



Act 1240 Waiver Request

District:	Des Arc School District
LEA Number:	5901000
Superintendent:	Dr. Marc Sherrell
Email:	sherrellm@desarcschools.org
Contact for Waiver:	Dr. Marc Serrell
Contact Email:	sherrellm@desarcschools.org
Contact Phone:	870-256-4164
Date Received by DESE:	

The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:

1. Board resolution approving the waiver request
2. Evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families

Waiver Request #1

Topic:	2024-2025 School Early Start Date
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Arkansas Annotated Code 6-10-106; Uniform dates for beginning and end of school year
Duration Requested:	5 Years
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Arkansas Virtual Academy and Arkansas Connections Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	All grades: Des Arc School District
PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promote Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Increase Equitable Access to Effective Teachers

1. Provide a DETAILED RATIONALE explaining how the waiver will enhance student learning opportunities, promote innovation, or increase equitable access to effective teachers. Include information about the problem or obstacle, if any, the waiver will help the district overcome.

The member school districts of the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative are collectively and separately requesting a waiver from A.C.A. 6-10-106, which establishes the first allowable day of class as the Monday of the week that contains August 19. For the 2024-2025 school year that date will be Monday, August 19. We would appreciate approval for the early start date for the listed schools in our region giving public schools the equity afforded to Charter Schools.

The specific waiver being requested is to allow the applying school districts to set their individual district's first day of class to be "no earlier than Monday, August 12."

The law as presently constructed results in a wide swing in the allowable opening date of school. At the earliest, it can be August 14, which was the case this year— fall of 2023. The latest possible first day is August 20 which, under the law will be — the fall of 2029. This waiver would allow the school to open next year and years to follow on the same relative date as this year.

The advantages of this waiver are several:

- The fall and spring semesters would be closer to the same length. Without this waiver, the fall semester will be 84 days while the spring semester will be 94 days, a difference of 10 days. With the waiver the fall semester will be 91 days and the spring semester 87 days, a difference of only 4 days. The more unbalanced the semesters are, the greater the issue for classes that are one semester in length.
- The alternative solution for unbalanced semesters is to not end the fall semester until after Christmas break. This results in final exams shortly after two weeks out of school, and the possibility of exams being repeatedly postponed due to winter weather.
- This waiver will give greater assurance of school ending in late May rather than extending into June. Some research indicates a decrease in learning past the Memorial Day Holiday.
- Beginning school earlier automatically results in more days of instruction before spring testing. More days of instruction will result in higher test scores,
- Activities such as football will begin next fall on the same relative date as they did this fall, with or without the waiver, Therefore, a large number of students will already be on campus to practice and prepare for their activities, regardless of the opening date of school. In addition to students who play football, this would include students who participate in groups such as golf, tennis, cross country, volleyball, band, cheer, dance, ROTC, Student Council, and National Honor Society, as well as others.

