

# Early Access for Highly Advanced or Gifted Children

## Overview

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) states that “highly advanced gifted child” means a gifted child for whom a body of evidence demonstrates a profile of exceptional ability or potential compared to same-age gifted children. To meet the needs of highly advanced development, early access to educational services may be considered as a special provision. “Early access” means early entrance to kindergarten or first grade for highly advanced gifted children under age six. Children for whom early access is appropriate are exceptionally precocious and ready for school earlier than their same-age peers. Academic achievement, reasoning ability, performance and motivation are keen (97th percentile or higher) compared to other gifted children. The Early Access policy defines Pinnacle Charter School’s process in determining whether a highly advanced gifted child who is age four (4) by October 1 may be enrolled in kindergarten, or age five (5) by October 1 may be enrolled in first grade, prior to the statutory age requirement.

## Purpose

Students eligible for Kindergarten must attain the age of five years old on or before October 1 of the year they are applying for admission OR be four years old as of October 1 of the year they are applying for admission and be identified as a highly advanced gifted child for whom early access to Kindergarten is appropriate in accordance of CRS 22-20-204. The purpose of this policy is to outline Pinnacle’s Early Access for Highly Advanced or Gifted Children process for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Pinnacle Charter School staff.

## Policy

### A. GENERAL

#### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Enrollment decisions shall be made in a nondiscriminatory manner specified in the charter school application, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. Pinnacle Charter School accepts applications from all residents of Colorado public school districts.

#### **Application Submission**

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child(ren) initiates the evaluation process by submitting an Early Access Application Portfolio to the school’s gifted education coordinator within the school’s application window of February 1st to March 1st. Applications received after March 1<sup>st</sup> will be handled on a case by case basis if personnel are available to administer the screening process, but no applications will be considered beyond April 1st. Late or incomplete application portfolios will not be accepted.
- The school must render a decision and have a determination letter sent to parent(s) or guardian(s) within 60 calendar days after the Early Access Application deadline of March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Screening**

- Upon receipt of the application, the Early Access Admissions Team will screen the application portfolio provided by the parent(s) or guardian(s) and consider any additional information that needs to be collected by school personnel. School personnel may conduct interviews or informal observations to collect additional information regarding academic performance and school readiness.
- After reviewing the portfolio and material the Early Access Admissions Team will determine if the child should move forward with a formal evaluation to complete a body of evidence on which to base an early access decision.
- If the Early Access Admissions Team determines that the portfolio does not deem a formal assessment, they will send out a written determination summary, with a reference to Pinnacle Charter School's Formal Grievance Procedures.
- The school's Gifted Education Coordinator is responsible for all communication with the parent(s) or guardian(s) throughout the early access evaluation process along with setting up a screening appointment.

**Formal Assessment**

- Gifted education coordinator sets an appointment with parent(s) or guardian(s) for the child(ren) to complete aptitude and achievement testing with qualified school personnel.
  - Appropriately licensed school psychologists are required to conduct the formal aptitude assessment and should plan for several sessions to assure the child(ren) is appropriately assessed. Pinnacle Charter School is required to use assessments listed on the CDE's Commonly Used Assessments for Early Access.

**Determination**

- Pinnacle Charter School's early access team reviews a complete body of evidence that includes information about aptitude, achievement, performance, school readiness, social behavior, and motivation and reach a consensus on a decision regarding the appropriateness of early access for the child(ren).
  - Achievement Testing: 97<sup>th</sup> Percentile or higher Math and Reading and Writing
  - Cognitive: 97<sup>th</sup> Percentile or higher
  - Behavior: 97<sup>th</sup> Percentile or higher
  - School Readiness
- Pinnacle Charter School's early access team attempts to reach a consensus on a decision regarding the appropriateness of early access for the child(ren). If consensus cannot be reached, then the school Gifted Education Coordinator will make the final decision.
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) will receive a written determination summary that is signed by all members of the team. Parents may dispute Pinnacle Charter School's decision to deny early access by following Pinnacle Charter School's Formal Grievance Procedures.
- Pinnacle Charter School's failure to meet the 60-calendar day timeline will not default in the admission of the child(ren) for early access.
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) may accept or decline an offer of early access. The child(ren) offered early access are required to follow the school's Admissions Policy.

**Developing and Monitoring the Advanced Learning Plan**

- If early access is granted and the child(ren) receives a seat, a conference will be scheduled with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and any appropriate school personnel to develop an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) for the school year of enrollment. The ALP will be written within the first month of school or September 30<sup>th</sup>, whichever is earlier.

- Ongoing progress monitoring using the ALP and child(ren)'s performance reports will be shared with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and child(ren) at least every five (5) weeks during the first year of early access.
- The ALP should provide evidence about how the parent(s) or guardian(s), teachers, school administrators, and the learning environment will contribute to a positive support system.
- During transitions, the support team will consist of the receiving teacher and administrator, gifted education personnel, the sending teacher, and any other appropriate persons identified by the school.

**Dispute Resolution**

- In the event that the parent(s) or guardian(s) wish to dispute the school's decision to deny early access, the parent must follow Pinnacle Charter School's Forma Grievance Procedures in its entirety.

**LEGAL REFERENCES:**

C.R.S 22-20-204.5 (Early Access)

**B. MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT**

The Superintendent/Chief Business Officer or their designee provides the central point of accountability, leadership, vision, and coordination for Pinnacle Charter School governance.

- **Governance** – Assisting in governance activities and decision making in a tiered governance hierarchy. They shall be part of the final decision making authority for new element definition/acceptance and are ultimately responsible for providing Pinnacle Charter School guidance, coordination, planning, and management.
- **Communications** – Developing and implementing a tiered management, decision, communications, and support infrastructure.
- **Policy** - Creating policies, rules, legislation, standards and practices necessary to carry out the governance and transparency initiatives across the Pinnacle Charter customer base.

**C. TRANSPARENCY**

**Enforcement**

Staff members found in policy violation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Distribution**

This policy is to be distributed to all Pinnacle Charter School staff and posted.

**Policy Version History**

Version	Date	Description	Approved By
1.0	8/2014	Policy drafted and ratified - Age of Entry for Kindergarten Students	BOD 8/18/2014

2.0	11/14/2018	Policy revision to comply with CSI guidelines	

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