



## Public School Waiver Request

<b>District:</b>	<b>Scranton</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	4204
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Toby Cook
<b>Email:</b>	tcook@scrantonrockets.net
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Toby Cook
<b>Contact Email:</b>	tcook@scrantonrockets.net
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	833.938.7121
<b>Date Received by DESE:</b>	

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

<b>Topic:</b>	School Start Date
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	ACA 6-10-106
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	5 years
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	Arkansas Virtual Academy
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To</b>	K-12
<b>PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input 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 Guy Fenter 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 the Charter Schools.*

*The waiver being specifically requested is to allow the applying school districts to set their individual district's start date for classes to be "no earlier than Monday, August 12."*

*The law as presently constructed results in a wide swing of the allowable start date of school. At the earliest, it can be August 14, which was the case this current school year (2023-2024). The latest possible start date is August 20 which, under the current law will happen in the 2028-2029 school year. This waiver would allow schools to start next year and the years to follow on the same relative date as we did in 2023-2024.*

*The advantages of this waiver for our district are as follows:*

- *The fall and spring semesters would be closer to the same number of days. Without this waiver, the fall semester for our district would be 83 days, while our spring semester would be 95 days; a difference of 12 days. With approval of the School Start Date waiver request, our fall semester increases to 86 days and our spring semester is 92 days, a difference of only 6 days. The more unbalanced the semesters are, the greater the issue for classes that are only one semester in length.*
- *The alternative solution for the unbalanced semesters issue to extend the first semester into January. This results in final exams being taken after the Christmas break when students do not have the material fresh on their mind. It also presents the risk of exams being postponed even more to due to winter weather.*
- *Approval of the School Start Date waiver request also gives the district greater assurance of school ending in late May rather than extending into June. There is research indicating a decrease in learning past the Memorial Day holiday.*
- *An earlier start date in August automatically results in a larger number of days of student instruction prior to state testing in the spring. More instructional days will result in higher test scores.*
- *Fall sports/activities practicing before the start date of school regardless of the class start date has a large number of students and faculty already on campus for practice and to prepare for their activities. This would include students and teachers/coaches participating in golf, tennis, football, cross country, band, cheer, dance, ROTC, Student Council, NHS, 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 in their schedule throughout the 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 calendar and avoids dramatic change to the calendar which will 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 an early start date to determine the effectiveness of the School Start Date waiver.*

A RESOLUTION OF THE SCRANTON SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO REQUEST A WAIVER

WHEREAS, the Scranton School District Board of Directors is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students within the district;

WHEREAS, certain circumstances or regulations may require the district to seek waivers to better address the unique needs or challenges faced by the district;

WHEREAS, The member school districts of the Guy Fenter 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.

WHEREAS, The waiver being specifically requested is to allow the applying school districts to set their individual district's start date for classes to be "no earlier than Monday, August 12."

The law as presently constructed results in a wide swing of the allowable start date of school. At the earliest, it can be August 14, which was the case this current school year (2023-2024). The latest possible start date is August 20 which, under the current law will happen in the 2028-2029 school year. This waiver would allow schools to start next year and the years to follow on the same relative date as we did in 2023-2024.

The advantages of this waiver for our district are as follows:

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- The alternative solution for the unbalanced semesters issue to extend the first semester into January. This results in final exams being taken after the Christmas break when students do not have the material fresh on their mind. It also presents the risk of exams being postponed even more to due to winter weather.
- Approval of the School Start Date waiver request also gives the district greater assurance of school ending in late May rather than extending into June. There is research indicating a decrease in learning past the Memorial Day holiday.
- An earlier start date in August automatically results in a larger number of days of student instruction prior to state testing in the spring. More instructional days will result in higher test scores.
- Fall sports/activities practicing before the start date of school regardless of the class start date has a large number of students and faculty already on campus for practice and to prepare for their activities. This would include students and teachers/coaches participating in golf, tennis, football, cross country, band, cheer, dance, ROTC, Student Council, NHS, as well as others.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of Scranton School District hereby authorizes the district administration to formally request 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 to allow the first day of school to be as early as August 12, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary steps and actions to submit the waiver request, including providing any additional information or documentation required by the relevant authorities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors expresses its support for the waiver request and acknowledges the importance of flexibility in addressing the unique needs and circumstances of the district.

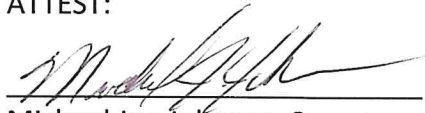
This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024 by the Board of Directors of Scranton School District.



Adam Fritsche, President  
Scranton School District Board of Directors

ATTEST:



Michael Joe Johnson, Secretary  
Scranton School District Board of Directors

# Calendar Early State Date Survey

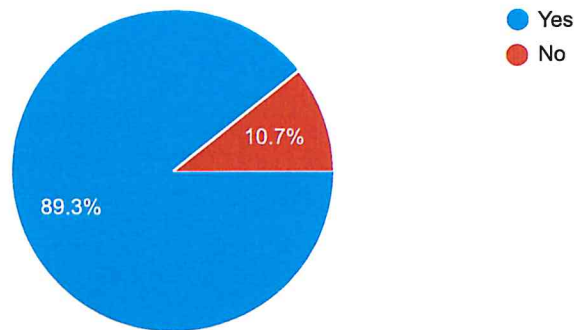
28 responses

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Would you be in favor of this early start date to get out earlier in May?

 Copy

28 responses



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Google Forms

Survey posted on school social media page for general walk for parents, faculty and community to vote

