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Beat Story #4

North Fremont High School introduces new alternative graduation plan

ST. ANTHONY, Idaho — The Fremont school board approved a new alternative graduation plan for North Fremont High School at their board meeting October 20.

The new graduation plan will help students that are struggling to meet state requirements for graduation.

David Marotz, North Fremont High School Principal, presented the plan to the school board. He said that because of changes in legislation, a new alternative plan needed to be put into place by October 30.

“This is the number one topic for administrators right now, and they are trying to scramble to find something that works,” Marotz said.

The plan consists of a point system for each student that has not passed the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) by senior year.

Students start taking the ISAT their sophomore year, but if they do not pass any section of the test, they are required to retake that portion. When students pass any section of the test, they are able to bank that portion of the test, and they are not required to retake it.

By their senior year, students that haven’t passed the ISAT are placed into the alternative graduation plan. They receive points based on their overall GPA, attendance, performance on their senior projects, end of course assessments for the subject areas they are struggling in, and for their performance in an ISAT preparation course.

In order to graduate, students under the alternative graduation plan need at least 16 points and have passed the ISAT.

Some of the school board members were concerned about whether or not the graduation plan would work long term. School board member James Neubauer suggested that there be an ongoing evaluation for the alternative graduation plan.

Marotz addressed this question, saying, "We tried to go through every conceivable situation with the students who are struggling. There may be something missing, but if it isn't working for students, we can always change."

As of this year, approximately 10 juniors at both North and South Fremont High Schools would need to be placed on the alternative graduation plan next year.

Marotz said that students who are struggling in the 9th grade year will be tracked and watched closely as well.