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# School board hearing delayed

ICCSD moves plans to fill vacancy on Sept. 15

Jessica Rish  
Iowa City Press-Citizen  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Iowa City Community School District’s board of directors have delayed a public candidate hearing as it inches closer to finding a replacement. Former director Jayne Finch suddenly resigned on Aug. 21, citing a “toxic environment” and division over the district’s ongoing financial recovery. The school board chose to fill the vacancy by appointment, noting the high cost of a special election as a reason.

The special election in 2020 cost the district \$70,000. The district recently announced that the previously planned public hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 8 will instead be held Tuesday, Sept. 15, when the board plans to appoint a new member. The district’s financial oversight committee plans to meet on Tuesday, Sept. 8 and the regular school board meeting on Tuesday, Sep. 22 will be held as planned. The originally planned school board meeting for Sept. 8 was canceled because of a “scheduling conflict.”

Residents can choose to fill the seat via a special election by filing a petition with 5,364 signatures to the district’s board secretary within 14 days after a new member is appointed. The earliest possible election date would be Tuesday, Dec. 8. Eight people have applied for the open ICCSD school board seat. Applications are due by Wednesday, Sept. 9.

**Meet the 8 applicants who applied to the Iowa City school board**

Each candidate will be allowed to speak before the board and the general

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**Superintendent Matt Degner and directors Jennifer Horn-Fraiser and Charlie Eastham listen to public comment on May 12 during an Iowa City Community School District board meeting in Iowa City.**  
JULIA HANSEN/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

**Apartments are pictured on Orchard Court on June 12 in Iowa City.** JULIA HANSEN/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

# Orchard Court housing project secures \$5M loan

Developer based in Indiana works toward affordable living

Liam Halawith  
Iowa City Press-Citizen  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Iowa City City Council recently approved a \$5.1 million loan for a new affordable housing project on the west

side of town. The loan will help finance land for a 183-unit affordable housing apartment complex at Orchard Court and Orchard Street. The project is being spearheaded by The Annex Group, an affordable hous-

ing developer based in Indiana that has completed several projects across Iowa, including Cedar Rapids. The development is expected to include 153 units rented to tenants who

**See HOUSING, Page 2A**

# Reynolds warns about kratom overdoses

Stephen Gruber-Miller  
Des Moines Register  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Kim Reynolds is calling for a full ban on the plant-based stimulant kratom as the federal government moves to restrict several potent variants of the product. Reynolds, joined by law enforcement and public health professionals, said at a news conference Tuesday, Sept. 1, that Iowa has seen 16 kratom-related deaths so far in 2026, an uptick from 16 deaths in 2025 and 13 deaths in 2024. “We’re at a point where this issue cannot be ignored any longer,” Reynolds said. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and Department of Justice on Aug. 26 classified three synthetic kratom products — mitragynine pseudoindoxyl, MGM-15 and MGM-16 — as Schedule I controlled substances, making them illegal to possess. A similar move is coming soon for the synthetic 7-OH variant. The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is set to begin a multimedia public awareness campaign about kratom in October. Kratom is a tree native to southeast Asia. Consuming its leaves, whether

**See KRATOM, Page 2A**

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