2. Provide a detailed explanation of how the services being waived will be provided for students.

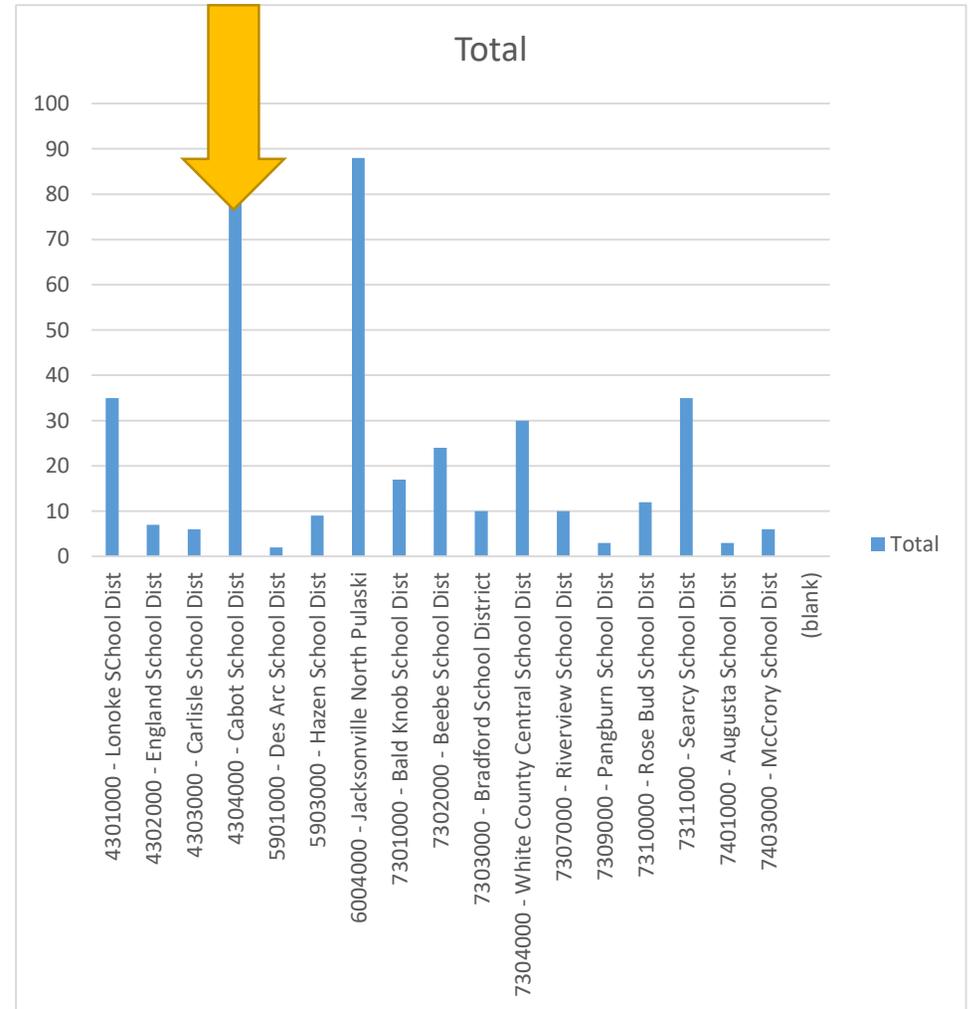
The school districts will create a calendar with an earlier start date which will provide them with more flexibility throughout the school year. The school year will remain the same length. It simply allows a district to continue with a school calendar structured as closely as possible to the current one and avoids the dramatic change to the calendar which must result without the waiver.

3. Provide a detailed explanation of how the district will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the waiver.

The district will monitor student assessment results and student attendance data related to the earlier start date to determine the effectiveness of the early start date.

Number of Students From WDMESC Districts Enrolled in Arkansas Virtual Academy

Row Labels	Count of Grade
4301000 - Lonoke School Dist	35
4302000 - England School Dist	7
4303000 - Carlisle School Dist	6
4304000 - Cabot School Dist	79
5901000 - Des Arc School Dist	2
5903000 - Hazen School Dist	9
6004000 - Jacksonville North Pulaski	88
7301000 - Bald Knob School Dist	17
7302000 - Beebe School Dist	24
7303000 - Bradford School District	10
7304000 - White County Central School Dist	30
7307000 - Riverview School Dist	10
7309000 - Pangburn School Dist	3
7310000 - Rose Bud School Dist	12
7311000 - Searcy School Dist	35
7401000 - Augusta School Dist	3
7403000 - McCrory School Dist	6
(blank)	
Grand Total	376



Number of Students From WDMESC Districts Enrolled in Arkansas Connections Academy

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative	
School District	AR Connections Academy Enrollment By District
<i>Augusta</i>	3
<i>Bald Knob</i>	9
<i>Beebe</i>	24
<i>Bradford</i>	0
<i>Cabot</i>	90
<i>Carlisle</i>	8
<i>Des Arc</i>	1
<i>England</i>	18
<i>Hazen</i>	11
<i>Jacksonville North Pulaski</i>	14
<i>Lonoke</i>	12
<i>McCrary</i>	17
<i>Pangburn</i>	8
<i>Riverview</i>	15
<i>RoseBud</i>	8
<i>Searcy</i>	29
<i>White County Central</i>	7

