

Frenchtown School Board of Trustees Meeting

April 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Middle School Shared Common Area

- I. **Call to Order:** The Regular School Board Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Jami Romney FitzGerald. Trustees Shiloh Lucier, Bryce Simpson, Noah Peters and Amanda Hansen were in attendance. Also in attendance were Superintendent Les Meyer, Principals Jake Haynes, Aaron Griffin, Riley Devins and Jodi Hall, Assistant HS Principal Beth Terzo, Technology Coordinator James Forrider and District Clerk Shauna Anderson.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting opened with the pledge at 7:00 p.m.
- III. **Board Recognition – none.**
- IV. **Public Comment Period**
Damon Leishman addressed the board and thanked District Administration for their support. Mr. Leishman discussed the median income of Frenchtown and how illegal substance dealers are targeting areas such as Frenchtown, and would like continued efforts to stop this and work with the Frenchtown Community Coalition for fortify the District as best as possible.
- V. **Individuals and Delegations to Address the Board**
HS Principal Jake Haynes spoke on behalf of the Student Council. The Student Council is busy planning Spring Fling week. Student Council advisors Annie Sullivan and Mandi Klimpel talked about activities planned during the week and encouraged all to attend.
Frenchtown Community Coalition representative Reagan Mecham discussed the upcoming Frenchtown Youth Summit in June. There will be speakers at the event and there is a registration fee to attend which will cover meals. There are many schools expressing interest in attending and the FCC is looking for a good turnout. Youth Action Committee members addressed the Board. Gracelyn Deuter, Makenzie Rasmussen and Eli Johnson discussed youth awareness strategies, substance abuse surveys, advertising campaigns for suicide hotlines and substance abuse prevention and efforts to support a “Social Host Ordinance” holding adults accountable for providing illegal substances to minors. Questions were asked regarding the surveys.
- VI. **Staff Presentation – none.**
- VII. **Approval of Minutes**
Bryce Simpson made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Shiloh Lucier seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.
- VIII. **Administrative Reports**
Highlights of the administrative reports were 1) Maintenance Supervisor Sean Mecham discussed the numerous service contracts under review, including elevator service and HVAC. Spring and summer projects will be underway including sprinkler repair and seeding/fertilizing lawn space. Maintenance Supervisor Mecham asked the Board to consider establishing a spending value for necessary infrastructure repairs to the roofing systems, chip seals and HVAC maintenance. 2) Technology Coordinator James Forrider read an email sent to all staff regarding internet connectivity issues and discussed efforts by the IT department to diagnose and correct these problems. 3) Administrative Reports: Special Services Coordinator Jennifer Demmons discussed National Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, the criteria for diagnosing autism and the buddy program for life skills students. Elementary Principal Jodi Hall acknowledged the K-5 art installation by Art Teacher Megan Dungan. Over 400 parents and families attended the event, and the art will be displayed through the spring concerts. Principal Riley Devins discussed upcoming spring concerts and encouraged trustees to attend. Testing for grades three through five started and the students are remaining positive. MS Principal Aaron Griffin acknowledged the MS wrestling success winning the Copper League duals, upcoming track meets, and the MS Honor Society

induction and possibly adding a science Olympiad. Trustee Noah Peters appreciated the academic activities discussed. HS Principal Jake Haynes discussed the opening game for HS baseball, the tremendous support by the community, and how fortunate we all are to live here. HS Assistant Principal Beth Terzo discussed the ACT test for juniors. This was the first year the test was mandated to be online, and for the first attempt it went well. Questions were asked about the HS art program's workshop in Great Falls and the recent FFA state event. Student Gracelyn Deuter spoke about FFA and answered questions from the Board about the events. 4) Superintendent Les Meyer discussed the legislative session and the recent meeting with the District's property and liability carrier, resulting in a large increase to insurance coverage cost for the District.

IX. Business

A. Old Business

1) Information/Discussion: School Election/Mill Levy Information

Superintendent Les Meyer discussed mill levy information mailers, an advertising campaign on KPAX, visits with the Frenchtown Senior Citizens and upcoming opportunities to continue education efforts with the community such as Little League opening ceremonies. The FEA was thanked for their efforts to assist with distributing information regarding the levy.

B. New Business

1) Review/Action: Adoption of English Language Curriculum and Professional Development Plan

The administrative team, a staffing team and the curriculum committee have held several meetings and recommended the adoption of the ELA curriculum for: Collaborative Learning (K-5 Reading), Collaborative Literacy Professional Development, StudySync (6th Grade Reading), No Red Ink (7-8 Language Arts) and grades 7-12 novels for both classroom instruction and choice reads as per the listing in the board packet. Principal Riley Devins explained that these are five-year contracts and discussed the No Red Ink program further.

