

August 17, 2026

Dear Freedom Area School District Families:

On behalf of the Freedom Area School District, I am pleased to welcome our students, families, teachers, and staff to the 2026-27 school year. Whether you are returning to FASD or joining us for the first time, we are excited for another successful year.

To begin the year, I would like to make sure that families have important information and upcoming dates/times for planning purposes to ease the transition back to school.

The first day of school is Tuesday, August 25, 2026.

School Start/End Times: (Students can arrive up to 30 minutes early)

- High School (9-12): 7:40AM - 2:40PM
- Middle School (5-8): 7:40AM - 2:40PM
- Elementary School (K-4): 9:00AM - 3:40PM

Food Service Updates:

Breakfast is FREE for all students again in 2026-27. We strongly encourage all district students to take advantage of this opportunity each morning. Families who also qualified for free lunches through direct certification in 2026-27 were recently mailed a confirmation letter.

The attached [Letter to Households](#) details a quick income reference for anyone considering their own free/reduced meal eligibility. Applications should be submitted through SchoolCafe on the [Food Service](#) web page.

The district is also grateful that a Freedom Area alumnus generously donated funds to help address student cafeteria debts this summer. Every student who had an outstanding balance this summer received some level of benefit from this generous donation. We hope this support provides families with a positive start to the new school year. We also ask families to please keep current with cafeteria account balances moving forward.

Beginning this year, the K–8 cafeterias and kitchens will be peanut and tree-nut free. Traditional peanut butter and tree-nut products will not be served in our kitchens, and wowbutter, a soy-based alternative, will be used in Elementary and Middle School cafeteria kitchens.

Yet, the district will NOT restrict items that K-12 students bring to school for daily lunches from home. However, we are restricting outside foods from being brought into schools or classrooms which are intended to be shared amongst peers. A student can bring lunch items to school for

themselves, but for classroom parties or other group celebrations involving food, staff and families are asked to work from a menu provided by Food Services to determine options available. Celebration options are posted to the district's [School Meal Guidelines](#) page, and Food Services should be contacted ahead of time for sufficient planning and ordering. The listed options may be updated periodically throughout the year.

At this time, there will be no change to the High School's current food service offerings related to peanut and tree-nut products.

Transportation:

Bus routing information is available on the district's [Transportation](#) web page. Please review your student's transportation information before the first day of school. We ask that students arrive at bus stops 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

Open House:

FASD's K–8 Open House will be Thursday, September 17:

- Middle School: 5:00PM - 7:00PM
- Elementary School: 6:00PM - 8:00PM

We encourage families to attend, meet teachers, and learn more about the school year at Open House. As a reminder, new 2026-27 kindergarten families have a "Meet & Greet" scheduled with teachers on August 20, and the Middle School will be hosting a 5th grade/new student orientation on August 20 as well. Contact schools for additional information, as needed.

PowerSchool:

PowerSchool continues to be the district's student information system for scheduling, attendance, and grade reporting. Any new parents/guardians to FASD can obtain login information by creating an account through the [Student and Parent Portal](#).

Summer Improvements:

The High School cafeteria received upgraded serving line equipment this summer, and we hope these improvements will provide for a more efficient serving process. In addition to the cafeteria upgrades, the High School received auditorium lighting and control-board upgrades. These improvements will enhance the facility for students, staff, performing arts programs, and community events.

Communication:

SchoolMessenger will remain to be a primary communication tool used from the district to families. Updates for transportation and weather-related occurrences will be sent to family emails and telephone numbers from provided PowerSchool contact information, as needed. This email communication was completed via SchoolMessenger. Therefore, if you received this letter through email, then your email address is connected to PowerSchool and SchoolMessenger. We will also send out a “Welcome Back” telephone message prior to the first school day to confirm telephone communication too. To assist in reaching all district families, including students, important information will be duplicated onto the district’s main www.freedomareaschools.org website. A “banner” will run across the main web page to highlight important, time-sensitive information, when needed. Currently, there is a “Welcome Back” banner on the main web page for reference to this practice.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership with Freedom schools. I look forward to seeing everyone at district and community events this fall and throughout 2026-27. The Homecoming Parade will take place on September 24. Join us to show your Bulldog Pride!

Welcome back!

Dr. Jeff Beltz
Superintendent
Freedom Area School District