

**FINANCE/POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
CANTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
March 25, 2019**

The Canton Area School District Board of Education held a Policy Committee meeting on, March 25, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. in the Administration Conference Room.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Ryan Allen, Mr. Eric Anderson, Mrs. Krista Jennings, and Mrs. Judy Sourbeier were present.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Eric Briggs, Superintendent; Mr. Craig Coleman, High School Principal; Mr. Mike Wells, Elementary Principal; Mrs. Michelle Kern, Mrs. Nichole Ambruch, and Mr. John Ambruch were present.

SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Allen called the meeting to order.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

- Dr. Briggs started the meeting by reviewing the packet prepared for the meeting. He reviewed the agenda, tables, and policies with the committee.
- Mr. Anderson asked how funding was determined for kindergarten (Title I). Dr. Briggs informed him that changing the age of beginners would have no impact on federal funding.
- Mr. Wells shared that we would not get additional funding for 4-year-old students.
- A question was asked if kindergarten students currently get funding through the state. Dr. Briggs reported that the district currently receives funding for kindergarten students (transportation) but was not sure what that looked like 5-7 years ago.
- Mrs. Jennings asked if the kindergarten teachers had any issues with the potential age change. Dr. Briggs said he spoke with one teacher and shared data with the teacher. The teacher's only concern was that the current data reflected that the child has not been working on (or mastered) consonant blends). Mr. Wells also shared he spoke with the entire kindergarten team and they had some concerns about a potential age change. Mrs. Sourbeier agreed that she had concerns with students and their kindergarten readiness skills. She cited that some students come to kindergarten and cannot even hold pencils properly.
- Mrs. Jennings asked how office discipline referrals compare in kindergarten to other grade levels. Mr. Wells reported they are comparable to all other elementary grades.
- A concern was brought up by Mr. Ambruch about pre-evaluation screening measures and behavioral issues. He agreed with a screening mechanism and felt something had to be in place to evaluate kindergarten readiness. He also believed a standard should be set. He offered that he was not looking for an entry age to be changed but rather a "window of exception" for some students.
- Mrs. Jennings commented on whether students would be socially/emotionally ready to enter kindergarten. This could be negatively impacted by entering at an earlier age because they would be seen as "lower on the totem pole" by their peers.
- Dr. Briggs asked the family if there were concerns about children going to college at age 17? They shared personal experiences with other friends/family members where that had not been an issue.
- Ms. Kern shared that if a high standard was set, the district would only be looking at a very few students.
- Mr. Allen asked when the birthday was of the child we were considering for the policy. (September 19)
- Mr. Ambruch shared that, right now, there is no opportunity for an evaluation based process for students who are ready for kindergarten but have not reached the age of beginners according to the policy. He stated it was like coming up against a "brick wall". All he is seeking is an opportunity.
- Mrs. Ambruch shared that the CASD policy had not been updated since the 80's. Dr. Briggs corrected her and said it was updated in 2011.

- Mr. Anderson asked if an evaluation would be conducted, would it be done by the district school psychologist? If so, what areas would be covered because he felt it was important that social/emotional aspects also be considered in this evaluation.
- Mr. Briggs shared that if the district was going to look at offering an evaluation, he believed it should be comprehensive (like a gifted or special education evaluation) due to the legal ramifications should a parent believe their child is eligible and the school district deems otherwise. He felt this was the safest, most secure way to legally support the district.
- Mr. Ambruch asked what percentage of students are “gifted.” Dr. Briggs shared that the gifted population is about 5% of the total student population.
- Mr. Ambruch then shared that perhaps a gifted standard may be too high for this purpose and perhaps a development age should be considered (5.5). Dr. Briggs shared that he was not sure if standardized assessment provided “developmental ages” for students after a battery of tests are administered. He would check with the school psychologist to verify if it exists. He believed it existed for a series of subtests (i.e. reading, math, social/emotional) but not a “stand alone developmental age”.
- Mr. Allen then stated that he believed the committee should not change the deadline but create a “workable window” because it would not lead to a high volume of students who would be eligible for this process.
- Dr. Briggs asked if the committee was interested in requiring the parents to have an independent educational evaluation at the expense of the parent. The committee did not feel this should be a requirement.
- Dr. Briggs asked how the child would be negatively impacted if the child was not admitted to kindergarten next year. Ms. Kern shared that she would lose an “opportunity to grow”. Mr. Ambruch shared that the “bored child” can have behavioral issue too.
- The policy committee then recommended that Dr. Briggs do the following:
 - Do not change the entry age
 - Create a “workable window” (September 1- September 30) where a select group of students who have birthdays during this time could be evaluated on a criterion to see if they are ready for kindergarten.
 - An evaluation be conducted by a certified school psychologist

MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Briggs
Superintendent