Amanda Hansen made a motion to discuss. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Board discussion was held regarding the motion. Board Chair Jami Romney FitzGerald called for a break to seek legal clarification on the motion.

Break 8:13 p.m.

The meeting was reopened at 8:19 p.m.

Board Chair Romney FitzGerald asked Trustee Hansen to repeat the motion. Amanda Hansen amended the motion to hold open discussion of the curriculum for grades 7 through 12. Noah Peters seconded the amended motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – Trustee Hansen clarified the reason for the motion, which was to address books listed as choice reads in the committee meetings but not in the board packet. Shiloh Lucier, Noah Peters and Amanda Hansen voted to approve the motion. Jami Romney FitzGerald and Bryce Simpson opposed. The motion passed 3-2.

Open discussion was held regarding the grades 7 – 12 curriculum materials. Trustee Bryce Simpson asked if the motion would have changed had these books been listed as choice reads, which was agreed. Trustee Shiloh Lucier asked for an explanation of choice reads vs. mandatory books in the grade level curriculum. Curriculum Coordinators Beth Terzo and Riley Devins explained classroom supplies of books, usage over the five-year period and the development of the grade level curriculum documents. The first step is approving and purchasing the novels, and then the teachers will develop the curriculum. The final piece is the professional development for teaching staff.

Board Chair Romney FitzGerald asked if members of the public would like to participate in this open discussion. Superintendent Meyer clarified that the question was regarding choice reads, the quantity of books purchased for this purpose and the No Red Ink language arts curriculum. Trustee Peters asked about the process teachers use to communicate book choices to the students. Principal Jake Haynes indicated the course syllabi are available to the student and posted to the curriculum area on the website.

Debbie Lester addressed the board, and voiced an objection to adding more books to a choice list, objected to censorship and acknowledged the teaching staff for their professionalism and expertise. Jodi Thomasson addressed the board and acknowledged that there has always been an alternative book selection option for students. She admires the teachers and their commitment to excellence, discussed the necessity of sound principles in education, asking the board to approve all of the books recommended. Holli Rankin addressed the board and felt books on the list create conversation with students regarding sensitive topics such as substance abuse. Crystal Leishman addressed the board, respected teachers but expressed concerns regarding carte blanche determination of topics covered in the classroom and felt parents' should be respected as well and have a say in the materials. Liz Delaney addressed the board in support of the staff, respects parents who do not want their children to read certain material but does not want those choices to affect other students. Caitlyn McIver addressed the board, and provided information on the graphic novels and "Battle of the Books" programs in her classroom, indicating that these programs appeal to a large group of students.

Trustee Lucier indicated that no books are being taken away in this meeting, and indicated that this conversation is about book choices. Trustee Hansen clarified that the discussion is about the book list as presented to the committee and the list that was in the board packet differing with regard to choice reads. Board Chair Romney FitzGerald indicated that there are five books that will be reviewed at a later meeting and are not in this adoption list. Kari Mazzola addressed the board, indicated that there has always been the option to give students an alternative book, and discussed the issue with parents determining what books all other students read. Trustee Simpson felt choices are a good option for students and encourages reading. Curriculum Coordinator Devins indicated that it appears that the discussion is complete and a motion is appropriate at this time. Ms. Lester addressed the board and felt that it was a burden to teachers to develop curriculum with many books, and the option for an alternative book is available already.

Noah Peters made a motion to adopt the English Language Curriculum as presented with adjustments to five books to be listed as choice reads: *When I Was the Greatest*, *All The Pretty Horses*, *Adrift*, *The Fault in Our Stars* and *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. Amanda Hansen seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

2) Review/Action: Approval of the purchases: Curriculum/Textbooks

Superintendent Les Meyer recommended the following for purchase: Collaborative Literacy (K-5 Reading) \$148,029.00 (5 years); Collaborative Professional Development Plan \$9,280.00 Literacy Intervention (SIPPS) and \$8,725.00 K-5; StudySync (6th Grade Reading) \$22,048.66 (5 years); No Red Ink (7-8 Language Arts) \$28,300.00 (5 years); Books A Million \$6,708.26; Bulk Book Store \$7,946.51; St. Martin's Guide to Writing Shorter \$2,086.00 and House on Mango Street \$179.25. Bryce Simpson made a motion to approve the curriculum purchases as listed. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

