

Policies

Westerly Public Schools Early Entry to Kindergarten

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(Ref. RIGL 16-2-27; A. Doe vs. Middletown School Committee, Commissioner of Education, May 31, 2005; RIDE Opinion Letter "Implementation of the Change in Kindergarten Eligibility Age", April 25, 2003.)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the early years of a student's educational experience provide the solid foundation critical to ongoing educational success. Since these early years are so essential to a successful long term educational experience, every effort is made to ensure that students entering kindergarten are ready to learn and be successful. Students are best served when they enter school at the age research indicates is most conducive to long term success. However this protocol prescribes the consideration of the individual needs of students for early entrance to kindergarten.

Parents must notify the superintendent's office by July 15 of their request to have their child evaluated for early entry to Kindergarten.

Definition

Early Entry Candidate: a Westerly resident who will be five (5) between September 2 and October 1.

Kindergarten Early Entry Team (KEET): a group of Westerly school department professionals, who will evaluate, review and determine a student's candidacy for early entry to kindergarten. The team will be comprised of a building level administrator, early childhood coordinator, kindergarten teacher and the assistant superintendent.

Determining Factors: The decision regarding early entrance into Kindergarten requires careful consideration of several factors including: student's academic, social, emotional, physical development and well-being. As such, reliable information regarding student readiness and thoughtful consideration for each individual is necessary.

Requirement

An evaluation of the child's potential to benefit from early kindergarten admission is required. Parent authorization for any evaluation, at no cost, and completed in a reasonable time period. Outside evaluations will not be considered.

After evaluation is completed, a conference will be held with the parents to communicate the decision of the Kindergarten Early Entry Team. A written summary of the evaluation findings shall be made available to the parent(s)/guardian(s). If a decision is made to not allow a child early admittance, parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to appeal first to the Superintendent of Schools, to the school committee, and then the Rhode Island Department of Education.

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Student candidates for early entry will not be considered for placement in their neighborhood schools if this causes the kindergarten enrollment to exceed the maximum allowable class size limit. Should this occur, Westerly Public Schools will provide transportation to all eligible kindergarten students. If all kindergarten classrooms are at capacity, or reasonably expected to reach capacity, early entry is denied.

Development committee: Christina Allen, Deb Pendola, Alicia Storey

Adopted: October 1, 2014