

1 Great Falls School District

2

3 **STUDENTS**

3100

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5 Early Childhood Education Enrollment Exceptional Circumstances

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7 It is the policy of the District to provide enhanced educational opportunities to students under the
8 age of 5 when either individual exceptional circumstances exist and/or when Community-Based
9 exceptional circumstances are present.

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11 This policy shall terminate and expire on June 30, 2024, to be replaced in its entirety by a policy
12 governing early intervention programs consistent with Chapter 608 (2023).

13

14 Exceptional Circumstances Meriting Waiver of Age Requirements for Students

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16 The Administration shall ensure admission, enrollment and assignment of all qualifying children
17 referenced in this policy. The administration shall place children enrolled pursuant to this policy
18 in either a half-time or full-time kindergarten program as an integral part of the elementary
19 school program. The administration shall also ensure provision of a free appropriate public
20 education in the least restrictive environment possible, pursuant to terms of each student's
21 individualized education program, for all children enrolled under this policy who are qualified
22 for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

23

24 The administration shall include children enrolled pursuant to this policy in the District's
25 calculation of average number belonging (ANB) as reported to the Office of Public Instruction
26 (OPI).

27

28 The Board of Trustees declares the following to be qualifying "exceptional circumstances"
29 within the meaning of that term as used in §20-5-101(3) MCA, that merit waiving the age
30 provisions of §20-5-101(1), MCA for qualifying children under six (6) years of age. These
31 qualifying exceptional circumstances are based on the educationally relevant factors to establish
32 a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary school specified in §20-9-309,
33 MCA and as required by Article X, section 1, of the Montana Constitution:

34

- 35 1. A child at least three (3) years of age with a disability qualifying the child for services
36 under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- 37 2. A child who is four (4) years of age or older on or before September 10 of the school year
38 in which enrollment is to occur who:
 - 39 a. Meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals under the
40 National School Lunch Program.
 - 41 b. Is Limited English Proficient within the meaning of Title III of the federal
42 Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
 - 43 c. Is Gifted and Talented within the meaning of that term as used in 20-7-901, MCA.
 - 44 d. Is an enrolled member of a federally recognized American Indian Tribe.
 - 45 e. Is homeless as defined in 42 U.S. Code § 11302, or, as determined by the
46 administration, exhibits other characteristics or lives in circumstance that are

- 1 uncommon, unusual, atypical, rare or otherwise distinguished from ordinary or
- 2 typical which place the child at risk of failing to achieve at adequate levels.
- 3 f. Is an at-risk student as defined in Section 20-1-101(4), MCA.
- 4 g. Child’s status as a member of a military family with prior enrollment.

5

6 The Trustees shall annually review this policy based on changing circumstances pertaining to the

7 criteria used for determination of the program. The administration is authorized to enroll students

8 in a manner consistent with this policy and to develop procedures to implement this policy.

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10 Cross Reference:

11 Policy 3100P	Student Enrollment, Exceptional Circumstances Meriting Waiver of Age
12	Requirements for Students
13 Policy 3110	Entrance, Placement, Transfer
14 Policy 3110R	Early Entrance

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16 Legal References:

17 §20-1-230, MCA	Enactment – Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military
18	Children - Provisions
19	
20	
21 §20-5-101, MCA	Admittance of child to school
22 §20-6-501, MCA	Definition of various schools
23 §20-7-117, MCA	Kindergarten and preschool programs
24 §20-9-309, MCA	Basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools
25	defined
26 Article X, section 1, of the Montana Constitution	
27 Individual with Disabilities Act	
28 Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973	
29 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children	
30 National School Lunch Act (Public Law 396, 79 th Congress, Chapter 281, 2 nd Session)	
31 Title III, ESEA (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic	
32 Achievement Act)	
33 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat.	
34 482, U.S.C. § 11301 et seq.)	
35 Chapter 608 (2023)	Targeted Interventions to Support 3 rd Grade Reading Proficiency

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37 Data/Study References

38 Engzell, P., Frey, A. & Verhagen, M.D. “Learning loss due to school closures during the

39 COVID-19 pandemic” Proc. Natl Acad. Sci USA 118, e2022376118 (2021).

40 Melinda Wenner Moyer, “The COVID generation: how is the pandemic affecting kids’ brains?”,

41 Nature, 10.1038/d41586-022-00027-4, 601, 7892, (180-183), (2022).

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43 Policy History

44 Adopted on: January 27, 2019

45 Revised on: June 13, 2022

46 Revised on: July 17, 2023