3) Review/Action: Hiring of Non-Tenure Certified Staff

Superintendent Les Meyer recommended the hiring of non-tenured certified staff members as listed in the board packet. Superintendent Meyer discussed the concept of the "COVID cliff" and that Frenchtown School District does not have a staffing impact because of COVID funding. Bryce Simpson made a motion to approve hiring of non-tenured certified staff as listed. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

4) Review/Action: Hiring Staff

Superintendent Les Meyer recommended the following for hire: Admin Payroll Assistant Amber Stark, Sub Playground Aide Crista Couture, HS Accompanist David Sheerin, Sub Shipping/Receiving Jenna Nile and Kristin Kzaley, Sub Para (23-24 school year) Kim Wilcox, Sub Admin Office Sarah Niegel, Sub Office Sara Jiminian, Student Workers MS Wrestling Makenzie Rasmussen and Makenzie Brush, K-8 Art Teacher Megan Dungan, and School Psychologist Intern Kendall Kiely. Bryce Simpson made a motion to approve the hires as listed. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

5) Information/Discussion: Resignations

The resignations of Speech and Debate Head Coach Paul Hutchison, Speech Language Pathologist Kelsie Maricelli, Custodian Lee Leduc, Assistant Football Coach Allen Lake, Paraprofessional Kim Wilcox, HS Assistant Volleyball Coach Nicole Day, HS Health Enhancement Teacher Jerad Reinhardt and Kindergarten Teacher Alison Kilgore were discussed. Also discussed was the retirement of Teacher Dawn Johnson who has been with the District for many years, and will be difficult to replace.

6) Review/Action: Leave of Absence

Superintendent Les Meyer recommended approval of the Leave of Absence request by Teacher Paige Vinton. Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve the Leave of Absence for Paige Vinton as requested. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous. Superintendent Les Meyer recommended approval of the Leave of Absence request by Teacher Dana Lozier. Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve the Leave of Absence for Dana Lozier as requested. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

7) Review/Action: Approval of Health Insurance Carrier

Superintendent Les Meyer discussed the insurance committee meetings on several occasions and the work Deputy Clerk Stacie Methner put in to the health insurance bid process. Two brokers presented to the committee competitive bids. Superintendent Meyer recommended the approval of MUST as the District's health insurance carrier. Bryce Simpson made a motion to approve MUST as the health insurance carrier. Shiloh Lucier seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – regarding the reason for selecting MUST, which was due to the benefits package being better for the FTSD employees. Unanimous.

8) Review/Action: Approval of out of state travel

The senior class would like to travel to Coeur d'Alene on Tuesday, May 30th for their senior trip. Superintendent Meyer recommended approval of the out of state travel as requested. Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve the out of state travel to Coeur d'Alene as recommended. Bryce Simpson seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

9) Review/Action: Bus Route Changes

Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve the bus routes changes 7B to 7C, 10A to 10C and 11A to 11B as presented in the packet. Bryce Simpson seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

10) Review/Action: Obsolete/Surplus Equipment

Superintendent Les Meyer recommended for disposal a 1994 Ford Ranger, 10 Dell Desktop computers and an HP color printer unsuitable for use. Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve Resolution #4182023-1 for Disposal of Public Property as recommended. Noah Peters seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

X. **Policy Review – none.**

XI. **Approval of Warrants/Approval of Financial Report**

Shiloh Lucier made a motion to approve the warrants and financial reports as presented. Bryce Simpson seconded the motion. Public discussion – none. Board discussion – none. Unanimous.

XII. **Committee Reports – Updated Committees**

- A. Policy (Shiloh Lucier, Jami Wright, Noah Peters)
- B. Insurance (Bryce Simpson, Amanda Hansen & Jami Wright)
- C. Negotiations/Labor Relations (Jami Romney FitzGerald, Bryce Simpson & Jami Wright)
- D. Transportation (Bryce Simpson & Rainier Batt)
- E. Safety (Bryce Simpson & Rainier Batt)
- F. School Improvement/Goals Committee (Jami Romney FitzGerald, Bryce Simpson & Noah Peters)
- G. Ad Hoc Committees – IT (Jami Romney FitzGerald & Amanda Hansen), Facilities – (Jami Romney FitzGerald, Bryce Simpson & Rainier Batt), Curriculum/Professional Development (Noah Peters &

Amanda Hansen), Academic Achievement – (Shiloh Lucier, Noah Peters & Jami Wright), Wellness (Jami Romney FitzGerald & Shiloh Lucier).

Recent meetings have been held for the Curriculum Committee, Insurance Committee and the Safety Committee.

XIII. Adjournment

ADJOURNED 9:17 p.m.

Approved: May 16, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Jami Romney FitzGerald
Board Chair

/s/ Shauna Anderson
District Clerk