

## **Board of Education Meeting Highlights**

*March 3, 2026 – Regular Meeting*

*This report provides highlights of the Board of Education meeting. It is not intended to serve as the official meeting minutes.*

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## **Board Actions & Updates**

**Student Board Members Report** - Gustavo highlighted the Upward Bound program. He talked about what they offer and how it can be an advantage to FHS students. The services for the most part are free to students. Quinn talked about the exciting month of arts and sports, the World Arts Festival, Finding Nemo Jr. and Showtime.

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## **Superintendent's Report**

### **Student Recognition & Achievements**

Treyden Diduch is our Boys Wrestling (106 lbs) State Champion. Tristan Peterson took 3rd place in Boy's Diving at the state meet.

**Attendance For February**, district wide 91% for daily attendance. The most recent average daily attendance is 89%.

### **Governor's FY2027 Budget Update: Mandated Categoricals (MCATs)**

- The Proposal: Governor Pritzker's proposed FY2027 budget includes a \$51 million increase for Mandated Categoricals (MCATs), bringing total funding to approximately \$1.2 billion.
- What are MCATs? They are legally required, non-classroom expenses—such as special education, transportation, and free/reduced-price meals—that are not covered by the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula.
- The Problem: Rising inflation has caused state funding proration rates to drop significantly. For example:
  - Special education transportation funding fell from 71% in FY2024 to 60% this year.
  - Vocational education transportation funding dropped from 85% in FY2024 to 75% this year.
  - *Result:* Districts have been forced to divert EBF and operating funds to cover these mandatory shortfalls.
- The Impact: The proposed \$51 million increase is designed to offset inflation, stabilize proration rates at their current levels, and relieve the pressure on district operating budgets.

**World Arts Festival** - Thursday March 5, at Freeport High School. With more than 1000 students represented in music and art. Everyone is invited to this 23rd Annual FSD tradition.

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## Information Reports

**2027–2029 Strategic Plan Update:** Representatives from Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA), who are guiding our district's strategic planning process, presented the proposed mission, vision, core values and beliefs, and planning parameters. These recommendations were developed collaboratively by a representative stakeholder group that included administrators, teachers, support staff, students, educational leaders, and community business leaders.

**2025 FSD Financial Audit:** A representative from the auditing firm reviewed the district's annual audit with the Board, outlining the purpose and process. The district received an unmodified (clean) opinion — the highest level of assurance possible. There were no findings of non-compliance or significant deficiencies in internal controls. The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report exceeds minimum reporting requirements, and minor recommendations were provided to further strengthen operational processes. The financial audit in full detail will be made available on our website in the near future.

**ECC Deaf/Hard of Hearing Classroom:** Currently, no regional programs exist to serve early childhood students with significant hearing deficits who require intensive support. Establishing this classroom would address this service gap and ensure our youngest learners receive specialized, high-quality instruction designed to meet their unique needs.

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## Approved Consent Agenda

- Bills for FSD 145 and CareerTEC
  - Personnel Report – March 3, 2026
  - Annual service agreement with BR Bleachers for the 26-27 school year
  - Country Inn & Suites preferred lodging rate for 2026
  - Renewal of annual VMWare licensing subscription
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## Approved Board Action Items

- Overnight Field Trip for Freeport Student Garden / MANNRS students
- Contractual services Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education #4

- Approval of FSD 145 Audit, AFR, and CAFR for Fiscal Year 2025 RESOLUTION-Approval of the Audit AFR for School Year 2025 (2).docx

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## Committee Reports

Member Sosnowski reported for the **Finance Committee**. After tonight's audit presentation, the audit was accepted and now work begins to create and submit a deficit reduction plan as required by ISBE.

Member Williams reported for the Curriculum Committee. Their focus on turning data into action, and working with buildings to assist with a tighter focus on priorities. FSD featured at the state affinity group event and stay-interview process peaked the interest of the state superintendent. IAR testing is coming up.


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## Next Meeting

The next **regular meeting (State of the District)** of the Freeport School District Board of Education will be held:

 **March 24, 2026**

 **6:00 PM**

 Freeport Middle School - 701 W. Empire St

The public is always invited and encouraged to attend.