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## Board considers uniforms

By *LESLIE BIXLER*  
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FREMONT -- Members of the city's board of education gave the go ahead for the director of Fremont Student Services to continue researching the possibilities of having school uniforms.

Tim Cullen, director of Fremont Student Services, gave a presentation on campus wear at Monday night's regular board of education meeting, noting that only preliminary research has been conducted.

He said he and staff members from the other schools in the district have met about four times to discuss the issue.

"If there's a common look, you know who belongs there and who doesn't," Cullen said, noting he believes this will enhance safety and higher attendance rates.

In his presentation, Cullen said parents will receive six months notice before any specific campus wear is required, should it become a reality.

Several area schools such as Toledo Public Schools, Lima City Schools, Sandusky City Schools, Mansfield and Cleveland City Schools currently have a policy in place.

A decision would need to be made by the end of February if the new policy is to take effect for the 2009-2010 school year.

If the policy is approved, surveys will be conducted with staff, students and their families and will be taken into consideration when a formal plan is defined.

Cullen said specific research and data still needs to be collected.

Board President Jim Fails said he and board member Linda Hershey have been on the board the longest and that the uniform issue was discussed when they first got on the board.

"Please, go with it," Fails said to Cullen. "I'd like to see a proposal and what the community has to say about it."

Hershey added, "There's a lot more ground we need to cover."

According to Cullen, research shows that the campus wear clothing ranges from \$25 to \$50. Parents already spend about a couple hundred dollars on their children's clothing now.

School districts have also teamed up with community agencies to acquire vouchers for eligible families to purchase the campus wear.

Cullen said local stores could have the chance to provide the items that fit within the uniform guidelines that are affordable.

In other news, Fremont Superintendent Traci McCaudy updated board members on the Fremont

Middle School project, which included a tentative timeline for the schematic design phase, design development, construction documents, project bidding and the actual construction.

"It would be our goal to have it completed by 2011, but the project could take place over a couple of winters," she said. "We're not going to rush it."

"We will make sure it's ready when it's ready for us," she added.

Meetings with local contracting businesses will also take place ahead of time so they are aware of the mandates before bidding begins.

McCaudy said there is a core committee which includes district personnel, board of education, Ohio Schools Facilities Commission, Touchstone, a construction company, Fanning-Howey, the design firm and community members. The purpose of the committee is to discuss the project's progress and budget on a monthly basis.

There is also a Program of Requirements Team to determine the number and size of the classrooms, office space, gymnasium and other educational space; a design team, who will work with Fanning-Howey on the design of the new middle school. Sub-committees consisting of design team members will be developed throughout the design phase process; and an HVAC system team to determine the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system for the new school.

The next steps of the middle school project includes finalizing committee membership, hiring a commissioning agent, who will serve as an advisor for mechanical and electrical areas, and continue to work on committees.

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