



**18 April
2024**

Welcome to FREEPOD, a local news source for everyone in the Freeport area. This weekly podcast is brought to you by a large volunteer group dedicated to providing to objective, unbiased news specific to our community.

FREEPOD is really excited to bring you a very special episode of the news you've been missing: today's pod is brought to you by the students of the Freeport High School journalism class! They have a few upcoming events to remind you about, and the majority of the discussion is about what's happening at the high school as the school year winds down. Our format here today is a little different to be sure we include the names of all the students who participated. Thank you, FHS students – we're proud of you!

We're getting more listeners every week, and much of that is thanks to you. Please share about us on your social media and thank you for your enthusiasm – now here's news you've been missing.

Intro – Ms. Jena Kleindl, instructor/educator

We welcome you to the April 18th, 2024 episode of FREEPOD! This week's episode is brought to you exclusively from the students in the Freeport High School Media Production Program.

As always, Freepod is proud to bring you this short weekly podcast with the help of a large volunteer group dedicated to providing objective news specific to our community. Now let's get started on the news you've been missing.

Stephenson County Home Show – Andrew

A surprise return to the Stephenson County Fairgrounds! The Greater Freeport Partnership is proud to announce the return of the Stephenson County Home Show coming April 20th. According to business engagement director Bill Clow, the event is free of charge for attendees. He says the home show is a great way for contractors to showcase their work and products. For more information, visit greaterfreeport.com/homeshow.

Skip the Stuff – Emma

Parkview, a nursing home in Freeport, is hosting a program for Earth Day 2024. This 30-minute program helps encourage people to not use "single-use plastics" as a way to

reduce plastic usage and waste. This program will be instructed by Teresa Smith of the Conservation Committee. It will take place in the lower level all-purpose room in Parkview on April 22 at 3:30 pm.

League of Women Voters program – Anysia

The League of Women Voters of Freeport will host a presentation on the standing of bilingual education and English learners in our community. In bilingual education, students and some teachers are taught two languages. It is a tool of instruction while they begin to learn English or, in some cases, Spanish.

The presentation will be held April 23rd at the Freeport Public Library from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. The presenters will include Freeport's superintendent Dr. Anna Alvarado and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rocio Del Castillo and other speakers.

FREEPOD survey -- Salaiya, Anijhuwa, and Jonna

FREEPOD is a volunteer podcast created by members of the community. They give us the daily spill of tea around Freeport and now they want to hear from you!

FREEPOD has a survey that you can take on their website to let them know how much you enjoy their content, where you listen to them, and how well they're doing to spread the news around town. Everyone loves good news so you should take their survey. Your feedback would be much appreciated as they continue to grow.

Review of new administrators completing their first year at FHS -- Salaiya, Anijhuwa, Jonna, Kal'el, Khaden, Jaelin, Anysia, Keyshawn, and Malik

This year, Freeport High School has a new team of administrators leading the building. While all three worked at the high school before, they're all taking on learning the ropes in new positions.

First, Principal Sarah Hasken. Mrs. Hasken has worked at the high school for years now— first as a math teacher, then as the Associate Principal of Curriculum and Instruction. Her main goals over the next few years are to build student confidence, increase rigor in the classroom, and make Freeport High School a better place to work and learn.

Hasken: "I think the biggest thing that we are lacking here at Freeport High School is students having confidence in themselves. So I think one of the ways to build their confidence is by giving them challenging tasks and letting them achieve success. With those tasks, once they start building that confidence they can tell themselves "Hey I can do hard stuff" then everything about their development becomes better. They start having real confidence in themselves."

Next, the Associate Principal of Curriculum and Instruction Reuben Cooper. Cooper has had a long career around the country. Most recently, he was the Director of Student Discipline and Compliance for the Rockford Public Schools before becoming the Associate Principal of Discipline at FHS last year. This year, Mr. Cooper has been working closely with 25 students who are at risk of not graduating to try and improve their behavior, attendance, and grades through mentorship.

Cooper: "I would like to see an environment of students that respects and recognizes that value of education. It's more so today than any other time in history."

And finally, Associate Principal Alecia Leeper. She oversees the Cultural and Student Support Office with the help of Mrs. Martin and Ms. Hilton. The C&S Support Office is a safe space that helps students adapt to everyday challenges they may face. It provides safety and security to those who need just a little bit of extra love.

Leeper: "My first year as assistant principal has been fun. I've enjoyed it. There's always room for growth and progress so we're going to look at a lot of data, talk to the parents, staff, students and figure out what we're going to do differently next year."

Winker retirement -- Ried, Cooper, and Payton

While those three administrators are wrapping up their first year, another beloved teacher at FHS is wrapping up his career. The longest-tenured teacher at FHS will be retiring at the end of the year. James Winker, who has been here since 1991, is a Social Studies teacher at Freeport High School and has had a very long and successful career.

Winker: "I'll miss being here being with the kids, I love being with the students. It's a lot of fun."

