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## School board member says goodbye after serving 8 years

BY LESLIE BIXLER

Staff writer

FREMONT -- Monday night was the last Fremont School Board meeting for board member Jim Fails.

Fails was elected to the city's board of education in November 2001, and this month his last term expires.

Alex Gorobetz, who has worked in the district, will be taking his place.

"I want to thank you for your commitment to our district and children," Fremont Superintendent Traci McCaudy said, as she handed Fails a gift from the district and a proclamation from State Rep. Jeff Wagner.

During Fails' time on the board, he served on a variety of district committees and has been actively engaged in the new Fremont Middle School project. Fails began teaching social studies at the junior high school in 1967 and retired in 1998. He spent his 31 years teaching the seventh grade.

Even though he's leaving the board, he plans to remain on district committees.

"Thanks, Jim, for everything, it has been a pleasure and an honor," board member Tim Ellenberger said.

Board President Marc Glotz-becker said he admires Fails.

"It has been a wonderful experience," Fails said, noting the majority of what he wanted to accomplish in his time on the board has been done in the past three years.

"I'm leaving the district in very good hands," he said.

In other news, McCaudy presented an early release policy to board members, which stems from the incident at Hayes Elementary School this month when a child was almost released to an unknown person. She said the guidelines have been in place since 2003, and district personnel have been following the policy since then, however, the policy was not followed Dec. 11. As a result, the policy has been reinforced with building principals and secretaries. A letter was sent home to parents reminding them of the student early release guidelines. Also, principals have met since the Hayes incident to discuss the guidelines and newly revised forms such as visitor registration sheets and student and staff sign-in and -out sheets.

Ross High School also plans to revise its current student sign-out procedures as well. McCaudy also said the district is looking into the possibility of having security cameras in each school office.

During the meeting, Treasurer David Chambers said the state house and senate came to a compromise on House Bill 318 protecting the state budget from an estimated \$851 million deficit. The passage meant school districts in Ohio would not have to reduce their budgets to make up for this lost income.

The Fremont school district's projected losses were estimated to be \$1.2 million this year and \$1.9

million next year. With the passage of the bill, the district is solid for the current and next fiscal year, and the estimated losses will not be in the current biennium.

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