The Garrett County School System will determine eligibility of four-year old children in accordance with the following Prekindergarten student selection criteria beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. This selection process is based on Statewide Selection Criteria for Prekindergarten Sites as revised and published by the Maryland State Department of Education.

A. Household Income Enrollment Criterion

For enrollment in the Prekindergarten Program, the school system will first consider each family's monthly household income. Initially eligibility, then, is determined by whether a child qualifies for free or reduced lunch meals as determined by guidelines that are published annually by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Maryland State Department of Education. (Please refer to the attached selection criteria checklist.)

B. Automatic Enrollment Criteria

The school system will automatically enroll four-year-old children into the Prekindergarten program if any one of the following applies:

- Limited English Proficiency and Limited English Proficient
- Homelessness
- Prior participation in a Head Start or Even Start program

C. Prioritized Enrollment Criteria

The school system will give priority for enrollment into the Prekindergarten program to children for whom any of the following applies:

- Referral
• Emergency and health situation
• Home and family circumstances

D. According to COMAR 13A.06.02, the Prekindergarten Program is for 4-year old children who are potentially at-risk of failing in school. The Superintendent may grant a waiver under rare circumstances:

- The child’s development is severely delayed.
- A determination is made that placement in the prekindergarten program is more beneficial than placement in the kindergarten program. This provision is not designed to place young kindergarten children into prekindergarten.

Procedures

A. Application Period
During the month of March, parents/guardians will complete a Notification of Interest Form. A Prekindergarten Program Questionnaire will be mailed to interested parents/guardians. All Prekindergarten Program Questionnaires must be returned by a date to be specified to the Garrett County Board of Education Pupil Services Office. The questionnaire will ascertain information that pertains to the Household Income Eligibility Criterion, the Automatic Enrollment Criteria, and the Prioritized Enrollment Criteria.

B. Student Selection
Students who meet the Household Income Eligibility Criterion, the Automatic Enrollment Criteria, and reside in the school attendance area will be selected in order of receipt of the questionnaire until the capacity of 20 children is reached. If the capacity is not filled by using the Automatic Enrollment Criteria, then the Household Income Eligibility Criterion and Prioritized Enrollment Criteria will be used to identify eligible children who reside in the school attendance area. (Please note that homeless children will be automatically eligible, even if the enrollment exceeds 20 or more students per school site.)

C. Notification of Selection
Following the close of the Application Period, the appropriate Pupil Personnel Worker in conjunction with the Director of Elementary Education will review all questionnaires and identify those children who meet the eligibility criteria. Parents/guardians will be notified no later than June 15th of the enrollment decision.

D. Out-of-Area Applicants
In the event that all available Prekindergarten vacancies cannot be filled using the Household Income Eligibility Criterion, the Automatic Enrollment Criteria, and/or the Priority Enrollment Criteria, the school system will enroll students from outside the school’s attendance area. As noted in part B, students meeting the Automatic Enrollment Criteria will be given first opportunity to enroll before the Household Income Eligibility Criterion and the Prioritized Enrollment Criteria are considered. Every attempt will be made to achieve an enrollment of twenty (20) students per site.

Local School System Reporting

Annually, the local school system will report enrollment data to MSDE in accordance with Prekindergarten programmatic requirement #7 found in the "Assurances" statement of the Request for Funds application. These data will reflect the number of children per site who have met the Household Income Eligibility Criterion, the Automatic Enrollment Criteria, and the Prioritized Enrollment Criteria.

Guidelines to Ensure Equal Access

The local school system will publish information about the Prekindergarten program, including
information about application and student eligibility criteria. Information will be published in the local newspaper and will be included in school newsletters. Additionally, a "Prekindergarten in Garrett County" brochure will be revised to include these guidelines. Guidelines will also be included in the Garrett County Board of Education Policies and Procedures manual.

Garrett County Prekindergarten Program Questionnaire – Attachment A

Last Modified by Karen Brewer on October 28, 2014