



Revised: 9/10/2015; 1/9/92; 4/12/12;

Adopted: 7/9/81

598 EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

I. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to provide an exception to the kindergarten admission minimum age law for exceptional children.
- B. The 1967 legislature passed a law 120.06 “Admission to Public Schools” – Age Limitations. The law states as follows:

All schools supported in whole or in part by state funds are public schools. Admission to a public school is free to any person who resides within the district which operates the school, who is under 21 years of age, and who satisfies the minimum age requirements imposed by this section. No person shall be admitted to any public school after September 1, 1971, (1) as a kindergarten student, unless she or he is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which she or he seeks admission commences; or (2) as a first grade student, unless she or he is at least six years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which she or he seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten; except that any school board may establish a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Mahtomedi Public Schools will have a program of Early Kindergarten Admission (EKA). This policy will allow children who are five years of age on September 2 through October 31 of the calendar school year for which they seek admission to enroll in kindergarten at their attendance area schools if they meet ALL of the following EKA assessment requirements:
 - 1. Birth dates prior to November 1 of the calendar school year for which they seek admission;
 - 2. Measured general intellectual ability at or above the 98th percentile when compared with same-age peers +/- one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) for the test used will be required. This area will be assessed using a standardized, norm-referenced, individually administered test of intellectual ability that is appropriate for the children given their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Subscales or prorated scores will not be accepted as indicative of “general intellectual ability”;

3. Measured social/emotional/behavioral skills within the average to above-average range (i.e., 25th percentile or higher) when compared with children who are age-appropriate for kindergarten. This area will be assessed using standardized, norm-referenced checklists designed to compare a child's social/behavioral skills to those of his/her peers. Parents and current daycare/preschool providers will be asked to complete these checklists, as information across settings is needed to determine present level of performance;
 4. Measured academic readiness skills within the average to above-average range (i.e., 25th percentile or higher) when compared with children who are age-appropriate for kindergarten. This area will be assessed using curriculum based measures of early literacy and numeracy as well as a criterion-based assessment of kindergarten readiness skills (e.g., the kindergarten portfolio);
 5. Assessed functional independence and school-readiness skills that are at least average when compared with children who are age-appropriate for kindergarten. This area will be assessed through parent and preschool teacher checklists and interviews. Additionally, the children may be observed within their preschool environments. If a preschool environment is not available, the children may be invited into an existing kindergarten classroom to facilitate an observation of the children's skills in following a teacher's directions, functioning within a large group, and interacting with peers during academic and/or social instruction; and
 6. Assessments and admission procedures will be sensitive to underrepresented groups, including, but not limited to Low-income, minority, twice-exceptional, and English learners.
- B. The elementary principal will set up screening and testing times for children and consultation with parents during the months of March, April, May, June, July, or August for children eligible for early entrance to kindergarten in September.

III. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR EKA

- A. At the request of interested parents and/or community members, the district will conduct a meeting for families considering EKA to explain the EKA requirements and process.
- B. Families seeking EKA must submit a letter of request for admission, or complete and submit the appropriate form, to the school district (by way of the district office or the desired school of attendance) by April 1 of the calendar year in which the family is seeking EKA (e.g., if the family is seeking EKA for the 2013-14 school year, the request for admission must be submitted by April 1, 2013).
- C. A district representative will meet individually with each family seeking EKA and review assessment requirements. A brief history of the child will be taken and an assessment plan developed that reduces any cultural or linguistic bias in the assessment process. Consent to obtain information from daycare and preschool providers will be obtained (note: parents may choose to decline consent; however, the team will need to develop alternative methods for obtaining information about

child performance across settings, and decisions about EKA are based on available data).

- D. A district school psychologist, in collaboration with the gifted and talented coordinator, will be responsible for organizing the assessment process, ensuring that all data are collected and summarized, completing any needed intellectual and social/behavioral assessment, convening the EKA assessment team, editing any final reports, and relaying information to families.
- E. Signed consent to complete the assessment will be obtained prior to starting any data collection. Any individual testing will take place before or after regular school hours or immediately following the conclusion of the school year.
- F. No testing by psychologists for EKA will be done prior to April 1 of the calendar year for which admission is sought. This ensures that all children tested will be at least four years and five months old.
- G. A fee will be charged to the parents for each child assessed, payable to Mahtomedi Public Schools at a rate commensurate with the expenses. The expenses include things like personnel costs, costs of test protocols, related materials, etc. This payment is due prior to starting the early admission assessment. Financial support to offset the cost of the early admission assessment is available through a standard application based on determination of financial need.
- H. The school district will have an early admission kindergarten team (team) review the assessment results. The team shall include a kindergarten teacher, a building principal, a school psychologist, the gifted and talented coordinator, and additional personnel as deemed appropriate.
- I. The team shall decide if the child meets the criteria, and is approved for EKA. The decision of the team is final and will be provided in writing to the family.
- J. A written summary of the assessment shall be submitted to the school district by June 15 of the calendar year in which the family is seeking EKA. Prior to June 30 of the same year, families will be contacted regarding assessment results. A meeting with available team members will be convened, if requested, to review assessment results and conclusions.
- K. Principals, teachers, and school psychologists in Mahtomedi Public Schools will not be involved in screening or evaluating students whose parents are interested in early entrance to preschool programs.
- L. Parents may seek assessment for EKA from agencies other than the school district at their own expense. Reports from these agencies must comply with the criteria established by the school district regarding age, intellectual ability, academic skills, social/emotional/behavioral skills, and functional independence in a school setting. Any areas not addressed adequately by a private provider's evaluation summary must be assessed prior to determination of EKA eligibility. The EKA

team will review any externally collected data and decide if: (1) the child is approved for EKA: (2) the child is not approved for EKA, or (3) additional data are needed to determine EKA eligibility. If additional data are needed to make the EKA decision, the EKA team will draft a recommended assessment plan, including any fees associated with completing the assessment, and submit the plan to the family (total fees will not exceed the cost indicated above for conducting a thorough EKA assessment). The decision of the team will be final and provided in writing to the family.

- M. Parents seeking open enrollment in the Mahtomedi Public Schools for their child as well as EKA must apply for EKA following the procedures above. If the child is not eligible for EKA, the open enrollment seat will be forfeited for the desired academic year.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120B.15 (Gifted and Talented Students Programs)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.02, Subd. 1 (Kindergarten Instruction)

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