

Freeburg Elementary School

Thursday, August 7, 2025

6:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Board of Education for Freeburg Community Consolidated School District No. 70 was held on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria at Freeburg Elementary School.

### **Call to Order**

Mrs. Trout called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call of the members.

### **Roll Call**

In addition to Mrs. Trout, board members Jamie Smith, Ed Scheibel, Bill May, Ben Mueth, and Ben Howes were in attendance. Board member Erin Shook was absent. Also in attendance were Dr. Mark Bearley, Superintendent and Mark Janssen, Financial Officer and Recording Secretary.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Board and public stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Visitors**

There were no visitors.

### **Public Participation**

The Board welcomed the public to the meeting.

#### **1. Communication – Chain of Command**

The Superintendent reiterated the established communication protocol:

- All Board questions, concerns, or requests for information are to be directed through the Superintendent, who will collect relevant information and present it to the Board member or the full Board as needed.
- Community concerns should be addressed first to the appropriate teacher or coach, then referred to the Superintendent, who will involve building administration to ensure proper handling.
- Building staff are expected to follow department-level reporting lines before elevating concerns to administration (e.g., custodians to Mr. Havel, cafeteria staff to Mrs. Vosse). Administrators will redirect issues back to the appropriate director if the process has not been followed.

#### **2. ISBE Financial Forecast**

The Superintendent and Mr. Janssen attended an ISBE webinar on budget planning and funding projections:

- Districts should plan budgets based on Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) and local revenues, without anticipating increases in mandated categorical grants (MCATs); cuts are likely in transportation, special education, and school meal programs.
- State reimbursement for transportation and special education continues to decline (79% last year, 69% this year, with a potential drop into the 50% range), while costs for buses, fuel, and salaries are rising.

- The \$150 million allocated to Tier I districts in EBF is distributed based on adequacy targets; Chicago Public School’s Tier I status now accounts for approximately \$41 million of these funds, potentially affecting other districts’ Tier placements and funding.
- ISBE recommends 3–5 year planning with the following assumptions:
  - EAV growth similar to the prior year.
  - Flat MCAT funding.
  - Federal funding scenarios range from full funding, to no increases in Title I/IDEA with cuts to other grants, to complete elimination of non-nutrition federal grants.

### 3. School Board Committees

Committees are not required to meet on a fixed schedule and are convened as needed to address specific matters. Ms. Trout noted that committees, particularly the Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee, are underutilized. Dr. Bearley clarified that this committee’s discussions will focus on district-wide, strategic issues, not classroom- or grade-level matters, to protect privacy. The Board discussed potential consolidation of committees where topics overlap—for example, Building & Grounds and Budget & Finance. Following discussion, the Board agreed that committee meetings will be held prior to regular Board meetings.

### 4. Goals

- **Short-Term (2025–2026):** Board members will provide input on short-term goals. One suggestion: install signage at the main road to encourage drivers to slow down at the start of school.
- **Long-Term:** Expansion of robotics/technology programs, construction of a new gymnasium, and consider entering the district into a sports state series.

## Adjournment

Moved: Bill May

Seconded: Ben Mueth

There being no further business to come before this body, **A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:20 P.M.**

Upon a voice vote, Motion Carried, 6-aye, 0-nay.

Amber Trout, President  
Board of Education, Dist. #70

Jamie Smith, Secretary  
Board of Education, Dist. # 70