RIDLEY 2026-2027

RESOLVED, that the Irvington Board of Education hereby approve the allocation of an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00, to cover court fees and expenses, including, but not limited to, filing fees, expert witness fees and depositions and transcripts fees which are directly related to litigation involving the Irvington Board of Education for the 2026-2027 school Year. The payment of expenses to be provided upon the production of an invoice to the Assistant Superintendent for Business. Total cost not to exceed \$50,000.00, to be paid from account number 11-000-230-590-00- 31.

ACTION:

Motion by: Joel Wanamaker, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

22. BROKER OF RECORD FOR DENTAL AND VISIONS PLANS

RESOLVED, that the Irvington Board of Education approved the appointment of Eagle Rock Management Group as the Broker of Record for Dental and Vision Plans for school year 2026-2027.

ACTION:

Motion by: Jordan Geffrard, Seconded by: Janelle Lowery

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

23. OCA ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING -ARCHITECT OF RECORD

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepted the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools to OCA Architect, 211 Warren Street Suite 218, Newark NJ 07103 for preparation of design, development, construction documents CADD background permit-ready, professional services, including upgrading the LRFP if needed for the 2026-2027 school year, Total not to exceed \$500,000.00, payable from account number 12-000-400-334-00-34

ACTION:

Motion by: Audrey Lyon, Seconded by: Jordan Geffrard

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

24. ELECTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE ESSEX REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES COMMISSION

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-61 et seq., the Board of Education of the Township of Irvington must elect one of its members to represent it on the Representative Assembly of the Essex Regional Education Services Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Township of Irvington has held such an election among its members;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Essex Regional Education Services Commission be notified that Annette Beasley has been duly elected as a member of the Representative Assembly of the Essex Regional Education Services Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the minutes indicating such election be forwarded to the Executive Director of the Commission.

ACTION:

Motion by: John Brown, Seconded by: Shante Barr

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

25. VOTING DELEGATE – NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS

BE IT RESOLVED, that Syesha Benbow shall represent the Irvington Board of Education and be their voting delegate at the meeting of the New Jersey School Boards Association. (18A:6-46) and further;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alternate Delegate shall be Jordan Geffrard

ACTION:

Motion by: John Brown, Seconded by: Joseph Sylvain

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

26. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE – ESSEX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION

The Board President does appoint Syesha Benbow as Executive Council Representative to represent the Irvington Board of Education at the Executive Meetings of the Essex County School Boards Association. The Alternate shall be Audrey Lyon.

27. APPOINTMENT - URBAN BOARDS COMMITTEE

The Board President does appoint Syesha Benbow to represent the Irvington Board of Education on the Urban Boards Committee of the New Jersey School Boards Association. The Alternate shall be Shante Barr.

28. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **Buildings and Grounds/Athletics Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Joseph Sylvain, Chairman

Joel Wanamaker

John Brown

Shante Barr

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **By-Laws and Policy Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Shante Barr, Chairman

John Brown

Janelle Lowery

Joel Wanamaker

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **Curriculum/Technology Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Jordan Geffrard, Chairman

Syesha Benbow
Janelly Lowery
Shante Barr

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **Finance Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Audrey Lyon, Chairman

Jordan Geffrard
Joseph Sylvain
Shante Barr

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **Negotiations Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Annette Beasley, Chairman

Jordan Geffrard
Joseph Sylvain
Joel Wanamaker

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **Personnel Committee** with the first named Board Member as Chair:

Annette Beasley, Chairman

Jordan Geffrard
Audrey Lyon
Syesha Benbow

The President of the Board does designate the following Board Members to be Members of the **School/Community Relations Committee** with the first Named Board Member as Chair:

Syesha Benbow, Chairman

Jordan Geffrard
Audrey Lyon
Annette Beasley

29. ADOPTION OF CODE OF ETHICS

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education understands and adopted the Code of Ethics for School Board Members as defined in Title 18A: 12-24.1, read and discussed the following:

18A:12-24.1 Code of Ethics for Board Members.

A school board member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.
- h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

ACTION:

Motion by: Joseph Sylvain, Seconded by: Shante Barr

Roll Call: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Tony Vauss stated “Congratulations to all of the re-elected school board members. You guys have done an outstanding job administering what we call the most important thing in our district, making sure our young people are taken care of, and they have the tools they need to succeed.

“I think going forward, you know, I look forward to working with you guys in collaboration. It’s been nothing but a wonderful journey, and I wish you all the best. So, thank God for you guys that you do this job day in and day out as I did for 9 years with absolutely no pay.

So, Congratulations Ms. Benbow, Mr. Geffrard and Ms. Lyon and I know you guys will continue to do well. God Bless.

President Benbow thanked the Mayor for all that he does for the scholars of the Irvington Public Schools. She went on to thank all who supported her and for the nomination and vote to be president. She indicated this was her fourth term as president. She was humbled by the support. She congratulated her board colleagues on the amazing job they were all doing and stated they were ready to continue to “Build Our Community One Student at a Time”.

Dr. April Vauss, Superintendent of Schools congratulated all the board members but wanted to remind the public that the next day would the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Rita L. Owens Junior STEAM Academy. She said “This is Irvington Public Schools moving to a whole other level of performance, and I thank the board always for their support of these great initiatives.

Audrey Lyon, first thanked the community noting this was her fifth term. She thanked the volunteers and everyone who voted for her and her board colleagues. She was looking forward to another three-year term noting they were doing great things in Irvington. She ended by saying, “Let’s Go Blue Knights”!

Jordan Geffrard thanked God obviously for being able to continue to serve. He stated it was his second term. He was looking forward to continuing good work and continuing to “Build Our Community One Student at a Time”.

CLOSED SESSION:

“In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act, be it hereby resolved that the Irvington Township Board of Education meet in closed session on Wednesday, May 22, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. to address matters of personnel and attorney/client privilege.

It is expected that the matters discussed will be made public at the time that the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Upon the motion by Annette Beasley, seconded by Jordan Geffrard and unanimously approved on a roll call vote, the Annual Reorganization Meeting of the Irvington Board of Education adjourned at 7:02 pm

Craig Smith, QPA
Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary

CS/rcs