

**FINANCE/POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
CANTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
JUNE 3, 2021**

The Canton Area School District Board of Education held a Finance Committee meeting on, June 3, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in the Administration Conference Room.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Ryan Allen (virtual), Mr. Gary Black (virtual), Mrs. Judy Sourbeer, and Mr. Bill Holland were present.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Eric Briggs, Superintendent, and Mr. Mark Jannone, Business Manager, Mr. Dave Loomis, School Psychologist, Mr. and Mrs. Ambruch were present.

SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Dr. Briggs called the meeting to order.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

At this time, Dr. Briggs reviewed the agenda with those present and the following items were discussed:

- Dr. Briggs then reviewed the two handouts that cited the PA School Code for entry age into kindergarten and a table referring to policy #201 and how 22 other school districts (regionally and across the state that are similar in size to Canton) are addressing admission to kindergarten.
- Dr. Briggs then went over an acceleration table where he discussed the different ways that Canton Area School District currently accelerates students once they are in the district.
- Shared that nationally Pennsylvania is 1 of 4 states that allows LEA's to choose kindergarten age (New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared a handout titled An Easy Yes: Starting School Early, Early Entry into Kindergarten for Gifted Children, School Code, and a White Paper
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch acknowledged that the district does do acceleration once the student is in the system.
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared that some school districts in PA are allowing students to come to school too early.
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared her report from the child's preschool program. Shared that she believed the teacher was pleased with her academic, social, and emotional progress while in the preschool setting.
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared an invitation the child made and shared the sister's report card with the committee. Child meets or exceeds the standards for many of the English Language Arts standards
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared she thinks that her older daughter is a success story.
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared she wants to support her child in her passion for learning.
- Mr. John Ambruch shared they are "stuck" as they have nowhere to go because they do not have the opportunity for their child due to the age cut-off.
- Mr. Black shared that he believes the current policy does not give flexibility to a student who is prepared for kindergarten. He would like to see some flexibility.
- Mrs. Sourbeer asked the family why this child did not do what the older sister did, but the preschool changed their policy and does not allow early admission into their kindergarten program, unless a child has completed two years of preschool program.
- Dr. Briggs shared that he feels a change in policy could be a "gamble" for students based on data that the district did not have. He was concerned with the data but would support a change if it stated as it is currently stated in the agenda.
- Mr. John Ambruch shared that by revising this policy, children who would not be ready, would not get in with the current criteria.
- Mr. Black asked if the standardized test would reduce the "gamble." Dr. Briggs agreed it would.

- Mr. Loomis shared how the gifted evaluation process would go with the standardized approach which would limit the number of students who would qualify.
- Mr. Holland shared that he did not believe this was a grade skip. He questioned whether this current tool would be able to determine if the child is ready. Mr. Loomis said this tool would address the needs to determine if children are eligible.
- Mr. Holland shared that 78% of the schools in PA have a start date of September 1. District already has things in place to meet these student's academic needs, once they enter school. Mr. Holland questioned where we close the window for early admission eligibility to kindergarten. Mr. Holland questioned that he believed it was the committee responsibility to make sure students are ready for college.
- Mr. Allen shared that he felt that there is no gamble, and he felt a 30-day window would be beneficial for students.
- Mr. John Ambruch shared his personal story about how successful he was by going to school.
- Dr. Briggs shared that an additional student or two could involve hiring of additional staff. Mr. Black shared that the opposite could occur as well.
- Mrs. Nichole Ambruch shared that she does not believe that parents will be knocking down Dr. Briggs door.
- Mr. Black adds that he does not believe it will open any flood gate and due to the threshold not many students would qualify. If you have 100 students, only 2 out of 100 will qualify.
- The committee was asked if they wanted to recommend a policy change to the full board. Mr. Allen voted to update the policy. Mr. Gary Black voted to update the policy. Mr. Holland voted to keep the current policy. Mrs. Sourbeer voted to keep the current policy. Based on the committee's vote, the committee would not be recommending any policy change to the full board.
- Mr. Jannone clarified that this does not preclude the Ambruchs' from addressing the full board. Mr. Black asked if he can have a motion put on the June board meeting agenda to initiate a policy change. Mr. Jannone responded by indicating it would be possible for a member to request a vote, on a policy change by the full board.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Eric Briggs
Superintendent of Schools