



Nettle Creek Family of Schools

## Hagerstown Elementary School Kindergarten Early Entrance Policy

### Philosophy

When considering a student for early entrance into kindergarten, the needs of the whole child will be considered, including social/emotional development, physical factors, and cognitive ability. In order to be recommended for early entrance to kindergarten, children will need to demonstrate above-average academic skills, social/emotional skills, and physical development.

The standards for early entrance are very high. These rigorous criteria have been put in place to ensure that early entrants exhibit a level of readiness and social/emotional maturity commensurate with that of their peers, many of whom will be a year (or more) older. Early entrance applicants who are not yet able to demonstrate these skills are more likely to struggle with kindergarten curriculum, making for a frustrating introduction to their K-12 education. Our goal is that kindergarten will be a positive, successful experience for every child.

### Instruments for Kindergarten Early Entrance Screening

- Test of Achievement: Bracken School Readiness Assessment
- Tests of Aptitude: Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test 2 (K-BIT2) or Early Screening Profiles (Cognitive/Language Profile)
- Social/Emotional: Early Screening Profiles
- Fine Motor: Beery Visual-Motor Integration (VMI)

### Steps in the Screening Process:

A student must be at least five (5) years of age on August 1 of the school year to officially enroll in a kindergarten program offered by a school corporation (IC 20-33-2-7).

Parents of students who turn five between August 1 and September 1 may apply for early entrance to kindergarten.

- Parents who wish to apply for early entrance should complete and submit an application to the High Ability Coordinator by the last day of February of the year in which they want to enroll in their child. Contact the High Ability Coordinator at 765.489.4555 to obtain an application.
- A screening day for early entrance applicants will be scheduled at least two school weeks prior to Kindergarten Roundup, which is held in April of each year. Parents will be notified of the day/time of their child's screening appointment.
- During the screening process, students will participate in aptitude and achievement screenings, gross motor and fine motor skill tasks, and an interactive session with other students (early entrants or current kindergartners) while being supervised by a kindergarten teacher and the school counselor. Parents will complete surveys and paperwork as necessary in a separate setting. Recommendations for placement will not be made on the day of the screening.
- The Kindergarten Early Entrance Committee (comprised of the high ability coordinator, a kindergarten teacher, a preschool teacher, a school counselor, and a member of the Broad-Based Planning

Committee) will meet to tabulate and review each individual student's scores and make a recommendation regarding placement in kindergarten.

- Students' scores are calculated by converting percentile scores into stanine scores. Students who consistently score in the 8th or 9th stanine (90th percentile and above) will be recommended for early entrance.
- Students with a score below the 8th stanine (90th percentile) on one or more assessments will be considered on an individual basis to determine a recommendation for early entrance.
- Parents will receive written notification of the committee's decision, along with a copy of their child's scores. Parents may request to meet with the Kindergarten Early Entrance Committee to review the results.
- If a student is recommended for early entrance, he or she will be scheduled to attend Kindergarten Roundup, which is held in April of each year.
- Students who move in after early entrance screenings have taken place may apply for early entrance by completing the required paperwork and submitting it to the High Ability Coordinator by the start of the school year. Testing and observations will be scheduled for the first week of school.
- Transfer and move-in students who do not meet the age requirements per Indiana code will participate in the same screening and identification procedures for early entrant students.

## Support Services

A Kindergarten Early Entrance Committee (consisting of the preschool teacher, kindergarten teachers who have early entrants, the school counselor, and the high ability coordinator) will meet during the first weeks of school to assist in transitional needs for early entrance students. If a student is identified as needing more support, additional services may be recommended. Individual needs and services will be determined by the child's kindergarten teacher.

## High Ability Services

Being accepted for early entrance to kindergarten does not mean the student is identified as high ability. There is a separate process and set of criteria used to identify high ability students.

Kindergarten students – including those accepted for early entrance – will participate in grade-level screenings for high-ability identification & services. For students who are identified as high-ability, an instructional assistant will be available to work with those students until cluster services begin.

## Retention

Early entrance students are not exempt from retention. Parents will be notified by late winter/early spring if their child is at-risk of retention.