



Early Access Addendum - St Vrain Valley 2022-2026

updated January 2023

The following section is required if the administrative unit permits early access to kindergarten or first grade. Refer to ECEA rules 12.08 for describing all sections and provisions required for early access.

12.08(1)-12.08(2)(e)(v) Key requirements:

- Criteria and the process for early access are explained and accessible to parents, educators and the public
- Professional development is provided to preschool, general and gifted education personnel, and principals
- Early access determinations are made through a collaborative process among parents, preschool, general and gifted education and school administration
- If a fee is charged, there is evidence it is reasonable and there is no fee for students eligible for free and reduced lunch • AU describes the methods and tools used to make early access determinations
- Criteria in a body of evidence include referral by a parent or educator, student profile of strengths, performance, readiness, needs and interests
- A cognitive score of 97th percentile or above is required along with an achievement score of 97th percentile or above in reading, writing and mathematics
- Performance tools indicated by work samples demonstrates ability above age peers
- Tools are used to measure readiness, social behavior and motivation appropriate for early access
- A support system to assist a child's success includes: Letter of determination signed by parent, gifted staff, early childhood staff, receiving teacher and school administrator support early access; Transition goal in ALP for first year; Methods of communication between school and parents; How parents, teachers and school will contribute to a positive support system
- Applications for early access are due by April 1 for the next school year
- Determinations are made within 60 calendar days of the AU receiving the child's portfolio submitted by the child's parent • Referrals received after April 1 are at discretion of AU, provided determination is made by September 1 or the start of the upcoming school year, whichever is earlier
- Students are age 4 by October 1 for kindergarten; and, age 5 by October 1 for first grade
- Personnel trained in gifted education are included in the early access determination team and qualified personnel administer required assessments
- Requirements for the screening portfolio are clearly stated for parents
- A screening tool is used for parent and teacher input
- Performance data include portfolio and qualitative and quantitative data
- Determinations are a collaborative consensus process
- Early access students have a completed ALP by September 30
- If a child is identified as gifted but does not qualify for early access, information is provide to school serving the student • Progress monitoring is evident at least every 5 weeks during the first year of early access and recorded in the ALP • There is a procedure for early access disagreements

Directions: Address each section and the provisions of the early access ECEA Rules 12.08. In each section below, describe the methods and/or tools that the administrative unit will implement for early access communication, criteria and process. Type your response in the white boxes referencing the topics.

Communication

In what ways will the administrative unit:

- Inform parents, educators, and community members about criteria, process, timelines, portfolio referral, tests, final determinations and ALP development
- Provide professional development for educators and administrators about early access and ALP development, especially staff involved in the process

Each academic year, the community is notified regarding an Early Access Informational meeting. Notification platforms include the district website, the GT blog, and social media. In addition, fliers are sent to families, registrars, and Early Childhood centers. An informational parent meeting is held before March to share the requirements of Early Access, characteristics of young gifted children, and the process the district follows pertaining to a body of evidence for identification and acceleration. Translation services are provided as necessary.

Gifted Services is available to support preschool registration and community events. Gifted Services also works directly with the Early Childhood Department to develop district capacity to identify young gifted learners through Early Access. Principals, teachers, and registrars are aware of the Early Access process. Consultation is provided as needed. Documents outlining frequently asked questions, timelines, and protocol steps are available on the department website and are updated or reviewed annually.

Screening questions and portfolios are available for any parent requesting access. Portfolios are due by April 1st and are evaluated by a team of trained gifted specialists who communicate results to parents. The portfolio packet includes information pertaining to the timeline, frequently asked questions, observation scales and evaluation tools for parents and teachers. Students who are strong candidates for assessment are scheduled for evaluation. Early Access determinations are formulated with the assistance of a review team, which includes experts in the area of early childhood and gifted education. Status decisions are reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. If a student does not meet the criteria for continued assessment, the results will be communicated to parents. For students who qualify, an individual meeting is scheduled to develop the ALP and to determine appropriate challenge and support for the student in the accelerated grade. Progress is monitored during the transition.

Describe how your AU communicates the Early Access Plan:



Criteria

- Describe the method, the standard (level of results) and tool/s that will be considered to determine early access for a highly advanced gifted student using the following categories for criteria: aptitude, achievement, readiness for school, social behavior and motivation. • Explain the support system that will assist the child during year one of transition into early access. How will parents, teachers, school administrators and the learning environment contribute to a positive support system? How will the transition goal be monitored? In what ways will parents, teachers, and the child communicate about progress?

Aptitude: Ability testing provides a picture of the cognitive ability of a child that is not dependent on skills taught. District psychologists assist Gifted Services by administering aptitude testing for each Early Access candidate. Tools designed to measure cognitive abilities in young children (typically WPSII, DAS, or KABC for second language learners) are administered individually. Data reports containing a narrative explanation of observations and test results are created for parents, and for use in guiding the decision making process. Scores in all areas of the cognitive assessment are disaggregated to correlate with strength areas, (97th percentile denotes qualifying criteria).

If recent outside testing results (within past 3 months) are available for the child, the district psychologist and the Early Access Decision Team, will review the data to determine if further assessments are required. A comparable body of evidence to those candidates tested in-district is needed to make an appropriate status determination.

Achievement: Achievement is a measure of attainment skills and knowledge based on a specific grade level or information taught at a given level. A variety of achievement data is gathered to form a body of evidence. Evidence begins with samples of work provided by the preschool or Kindergarten, and surveys from teachers and parents. Measures utilized may vary with student needs. Measurements may include psychologist recommended assessments, Test of Early Reading Ability, Test of Early Mathematics Ability, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Qualitative Reading Inventory, and the Test of Mathematical Abilities of Gifted Students. Scores in the 97th percentile represent highly advanced gifted students and are considered as qualifying criteria in a body of evidence.

