APPROVED

Freeman School District

Minutes

FREEMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Date and Time
Monday September 22, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location
PRTC - 14815 S Jackson Rd, Rockford, WA 99030

Vision Statement
Continuing Our Tradition of Excellence in Education

Mission Statement
The Freeman School District is the center of a unique, rural community. With pride, commitment and caring, we provide a safe environment for all students to experience meaningful, rigorous learning opportunities that allow them to dream and develop into capable, confident and ethical members of the 21st Century.

Directors Present
A. Keebler, B. Morphy, D. Santman, D. Teague, N. Talbott

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
A. Steinolfson, Chad Ripke, Evelyn Kann, Everett Combs, J. De Peralta, James Kann, Jeff Smith, Jim Straw, Joe Branon, Kent Bevers, Kirk Lally, L. Phelan, Mike Allen, R. Russell, Sam Branon, Stacey Rawson, T. Reed

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Teague called a meeting of the board of directors of Freeman School District to order on Monday Sep 22, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Joe Branon led us in the flag salute.

D. Establish Quorum

There was a quorum present.

E. Approve Minutes

A. Keebler made a motion to approve the minutes from FREEMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING on 08-27-25.
D. Santman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Consent Agenda

A. September 2025 Consent Agenda Items

Danielle Santman moved the Board approve the September 22, 2025 consent agenda, as presented. Annie Keebler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. Board Recognition

A. ASB Reports

No report from FHS ASB.

Evelyn Kann, FES/FMS ASB President presented her board report.
Overview
This year, ASB is focused on making sure every student feels a sense of belonging and connection at Freeman Elementary and Middle Schools. We are working to increase student voice and involvement, giving more opportunities for students to share ideas and lead activities. Our goals also include strengthening our partnership with Freeman High School, creating efficient processes for our work, and making sure we have fun along the way. Together, we want to build a school community where everyone feels included and engaged.

Areas of Focus
>School-Wide Assembly- CORE Day
>Scottie Dash- Friday, September 26th - working on fundraising
>Lunchtime Activities
>Spirit Weeks
>Dances

Evelyn also mentioned the other officers on her council...
Evan Schwartz - Vice President
Brooklyn Rumsey - Secretary
Gillian Gonsalves - Treasurer
Chuck Bowen - Parliamentarian
Jack Kindred - Sergeant at Arms

Bill Morphy asked about their involvement with tailgating for football games, and she said many students attend, but they haven't been helping with organizing as that's primarily been the High School.

B. Above and Beyond Award

Joe Branon and Todd Reed were presented with Above and Beyond Awards. They were nominated by their peers, Kent Bevers (Nutrition Services Director) and Kirk Lally (Maintenance/Grounds Director). Joe and Kirk provide excellent customer service to our staff and students, and always have a smile on their face. They take the time to work directly with whomever is in need. We've had a great start for technology and safety for our district this school year, and these two gentlemen deserve recognition.

IV. Pace Character Trait

A. RESPECT

Recognizing, considering and properly honoring the worth of one's self and others.

V. Building Reports

A. Lisa Phelan, Elementary School Principal-Assistant Superintendent

Overview
For the 2025-26 school year, Freeman Elementary School will continue to strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Our focus will be on refining practices within all three tiers to ensure that each student receives the support they need to thrive. Equally important, we are committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging for all students, staff, and community members.

Areas of Focus

- Hiring a one-year non-continuing K teacher - Cricket Spitze is doing a fabulous job
- Fall benchmark screening for all students 1-5
- PLC meetings to review data (Aimsweb, classroom) for intervention groups - this helps support the needs of our kids for reading comprehension and math skills
- Rockford Fair projects were a huge success - lots of first place ribbons
- Fall Field Trips, Scottie Dash, PTSG event planning and doing a great job of bringing in new members and building community

Enrollment

TK = 37 and P3 = 4 K = 67 1st = 48 2nd = 66
3rd = 58 4th = 72 5th = 58= 406

B. Jim Straw, Middle School Principal

Overview

For the 2025-26 school year, Freeman Middle School will continue to strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Our focus will be on refining practices within all three tiers to ensure that each student receives the support they need to thrive. Equally important, we are committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging for all students, staff, and community members.

