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.

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.

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)