



Cumberland School Department Policy Manual

STUDENTS

J

EARLY ENTRY TO KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE

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PURPOSE

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 academic success. Since the first years are so essential to a successful long-term educational experience, every effort is made to ensure that students entering kindergarten and first grade are ready to learn and be successful. Balancing current understanding of the long-term effects of early education with the unique needs of each student requires careful consideration. The Cumberland School Committee, in accordance with Rhode Island state regulation, holds that students are best served when they enter school at the ages research indicates is most conducive to long-term success. However, this policy and state regulation have prescribed the consideration of the individual needs of students for early entrance.

Early Entry Candidate: A Cumberland resident who will be five or six years old between September 1 and December 31 of the enrollment year, or on an individual basis, those students who have not turned five by December 31.

ISSUES

The decision regarding early entrance to kindergarten and first grade requires careful consideration of all factors. The academic, social, and emotional readiness, as well as the student's physical development and well-being, must be weighed and institutional factors may also be considered. Sound decision making in the area of early entrance to kindergarten and first grade is dependent upon reliable information regarding a student's readiness and a thoughtful balancing of the myriad of factors implicated by the decision.

POSITION

It is the presumption of the Cumberland School Committee that students will enter kindergarten and first grade at the ages prescribed by Rhode Island state regulation. The Cumberland School Committee understands that students whose birth dates closely miss the cutoff date for school attendance may have educational needs or demonstrated capabilities that warrant early admission to kindergarten or first grade.



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KINDERGARTEN EARLY ENTRANCE

Procedures

The kindergarten early entrance procedures are designed to identify and place those children in kindergarten who:

1. Will turn 5 years of age between September 1 and December 31 or on an individual basis, those students who have not turned five by December 31 and;
2. Are believed by parent(s), guardian(s), or teachers as being intellectually advanced and likely to benefit from advanced grade placement in kindergarten and; are selected on the basis of evaluations conducted by district personnel with evidence of strength in mental ability, fine and gross motor ability, visual and auditory discrimination, social/emotional, development, and communication skills.

The following procedures will be used to address all requests for early kindergarten admission:

1. Applications for early admission to Kindergarten will be accepted between March 1 and May 1 by the Cumberland Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Residents who move into Cumberland after the closing date but prior to August 1 may apply for screening by July 31. The initial application will include:
 - A. An up-to-date and certified immunizations record
 - B. A certified birth certificate
2. An evaluation of the child's potential to benefit from early admission to kindergarten is required. Parent(s)/guardian(s) authorization for any evaluation is required. The evaluation will be at no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s). It shall be completed within a reasonable time period by qualified personnel. Evaluations completed by outside providers will not be considered in the determination of early entrance to kindergarten.
3. In order to withstand the rigors of the kindergarten program, the early entry student must be able to demonstrate that he/she has the social-emotional, intellectual and developmental level of a five year old. To assess these areas, the following instruments will be used in the following order:
 - A. Application
 - B. School Readiness Assessment. This includes two parts of assessment completed concurrently.
 - i. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will complete a standardized rating scale that measures social/emotional development and;
 - ii. Students will participate in an assessment that evaluates foundational academic concepts necessary for kindergarten. Students must score in the 90%ile to move onto the next evaluation.
 - C. Weschler Pre-School and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI). Those students who score in at least the 80%ile will qualify for early admission to kindergarten.



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4. After the evaluation is completed, the Superintendent/Designee will notify parents of the results. A written summary of the evaluation findings shall be made available to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
5. If a decision is made to not allow a child early admittance to kindergarten, there will be no appeal process regarding the decision.
6. Student candidates for early entry to kindergarten will not be considered for placement in their home school if this causes the kindergarten enrollment to exceed the maximum allowable class size limit. Should this occur, other Cumberland School Department kindergarten classrooms with space for additional kindergarten students will be made available. In this situation, early entrant children will not be provided transportation. In the rare event that all classrooms are at capacity, early admittance to kindergarten will not be offered.

