

# Basic skills approved by Boone School Board

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**By Denise Larive**  
**News Writer**

Following up on a recommendation made at the Daniel Boone School Board's April 11 Committee of the Whole meeting, the board unanimously approved on April 18 to keep basic skills math teachers and classes at 100 percent in the district's four elementary schools.

Board member Walter Sheehan said the savings would have been \$37,000 by reducing the program by 80 percent but it is more important to provide students with a good foundation in math.

"If they don't get a good foundation in math we'll spend a lot more money in the future and they'll never get caught up," said Sheehan, adding, "We can't lose these kids. We're going to half day kindergarten, and it will be a part of the kindergarten curriculum."

"This recommendation shouldn't have even been brought to the table, because they [students] won't be a success without basic skills math," said board member Margaret M. Fiset.

No further discussion was made of the budget or of the district's \$5.9 million deficit.

The Curriculum Committee also recommended April 11 for the board to add the following back into the budget at a cost of about \$400,000: kindergarten, first, and second grade part-time classroom aides, 24 special education classroom aides, high school remedial math, as well as the middle school Read 180 program and Read 180 for high school special education students.

A budget workshop is scheduled for tonight at 7 p.m. at the Daniel Boone Middle School. The board has proposed \$2.8 million of cuts to reduce the \$5.9 million deficit.

The only approved program change is to reduce full day kindergarten to a half day program for a savings of \$424,166.33. That savings is reflected in the current deficit amount.

Alinda Ferez, Douglassville, co-founder of the Daniel Boone Public School Initiative -- which fell short in its effort to raise money to save full day kindergarten -- asked the board to save the program by reinstating seven kindergarten teachers instead of reinstating the part-time aides. Fiset said the part-time aides cost is about \$140,000.

"I admire you all," Ferez told the board, adding, "You are very pro-active during these tough times."

Angela Bongiovanno, Birdsboro, and her fellow high school drum line members,

attended the board meeting in support of not eliminating the drum line.

"I cringe when I think where we would be without the drum line," said Bongiovanno. "Drugs, addicted to video games, and I don't know where we would be without it. We all love each other and we love our program. Monday night is one of our few nights off but we showed up tonight to support our beloved program."

Sheehan said the board's only discussion of middle school and high school bands (regarding reducing the budget deficit) is the Curriculum Committee's recommendation that the high school's \$35,000 marching band program should be a non-graded, extracurricular activity; he said there is no proposal to cut it.

Board members said the approval of an extracurricular fee could ultimately save the program from elimination because of costs. Fiset said the extracurricular fee and the creation of a policy is being discussed in committee for discussion at the board's May 9 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Teresa Walter, Douglassville, asked the board to consider the importance of music in the mental development of children before the board votes to eliminate fourth and/or fifth grade band.

"Do some homework on what music does for children," said Walter. "Music makes all parts of the brain light up and creates new neuro-pathways such as high level math skills. The more music and arts classes, the higher student achievement was in all measures, and the least likely students are to drop out of school. I expect the board to make an informed decision and do their homework before cutting any music programs, which are essential for our children and the academic success of the Daniel Boone School District"

The board recognized Linda Neiman, secretary to Superintendent Dr. Gary L. Otto, at her last official board meeting before she retires on May 6; she will attend tonight's budget meeting. Otto said Neiman was hired on Aug. 27, 1984, at \$3 an hour as a junior secretary and worked for the school district for 27 years.