

LEARN BUILD LEAD

Fremont Joint School District No. 215
Special School Board Work Meeting Minutes

August 6, 2020
Via Zoom 4:30 p.m.

Attending: Bonnie Moon-Board Chair
 Jon Bailey-Vice Chair
 Shawn Dye-Trustee
 Tia Cherry-Trustee
 Julianne Hill-Trustee
 Byron Stutzman-Superintendent
 Hali Mackert-Clerk/Treasurer

Chairman Bonnie Moon called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. A quorum was present.

Chairman Bonnie Moon lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustee Julianne Hill made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Trustee Tia Cherry All “ayes”, motion carried.

Superintendent Byron Stutzman said we had a Leadership Team meeting last Tuesday and a lot was discussed about what needed to happen, and what needed to be done. We would like to delay the start of school until September 8. If we want to implement our learning management system correctly and to do it well, it will take time to train teachers in Canvas. If we give teachers training and time to front load lessons we will be set up if, and when, we have to go remote, and give teachers everything they need to make classes successful. This will be a good platform for our students and parents, and they will have one spot to go to. Delaying the start of school would truly give us time we need to allow students and staff to get ready for what they need. I think it will be advantageous instead of detrimental to get set up.

Chair Bonnie Moon asked the administrators their thoughts.

They were on board with moving the start day. They felt there was some anxiety with teachers regarding Canvas since they haven't seen it yet. They felt it would be beneficial to have time to learn the new program and give them time to get ahead.

Chair Bonnie Moon explained Canvas is a new program, and we're implementing the first time in the fall.

Trustee Jon Bailey said he has received a lot of emails regarding why are we just starting this now. He needs additional understanding why and when we actually got the contract in place. A lot of people have emotions and we need to make sure there's an understanding.

Superintendent Stutzman said teachers and principals are not on contract during the summer and if we were to do anything during the summer, they would be doing it without pay. One of the things I always kick around, is how can we get more professional development training during the summer. If we paid for extra days work, with taxes and everything else it would cost the district about \$43,000 per day.

Chair Bonnie Moon said she has received emails on both sides of the issue. If we do this, she wants to make sure the Superintendent and Principals send out correspondence and to get communication out and teachers need to be up to date with what's going on.

Trustee Julianne Hill asked if the schools can work as hard as what is being demanded of them and that teachers have the tools with which to work. She said she's talked to educators and they don't have the confidence to go to virtual teaching. I think we need our teachers to become rock stars on the virtual media with whatever scenario we hit.

Chair Bonnie Moon asked are we healthy enough to go to school and are we able to meet the demands and to put cautions in place to meet the needs of the students.

Trustee Julianne Hill said we need good hand washing, masks, and social distancing to try to keep risks as suppressed as much as we can control. Parents have the responsibility to make sure they help with this.

Trustee Shawn Dye said everyone who has reached out to him, wants to start right now. No matter what we do, we have people mad if we start or if we don't. The leadership team has asked to delay starting school, but have athletics get started on time. No matter what we do we will have opinions contrary to what we do. We need to support the Leadership Team and principals for what they know is best. We need to be considerate to those who have serious health issues and not make this about masks, and we don't have bullying for those wearing or not wearing masks. I stand in favor of what the principals and superintendent recommend.

Trustee Tia Cherry said her phone calls and emails started at 6:30 this morning and she's thankful that patrons are willing to express their feelings. I totally understood the email from Byron, and we aren't going to make everyone happy. A lot of the teachers she talked to, wanted to know will the time without students outweigh the time with students. Is it something that could be done in 5 days?

Superintendent Stutzman said it's yet to be known how perfectly this will go with the training and teachers implementing canvas. Dave Marotz is working hard to get it all set up, and it's not as easy as he thought it would be. If we can do the front loading and heavy lifting in those two weeks if we go virtual, we could do it seamlessly. There are parents looking for virtual delivery.

David Marotz said we started looking at Canvas months ago. We were finally able to get everything ordered and started working on it in mid-June. It normally takes 90 days to get everything up and running to get it to go. Add on top of that, they have 1000 new schools and 4 states, and they are extremely overwhelmed. We just got Powerschool and Canvas talking this morning. Trying to get the training set up so teachers can start looking and get familiar with it. At this point we are looking at fundamentally asking teachers to rethink everything we have done and facilitate to online learning, so we can change very quickly. We are asking to teach totally differently than we ever have before.

Chair Bonnie Moon asked by voting yes what does it do for kids, if we vote no what does it do for kids?

Superintendent Stutzman said if we delay, teachers will have time to get canvas put together so the students can learn from day one. If we start straight up, the teachers will have two days to get prepared and go live in the classroom and get curriculum put in to canvas.

Trustee Tia Cherry said she is grateful to David for answering these questions, and I've learned this could prevent us from a shut down. I can keep a sick kid home, and they can still learn from home. We are helping to prevent a shut down, and we can all stay home.

Chair Bonnie Moon said whatever we decide, we need to communicate it well and use various channels. I want to make sure we are getting communication from our school, and it needs to be communicated quickly and well to teachers, staff.

Superintendent Stutzman said regardless of the outcome a press release and email will go out to all parents. He's already asked the Standard Journal to do an article, and then we'll walk through everything that needs to be done and put out notifications. I plead to parents we need their help to keep kids safe. I'd love to have the students in the classroom, but there's is a monetary aspect we need to keep in mind and a safety aspect. We need to make sure it is set up well. Let's delay the start so we can be ready to run full speed ahead on September 8.

Chairman Bonnie Moon said, I wish we could have had the foresight and that we would have known. Let's be as proactive as we can. We have tools if they are sick, we have the tools in place, so they don't get behind. But I see this piece that we need to get these teachers trained, and these aren't easy times. We must stick together, and we don't want to alienate anyone, but we are people and they aren't miracle workers that need support. We all have the right to make the best decision to make for your family. I appreciate the emails and parents had done their homework.

Trustee Shawn Dye made a motion to go with the Superintendent and Leadership Teams recommendation to postpone or delay the start of school until after Labor Day. The motion was seconded by Trustee Tia Cherry. All "ayes", motion carried.

Trustee Tia Cherry said this is not due to fear that it will not create a longer school year. This will not stop sports and will provide teachers with adequate training. Our teachers contract days are important to consider. This will prevent a shut-down long term. In the end trust the Leadership Team. Good Luck.

Superintendent Byron Stutzman said the board needs to approve the COVID 19 Protocols and Return to Play Plan & Guidelines so that we have an administrative rule in place.

Chris Tucker said he knows the IHSAA has been doing a lot of research during the summer, and they want the kids and the communities to play sports. We must come to an agreement with the safety precautions and what we are going to do. We don't need a 4 to 5-page plan. They want to play and we're going to follow this guideline and whatever we must do. The form is a liability form and every kid and parent must sign the form so if they get COVID they aren't going to sue the school.

Trustee Tia Cherry make a motion to approve COVID 19 Protocols and Return to play and guidelines. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shawn Dye. All "ayes", motion carried.

Trustee Shawn Dye made a motion to adjourn at 5:20 p.m.