

Early Entrance Requirements to Kindergarten/Grade 1

These procedures are developed to follow the guidelines specifying the age and conditions under which a child may be enrolled in public school as established by the North Dakota Century Code and the BPS Policy FAAB *Early Entrance Requirements*.

Schools Free and Accessible - School Ages

1. Each public school must be free, open, and accessible at all times to any child provided:
 - a. The child may not enroll in grade one unless the child reaches the age of six before August first of the year of enrollment;
 - b. The child may not enroll in kindergarten unless the child reaches the age of five before August first of the year of enrollment; and
 - c. The child has not reached the age of twenty-one before August first of the year of enrollment.
2. Notwithstanding subsection 1, a school district may not enroll in grade one a child who is not six years old before August first, unless the child will be six years old before December first and:
 - a. The child, by means of developmental and readiness screening instruments approved by the superintendent of public instruction and administered by the school district, can demonstrate academic, social and emotional readiness, or
 - b. The child has completed an approved kindergarten program.
3. Notwithstanding subsection 1, a school district may not enroll in kindergarten a child who is not five years old before August first, unless the child will be five years old before December first and the child, by means of developmental and readiness screening instruments approved by the superintendent of public instruction and administered by the school district, can demonstrate superior academic talents or abilities and social and emotional readiness.
4. The requirements of this section are not applicable to the children of military families, to the extent that the requirements conflict with enrollment provisions otherwise agreed to by the state in the compact on educational opportunity for military children.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Student Support Services, 806 N Washington Street, Bismarck, North Dakota

Purpose

An early entrance evaluation process for kindergarten and first grade has been established to accommodate inquiries from parents who view their child as possessing and demonstrating high levels of ability and maturity when compared with their same chronological age-group peers.

This process reflects BPS's desire to meet individual differences by providing an accelerated educational opportunity for those children who can best profit by it.

An applicant may be allowed to apply only once for early admission during a 12-month period. Application denial decisions are binding for a 12-month period.

Transfer Students

The District will honor early admission evaluation decisions made by other North Dakota school districts. The District shall also honor early admission decisions made by other United States school districts for military children governed by ND Century Code and worldwide for military children governed by ND Century Code. Despite these exceptions, the District will still require a four-week probation period for any student who transfers into the District and is younger than the state minimum age of attendance for kindergarten or first grade.

Procedure

Parents of a child who will be five years of age after July 31 and before December 1 of the current school year may apply for an early entrance evaluation for this child. A parent informational meeting will be held in April of each year at which time the parents of said child must request the early entrance evaluation and complete the specified request form on or before May 1. Parents will then be contacted to confirm dates, times, and locations for their child's evaluation, which will generally be completed within thirty days of the request.

The early entrance evaluation process may conclude at any step if it becomes evident that the child does not meet necessary criteria.

The child may be observed and evaluated by members of the early entrance team which may consist of the school psychologist(s), a certified kindergarten or first grade teacher, a speech/language pathologist, and an educational specialist.

Criteria

The early entrance evaluation process will emphasize specific skills and behavioral characteristics which are highly correlated with success in the kindergarten or first grade curriculum, as well as continued success in an advanced curriculum throughout the student's academic years. These readiness areas include: cognitive/intellectual development, communication skills, academic readiness, sensorimotor/physical development, adaptive skills development, and social/emotional maturity.

- *Cognitive/Intellectual Development:* For early entrance to first grade, the child must demonstrate intellectual development or aptitude of no less than 114 (75th percentile) on a deviation scale. For early entrance to kindergarten, the child must demonstrate superior level of intellectual development or aptitude requirement of 2 standard deviations above the norm (mean of 100) with a lower limit of no less than 128 on a deviation scale.

- *Communications Skills and Academic Readiness*: indicated ability with receptive communication skills, verbal expression, and academic readiness falling within the upper quartile compared to same age peers
- *Sensorimotor/Physical Development*: ratings and observations of the child's coordination, large muscle development, and fine motor development are within the upper quartile. The child needs to be in good general health.
- *Adaptive Skills Development/Social Emotional Maturity*: the child will participate in a classroom experience with teacher observations indicating above average social adjustment and school readiness behaviors. Additional adaptive behaviors ratings/checklists and parent and teacher interviews will be used as needed.

A child who has demonstrated the superior and above-average skills and development will be eligible for a four-week probation enrollment in kindergarten or first grade. Following this time period, a conference will be held with the parents to determine if the early entrance decision has been in the best interest of the student

Early Entrance Placement

The above described early entrance evaluation process will be done once yearly in April-May. A child who moves into the community during the summer months and demonstrates above average characteristics may still be considered for the evaluation process prior to the beginning of the school term. BPS may honor evaluations of other districts and private practitioners that meet fully the above criteria. Final decision will remain with the Bismarck Public School evaluation team, based on successful participation during the probation enrollment.