

Boone junior seeks school board seat

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By Kevin Duffy
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Some Daniel Boone School District residents might be surprised to learn that one candidate for school board won't even be old enough to vote for himself in the May 17 primary.

Connor Kurtz, a junior at Daniel Boone High School, won't turn 18 until September, two months before the general election.

Still, Connor has become a familiar face at school board meetings, often questioning the district's approach to spending.

Connor is cross-filed for the primary, meaning he'll appear on the Democratic and Republican ballots in Region 1, Amity Township.

"I believe my age is an advantage," he said. "I'm the end-user of the services that the district provides. All the decisions the board makes affect me."

Connor's interest in running for school board was sparked about six months ago when he noticed the condition of flags flying outside the middle school along Weavertown Road in Amity Township.

"The American flag was tattered and the Pennsylvania flag was torn in half," he said. "I went to a school board meeting and said: 'You can't leave the flag like this. You can't let the American flag fly in this manner. It's despicable.'"

Both flags, he said, were replaced within days.

Connor said he listened to issues other people raised at the meeting. Some spoke about the elimination of a bus route, which piqued his interest.

"I wanted to find out how that would be resolved," he said.

From there, Connor became a fixture at most meetings, questioning the board about a variety of issues.

He believes Daniel Boone has overindulged in spending, particularly in respect to school facilities and teachers' contracts. Students and parents, he maintains, aren't getting the quality of education equal to the amount residents pay in taxes.

Connor, who will graduate in June 2012, said he would attend college locally so that he could serve on the board.

Connor's father, Jim Kurtz, said he and his wife, Heather, are supportive of their son's candidacy, even though they fully expect him to go to college.



"That was a concern for us, but he said he is determined to make every school board meeting," Jim Kurtz said. "I said that's quite a responsibility, but OK.

"He's an old soul of a child. He's always looked into bigger things. It's unusual, but he's pretty focused."

Another school board candidate, David Rathgeb, 44, admires Connor for running.

"I certainly think it's fantastic and commend him for his initiative," said Rathgeb, who lives in the same Amity neighborhood and has known the Kurtz family since 1998. "My only concern would be I expect he's going off to college."

School board member Alan D. Ross said he believes it's inappropriate for a student to run for school board. He explained that state law prohibits school employees from holding elected seats within their districts, so if a teacher or custodian is prohibited due to a conflict of interest, Ross reasoned, then a student should be as well.

"I'm a CPA, and I couldn't be the auditor for the district because I'm serving on the board," Ross said. "We set policy, (like) what grade it takes to pass a course. It's totally inappropriate that he would be awarding himself his own diploma."

Still, there's nothing in the law that prohibits a student from running, other than that the individual must be 18, which Connor will be on Sept. 8.

To Connor, his student status shouldn't be a factor at the polls.

"Age isn't the issue in our election," he said. "Taxing and spending are the issue."

Contact Kevin Duffy: 610-371-5016 or kduffy@readingeagle.com.