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## *An Important Community Update*

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May 3, 2019

Dear IUFSD Community Members,

As the school year draws to a close, the Board of Education would like to update you regarding several important school district matters.

### **Review of Employee's Attendance Records**

On March 6, we informed the community that after an initial review by the Board of Education's legal counsel into certain attendance record discrepancies associated with a (now former) District employee, we brought information from that review to the attention of the Westchester District Attorney and the Office of the NYS Comptroller. It is our understanding that their reviews of those materials are continuing and may not be finalized for months. We will continue to cooperate with all information requests from these agencies and to keep our community informed of any important public developments.

We fully recognize from our individual and collective conversations with school community members that some residents want more context about this matter. Like you, we care deeply about both the quality and reputation of our schools, and we know that many residents share these same values. At the same time, matters that concern a government inquiry and personal rights to privacy carry potential legal ramifications. As a result of this fact, the Board's legal counsel and the independent agencies with which we are cooperating have recommended that we share no additional information with the public at this time. We have accepted these professional recommendations so that we will not otherwise complicate or adversely impact the outcome of these reviews.

### **Independent HR Department Audit**

Subsequent to the aforementioned review of attendance records discrepancies, the Board of Education also initiated an independent review of the District's human resources practices and processes by hiring an objective third-party HR professional. While we conduct audits like this periodically, we had not previously planned an audit this year for the HR function; however, there was no question about the necessity of conducting an audit at this time. We have been told by the independent HR consultant to expect a finalized report in June, one that will include a review of recommendations made in the prior 2012 HR audit and the District's implementation efforts related to those previous recommendations. The auditor has shared that District staff have been fully cooperative during the intensive audit process. We anticipate the audit will result in recommendations for the improvement of certain HR systems, such as those currently in place for monitoring employee attendance.

### **Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Requests**

As you may have learned from newspaper articles, social media, or general conversation, the District has received an extraordinary number of formal information requests in recent years, and particularly this year, known as FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) requests. Because we are committed to transparency and will always abide by the law, the District has, this year alone, produced nearly 7,000 pages of documents pursuant to this law. Fulfilling these

requests requires hundreds of hours of legal and administrative time, which translates to significant direct and indirect costs. In addition, reviews and redactions, where appropriate and necessary, are conducted in a methodical and time-intensive manner to preserve the District's legal standing and avoid potential litigation.

We have and will continue to work earnestly and transparently, we will always abide by the law, and we will continue to fulfill the expectations of our community by maintaining a high-performing and well-regarded school district.

### **Annual Budget Vote, Trustee Election, and Capital Bond Proposal**

On May 21 from 7 a.m.- 9 p.m. at the Main Street School, the District will hold its annual budget vote and trustee election. As we approach that day, we can confidently report that the District is in excellent financial health and that our proposed budget complies with the tax levy cap. In addition to voting on the annual budget and electing Board of Education trustees, residents will be asked to consider a special ballot question for a debt-neutral capital bond project proposal to address the following areas:

- School safety,
- Maintenance and infrastructure needs,
- Energy conservation, and
- Learning space modernization.

For more information regarding the 2019-20 proposed budget and capital plan, there are pages on our [website homepage](#) devoted to both that include a calendar of upcoming informational presentations, [Q&A's](#), and additional supporting materials such as prior year financial actuals, purchasing practices, planning reports, and more.

### **Communication with the Board and District**

The IUFSB Board of Education is committed to maintaining strong, open communications with District stakeholders. As elected officials and fellow community members, we expect and welcome questions and feedback on District matters.

Throughout the year, the Board invites you to attend Board of Education meetings. If you cannot attend a meeting in person, YouTube videos of the meetings are available on Boarddocs under each meeting's date. The videos are posted a few days after each meeting at [www.irvingtonschools.org](http://www.irvingtonschools.org) under the heading *Meeting Agendas and Boarddocs*. In addition, monthly *Board Briefs* email newsletters contain direct links to the prior month's Board presentations and summarize Board actions in one place. If you do not currently receive the Board Briefs newsletter you can subscribe to it by contacting Donna Friedlander at [donna.friedlander@irvingtonschools.org](mailto:donna.friedlander@irvingtonschools.org).

### **District Survey**

Additionally, we encourage your participation in the current District survey, which provides an important opportunity for stakeholder input. The deadline to complete it has been briefly extended. As a parent or staff member you would have received an email link; as a community member currently without children in District schools, you can find a survey link on the homepage of the District website at [www.irvingtonschools.org](http://www.irvingtonschools.org).

### **District Newsletter**

Finally, there is so much wonderful news to share about our student and staff experiences and initiatives! You may read about many of these in our [most recent newsletter at this link](#).

### **Thank You**

The Board of Education thanks you for your ongoing interest and support for the success of our district as we strive to serve our students' academic needs and overall well-being every day.

Sincerely,  
Michael Hanna, Board of Education, President  
Maria Kashkin, Board of Education, Vice President  
Brian Friedman, Board of Education, Vice President

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