Areas of Focus

>Goal Meetings Completed/Observations Beginning
>Academic Skills Elective- Mrs. Hamilton and Mr. Cochran are doing a great job with this required 6th grade elective, focusing on organization and other skills required to be successful in a secondary schedule - unbelievably successful so far
>Core Day- Greg Sommers from The Core Project met with all three grade levels individually, focused on “we are more alike than we are different” and challenged our students to commit to caring for and supporting others, great kick-off to “Scotties Be Nice” Week - big message was inclusion and getting to know other people - switching partners and getting outside comfort zone
>Back to School Night- parents had the opportunity to follow their student’s schedule and hear ten-minute presentations from each teacher, 46 families attended (3 minute transitions between classes, and if the parent was late they got detention from their kids!)
>Scottie Dash- coming on Friday, September 26th - collections coming tomorrow and Friday

Enrollment

6th- 57 (-1)	7th- 72	8th- 63 (-2)	Total- 192 (-3)

C. Jeff Smith, High School Principal

Overview

For the 2025-26 school year, Freeman High School will continue to strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Our focus will be on refining practices within all three tiers to ensure that each student receives the support they need to thrive. Equally important, we are committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging for all students, staff, and community members.

Areas of Focus

- First Fridays - POWER values (what do these values feel like, look like, etc - creates shared language and builds culture) and College & Career Readiness (placements for high school and beyond)
- Week of Kindness 9.8-9.12 & All District Assembly
- SBIRT (School-Based Screening, Intervention & Referral to Treatment) will resume this year - slow start due to a therapist change, but getting the ball rolling now
- FFA Animal Judging - Spokane County Fair - 30 teams and we finished 11th
- CTE Articulation with SCC - Intro to Business and Welding 2 Course - congrats to Kyle Monasmith and Jim Rae for their support
- Starting pre-conferences for formal observations of staff

Enrollment

9th = 69, 10th = 56, 11th = 75, 12th = 83 . Total: 283

D. Chad Ripke, High School Assistant Principal-Athletic Director

Overview

Fall sports are off to a great start. 132 student athletes participating in fall sports.

- Soccer is currently 4-0.
- Football is currently 2-1.
- Volleyball is currently 8-2, and finished 3rd overall in the Kenny Davis Rip-A-Shot tournament over the weekend. This continues to be a very popular tournament that we carry a wait list for. Very high level of competition.
- Cross Country is doing great, boys team finished 1st overall at the jamboree, and the girls finished 2nd overall. Last weekend they both brought trophies home from Lewiston.
- Cheer team is a younger group and are off to a great start supporting all the sports team and showing school spirit.

Areas of Focus

- HS fall sports parent meeting was held 8/28, 64 parents attended.
- New music program for home games/activities/dances arrived and was used at the home football game and the Kenny Davis Rip-A-Shot VB tournament.
- New video board in the blue gym training was last week. It was re-scheduled from last spring. Hope to start it with the volleyball game later this week.

- Football play clocks – generous donor purchased these. Hoping to use this Friday night.
- Finalizing the wrestling schedule. We'll have a girl wrestler for the first time in a while.

Enrollment

- Cross Country – 21 boys, 9 girls
- Volleyball – 23
- Soccer – 17
- Football – 47
- Cheer – 16

E. Mike Allen, K-8 Principal Assistant-Athletic Director

Overview

Work to improve programs and support our student athletes.
Participate in partnership with the Greater Spokane County League (GSCL).

Areas of Focus

FMS Fall Sports

- Softball – 7th grade is 1-1-1, which is a rare beginning
- Football – three 7th graders playing 8th grade schedule for 12 total kids
- Cross Country – hosting our all-league meet October 14th

Current Openings

- FMS Volleyball – 2 positions, Interviews this week (4 applicants)
- FMS Track and Field – 1 position

Enrollment

- FMS Softball – 29, two teams
- FMS Football – 35, two teams
- FMS Cross Country – 26

VI. Department Reports

A. Kent Bevers, Nutrition Services Director

Overview

Freeman SD Nutrition Services supports the philosophy of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and will provide wholesome and nutritious meals for our students.

Areas of Focus

1. Meeting with K8 ASB on Wednesday - goal is to increase engagement with feedback
2. 30-Day Free/Reduced eligibility carryover from SY 2024/25 expires on Sept. 2.
    1. All students w/out new application or other eligibility update for this school year will revert to PAID status on Sept. 3
    2. Letters were sent out for households who do not have a new application/eligibility status to let them know we need a new application.
    3. Announcements have also gone out through community communications.

B. Everett Combs, Transportation Supervisor

Overview

"The students of Freeman are the heart of our community and the reason we serve. The Freeman School District Transportation Department is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, and respectful transportation for all TK–12 students. We are committed to connecting home, school, and community, ensuring every student arrives ready to learn and thrive."