Scott retirement -- Diego, Asher, and Kal'el

Another long-time FSD staff member will also be retiring this year. Ms. Debra Scott has worked at the high school for 6 years and Freeport Middle School for 18 years. In her current job as a Dean, she works with students to improve their behaviors and support teachers with classroom management.

Throughout her career she's also worked closely with students who are truant, meaning they've missed more than 10 days of school each year. She's loved getting to see students grow and mature.

After retirement, she plans to renew her social work license and work with elementary students to better prepare them for middle school.

English as a Second Language (ESL) cohort -- Detric, Donovan, Ben, Payton, Cooper, and Reid

Freeport High School is seeing growing numbers of Spanish-speaking students and teachers want to be able to communicate with them better. ESL, or English as a Second Language, refers to programs designed to teach English language skills to non-native speakers. This is a fantastic opportunity for teachers as the school district is covering the cost of obtaining their certificates.

Teachers will take five six-week classes to get the ESL certificate but can add on an extra class for a bilingual certificate. Janosik: "I've been wanting to do this for a while.... I have a Spanish minor so I'm somewhat able to support students, but every year I finish my education I keep wanting to do more and more."

Another reason he wants to do it is there is only one ESL teacher in the school and he thinks they need more resources.

Ms. Petty looks at it differently: "I want to get it because I want to learn different methods of teaching to help my students who aren't as fluent in English. It's a lot of work, but the work is worth it."

She won't be able to teach in Spanish but she can describe and get the resources needed for the students.

Mrs. Wright is the only ESL teacher in the building: "It is important because especially over the past few years there are more and more students that speak another language other than English."

SAT taken in digital format -- Salaiya, Jonna, and Aniyjhuwa

For the first time ever, FHS students took the SAT electronically at the beginning of this month. The College Board intended for the digital SAT to be less stressful for students but they didn't intend for either section to be easier.

Going digital wasn't the only change to the SAT this year. This SAT debuted a shortened test, the allowance of graphing calculators throughout the math portion, and faster results. Most students enjoy having the SAT on the computer instead of paper. This seems to be the better option as society continues to advance in technology.

New softball coach -- Deklyn, Kyle, Davion, and Zac

Freeport has a new softball coaching staff who is young and ready to compete for a NIC-10 championship. How is this going to affect the players and the team? What are people's views on the new head coach? Do they like her or do they not?

We talked to multiple coaches and players about the new head softball coach Mirakal Dedmond. According to Assistant Varsity Coach Seth Heitter the players are extremely excited to see what an all-state player can do as a head coach. The players are equally as excited and are looking forward to the rest of the season.

Boys volleyball -- Will, Tyler, Gracie, and Conner

This spring, FHS unveiled its first-ever boys volleyball team. The Pretzels are just fielding a JV team this year to get some experience under their belt before trying to fill a varsity team next year. Head Coach Holly Klever was previously the girls' volleyball coach and now leads the boys' team.

The next home game is on April 18th against Rockford Christian.

Journalism competition -- Aiden, Tyler, and Byron

Journalism is an IHSA activity that has recently joined the Freeport spring roster this year. After being encouraged by the Galena High School journalism advisor, Mrs. Kurtz and Ms. Kleindl decided to have Freeport High School enroll in the activity. It functions similarly to most sports with a sectional, then state format.

Today, we have an advisor for that activity, Ms. Kleindl: “We have students in TV news, copy editing, editorial writing, feature edit writing, and news writing. We picked just a select group of people that we think would have a good shot at making it down to state.”

Four students placed top 3 in the sectional and will head to Normal, Illinois at the end of the month to compete in the state competition: Kennadee Lind, Evie Stingley, Mya Meighan, and Salaiya Fleming.

Women’s History Month – Taijhanna

This March Freeport High School celebrated Women’s History Month. Freeport High School Women’s History Teacher Mrs. Kelly Everding had some important information to share about the topic: “Women’s History Month was originally created to bring the spotlight to things that women have done in general history. We celebrate Women’s History Month because in history we gloss over the different groups and when we can celebrate Women’s History Month and Black History Month and Hispanic History Month we can really shine the spotlight onto these groups.”

MANNRS trip – Mya

The Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences Club, also known as MANNRs, has decided to go on a summer trip in July.

For the trip, the individuals plan on visiting universities in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. They also plan to see different attractions along the way like the Smoky Mountain National Park and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Benefits of this one-week trip for the students, especially the graduating seniors, show them the different options of opportunities they might encounter in the future, along with each member being able to have a good time during their time on this trip.

Close – Ms. Kleindl, instructor/educator

With that, time’s up for this week but tune in again next week for all your Freeport news. FREEPOD couldn’t come to you without the help of many local supporters. Thank you again to the Mass Communications Department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast, and to our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, Highland and Team FREEPOD!

We hope you’ll check back next week for more news you’ve been missing. Thank you for listening!

If you have story suggestions or would like to donate to support FREEPOD (now tax-deductible), visit our website at www.freepod.org.

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