

GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #304
Office of the Superintendent

TO: Geneva CUSD 304 Board of Education

FROM: Kent D. Mutchler, Superintendent

SUBJECT: All Day Every Day Kindergarten Recommendation

DATE: February 6, 2014

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen;

Thank you for your careful study of the results from the Committee studying Kindergarten and the Administration in Geneva 304 and for your in-depth discussions of this topic over the last several Board meetings and over the last several years.

After weighing the results of the Committee most recently, the work of the Committee in 2008, and the impact of the Common Core Curriculum Standards on our students in Geneva 304, I support the findings and recommendations of the Committee and the Administration. This recommendation is that we adopt an All Day Every School Day Kindergarten program beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Along with this, I recommend that we maintain a half day program during the morning, for those parents choosing half-day, that would be incorporated into the full day program where students would leave at a break around noon. Also, I recommend that we use nearly the same amount of kindergarten assistant hours that we currently provide and share the assistants between teachers in an effort to meet the needs of our students and also contain the cost of this program.

The committee emphasized two important issues, along with the focus of providing this program to meet the educational needs of our students. In meeting the educational needs of our students, it is important that we provide a comprehensive program for our students to meet the requirements of the Common Core Curriculum Standards in providing a solid educational foundation for every student in Geneva 304. A half-day program places our students at a disadvantage educationally in regards to meeting these standards. One major issue is that the full day program is the 'default' for our kindergarten program for every student. This means that we work toward the goal that every kindergarten student achieve the benchmarks of kindergarten in preparing for the first grade. This diminishes the educational value of a half-day program just by the time constraints. The second issue is that the full day program is there for every student. A pay-to-attend program diminishes the educational value for those students whose parents do not pay for the full day program.

Along with this recommendation, please know that the structure of the proposed full kindergarten day would be similar to that of first grade in an effort to provide a strong educational foundation for our students and to contain costs. As explained in the recommendation from the Committee and Administration, we will make efforts to contain the costs of this program similar to efforts we make to contain costs of all of our educational programs. In addition, we will continue to seek offsets for added expenses, explore added resources for funding, and examine further ideas presented that may be implemented without compromising the quality of educational program for our kindergarten students.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.