

### Gifted Education Unit

#### Early Access to Educational Services for Kindergarten and First Grade

#### House Bill 1021

Signed: May 2008

Effective: July 2008

Rules: August 2008

#### What main points in HB 1021 impact administrative units/districts?

- House Bill 1021 reinstates a provision whereby districts may count in their enrollment and receive State Education Funds for highly gifted students who the administrative unit deems appropriate for early access to kindergarten or first grade.
- HB 1021 allows administrative units to decide whether early access will be permitted in the administrative unit.
- If an administrative unit permits early access, the district/s must abide by the rules of administration promulgated by the State Board of Education.
- The administrative unit makes the determination for early access placement based upon the Rules that will establish *criteria and a process that an administrative unit shall use to make determinations regarding the advanced placement of highly advanced gifted children. 22-20-104.5*
- The administrative unit may charge a fee to parents for early access assessment; except that, no fee will be charged to free and reduced lunch families.

#### If an administrative unit permits early access does it have to happen by fall 2008?

No. Administrative units (AU) may provide early access when the AU is ready to implement the conditions of HB-1021. For example, an AU may use the 2008-2009 school year to plan policy and procedures that align with the Rules; and, to implement professional development for educators and parents regarding the forthcoming early access requirements and procedures.

#### What child will benefit from HB 1021?

House Bill 1021 defines the 4 or 5 year old child who may benefit from early access as a “highly advanced gifted child”. This child is academically gifted, socially and emotionally mature, in the top 2% or less of the gifted peer group, motivated to learn, ready for advanced placement, and has exhausted the resources of preschool or home schooling.

The intent of HB 1021 is to meet the unique needs of the “highly advanced gifted child”. It does not permit early access to all gifted 4 or 5 year olds. Quality preschool programs will meet the needs of most gifted children. Acceleration is an option that may also be considered in future years.

#### How will preschool and kindergarten educators and parents learn about HB 1021?

Communication is a shared responsibility. The Colorado Department of Education will post information on the CDE web site and provide information to superintendents, gifted education directors, and public and private preschools. Administrative units will need to: 1) provide access to information; 2) educate members of its teaching staff and community about the district’s policy and procedures for the implementation of early access.

#### What criteria will the Rules address?

House Bill 1021 requires the Rules to consider: aptitude, achievement, performance, readiness for advanced placement, observable social behavior, motivation to learn, and support from parents, teachers, and school administrators.

#### What elements of an early access process will the Rules include?

House Bill 1021 requires the Rules to include: time line, involved personnel, evaluation, a body of evidence, decision making, and monitoring of student performance after early access.

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**If an administrative unit is considering early access, what are a few suggestions to begin the process?**

- Initiate conversation with a key stakeholder's group about early access policy, delineating purpose and link to quality instruction, learning, growth and self-esteem.
- Clearly define and provide examples of the student who would benefit from early access.
- Determine what the administrative unit's current status is for students with demonstrated exceptional abilities in the early years.
- Review the administrative unit's existing assessment tools for kindergarten and first grade readiness.
- Become aware of tools that are commonly used in a body of evidence for early access.
- Discuss how preschool teachers and parents will screen for readiness; and what personnel would be responsible for early access assessment and decision making.
- Consider how information will be communicated to private and public preschool staff and families in the community; and to the district's educators.

**What resource would offer background information for an early access procedure?**

The Iowa Acceleration Scale is a guide for making decisions about grade level acceleration that may be adapted for preschool to kindergarten acceleration. The whole child (aptitude, achievement, motivation, social-emotional readiness), learning environment and family support systems are taken into consideration.

Gifted Education directors and coordinators, most likely, have this resource in the administrative unit.

**What are examples of assessment tools that the district might include in a body of evidence for early access determinations?**

- A screening tool used by preschool teachers and/or parents to initiate a referral to the district (e.g., Gifted Rating Scales; district's kindergarten and first grade screening tools)
- An ability test that is an indicator of a student's potential to be successful in a school setting (e.g., Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Ability Scale, Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children)

- An assessment of achievement that will demonstrate a student's learning in specific content areas (e.g., Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement, Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, curriculum-based assessment)
- Response to intervention (RTI) data from instructional and curriculum evidence-based strategies and assessments for students above grade level
- Observation or rating scales that will provide information about social-emotional, physical and motivational factors contributing to school readiness and maturity (e.g., Iowa Acceleration Scale, Behavioral functioning rating scales)
- Interview data that considers relationships with peers and adults, attitudes about school and learning
- Information that provides evidence of parent and school system support for early access; and time line for additional data to determine success of placement

**Where will the Rules be found after they are approved by the State Board of Education?**

Early access requirements will be integrated into the Gifted Education section of the Rules for the administration of the *Exceptional Children's Education Act (section 12.00)*.

Rules are posted on the Secretary of State's web site: [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us); The Colorado Code of Regulations for the Exceptional Children's Education Act is: 1 CCR 301-8.

**What other factors are implied in an early access policy?**

- Early access procedures will require communication among preschool and general education teachers, parents and gifted education personnel.
- Personnel resources will be required to implement early access assessment and decision making.
- Parents and early childhood teachers will need to understand the meaning of "highly advanced gifted child" and the purpose of HB 1021.
- Quality preschool programs will meet the needs of most gifted preschoolers.