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School board gets look at business plan

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FREMONT -- After a year of work, the Fremont City Schools Board of Education has received the first draft of a business plan from its business advisory committee.

Committee chairman Tom Kern, chief executive officer of Style Crest, and committee member Don Nalley, director of adult services for Sandco Industries, gave the draft to board members during Monday's meeting.

"I think our schools can run like a business," Kern told the board. He said the district already functions much like a business, and his committee's suggestions might help the district's bottom line.

Kern said the document will help the community understand some of the district's challenges, including funding issues and following state mandates.

The 11 members of the business committee, along with schools superintendent Traci McCaudy and treasurer Dave Chambers have been meeting each month for the past year.

Tim Ellenberger, school board member and vice president of Motion Controls Robotics, also served on the committee.

"We concentrated on a lot of different areas," Nalley said. Each member sat on one of three subcommittees, which covered marketing and public relations, finance or facilities.

Nalley said the marketing and public relations committee wanted to establish an alumni association. Members also would like to establish positive relationships with real estate agents and bankers, who deal with people who are considering moving to Fremont.

Those people should be aware of the "new direction" of the school district, and not rely on out-of-date negative impressions of it, Nalley said.

The finance subcommittee worked with McCaudy to try to reduce the costs of health care and benefits.

Members of the facilities subcommittee made recommendations to reduce the district's building operation costs, and also worked with district personnel on the selection of the design firm and construction manager for the new middle school project.

"This document helps you sell to the community what you're accomplishing," Nalley said.

McCaudy told the board the business plan is a good complement to the comprehensive continuous improvement plan the district has for education. The business plan will concentrate more on finances and operations, she said.

"The next step is keeping this as a fluid document," McCaudy said. She wants to see the business plan updated.

Ellenberger said a diverse group worked on the project. "The cross-section of people is just phenomenal," he said. "It was almost a 'community advisory board.'"

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