

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Les Meyer

"Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer when they complained about the heat." - Author Unknown

You do not know my oldest son; however, his body temperature is always running hot. It is difficult to ride in a car with him because he wants the AC on when it is 45 degrees outside! The quote above resonates with me since we drive vehicles with the heat set at a place in the winter and if it was that hot outside, then we would be running the AC! I guess, we are being taught to be thankful for the cold when it is cold and thankful for the heat when it is hot.



2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

A calendar for the 2024-2025 school year will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval at the February 19th Board Meeting. The calendar committee has met several times and surveys have been shared with staff members to determine a course of action. The committee takes into account a calendar that best fits the needs of students and families, while addressing the needs of the staff preparation and training. The calendar will include PIR dates and times. Once a calendar is approved, it will be made available on the website, Infinite Campus, and in next month's newsletter.

FRENCHTOWN SCHOOLS - MEETINGS

- Safety Committee Meeting Friday, January 12. Security System, Reunification, Bell System.
- Montana High School Association Meeting: Sunday, January 14 and Monday January 15.
- Policy Committee Meeting Friday, January 19.
- Calendar Committee Meetings: next one January 26th
- Health Insurance Trust Meeting: Helena, January 30-31
- Finance Committee Meeting TBA. Financial and operational levy review
- Curriculum Committee Meeting TBA – Math



BUS DRIVER APPRECIATION DAY

FEBRUARY 22ND – At the beginning of the school year we never dreamed that we were going to be where we are today. Not that we are in a great spot and not that we can't improve matters, but due to creative scheduling and schedule changes and the sacrifices made by drivers we have been able to get students to and from school as well as provide transportation to almost all activity and field trips.



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION(S)



Given the situation schools across the state dealt with on January 16th and 17th, I thought it appropriate to reiterate protocols the district will try to follow given the circumstances. Not every situation fits into a tidy category; however, below is a framework of what we will try to do in the event an emergency occurs.

The district is required to balance the demands of individual privacy for students against the merits of public disclosure, under both state (Montana Constitution) and federal law (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act). If there is a potential issue of school and student safety and security, our normal cause of action is to immediately contact and coordinate with applicable law enforcement in identifying if there is a credible threat.

It is at that point that we will provide a preliminary notice to families that we are investigating and whether we have determined if school and student safety and security is at risk. It is important that we have your current contact information to ensure that you receive that information at the earliest possible moment. You should be aware that the constraints of privacy at this point will generally prevent us from sharing personal identifying information from a student's record. The main point of communication at this point will be to acknowledge that we are dealing with a potential situation, the steps we have taken, the steps you can take as a family, and the anticipated time frame for finalizing a determination in consultation with law enforcement regarding whether the threat is credible.

Once we have reached a determination in consultation with law enforcement regarding whether we are dealing with a credible threat to school and student safety and security, we will follow up with as much information as we can lawfully provide, including directives related to school closure and means by which you can obtain information.”

The sample framework about Security Matter

On_____, 20__, Frenchtown School District is aware of a school safety incident. School District officials and_____Police/Sheriff's Department are in regular contact to ensure that the school is taking all precautions to address the matter. The safety of our students is our top priority.

Law enforcement officers are conducting an investigation with the cooperation of the District to address the matter. The identity of all students of the District is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act(FERPA).

While the District is unable to share any student information, the public can be assured that all appropriate measures are being taken to protect the safety and security of all

students, The School district and _____ Police/Sheriff's Department will provide further information and guidance if and when it becomes available.

I would like to take a moment to address social media. Social media postings, while honorable in thought, can contribute to confusion if the information is not correct. Often social media posts are opinions presented as facts. It might be what they heard, thought, or gleaned. We will not be able to get ahead of social media, nor do we want to get ahead, we want to make sure we are doing exactly what we can do, will do and what we are supposed to do.

INFORMATION ON WINTER SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY



Please check the FTSD website www.ftsd.org on the mornings when you are concerned if school will be held or not because of inclement weather. School cancellations and late starts will be posted on the Live Feed. The District also has the IC message system that will send out a phone call, a text message, or email alerts for school closures or delays. The district will also make an effort to update parents and students on the website about the status of school in Frenchtown when there have been cancellations of other area schools but not for FTSD #40. We will try to make calls close to 6:00 am, but we have experienced changing conditions after around 6:30-7:00.

The media has done a nice job of getting our information to their websites and notifying the public on school closures or delays. **If you don't hear Frenchtown mentioned in a listing of school closures, then know that we are holding school.**

However, if you are in a location that does not allow for safe passage to school or to the bus stop, then as a parent, you are the best person to determine if your child/children should attend school on a day when the weather is bad. If a student is absent because you could not get them to the bus stop or school, please notify the school and your child will be marked as an excused absence for that day.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE - REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS

The Montana Department of Justice has a website that you can access and by just putting in your zip code it will give you a listing of any registered sex offenders and violent offenders living in your area. This website is updated by the Department of Justice regularly so you might want to check it on at least a monthly basis. The website is entitled Sexual and Violent Offenders Registry and in addition to the ability to find the names and addresses, it has many other interesting facts and information. Go to <http://doj.state.mt.us/svor> for this information.

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION PROCESS



Thank you to all of you who took the time to complete the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. We received the compiled results of the assessment and now we are starting to analyze the performance, perspective, and process data for themes and trends. We are starting to develop problem statements that are easy to understand and that are specific. Once we are able to achieve a certain comfort level of going through this process, then we will begin to reach out for stakeholder assistance in developing and approving goals. This will be a challenging and yet rewarding process.



PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TIMELINE

Late in the month of November, we met with the Board of Public Education (BPE) via virtual means. We provided a power point presentation with information surrounding the Bronc Fast Track. The information we provided seemed to be well received by BPE. We were asked some good questions and received several compliments; however, we have not heard any news as to whether or not we will receive public charter school status or not. According to the timeline, it looks like we will know something by the end of January.

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

The local chapter of Women in Construction (WIC) will be celebrating WIC the week of March 4th through March 8th. The local chapter is committed to visiting as many schools and communities as possible that week so be on the lookout for some school presentations!



HAVE A GREAT FEBRUARY!