

Pre-K Committee Update March 21, 2019

A committee comprised of Trustee Lucy Kelly, Elementary Principal Julie Mable, Trustee Mark Schneider, and Superintendent Jason Thomson set out to research and analyze the possibility of Delaware Academy Central School District at Delhi offering a Pre-K program. The committee looked at factors such as program efficacy, program costs, and impacts on the local community. In the research phase, the committee visited three Pre-K Programs in our BOCES, one Pre-K program at the YMCA in Oneonta, and six providers of services for 4-yr. old children in the Delhi Community. The committee asked questions of the providers and discussed options available to the Delaware Academy School District.

Throughout our research and discussion, we kept in mind that most students who had some form of Pre-K experience were more likely to adjust well to the social, emotional, physical, and academic demands of a kindergarten classroom. The committee's research led to development of the following primary goal for any Pre-K program offered by the district:

- Increase participation among the district's 4-year old population in a Pre-K program leading to social, emotional, physical, and academic development and have as close to 100% participation of 4-year olds as is practical.

In the past two years, 90 out of 115 incoming Kindergarten students have had some form of Pre-K experience. The committee looked at barriers to families not participating in the current programs and in order to overcome those barriers a program would need to be full day and would have to offer transportation.

A full day program with transportation would cost approximately \$250,000. The district would receive no grants or aid on that \$250,000 and therefore, the entire amount would be the responsibility of the taxpayers. \$250,000 is approximately a 2.5 % increase in taxes. In addition, a school-based Pre-K program would undermine multiple existing providers of services to the 4-year old population within the district. For these reasons, the committee recommends against budgeting for and implementing a Pre-K program within the school for the 2019-2020 school year.

The committee is dedicated to pursuing the following ideas:

- Incorporate quarterly meetings with kindergarten staff and local providers for a free exchange of ideas, professional development, and an overview of what Kindergarteners are expected to do when entering Kindergarten
- Investigate whether the district could provide trainings for interested parents
- Keeping data on students who have had a Pre-K experience vs. students who have not, up through the 3rd grade, to discuss and evaluate the longer term effects of the Pre-K experience on our students
- Continue to research program options that might come with a smaller price tag

The presentation of the Pre-K research and information will take place at the March 25th Board of Education Budget workshop to begin at 6:00 pm in the HS library. Please join us at that time.