



## Mapleton Public Schools

# “Early Access” Instructions

(For Highly Advanced Gifted Children Under Age Six)

*Updated: April 2025*

## What is “Early Access”?

The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA), defines “Early Access” as “*early entrance to kindergarten at age four (4) or first grade at age five (5) for highly advanced gifted children who are placed in a grade level above other same aged peers*” based on the following conditions:

- The student is formally identified as “highly gifted;” and
- The student meets requirements for accelerated placement as determined by a comprehensive body of evidence (e.g., cognitive ability, achievement, social-emotional factors, school learning skills, developmental characteristics, and family and school support).

The State of Colorado has determined that only students who are identified as “highly gifted” may apply for early entrance into kindergarten and/or first grade. “Highly gifted” is defined as students who demonstrate highly gifted abilities at the **97<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher** on cognitive and achievement assessments. [Rule Section 12.02(2)(I) and 12.08]

## “Early Access” in Mapleton

Due to the wide range of student abilities when entering school in PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the Office of Gifted Education at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) recommends that districts use a qualifying score on a **cognitive** assessment when identifying students for “Early Access” and/or gifted and talented status. With this guidance in mind, Mapleton requires a qualifying score on a cognitive assessment to qualify for “Early Access” status; all other assessments are included as “supporting data” used to create a comprehensive body of evidence.

The “Early Access” student candidate must:

- qualify as “highly gifted” (at or above the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile) through a qualifying score on a cognitive assessment within a comprehensive body of evidence.
- be socially and emotionally mature.
- be motivated to learn.
- be able to focus for sustained periods of time (comparable to target grade peers).
- be ready for advanced placement; and
- have exhausted the existing resources of preschool or home schooling.

The student must meet the following age requirements by October 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Four (4) years of age for Kindergarten, or
- Five (5) years of age for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade.

The application window runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Referrals received after March 31<sup>st</sup> are evaluated at the discretion of the district.

Final classroom placement must be completed by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

The following articles can help educators and families gain a better understanding of what giftedness may look like in young children:

*Characteristics of Intellectually Advanced Young People* (Davidson Institute)

<https://www.davidsongifted.org/search-database/entry/a10501>

*Preschool Behaviors in Gifted Children* (MCGT)

<https://mcgt.net/preschool-behaviors-in-gifted-children>

## **The Application Process**

### **Step 1: Application Package**

A student is referred for “Early Access” consideration by the parent/guardian/family by submitting the following items to:

Gifted Education Program  
Mapleton Public Schools  
7350 Broadway, Denver, CO 80221

- 1) *(required)* Mapleton “Early Access” Entrance Application,
- 2) *(required)* Mapleton “Early Access” Parent Survey,
- 3) *(required)* \$50 Screening Fee (which may be waived upon receipt of a qualifying Free/Reduced Lunch Program application), and
- 4) *(optional)* Student Screening Portfolio which may include:
  - Letter of recommendation from preschool/kindergarten teacher
  - Supporting anecdotal information such as a one-to-one interview
  - Test/Observational data (e.g., TS GOLD student reports, Ages & Stages Questionnaire, literacy/math data, private testing results, etc.)
  - Student work samples (e.g., writing samples, projects, etc.)

## **Step 2: Initial Review**

The application package is evaluated by a District Determination Team within twenty (20) school days of receipt to determine if there is enough evidence to move forward with further evaluation and data collection. The district team is composed of staff from the Gifted Education Program, Early Childhood Program, and Teaching & Learning Services. This decision is communicated with the parent/family by email and/or letter.

## **Step 3: Data Collection**

If a decision is made to continue with the evaluation process, within 30 school days an appointment is made for testing of the student, which may include individual IQ testing with a district-licensed school psychologist, additional cognitive and achievement assessment(s), and/or the student's family may provide private testing results. Data is collected from a variety of sources, which may include classroom performance, district assessments, embedded curriculum assessments, interviews, family and/or educator referrals, student surveys, and/or behavior scales.

## **Step 4: Data Evaluation**

The District Determination Team (including school administrators) reviews and analyzes the collected data. The analysis focuses on the student's strengths and comprehensive readiness for early access. Collaboratively, the District Determination Team decides if the child is intellectually and emotionally ready to benefit from early access to kindergarten or first grade.

## **Step 5: Final Determination**

The final determination status is communicated with the parent/family by email and/or letter, with a copy placed in the student's digital school records.

## **Step 6: Advanced Learning Plan**

If accepted, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is collaboratively developed by the classroom teacher, GT Lead, and parent/guardian/family by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the year of early access enrollment.

## **Step 7: Progress Monitoring**

If accepted, regular monitoring of the ALP will occur between the parent/guardian/family and classroom teacher at each parent/teacher conference scheduled throughout the school year.

### **Dispute Resolution**

In the event of a dispute regarding the final determination, the parent/family can request dispute resolution via the district's board policy on complaints [KE Public Concerns and Complaints, KE-E Formal Complaint Form].