Board Resolution

2023-2024

WHEREAS the dES Arc School District Board of Directors met in a special, open, and properly-convened board meeting on 02/05/2024, in The Des Arc School Board Meeting Room; and

Whereas 6 members were present, a quorum was declared by the chair; and

WHEREAS A.C.A. § 6-10-106 requires the first day of the school year for student attendance in the public elementary and secondary schools of the State of Arkansas shall be:

- (i) On or after the Monday of the week in which August 19 falls;
 - (ii) Not later than August 26.
- (B) The date for beginning the school year shall be determined by the board of directors of the school district.
- (C) Labor Day shall be celebrated as a school holiday in all the school districts of the state, and school shall not be held on that date.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Des Arc School District approves of a school start date of August 12th for the 2024-2025 school year.

ADOPTED in regular (change to "special" if true) session by the Board of Directors of the Des Arc School district February 05, 2024.



PRESIDENT

Documentation of Staff and Student Parent Feedback

2/5/24, 2:18 PM

(16) Facebook



Posts

Filters

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List view

Grid view



Des Arc School District

11m · 🌐



Start of 24-25 School Year Calendar Waiver Community Input Survey.

Arkansas Schools are not allowed to start school before August 19th for the 2024/2025 school year. This would put our last day on May 29th next year, which is after Memorial Day. Des Arc Schools qualifies for a waiver submission that would allow us to move that date to Aug 12th. Please choose one of the options below indicating when you think we should start school next year. Once again please just pick and option. Comments will be deleted.

Option 1: Start school after August 19th. Last day of school will be May 29th.

Option 2: Start school before August 19th but no earlier than August 12th, with the last day of school being around May 22nd.

See insights and ads

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Write a comment...



Des Arc School District

1d · 🌐



Adrienne VanHouten

2d · 🌐

We (also as in me) don't give bus drivers more appreciation than what they deserve! Thank you, bus drivers, for all you do to ensure the safety of the children i... See more

No insights to show

Boost a post

12

1

Like

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Write a comment...



Des Arc School District

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Congratulations to Daviyon Bell for receiving the Fearless Friday Interception of the Year Award! Thank you Wes Moore, Fearless Friday, Fox 16, and the Petrus Family for recognizing this outstanding young man. #putonformysmalltown

Des Arc School District's Post



 **Julie Pendergrass Spratt**
Option 2
2h Like Reply Hide

 **Kathryn Grady**
Option 2
1h Like Reply Hide

 **Bridget Crouch**
Option 2 
3m Like Reply Hide

 **Charly Green**
Option 2
45m Like Reply Hide

  Top fan
Chris N Danielle McDonald
Option 2
3h Like Reply Hide

 **Bridget McManners**
Option 2
1h Like Reply Hide

 **Randa Saul**
Option 1
2h Like Reply Hide

 **Karly Woodall**
Option 2
2h Like Reply Hide

 **Morgan Monroe Hambrick**
Option 2
3h Like Reply Hide

 **Deb Hill**
Option 2
3h Like Reply Hide

 **Dena Knight**
Start before August 19.
4h Like Reply Hide

 **Zach Autumn Payne**
Option 2

 Write a comment...





Blank Quiz



Questions

Responses



Settings

Total points: 0

Blank Quiz

2024-2025 School Start Date



Would you rather the first day of school next year be before August 19th or after August 19th?



Multiple choice



Before August 19th, Last day of school May 22nd



After August 19th, Last day of school May 30th



Add option or [add "Other"](#)



Answer key (0 points)



Required



Blank Quiz

61 responses

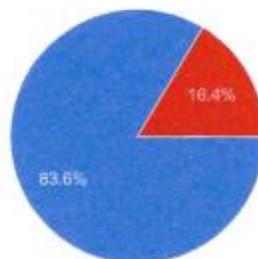
[Publish analytics](#)

Would you rather the first day of school next year be before August 19th or after August 19th?



Copy

61 responses



- Before August 19th, Last day of school May 22nd
- After August 19th, Last day of school May 30th