

540 EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

I. PURPOSE

The School Board recognizes that there may be occasions when it is appropriate to admit a child to school prior to the regular entrance age of five (5) years on or before September 1 of a school year. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to families and professional staff regarding early entrance to kindergarten.

~~The purpose of this policy is to explain the requirements for Early Entrance to School requests for students at Owatonna Public Schools.~~

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Minn. Stat. § 120A.20 (1)(b) Admission to public school states that, "A person shall not be admitted to a public school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences...except that any school board may establish a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age under section 124D.02...."

III. CRITERIA FOR EARLY ENTRANCE

Children 5 years of age, on or before September 1 are eligible to enter Kindergarten. If a child's birth date falls after September 1 and on or before October 31, the parent/guardian may request consideration for fall enrollment into kindergarten under the following procedures:

1. Parents or guardians must submit an Early Entrance to Kindergarten Request Form, available on the District website, to the district by May 1 of the year preceding the desired enrollment.
2. Children must complete the district's Early Childhood Screening before submitting the early entrance request. This screening assesses developmental milestones and readiness for school.
3. Children considered for early entrance will undergo assessments to evaluate cognitive ability, academic readiness, and social-emotional development. The district shall arrange for these assessments to be conducted by qualified professionals, such as licensed psychologists or trained assessment specialists. Assessments may include standardized tests, observations, and parent/guardian input. The parent/guardian will incur the charge for the assessment if completed by the school district. A sliding fee scale will be used to accommodate financial need. The district will consider external evaluations submitted by the parent or legal guardian, provided they are conducted by licensed professionals and meet district standards.
4. An early entrance committee will review the assessment results and make a recommendation regarding the child's early entrance to kindergarten. The family will be notified of the results and the decision of the committee.

5. Parents or legal guardians who disagree with the committee's decision may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent within 10 calendar days of receiving the decision. The Superintendent's decision following the appeal is final.
6. Children approved for early entrance to kindergarten will participate in a six-week trial period at the start of the school year. During this time, the child's academic progress, social interactions, and overall adjustment to the kindergarten environment will be monitored by the teaching staff. A meeting with the parents or guardians will be held at the end of the trial period to discuss the child's experience and determine if continuing in kindergarten is in the child's best interest. The final decision will be made collaboratively by the principal, teacher, and school psychologist.

~~A. Must be five on or before December 1 and have one year of preschool experience.~~

~~B. An application for early entrance to kindergarten must be made no later than May 1 of the preceding school year to the Elementary Principal along with a copy of the child's birth certificate and a letter of recommendation from the child's preschool teacher.~~

~~C. The following tests will be administered by a certified teacher, school psychologist, or principal employed by Owatonna Public Schools and the scores must be at or above the levels indicated:~~

Test	Score
Curriculum-based reading assessment	Kindergarten—Winter Goal
A Test of Visual Motor Integration	+1 Standard Deviation Above
Receptive/Expressive Vocabulary Test	+1 Standard Deviation

~~D. The child's intellectual functioning will be assessed using an individually administered intelligence test conducted by a licensed psychologist, preferably employed by Owatonna Public Schools. The child's Full Scale Intellectual functioning must place him/her at or above the 85th percentile or greater than +1 Standard Deviation. The parent/guardian will incur the charge for the assessment and it will be \$50 per hour if completed by the school district. A sliding fee scale will be used to accommodate financial need.~~

~~E. The district will complete testing and will meet the parents/guardians upon completion of the evaluation to review the results and make recommendations based on the evaluation results by June 1st. All district decisions are final.~~

~~F. All early entrant placements are on a trial basis for six weeks. The student's progress will be reviewed at a parent teacher conference where the decision will be made as to whether or not the student will be continuing beyond the trial period. All district decisions are final.~~

~~G. Children who are approved for continuation in kindergarten will automatically be approved for early admission to first grade pending successful completion of the kindergarten requirements. If the student has not met promotion to first grade requirements, retention in kindergarten will be considered.~~

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.20 (Admission to Public School)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.02 (School Board Powers; Enrollment)

Cross References: Policy 513 (Student Promotion, Retention, and Program Design)