



The Freedom Institute
Christopher Marker, CEO
2706 Horseshoe Dr. S. Naples, Florida
239-427-1776
Chris.Marker@FreedomInstitute.net
www.freedominstitute.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2026

Florida Board of Education to Hold Statewide Meeting at Freedom Institute

Naples, FL — The Freedom Institute of Collier County will host the Florida Board of Education for its upcoming statewide meeting at 9 a.m. on April 17. The meeting will take place on the Institute’s campus at 2706 Horseshoe Dr. S. in Naples.

The Board of Education meeting is part of its regular schedule to review and discuss education policies impacting students, families and schools across the state of Florida. Hosting the meeting underscores the Freedom Institute’s growing role as a center for educational innovation and dialogue.

“We are honored to welcome the Florida Board of Education to our campus,” said Chris Marker, CEO of the Freedom Institute. “This meeting reflects the importance of bringing meaningful conversations about education policy closer to local communities and highlights our commitment to being part of those conversations.”

As part of the meeting, two Freedom Institute students will be formally recognized for their achievements and unique educational pathways.

Erik Aspegren, a sophomore, exemplifies the Institute's personalized learning model. After experiencing public, private, and hybrid homeschool environments, Erik joined Freedom in eighth grade and quickly advanced, now on track to complete his high school requirements by the end of his junior year. He is currently enrolled in dual enrollment courses at Florida SouthWestern State College and has applied to Lorenzo Walker Technical College to further pursue training in electronic systems, HVAC, or welding. At just 16 years old, Aspegren has secured a paid internship at Hendrick Chevrolet in Naples, where he works 27 hours per week while continuing his academic studies. In addition, he has participated in athletics at local public high schools, represented students at Arthrex NextGen Speaker Series events, and has been an active speaker at Young America's Foundation events. He plans to graduate with both his high school diploma and an associate degree while also completing trade certifications.

Eire Layton, a senior graduating in May, joined Freedom after attending a traditional public high school and has thrived in its flexible, student-centered environment. A standout student-athlete, Layton served as swim captain and competed on the Naples High varsity swim team, earning state finalist recognition for four consecutive years. She also works as a lifeguard for the City of Naples, supporting community swim programs. Her accomplishments include being named Naples Daily News Athlete of the Week, receiving the City of Naples "Do The Right Thing" award twice, and participating in the Arthrex NextGen Speaker Series. Layton is currently completing dual enrollment coursework with a 4.0 GPA and plans to attend college, where she intends to study marketing or communications with a minor in business.

The Florida Board of Education continues to address key priorities including expanding school choice, enhancing student progress monitoring, and strengthening accountability across the education system.

By hosting this statewide meeting, the Freedom Institute provides a platform for engagement between state education leaders and the broader Southwest Florida community while also highlighting the success and potential of its students.

About the Freedom Institute of Collier County

The Freedom Institute is an innovative high school program offering personalized and flexible learning pathways that build critical thinking, financial literacy, and the foundations of engaged American citizenship. Through an AI-enhanced curriculum, a blend of high school and college courses, and real-world experiences including internships, college and career preparation, and job placement students gain the skills, knowledge, and values

essential for economic freedom and workforce success. The Institute's American Dream Conversations at Freedom series brings civic, business, and thought leaders directly to students to share lessons about life, liberty, and the pursuit of excellence.

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