Areas of Focus

- We just sold a bus that came off our depreciation schedule. We are using GovDeals.com after we wait 30 days so other districts can have a chance to purchase the buses. Picking it up tomorrow morning.
- The State depreciates the cost of the bus over 13 years minus tax and district options. We are very fortunate to have this program as not all states do this.
- We are asking for approval to purchase a new bus for an October 2025 delivery. This will allow us to keep up with healthy depreciation money coming in from the State.
- We have a TK/SPED route that covers Hangman and Valleyford to help keep the pressure off those buses which have quite a few students on board. The new bus will be replacing the current bus on this route which will have a greater capacity than the one we currently have on that route.
- We currently have:
    - 11 Gen ED routes
    - 1 SPED route with a lift
    - 1 TK/SPED route with a lift

C. Kirk Lally, Maintenance-Grounds Director

Areas of Focus:

1. Completed report in ICOS for Alyssa's law. This included district panic buttons, camera upgrades, live audio feeds, fencing, etc. Kirk went in by building to make updates to make sure we are in compliance.
2. Working on permit for wastewater discharge.

3. Training Greg Geiser for sub custodial when available. Sharing Greg's time with Everett for transportation needs.

Safety:
Nothing to report currently.

D. Stacey Rawson, Interim Director of Student Services

Overview
For the 2025-26 school year, Freeman Student Services Department will continue to strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Our focus will be on refining practices within all three tiers to ensure that each student receives the support they need to thrive. Equally important, we are committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging for all students, staff, and community members.
Areas of Focus and Enrollment

Area of Focus
Monthly Updates
Program Enrollment

Special Education

- Annual IEP updates have begun, great family communication! This happens once a year.
- Updated processes for students transferring into district with an IEP, meeting procedures, evaluation procedures and referrals to the program. Goal is continuity.
- Successful Beginning of the Year Professional Development with SPED certificated staff on August 29th.
- 109 Students.

Multilingual Learners (MLL)

- Initial Screenings complete for new elementary students who qualify as MLL.
- Working on initial screenings for new, transfer-in high school students who qualify.
- 2 students - likely to change to 4 after high school screenings.

McKinney Vento/ Foster Youth

- Annual Intake calls completed. Families were notified of their rights under the program. We appreciate our community donors for items like gas cards, gift cards, clothing, etc.!
- 22 students/ 0 students.

Title 1/ Learning Assistance Program (LAP)

- Working on creating data-driven intervention groups for elementary students in reading and math. Groups will be started week of 9.22
- Completing Consolidates Grant and LAP Grant by 9.30 with Lisa and Alan.

Highly Capable

- No updates.

E. Todd Reed, Technology Director

Overview

Provide the highest quality technology-based services, in the most cost-effective manner, to help facilitatethe FSD mission

Areas of Focus

- We successfully implemented two-factor authentication on district email accounts, with transportation still pending, to strengthen security and safeguard district information. Kudos to Joe Branon who managed this process very successfully.
- All six district generators underwent biannual maintenance, with all systems checking out successfully, except the high school generator which still needs its coolant system flush.
- After a year of research and coordination, we successfully transitioned our elevator and fire panels from outdated POTS lines to cellular and network communication, a move projected to save the district approximately $2,000 per month.
- Alyssa's Law - 14 year old killed that drove this bill for safety in schools - panic button, live audio feed for classrooms, MOU with Spokane County Sheriff who can tap in to our cameras when we have an emergency, remote control the front door, safety plan in place

VII. Superintendent's Report

A. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Dr. Russell reviewed Board Policy & Procedure No. 2410 - High School Graduation Requirements. Reviewed the twenty-four requirements and the procedures. Some kids can get mastery level credit and Freeman ConnectEd is added.

B. School Safety, Culture and Environment

- Walk throughs are beginning soon and Dr. Russell invited the board members to attend as their schedules allow.
- We had a safety concern at the High School today that was handled without incident. The concept of See Something, Say Something is critical for our school

district and community as everyone has a responsibility for the safety and security of our students, staff and campus.

C. Partnering with Parents and School/Community

- Dr. Russell shared an update regarding the Solar Project. Colby Peone will be our Project Manager with Ellensburg Solar. Installation will be happening in January 2026. Inland Power wants to take power off of the grid in phases, more to come on that. Everything is on track, no changes to our 100kW ground mount system. **As a reminder, this project has no cost to the Freeman School District or taxpayers.**
    - Incentive application is complete.
    - School Board approval and Power Purchase Agreement are complete.
    - Vendor selection is complete.
    - Final engineering design is in process and will be presented to the board when ready.
    - Permitting, procurement and construction will follow, as well as Commissioning and Permission to Use.
- The SE Spokane County Fair was amazing! Three of the four princesses were from Freeman, the food booths were busy, Freeman's band performed, the pancake breakfast fundraiser was a success, and we had lots of our kids in the fair and parade. It was a really great weekend for our community!
- Special shout out to Mark McKee and Barb LaShaw, two of our bus drivers, who managed the successful parade.

