

# Fremont School District 79 Uses 5Cast for MBA Submission and is Recognized for 5th Consecutive Year



**ORGANIZATION TYPE**  
K-8 Public School

**ENROLLMENT**  
2,200

**ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET**  
\$35M

Fremont School District 79 serves 2,200 students across a 36-square mile area from eight communities: Mundelein, Wauconda, Hawthorn Woods, Grayslake, Round Lake, Long Grove and Libertyville. The district has earned the highest financial distinction from the State of Illinois with the Financial Recognition Award, every year since the program started in 2003. Fremont has achieved the prestigious Meritorious Budget Award for five consecutive years.

## THE SITUATION

The mission of Fremont School District 79 is to provide a quality education that prepares today's child for tomorrow's world. Its vision statement is to serve the community by providing an exemplary education focused on whole-child development, collaboration and fiscal responsibility. As a long-time client of PMA's Financial Planning Program (FPP), the district was ultimately able to customize the FPP output and successfully populate the Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) template. The MBA promotes and recognizes excellence in school budget presentation and enhances school business officials' skills in developing, analyzing, and presenting a school system budget.

The award submission process was labor intensive, costly and created a time crunch. In the summer of 2015, the district followed the PMA FPP migration and upgraded to Forecast5's 5Cast platform. This new model allowed for an auto-populated MBA output module as part of the 5Cast subscription. Michael Tanner, Director of Business Services at Fremont 79 says, "While I could see the potential that a 5Cast automated MBA output module offered, I was very hesitant to move away from a known solution."

## THE SOLUTION

Allen Albus, a Senior Analytics Advisor on the 5Cast team, stepped in to work with Tanner on his FY 2017 MBA submission to the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBOI). They walked line-by-line through the MBA submission requirements and married them up to the output components in the automated 5Cast module. They then worked to build a customized template to filter this output, creating a standardized and attractive format that is now saved for use in future years. Tanner says, "While this initial set-up was laborious, it will never have to be repeated, making future MBA output an integrated piece of 5Cast annual budget creation."

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## THE RESULTS

Tanner was nervous about the new format but knew if his FY 2017 MBA submission was successful, his submission workload in future years would be cut in half. The hard work paid off and the district was recognized in February 2017 with its 5th consecutive MBA award. “Ninety-three percent of annual revenues are generated from local tax dollars. The MBA provides the Fremont community with assurance that its financial resources are wisely invested,” Tanner said.

Fremont is also using 5Cast for collective bargaining, capital planning, annual budgeting, scenario analysis, what-if modeling for potential state legislation, and budget “right-sizing”. Tanner noted too that their Board of Education feels it has an accurate tool to assist in long-range planning. “5Cast is a good product. I like the customizable and replicable templates for future output that are automatically updated with varying model iterations. With the workload on the annual MBA submission project significantly reduced, I look forward to continuing this annual submission well into the future,” said Tanner.