Performance: Performance is demonstrated through tasks related to learning, but measured through a series of hands-on tasks focusing on number sense and language arts skills. Performance tasks are administered to students individually by staff familiar with early childhood education and characteristics of young gifted children. Observations and anecdotal evidence is gathered (especially regarding social emotional readiness)

by the test administrators and licensed psychologists who administer the cognitive data.

Readiness, social behavior and motivation: Attention to school readiness, motivation, and social/emotional maturity is important in projecting the overall success of a child placed in an acceleration with older peers. Gifted Rating Scales (GRS) are completed by pre school/kindergarten teachers or other early childhood educators. In addition to the GRS, the Adapted IOWA Acceleration Scale: Early Access for Highly Advanced Gifted Children Under Age 6, is completed by parents and teachers.

Support system: Once a child meets the criteria for Early Access, a meeting is scheduled with GT personnel and classroom teachers at the receiving school to outline best practice strategies and appropriate programming options within the Advanced Learning Plan. Academic and affective goals are developed, and information about transition concerns are discussed. Counselors are provided with information about the student in order to play an informed role in the social/emotional transition and development. Teachers are provided information about best practice strategies use with precocious young students, and training around gifted characteristics.

Process

Briefly summarize how the administrative unit will address each component in the early access process. Include specifics prompted by the questions or bulleted points that satisfy conditions of the law. Note: The child's ALP must be developed no later than September 30 for both kindergarten and first grade years of early access.

Personnel and Timelines:

Identify personnel who will be involved in: collecting referrals and how that person is "qualified"; testing; collecting data for the body of evidence; the determination team; the support team; and any other personnel the AU deems helpful in the early access process:

The timeline for the Early Access process begins in early winter with a district website post, information in the local newspaper, and information shared at all schools regarding an informational meeting being held for parents in the district. Schools also share notices about the Early Access process and timeline with parents and staff.

Referral portfolios are available at the beginning of March. Screening questions are gathered from parents of nominated children in an effort to insure children possess basic academic skills necessary for successful testing outcomes. A portfolio filled with information about gifted young children, their characteristics, timelines, fee schedules, and surveys is also required. All forms are available in English and Spanish. Accommodations are available as needed for additional home language needs. Samples of work and evidence from the portfolio is returned to Gifted Services for review right before spring break each year. Portfolios submitted after April 1st are reviewed at the discretion of Gifted Services and determined before the school year starts. Children progressing through the Early Access protocol must meet the state age guidelines of no younger than 4 by the first day of school for kindergarten, and age 5 for first grade.

GT Coordinators and educators evaluate evidence and make recommendations about the skill level of the

child as evidenced by samples and surveys within the portfolio. Parents are contacted regarding the results of the screening process. Testing is scheduled and administered through the Gifted Services Department. District psychologists administer all cognitive measures. (Should parents seek outside testing, that data is reviewed at this time). If a student does not meet criteria for Early Access during any phase of assessment, parents will be contacted and additional assessments may not be ordered.

Narrative reports of all testing are reviewed by the Early Access team and a status decision is made within 60 days of the portfolio submission. A "disagreement procedure" is in place for parents who have concerns about the final decision. An ALP will be developed for those kindergarten age students who meet the criteria for gifted identification, but do not meet the criteria for Early Access. Every effort will be made to differentiate in the classroom in response to their gifted potential. Subsequent to parent notification, receiving schools and GT personnel are contacted to clarify their role in the Early Access process. An ALP meeting is set up where a collaborative conversation about goals and transition measures takes place. The Advanced Learning Plan is in place by the end of September, regardless of when the student enrolls.

SVVSD does not charge parents for Early Access.

Monitoring:

Describe what standards the AU will set for teachers and parents when monitoring student performance and progress during the first year of early access.

Student progress is consistently monitored, with formal data collection taking place at least five times per year. Data is housed in the district management system and in SVVSD report card observations. Information regarding growth/academic progress and the Advanced Learning Plan are outlined in the data warehouse. Specific details about progress are shared with parents during fall/winter conference appointments, or upon request during the academic year.

Evaluation:

What are the AU's implementation steps or requirements for early access evaluation? In the description, summarize each factor related to evaluation: responsibility for and content of the screening portfolio; the screening tool for a referral; performance information; referral procedures; testing for a body of evidence; consensus decision making; method to inform parents; the resolve if the determination team cannot come to consensus; the ALP development responsibility; and the process to provide ALP data to the home school if the child is gifted, but not deemed appropriate for early access. Attach a copy of the determination letter that will be used in the process at the end of this addendum.

The Early Access Determination Team (Gifted specialists, elementary/ early child specialists, and psychologists) is responsible for reviewing screening questions, administering achievement testing, evaluating the portfolio of evidence, deciphering cognitive data and narrative report, and determining the

final status of each Early Access applicant. The data, and status determination is reviewed with the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. A comprehensive report is developed containing details of achievement scores, anecdotal data, and the cognitive narrative. This report is provided to parents via email or mail if requested. The "disagreement procedure" is shared with parents who are invited to contact the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services should they have concerns about the final decision or do not agree with the determination.

 St. Vrain EA Determination Letter- YES.doc

Select Yes or No if the AU will be using the same procedure for disagreements process as in the main Program Plan. Yes

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please reach out to the [Office of Gifted Education](#) for additional support.