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School Board 05-19-2015 meeting – press release

The May 19th meeting of the Fremont #1 School Board of Trustees started at 6pm in the Starrett Room at the new Central Administration building, 863 Sweetwater (formerly Starrett JHS).

Presentations, Reports, and Recognitions

Technology Director Chris Brown, speaking for the District Communications Committee, presented information outlining recent efforts of the Committee to understand and improve how the school district communicates with staff, students, parents, and the community.

Stakeholders were surveyed on their communications preferences back in February, and those results were analyzed and discussed by the newly-formed District Communications Committee. The Committee looked at all the district's communications efforts and how their use was being perceived by our stakeholders. A list of action items for the next 0-9 months was presented, including:

- Online registration coming in the summer. This is a major project that will reduce parents' paperwork burden, especially for households with more than one student, as well as allow parents a "self-service" portal to make changes to their communications preferences, their phone numbers, and their email addresses through Parent Portal.
- An online payment system for parents to securely pay lunch balances and other fees online
- Additional efforts that will continue to highlight our avenues of communication to all our stakeholders, such as a smartphone app coming in the fall.

The presentation is available at: <http://www.landerschools.org/communications-survey-results-2015/>

The Fremont #1 school district website is <http://www.landerschools.org>. We can be found on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/LanderSchools> (or just search for LanderSchools). Our main Twitter account is <http://www.twitter.com/LanderSchools>, or you may either follow us @LanderSchools or read tweets on the district website main page.

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Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was passed, approving the following items:

- Travel for LMS students to National History Day competition in Washington DC in June
- Travel for LVHS FBLA to the National Leadership Conference in Chicago in June-July.
- LMS National Honor Society club application
- LMS FBLA club application

Action Items

An amended personnel action list was passed as presented.

A discussion about LVHS classes with low enrollments occurred. Some classes, mainly advanced ones, have class sizes less than 10, such as high-level Spanish and Art classes. Action was required to allow building administrators to deal with classes with low enrollment. Mr. Neuendorf explained how students enrolled in the advanced classes would still get content in a mixed-class group through differentiated instruction and other methods.

A motion was made to change July's School Board meeting date. The regular July meeting and budget hearing will now be on July 15th, and there will also be a School Board training on the 21st.

The LMS schedule change was approved. Julie Shanley, LMS principal, and Ken Nielsen, Director of Curriculum, were present to answer questions regarding the new schedule.

Action Items – LVHS block schedule

LVHS Assistant Principal Brad Neuendorf presented a slideshow discussing the block schedule research and trial performed at the school this semester. After he provided a basic overview and a comparison of LVHS's schedule with other 3A schools that have scored higher on the ACT, a number of teacher presentations followed Mr. Neuendorf, including:

- Mr. Meyer discussed how block scheduling fits in with the new Strategic Plan goals.
- Mrs. Meyer discussed current programs such as Kagan and the 1-to-1 Chromebook initiative fit into the block schedule. She also touched on making connections with Pathfinder HS, which already uses a block schedule.

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- Mrs. Hanfman discussed the social and emotional considerations of students, including research showing how a block schedule reduces student stress.
- Mr. Parsons discussed student responsibility, and Mr. Neuendorf demonstrated the HERO system for tracking student attendance during “Student Responsibility Block” class times (SRB time) using barcode scanners and their ID cards. “Opportunity Classes” were also discussed.
- Mrs. Giesmann discussed how this would affect Advisory “Homeroom” time, and how much more can be done in Homeroom without impeding on core class times if a block schedule were in place.
- Ms. Lahey discussed how a block schedule SRB time can assist special education and at-risk students, by providing additional study skills and prep time without taking time from core classes.
- Mr. Haskins talked about professional development time for faculty, and about teacher motivation to move to block scheduling.
- Mr. McConnell discussed the one-week block schedule trial recently run at LVHS, and the information gained from the trial.

In the recent trial, 80% of LVHS teachers rated the trial experience a 4 or 5 (out of 5 max), with 10% rating a 3 (neutral), and 10% rating the experience a 1 or 2.

For students, 69% of them rated the trial a 4 or 5 (out of 5 max), about 19% rated it neutral, and 12% rated it a 1 or 2. 53% of students responded that “I didn’t feel as stressed” as a result of block scheduling.

An extended discussion resulted, with many teachers answering questions and offering their insights how block scheduling would positively help teachers gain instructional time. Several students and parents in attendance also spoke positively about block scheduling.

Expressing concern regarding the timing of new superintendent and new LVHS principal, and wishing to hold the change until those new administrators were hired and working, Mr. Palmer made a motion to table the conversation until the fall, seconded by Mrs. Barton. After additional audience discussion, the question was called to table the motion, which was tied on a 3-3 vote, meaning the motion failed. Mr. Palladino, Mrs. Nirider, and Mr. Hedges, voted against tabling; Mr. Berg, Mr. Palmer and Mrs. Barton voting for tabling; Mrs. Sutton not present.

Mr. Palladino then motioned to accept the block schedule, as the previous tabling failed to pass due to the tie. Additional discussion followed, with teachers, parents, and students offering responses to Board questions and concerns.

Mr. Neuendorf talked about the commitment the HS teachers were willing to give, and the need to not put off the schedule change until Christmas break. He mentioned that LVHS, like the entire school district,

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follows a continuous improvement model, and how the newly-hired LVHS principal can help by contributing and enhancing an already-in-place block schedule.

Mr. Hedges called the question to approve, motion passed 6-0; Mrs. Sutton not present.

A total of two hours' discussion came from the LVHS block schedule discussion.

Action Items (continued)

Adoption of the proposed social studies standards and the proposed physical education standards passed.

The Board discussed 2015-2016 school student handbooks. Mr. Neuendorf discussed proposed changes and wording to LVHS attendance policies. The motion to approve school handbooks passed 5-1.

Discussion Items

Policy EBBD - First Aid: This is a new policy which will provide guidance for people needing CPR certification and training as part of their job requirement.

Administrative Details

The next two scheduled Fremont #1 School Board meetings are June 5th, at 7:00am, and June 16th, at 6:00pm.

Wednesday, May 20th, is Staff Appreciation Day during the WEO time. The event will be held at the new Central Administration building at 863 Sweetwater. After the event, the remodeled section of the building will be open for staff and Board members to view.

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