

Freeburg Elementary School  
Wednesday, December 17, 2025  
7:15 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Board of Education for Freeburg Community Consolidated School District No. 70 was held on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 7:15 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 Bill May, Ben Mueth, Erin Shook, Ben Howes, and Nicole Schilling (7:30) were in attendance. Board member Ed Scheibel was absent. Also in attendance were Dr. Mark Bearley, Superintendent and Mark Janssen, Financial Officer and Recording Secretary. Administrators Tiffany, Zurliene, Stacey Sommerfield and Amanda Hargan were also present.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Board and public stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Visitors**

Visitors to the meeting included district staff Brooke Krauss, Theresa Goscinski, Marc Derwort, and Michelle Freebairn. Also in attendance were Lydia Derwort and Jay Hubert.

### **Recognition**

Coach Marc Derwort read a statement from Coach Ben Junge recognizing Trevor Huschle for an outstanding Cross Country season. The statement highlighted Trevor's accomplishments and exceptional work ethic throughout the season.

Coach Derwort also recognized Tenley Hepperman for an outstanding Cross Country season. Tenley made school history by becoming the first Hornet to win the Conference meet, and her numerous accomplishments during the season were noted.

Dr. Bearley recognized Coach Derwort and congratulated him on an outstanding coaching career. This marked Coach Derwort's final season as Cross Country and Girls' Basketball Coach. Dr. Bearley noted Coach Derwort's profound impact on his players, the values he instilled, and the lasting positive influence he had on all those he coached.

### **Consent Agenda**

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Bill May

#### **A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).**

- MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 24, 2025 REGULAR BOARD MEETING AND THE DECEMBER 3, 2025 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
- INVESTMENT SUMMARY THROUGH DECEMBER 12, 2025
- BUDGET SUMMARY THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2025

Upon a voice vote, Motion Carried, 7-aye, 0-nay.

Board Member Nicole Schilling was administered the Oath of Office.

## **Approval of the Bills**

Moved: Erin Shook

Seconded: Ben Howes

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE BILLS, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).**

AYES: May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout

Motion Carried

## **Committee Updates**

### **Petitions/Communications**

The district received one Freedom of Information Act request from Public Info Access. The requester sought employee information, including job titles, work email addresses, and work locations. The request was fulfilled within the required five-day timeframe.

### **Public Participation**

The Board welcomed the public to the meeting.

### **Teachers' Report**

District Social Worker Theresa Goscinski thanked the Freeburg community for coming together to provide Christmas gifts for 35 children in the community. She noted that three clubs, two local businesses, and eight families collaborated to make this possible. She also shared that she continues to coordinate food support for students in need and expressed her appreciation to everyone for their generosity and ongoing support.

Teacher Brooke Krauss provided an overview of activities taking place in her classroom. She also highlighted the Lego Club and Community Service Craft Club that she coordinates with Mrs. Goscinski, noting that approximately 40 students participate in these programs.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### **Enrollment and Suspension Report**

Dr. Bearley provided an enrollment update, noting that the district currently has 719 students, down two from last month. He also reviewed discipline data with the Board, including the total number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions to date.

#### **Test Scores Presentation**

Mrs. Zurliene presented 2025 IAR and ISA test results. Due to the State of Illinois adjusting its cut scores this year, the results cannot be directly compared to last year's performance.

Even with the state's new scoring system, Freeburg students performed exceptionally well. Across nearly all grade levels and subject areas, student proficiency rates exceeded Illinois state averages, often by a substantial margin.

- **ELA:** Proficiency ranged from 70% to 83%, well above the state averages of approximately 46%–56%.
- **Math:** Most grade levels outperformed the state, including standout results of 85% proficiency in 3rd grade and 63% in 4th grade.
- **Science:** On the Illinois Science Assessment, 5th and 8th grades scored 69% and 60% proficient, significantly above state performance.

Overall, the district continues to demonstrate strong academic achievement, reflecting the hard work of our students, teachers, and staff.

*Mrs. Zurliene presented the Principal's Report for the Elementary School.*

- On Friday, December 12th, the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade chorus traveled to the Freeburg Care Center to perform their Christmas Program for residents. It got everyone in the holiday spirit!
- On Monday, 4th-8th performed their Band and Chorus Concert. It was an amazing performance. Thank you Mrs. Ketchum for your dedication to our students; it shines through when they perform.

