The News-Messenger.com

April 9, 2009

School officials talk about 'zero period' possibility

BY LESLIE BIXLER
Staff writer

FREMONT -- Ross High School and district officials are looking to add a period at the beginning of the school day next fall, called the zero period.

High School Principal Jose Hernandez said the zero period would last 45 minutes and would be from 7:50 to 8:35 a.m. everyday of the week.

Hernandez said this period would allow upper classmen and advanced students the opportunity to take extra classes. It also would be a benefit to the teachers in the freshman academy and would give them time to collaborate on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

"We're learning new strategies. ... to help make the classroom come alive," Hernandez said.

With this new schedule, there would be four lunch periods that would last 26 minutes.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays during the zero period, students in the ninth and tenth grades will be able to go to an intervention to get extra help from their teachers.

District Superintendent Traci McCaudy applauded the high school's efforts in the rescheduling.

"Master scheduling is not an easy task," she said.

With the first year of the freshman academy practices in place, McCaudy said one area that needed more attention is the time for teachers to collaborate for student intervention and professional development days. She said Hernandez was trying to build that time for the freshman academy teachers. They are also looking to create a sophomore academy next year, and are proposing the same collaboration time for sophomore teachers.

"Freshmen can sometimes get lost in a big school," Hernandez said, noting ninth and tenth graders will have a solid foundation and go on to graduate.

The freshman academy, which is a school within a school, puts all freshmen in their four core classes, which are English, math, science and social studies. The academy is created by teachers and the goals consist of improving academic performance, improving attendance and increase the graduation rate along with improving communication between teachers and students and their parents.