

Freeburg Elementary School

Monday, March 23, 2026

7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Board of Education for Freeburg Community Consolidated School District No. 70 was held on Monday, March 23, 2026, at 7:00 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 Ed Scheibel, Bill May, Ben Mueth, Erin Shook, Ben Howes, and Nicole Schilling were in attendance. Also in attendance were Dr. Mark Bearley, Superintendent and Mark Janssen, Financial Officer and Recording Secretary. Principals Tiffany Zurliene, Stacey Sommerfield and Director of Student Services 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 Scott Schulz, Chelsi Lloyd, and Becky Howard. Also in attendance was Jay Hubert.

Recognition

Consent Agenda

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Erin Shook

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

- MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2026 REGULAR BOARD MEETING
- INVESTMENT SUMMARY THROUGH MARCH 20, 2026
- BUDGET SUMMARY THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2026

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

Approval of the Bills

Moved: Nicki Schilling

Seconded: Ben Howes

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

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

Motion Carried

Committee Updates

Petitions/Communications

The Board reviewed one Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request received from Public Info Access, which sought the contact information for various District Department Heads. The request was fulfilled within the mandated five-day statutory timeline.

Public Participation

The Board welcomed the public to the meeting.

Teachers' Report

Administrator's Report

Elementary School Principal's Report

Curriculum & Classroom Highlights

- Physical Education: Mrs. Kolakowski concluded the junior high girls' bowling unit on March 6th with a high-energy "glow bowling" event, which was a huge hit with the students.
- Language Arts: On March 13th, Mrs. Becker's 7th-grade students hosted a "Float Parade" at the Primary Center. Students showcased creative shoebox floats representing their recent book reports for the younger students to enjoy.
- Vocational Outreach: The FCHS FFA visited our 8th-grade classes last Friday. Led by FFA President Cole Spacher, the group led team-building exercises and introduced our students to the opportunities available within the FFA program.

Testing Updates

State testing is well underway in the Elementary Building. We successfully completed all IAR Math sections last week and began the Language Arts portion today. Our goal is to conclude all IAR testing prior to the start of Spring Break.

Extracurriculars & Appreciation

This Thursday, our 5th-grade students will visit the Science Center. We extend our sincere gratitude to the PTO for their continued financial support, which makes these enriching field trip experiences possible.

Upcoming Events

- Friday, March 27: Early Dismissal (11:30 AM) to begin Spring Break.
- Tuesday, April 7: Classes Resume.
- Friday, April 10: Student Trivia Night (Grades 5–8). Registration forms are available via Mrs. Goscinski.
- April 21 – April 23: Illinois Science Assessment (Grades 5 & 8).
- Thursday, April 23: Spring Concert.
 - Grades 4 & 5: 6:00 PM.
 - Grades 6, 7, & 8: Following the first session.
- Friday, April 24: 3rd Grade Recorder Concert (10:30 AM).

Primary Center Principal's Report

Read Across America Week

We celebrated Read Across America during the first week of March with several engaging literacy events. A special thank you to Mrs. Trout for visiting the Primary Center; she treated our Kindergarten classes to a construction-themed story, and every student went home with their very own hard hat!

Additionally, Ms. Sommerfield visited every classroom for a guest read-aloud, and many sections enjoyed visits from "Mystery Readers" throughout the week.

Family Reading Night & Book Fair

Our annual Family Reading Night was a tremendous success with excellent attendance. This year's "Magic" theme featured a professional magician, glow-in-the-dark activities, "potion making," and themed snacks. Families also enjoyed the opportunity to shop at the Book Fair.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the NJHS students whose volunteer efforts were instrumental in making the night run smoothly.

Student Achievements

In Ms. Richter's class, students are working hard to join the "Phone Number Club." Once a student memorizes their parents' phone numbers, they visit the office to place a celebratory call home and officially join the club. It has been a wonderful way to build functional life skills and school-to-home connections.

Kindergarten Transition

We are looking forward to welcoming our newest learners this Thursday. To kick off their school spirit, every future Kindergartener who registers will receive a complimentary Hornet T-shirt!

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, March 26: Kindergarten Registration (4:00 PM – 7:00 PM)
- March 30 – April 6: Spring Break (No School)
- April 13: Spring Pictures
- April 20: Pre-K Screenings

Director of Student Services Update

Special Education & Student Inclusion

We are excited to announce two upcoming community events focused on inclusion and student achievement:

- April 9: Students will attend the Inclusion Carnival hosted by Red Bud High School.
- April 17: Our athletes will participate in the **ACE Olympics** at Columbia High School.

Paraprofessional Appreciation

Although Paraprofessional Appreciation Day falls on April 1 during Spring Break, we want to formally recognize our exceptional support staff. Our paraprofessionals provide vital assistance to our high-needs students across all settings—including classrooms, the cafeteria, and recess. Their dedication goes above and beyond, and they are essential to the daily operation and success of our district.

MTSS & Response to Intervention (RtI)

Intervention services remain ongoing, and we continue to see significant gains in student growth. The data consistently demonstrates the power of targeted intervention in improving individual learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps.

Superintendent's Report

Enrollment and Suspension Report

Current enrollment stands at 716 students, which is unchanged from last month. Dr. Bearley also shared the most recent monthly discipline data.

District Update

Dr. Bearley thanked Mrs. Zurliene and Mr. Foster for coordinating the administration of the IAR assessments. He also expressed appreciation to Mrs. Hargan for her work in ensuring that appropriate accommodations were in place for students who required them.

Dr. Bearley reported that the Talent Show was held last Friday and commended the students for their outstanding performances.

He also noted that Family Reading Night was held last Tuesday and remarked on both the significant effort that went into organizing the event and the strong attendance.

In addition, Dr. Bearley shared that he visited several classrooms, including a Technology class in which students were using a Sphero, a programmable robotic ball that supports hands-on learning in coding, problem-solving, and STEM skills.

Dr. Bearley stated that the Primary Center playground equipment is expected to be delivered at the end of the week, with installation scheduled to take place during spring break next week.

Finally, Dr. Bearley provided an update on the staff tuition issue. He explained that the Board is considering allowing children of staff members to attend the district tuition-free. At this time, he projects that seven students would enroll in the fall, with the possibility of as many as 14 students within the next three years.

Old Business

New Business

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Nicki Schilling

A MOTION WAS MADE TO RESCIND THE MOTION APPROVING THE 2026-2027 DISTRICT CALENDAR FROM LAST MONTH.

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

Moved: Ben Howes

Seconded: Erin Shook

A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE 2026-2027 DISTRICT CALENDAR, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).

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

Moved: Ben Mueth

Seconded: Bill May

A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE BUS LEASE WITH ST. LIBORY DISTRICT #30 FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR, AS PRESENTED (SEE ADDENDA).

AYES: Scheibel, May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout
Motion Carried

Motion: Bill May

Seconded: Ben Mueth

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:21 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)

AYES: Scheibel, May, Mueth, Shook, Howes, Schilling, Trout
Motion Carried

Moved: Ed Schiebel

Seconded: Ben Mueth

A MOTION WAS MADE TO RE-ENTER REGULAR SESSION AT 8:20 PM.

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

Other Business

Adjournment

Moved: Ed Scheibel

Seconded: Ben Mueth

There being no further business to come before this body, **A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:24 P.M.**

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

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

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