*Ms. Sommerfield presented the Principal's Report for the Primary Center.*

- Santa's Kottage December 12th - We appreciate the Freeburg Women's Club for organizing it.
- The Christmas Program for K-2 was last night.

Thank you to Mrs. Ketchum for all of her hard work getting the students geared up for this.

**Upcoming Events-**

- Friday's early dismissal is at 11:30
- End of 2nd quarter is Friday, December 19th.
- School resumes January 5th.
- January 16th-Early Dismissal at 11:30.
- No School-January 19th in observance of Martin Luther King's birthday.

*Mrs. Hargan presented the Director of Student Services Report.*

**Special Education / 504**

Staff continue to make meaningful progress supporting student performance, with a strong focus on caring for the whole child. Appreciation was expressed for staff efforts that extend beyond academics, including meeting students' basic needs and creating positive experiences for families. Pride was shared in the district's work, along with well wishes for a restful break.

**MTSS / Response to Intervention**

Two previously shared events were highlighted. An online parent webinar on executive functioning supports will be held December 18 through the Illinois SLD Support Project. In addition, district social

workers will host a mental health awareness fair on January 21, featuring a speaker on childhood worry and anxiety and providing family resources.

### District Update

Dr. Bearley expressed his sincere appreciation to staff for their continued dedication and hard work, noting that many positive things are occurring in the hallways beyond test scores. He emphasized the district's commitment to educating the whole child, fostering creativity, and supporting students in meaningful ways, while also acknowledging there is always room for growth and continued improvement.

Dr. Bearley congratulated the band and chorus on an outstanding concert held this past Monday, noting that their preparation and hard work were clearly evident. He also commended the Primary Center for an excellent program presented at the High School the previous evening and specifically recognized Mrs. Ketchum and the Primary Center teachers for their patience, effort, and collaboration in making the event a success.

Dr. Bearley reported that he and Mr. Janssen are actively working to identify and prepare projects for the School Maintenance Grant and anticipate having quotes available for Board consideration and approval next month.

He concluded by thanking Social Workers Mrs. Goscinski and Mrs. Mueth for their ongoing efforts to support students and families and for lifting the spirits of those in the community who are less fortunate.

### Old Business

### New Business

Moved: Bill May

Seconded: Ben Howes

### **A MOTION WAS MADE TO NOMINATE ERIN SHOOK AS BOARD SECRETARY.**

AYES: May, Mueth, Howes, Schilling, Trout

ABSTAIN: Shook

Motion Carried

Moved: Amber Trout

Seconded: Bill May

### **A MOTION WAS MADE TO ENTER INTO A LEVY HEARING.**

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

Motion: Amber Trout

Seconded: Nicole Schilling

### **A MOTION WAS MADE TO RE-ENTER REGULAR SESSION.**

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

Moved: Erin Shook

Seconded: Amber Trout

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE 2025 TAX LEVY WITH A TOTAL INCREASE OF 8.48%, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).**

AYES: May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout

Motion Carried

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Ben Howes

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE 2<sup>nd</sup> READING OF BOARD POLICY REVISIONS, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).**

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

Motion: Bill May

Seconded: Ben Mueth

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:01 PM TO CONSIDER:**

**THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT INCLUDING HEARING TESTIMONY ON A COMPLAINT LODGED AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE. 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1) AND**

**TO CONDUCT THE SEMI-ANNUAL REVIEW OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS LAWFULLY CLOSED TO DETERMINE WHETHER ANY MAY BE RELEASED AS MANDATED BY SECTION 2.06 ILCS 120/2(C)(21)**

AYES: May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout

Motion Carried

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Erin Shook

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO RE-ENTER REGULAR SESSION AT 8:30 PM.**

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

Moved: Amber Trout

Seconded: Nicole Schilling

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO EMPLOY RONICA FUENTES AS PART-TIME TEACHER, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 5, 2026, AS PRESENTED.**

AYES: May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout

Motion Carried

Moved: Ben Howes

Seconded: Erin Shook

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO EMPLOY CLAIRE WALKER AS LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 5, 2026, AS PRESENTED.**

AYES: May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout

Motion Carried

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Bill May

**A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE NONRELEASE OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES AS THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY STILL EXISTS.**

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

### **Other Business**

### **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 8:38 P.M.**

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

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

Erin Shook, Secretary  
Board of Education, Dist. # 70