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## Group wants to raise \$425,000, save full-day Boone kindergarten

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Last week the Daniel Boone School Board agreed to slash its kindergarten program to a half-day to handle a gaping budget deficit.

On Monday the board agreed to keep the full-day program if a parents group can raise \$425,000 in six weeks.

Two parents, Alinda V. Ferenz and Craig Brown, want kindergarten parents to donate up to \$2,000 to a new nonprofit they're creating, tentatively called Daniel Boone Public School Initiative.

They asked for the board's blessing, and after discussing legal and logistical concerns, the board voted 8-1 to accept the proposal. Kevin F. McCullough voted no.

"It's a win-win situation if they can raise money for the district," board member Walter B. Sheehan said.

The kindergarten cut is one of several the district will need to close a \$6.9 million gap in the \$51 million preliminary budget.

The budget includes a 10 percent tax hike. The 2.82-mill increase would raise the annual tax bill on a property assessed at \$100,000 to \$3,124 from \$2,842.

Brown and Ferenz have attracted about 70 parents in three days to a Facebook group focused on saving full-day kindergarten.

They read about a group of New Jersey parents that recently raised \$420,000 in a month.

"We know that we're in a bind," Ferez said. "We know that there is no money, but we're trying to get it. We're trying to provide our children with good education with full-day kindergarten so our children can learn at their own pace, whether it's slower or faster than the others."

If the group fails to raise the full amount, donors will get full refunds, Ferez said.

The group plans to set up a table at kindergarten registrations, and also to organize a meeting Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Villa at Morlatton.

Dr. Gary L. Otto, superintendent, said the fundraising effort could send a mixed message to the community. He suggested the group take the time to canvas the community and try next year. He also said district administrators are already preparing for half-day kindergarten.

The proposal would require approval from district Solicitor Brian Subers, Otto said.

The board also discussed cutting eighth-grade foreign languages and fifth-grade band, cutting guidance hours by 20 percent throughout the district and soliciting donations for programs.

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