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Freeland schools have many Facebook, Twitter fans; che online

By Erika Hirschman
for the Daily News

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Freeland Community Schools Superintendent Matt Cairy says the district is keeping parents, students an better informed by linking to the latest in technology.

Since joining Facebook and Twitter -- the first being a social networking website and the latter a micro-b - in early March, the district now has some 375 fans on Facebook and has followers on Twitter. Joining both services does not cost the district anything and is a way to stay connected to the community, Cairy said.

Joining Facebook is a way to get information to parents and students in the district, and to share what's each of the buildings. Whether people are interested in sporting events and updates, links to various article news, they can now access the information via those on-line services.

Since the district will do away with three of next school year's districtwide newsletters to reduce costs, C Facebook and Twitter are ways to "get information out there for our community in an inexpensive way." Pri newsletters instead of six will save the district about \$3,000.

The district's Facebook page has links to local newspaper articles, information on changing school start ti year and sporting event stats.

"It's both positive and informational," said Cairy. "We feel like we want to get everything out there for people to know and understand."

Cairy said the district also is posting its checkbook register information on the school's website because "we see this as just another way to provide information to those we serve."

Cairy said the Freeland Community School District has been posting the checkbook registers on line for taxpayers to inspect since February. Bullock Creek Schools also posts its checkbook register.

"I think this is a great idea, and it makes sense. It's public information and it's there for those who want to look at it," said Cairy. In February, the site received 76 hits; in March, 60 hits; in April, 44, and in May, 35, according to Cairy, who tracks the number of hits. Check registry information and the links to Facebook and Twitter can be found at the Freeland Community Schools website at www.freeland.k12.mi.us/edu.



Last week, Kenneth Braun, director of the Mackinac Center's "Show Michigan the Money" transparency project is encouraging all 551 public school districts in Michigan to provide the check register data on their websites.

The "Show Michigan the Money" project now includes 40 public school districts statewide. Links to all 40 checkbook registers are available at www.showmichiganthemoney.org/9329.

"Our goal is to make every school district in the state aware of this project," said Braun. "We want to have a majority of the check registers up on our website by the end of 2009."

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