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## Board considers all-day classes

By KRISTINA SMITH HORN

Watchdog/enterprise reporter

FREMONT -- Fremont City Schools are considering starting all-day kindergarten classes next year at some district elementary schools, an official said.

A committee of elementary school principals, kindergarten teachers and other officials are examining the cost of implementing all-day classes, curriculum and what furnishings might be necessary, Laurie Godfrey, director of curricula assessment and staff development, said at the school board's meeting Tuesday night.

"Our students are expected to learn so much more than they were expected to learn in the past," she said. "We just want to give them every opportunity we can."

Currently the district offers half-day kindergarten with morning and afternoon classes for an estimated 300 students, Godfrey said.

Years ago, it had all-day kindergarten that was funded through grants, Godfrey said. If the district implements all-day class again, officials want it to sustain itself and not be dependent on grant money.

After the committee researches what needs to be done to implement the all-day kindergarten, a proposal will be made to the school board, she said. Board members then decide whether or not to approve it.

"We want to present the entire picture," she said.

Although the district would have to hire more kindergarten teachers, the all-day classes could save money in the areas of busing and food service, she said.

"Another benefit is the teachers can really get to know the students and their parents better," Godfrey said. "We think it's a real benefit to both the student and the family."

If the board decides to have all-day kindergarten, it would only be implemented at a few of the district's elementary schools to start, Godfrey said. The district likely would not have enough money to add the all-day classes at all schools, Superintendent Traci McCaudy said.

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- McCaudy discussed some of the district's goals. Officials want to improve the district's state rating with the Ohio Department of Education to excellent by 2010, she said.

The district received an effective rating, which is just below excellent, in August. Ratings are based on students' scores on standardized tests.

District officials also want to increase student achievement; close the gaps in socio-economic, ethnic and disability groups in student achievement; and build trust and respect with the community.

- McCaudy said district officials are considering having students wear uniforms.
- The number of expulsions has decreased this year, McCaudy said. There has been one so far this year, compared to four last year at this time.

Out-of-school suspensions also have decreased, she said. There have been 85 so far this year, compared to 98 at this time last year.

- Enrollment has been declining for the past six years, said Christine Opelt, director of human resources and community relations. There are 4,228 students in the district this year, compared to 4,300 last year and 4,612 in the 2002-2003 school year.

Next year, the district is projected to have a reduction of more than 100 students, she said.

"Our community is losing families," Opelt said. "More than likely that is due to factories or businesses closing."

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