FIRST GRADE EARLY ENTRANCE

Procedures

The first grade early entrance procedures are designed to identify and place those children in first grade who:

1. Will turn 6 years of age between September 1 and December 31; or on an individual basis, those students who have not turned six by December 31 and;
2. Are believed by parent(s), guardian(s) or teachers, as being intellectually advanced and likely to benefit from advanced grade placement in first grade and; are selected on the basis of evaluations conducted by district personnel with evidence of strength in mental ability, fine and gross motor ability, visual and auditory discrimination, social/emotional, development, and communication skills.

The following procedures will be used to address all requests for early first grade admission:

1. Applications for early admission to first grade will be accepted between **March 1** and **May 1** by the Cumberland School Department's Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Residents who move into Cumberland after the closing date but prior to **August 1** may apply for screening by **July 31**. The initial application will include:
 - A. An up-to-date and certified immunizations record
 - B. A certified birth certificate



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2. An evaluation of the child's potential to benefit from early admission to first grade is required. Parent(s)/guardian(s) authorization for any evaluation is required. The evaluation will be at no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s). It shall be completed within a reasonable time period by qualified personnel. Evaluations completed by outside providers will not be considered in the determination of early entrance to kindergarten.
3. In order to be considered for early admittance to first grade the child must have successfully completed kindergarten or completed a program for five year old children that the district deems equivalent to kindergarten.
4. In order to withstand the rigors of the first grade program, the early entry student must be able to demonstrate that he/she has the social-emotional, intellectual and developmental level of a six year old. To assess these areas, the following instruments/information will be used in the following order:
 - A. Application
 - B. School Readiness Assessment. This includes two parts of assessment completed concurrently.
 - i. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will complete a standardized rating scale that measures social/emotional development and;
 - ii. Students will participate in an assessment that evaluates foundational academic concepts necessary for first grade. Students must score in the 90%ile to move onto the next evaluation.
5. After the evaluation is completed, the Superintendent/Designee will notify parents of the results. A written report of the evaluation findings shall be made available to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
6. If a decision is made to not allow a child early admittance to first grade, there will be no appeal process regarding the decision.
7. Student candidates for early entry to first grade will not be considered for placement in their home school if this causes the first grade enrollment to exceed the maximum allowable class size limit. Should this occur, other Cumberland School Department first grade classrooms with space for additional first grade students will be made available. In this situation, early entrant children will not be provided transportation. In the rare event that all classrooms are at capacity, early admittance to kindergarten will not be offered.



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STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE KINDERGARTEN AT PRIVATELY ACCREDITED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

For those students who successfully complete an accredited kindergarten program as demonstrated by official grade reports and who have not turned 6 by September 1 and whose parent/guardian wish for them to enter grade 1, a letter requesting placement in grade 1 will be made to the Superintendent/Designee by **May 1** of each school year.

By **June 30**, a final report card and letter of recommendation from the child's kindergarten must be provided to the Office of the Superintendent/Designee.

Information will be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent and submitted to the Superintendent for final approval and recommendation to the Cumberland School Committee at their first meeting scheduled in August of that year.

This process has been developed to guide our decision regarding this important issue. However, there may be times when flexibility is needed to do what is in the best interest of students. Therefore, the Superintendent/Designee shall have the authority to make the final decision on early entrance to kindergarten and first grade.

This policy supersedes the following policies:

JEC – Amendment to Early Admissions Policy; JECB – Kindergarten: Early Admission (Proposed);

JECB – Clarification of Early Admissions Policy

Policy Reviewed & Approved by Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee: 4/10/2012

Policy Approved by School Committee: 4/26/2012

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Revisions Approved by School Committee: 6/14/2012

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Revisions Approved by School Committee: 2/28/2013

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Amendments Approved by School Committee: 2/26/2015