D. Fiscal and Legal Accountability

- Alan Steinolfson, Director of Finance, gave a financial update with Dr. Russell and reviewed both the capital projects and overall cash flow. Our lowest point brought us to a .14% fund balance. After tightening things across all areas of the district, we have slowly built back up to a 5.5% fund balance. This took incredible diligence and sacrifice from the staff to protect our finances during a critical period. We are not out of the woods, but certainly are in a much better place. Thanks to Alan for his leadership in this process.
- Dr. Russell reviewed our overall enrollment, which wasn't a huge report since we are only in month one of school. He then reviewed our 2025-2026 Choice Student enrollment with the board, as well as September enrollment. We have tracked the choice student numbers carefully for the past decade, which breaks down staff and non-staff student numbers. It's good for the community to know where we stand with choice numbers, and also how critical it is for funding programs and educators in our district. We receive the state funds for all choice students who attend Freeman.
    - Dave Teague asked if we should estimate the value of the choice kids in our district, which we can do if needed. The state funding we receive from

choice students allows us to keep and add programs and staff to keep our student experience competitive. Most importantly, we want our community to know what the numbers actually are, and what it's looked like over the past 10+ years.

VIII. Board Comments

A. Board Comments

- Bill Morphy commented that having the FHS football game on Saturday night during fair weekend was beneficial for those wanting to attend fair activities Friday evening. He then asked if that was something we would consider again in the future (Saturday football game vs. Friday during fair weekend). Nate Talbott mentioned that it just depends on what the fair activity schedule is each year. This year didn't have a conflicting dance Saturday night, but it may in future years.
- Dave Teague commented that it really seems to be a great start to the school year and to thank all who contribute to that success.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. Approval of Board Policy No. 2230 - 2nd Reading

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve Board Policy No. 2230 - Transition to Kindergarten Program, as presented. Danielle Santman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Board Policy & Procedure No. 6801 - 2nd Reading

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve Board Policy & Procedure No. 6801 - Capital Assets - Theft-Sensitive Assets, as presented. Nate Talbott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

X. New Business

A. Approval of Bus Purchase Proposal

Bill Morphy moved the Board approve the Bus Purchase Proposal, as presented. Annie Keebler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Football Play Clock Donation

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve the Football Play Clock Donation, as presented. Danielle Santman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Thank you to DJ Jared from the board!

C. Approval of FSD CTE 4 Year Plan 2025-2026

Bill Morphy moved the Board approve the FSD CTE 4 Year Plan 2025-2026, as presented. Nate Talbott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

D. Approval of Board Policy & Procedure No. 2021 - 1st Reading

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve Board Policy & Procedure No. 2021 - Library Information and Technology Programs, as presented. Danielle Santman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

E. Approval of Board Policy & Procedure No. 3206 - 1st Reading

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve Board Policy & Procedure No. 3206 - Pregnant and Parenting Students, as presented. Nate Talbott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

F. Approval of Board Policy & Procedure No. 5011 - 1st Reading

Bill Morphy moved the Board approve Board Policy & Procedure No. 5011 - Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited, as presented. Annie Keebler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XI. Other Information

A. Future Board Meetings

- The next board meeting will be Wednesday, October 22nd.
- The following meetings will be November 19th and December 10th.
- As of right now, all board members will be in attendance for these three meetings.

XII. Personnel

A. Personnel Action

Certified: **Cricket Spitze** – 1.0 FTE Non-Continuing Kindergarten Teacher
Matt Smith – Teacher Out-of-Endorsement in the Freeman ConnectEd Program (Biology, Chemistry, English Language Arts, Health/Fitness, Mathematics, Science, Visual Arts, General music, Middle level math, Middle level science) for the 2025-2026 school year

Classified: **Hal Patton** – Resignation – Bus Driver – effective 12/31/25
Hal Patton – Substitute Bus Driver – effective 1/1/26

Extracurricular: **Brooke Forkner** – Resignation – MS Girls 7th Grade Head Volleyball Coach

Bill Morphy moved the Board approve the personnel action, as presented. Nate Talbott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

_____ _____

Recording Secretary Board Secretary

_____

Board Chair

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. De Peralta