

F.B.,

Appellant

v.

PRINCE GEORGE'S
COUNTY BOARD OF
EDUCATION,

Appellee.

BEFORE THE

MARYLAND

STATE BOARD

OF EDUCATION

Opinion No. 26-16

OPINION

INTRODUCTION

Appellant, parent of Student X, appeals the decision of the Prince George's County Board of Education ("local board") denying her child early entrance to kindergarten for the 2025–2026 school year. The Appellant claims that the denial does not reflect her child's true readiness and presents a unique hardship by separating him from his twin sister, who was granted early admission. (Appeal). The local board responded to the appeal maintaining that its decision is not arbitrary, unreasonable, or illegal.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Student X was born on September 29, 2020. Because his birth date falls after the September 1 cutoff date for automatic kindergarten enrollment, the Appellant requested that he be tested for early entrance. On July 31, 2025, Student X completed the Prince George's County Public Schools ("PGCPS") Early Admission to Kindergarten Assessment. (R. 3-5).

Under PGCPS criteria, a student seeking early admission must demonstrate readiness by scoring at least 90% on the Language Arts portion of the exam. (R. 12-14). Student X scored 83% in Language Arts. (R. 3-5). Furthermore, the student must attain a "mastered" rating in the pre-kindergarten mathematics screening and an overall "striving" rating in the mathematics inventory. *Id.* In mathematics, Student X scored a "striving" rating on the pre-kindergarten screening and an "intervention" rating on the mathematics inventory. *Id.* Consequently, Student X did not meet the minimum objective criteria for early entry and PGCPS denied early admission.

On August 16, 2025, the Appellant appealed the denial to the PGCPS Office of Appeals and Hearings. (R. 9-11). In her appeal, Appellant argued that Student X's prior academic performance in pre-kindergarten demonstrated his capabilities and that separating Student X from his twin sister, who successfully passed the assessment and entered kindergarten, creates a "unique hardship" causing emotional distress and an unhealthy dynamic of superiority and inferiority. *Id.*

The Office of Appeals and Hearings reviews an appeal to determine whether (1) an alleged violation of established policy or procedure has been demonstrated; or (2) whether the circumstances surrounding the appeal would present a unique hardship that would necessitate an exception to policy or procedure. (R. 12-14). On August 25, 2025, the Office of Appeals and Hearings upheld the denial finding that PGCPs procedures were properly followed and that differences in school readiness among siblings, including twins, do not constitute a "unique hardship" warranting an exception to policy. *Id.*

The Appellant appealed to the local board reiterating her concerns and asserting that the test results merely reflected an "off day" or testing fatigue, as evidenced by the assessor noting that Student X needed to take three breaks. (R. 15-23). The local board affirmed the decision denying early kindergarten entry on November 21, 2025. (R. 29).

The Appellant filed the present appeal to the State Board on December 18, 2025.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

Decisions of a local board involving a local policy or a controversy and dispute regarding the rules and regulations of the local board shall be considered *prima facie* correct. The State Board may not substitute its judgment for that of the local board unless the decision is arbitrary, unreasonable, or illegal. The appellant bears the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence to demonstrate that the local board's decision meets this standard.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Under Maryland law, there is no legal right to attend kindergarten before age five as children must be five years of age or older on or before September 1 of the school year to enroll in kindergarten. Md. Code Ann., Educ §7-101(a). While COMAR 13A.08.01.02B(3) requires local boards to provide a process for early entry for four-year-old children demonstrating "capabilities warranting early admission," it is within the local board's discretion to determine the assessment method. *Chiffon H. v. Baltimore City Bd. of Sch. Comm'rs*, MSBE Op. No. 19-11 (2019); *David and Adreinne G. v. Montgomery Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 09-19 (2009).

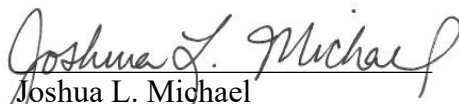
Accordingly, the local board had adopted Administrative Procedure ("AP") 5111.1 to govern early admission and requires children to receive designated acceptable scores in the identified assessment areas. This Board has held on numerous occasions that a school system may deny early entry to kindergarten based on the child's failure to attain the required scores on the assessment. *See Syed Junaid M. v. Howard Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 13-18 (2013) and cases cited therein (upholding determinations that a child is not ready for early entry after failing to achieve the required assessment scores).

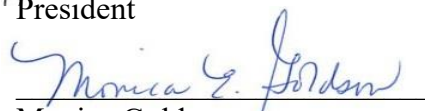
Student X objectively failed to meet the required benchmarks in both Language Arts and Mathematics. Although Appellant disagrees with the assessment scores, the record reflects that Student X was appropriately screened and assessed in accordance with the standardized procedure but did not meet the established criteria. A parent's disagreement with assessment scores does not render the school system's reliance on the assessment scores arbitrary or unreasonable. *See S.A. and O.S. v. Anne Arundel Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 23-02 (2023); *Tim and Sherri B. v. Anne Arundel Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, MSBE Op. No. 13-48 (2013).

Appellant also maintains that the circumstances here amount to a “unique hardship” separating Student X from his twin for school, which she claims raises mental health concerns for Student X and an unhealthy dynamic between her children. While we acknowledge Appellant’s preference that Student X also be admitted early to kindergarten like his twin, the local board reasonably concluded that differences in developmental progression and test performance between siblings, even twins, are not unusual occurrences. Nor is there any medical evidence of mental health issues. Moreover, the standard set forth in COMAR 13A.08.01.02B(3) requires the child to demonstrate capabilities warranting early admission and Student X did not meet that standard.

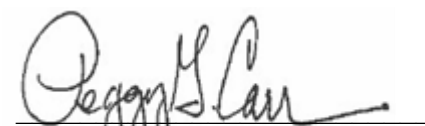
CONCLUSION

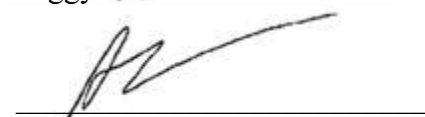
The Appellant has failed to meet her burden of demonstrating that the local board's decision was arbitrary, unreasonable, or illegal. Accordingly, we affirm the local board’s decision denying Student X early entry to kindergarten.

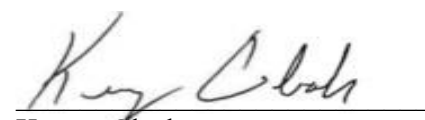

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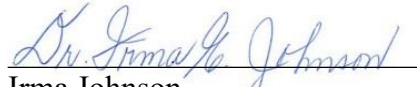

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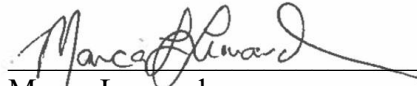

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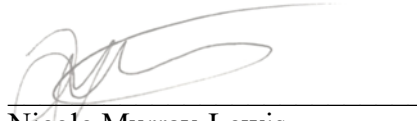

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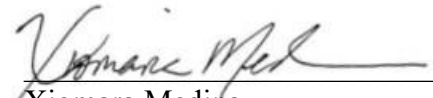

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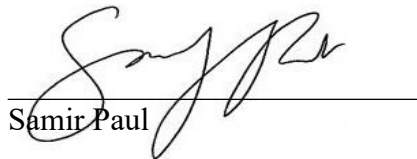

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April 28, 2026