

## EXEMPTION FROM FIVE-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

### Introduction

In accordance with Act 41, as of September 1, 2011, no public school board or charter school is to enroll a student in first grade unless the child has completed 5-year-old kindergarten except as otherwise specifically by law or by the exemption procedures adopted by the school board.

Consistent with the District's stance for educating all students in their normal environment, the preference is to maintain students with their age peers. In situations where a student has not completed a five-year-old-kindergarten or its equivalent and who does not demonstrate the skills identified as needed for successful completion of first grade, denial of that student into first grade will be done only if it has been determined that the student will fail in a first grade placement or otherwise experience significant harmful effect in spite of extensive supports.

### Age Requirement

1. Regardless of kindergarten completion status, no child may be admitted to first grade in the District unless the child is six years old on or before September 1 of the year entrance to first grade is sought except when the student meets the first grade early entrance requirements identified in District Policy.
2. The parent/guardian may appeal a decision of the principal to deny enrollment into first grade for student following procedures identified in appropriate District policy.

### For Students Transferring from Outside the State

Students who transfer into the District from another state, territory, or country and who have not completed five-year-old kindergarten will be admitted into first grade if either of the following apply:

1. Before either commencing or completing first grade, the child moved into the District from a state, country, or territory in which completion of five-year-old kindergarten is not a prerequisite to entering first grade.
2. Before either commencing or completing first grade, the child moved into the District from a state, country, or territory in which completion of five-year-old kindergarten is a prerequisite to entering first grade and the child was exempted from the requirement.

### Conditions and standards for Exemption from Kindergarten Completion Requirements

With the exception of transfer students identified in the previous section, evidence must exist that the child's educational welfare would be served by placement in first grade. A student who has not completed a formal five-year-old kindergarten, and the transfer exemptions do not apply, will be admitted into the first grade if either of the following can be demonstrated:

1. The student successfully completed a program for five-year-old children that the District deems equivalent to kindergarten (e.g., structured home school program). Documentation of the program completion and student performance is required.
2. Based on assessment utilizing a variety of procedures (e.g., formal assessment, informal assessment, interview, work samples, observation, etc.), the student demonstrates academic, emotional, social and developmental readiness skills identified as necessary for successful participation in first grade.

### Procedure

1. Requests are to be submitted in writing to the principal of the school the student is anticipated to attend. If possible, this application should be submitted by August 1 prior to the upcoming school year or at least four weeks in advance for students transferring during the school year.
2. The principal will meet with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the reasons for requesting the student enter first grade without first completing a five-year-old kindergarten or equivalent and to review relevant information available.
3. Based on the information available, the principal will determine if sufficient information is available to make the decision relative to first grade placement for the student. If the principal deems additional information or assessment is needed, appropriate staff will be assigned to complete the assessment. Upon completion of this assessment, the principal will meet with staff and parents to review results and determine what levels of academic, emotional, social, and developmental readiness skills the student demonstrates.
4. For students who meet the age requirement, but who do not demonstrate the academic, emotional, social, or developmental skills deemed necessary for success in first grade, the principal in collaboration with appropriate staff, will determine what additional supports the student requires to participate in first grade. (Note: if the principal deems a special education evaluation is necessary, procedures consistent with that process will be observed.)
5. Any decision that an age-eligible student will not be admitted into first grade even with supports, or will be admitted to first grade on a probationary basis can be made only with the participation of the Director of Student Services or designee.
6. Any decision to enroll a student in first grade on a conditional or probationary basis will be reviewed no later than nine weeks after the student's initial participation in first grade.

### Appeal Procedure

1. Any decision relative to first grade placement can be appealed.
2. The parent/guardian must make their appeal in writing and submit that appeal to the Director of Student Services or designee.
3. The decision of the Director of Student Services or designee may be appealed to the Superintendent. Any such appeal must be made in writing. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

### Legal References

Wisconsin Statutes 118.3; 118.14(1); 120.12(25); 120.44; Chapter 115, subchapter V  
Policy 5111  
Act 41

Adopted: 8/29/11