

Charter Schools Unit
Waiver Request Form (revised October 2025)
For Requests Submitted during the 2026 - 2027 School Year

Section 1: Administrative Data

District/ School/ Applicant Name	Garfield Scholars' Academy
Superintendent/ Point Of Contact	Cheryl Harrison
Email Address	cheryl.harrison@garfieldscholars.org
Phone Number	479-405-4261
District/ School LEA (if assigned)	0448700/702
Date of Waiver Request Submission	10/1/2026

Section 2: Waiver Requests – Total of 3 Requests

Request # 1	Waiver Topic: Superintendent Licensure – Cheryl Harrison
Arkansas Code Annotated:	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-13-109(a) (qualifications clause only)
Standard for Accreditation:	4-B.2 – Superintendent licensure requirement (6 CAR § 61-503(b))
DESE Rules Governing:	Educator Licensure Rules: 6 CAR § 180-601(c) – District-Level Administrator endorsement
Rationale:	Garfield Scholars' Academy requests a waiver of the superintendent licensure requirement for Cheryl Harrison. Ms. Harrison is the school's full-time superintendent and point of contact and holds multiple active Arkansas educator licenses, but she does not currently hold the District-Level Administrator endorsement applicable to the superintendent assignment. This request is limited to the licensure qualification for the superintendent title. GSA is not requesting a waiver of the requirement to employ a full-time superintendent or charter school executive officer. The waiver will allow continuity of leadership in a small charter school while GSA maintains all other statutory, training, reporting, and accountability requirements applicable to the position.

Request # 2	Waiver Topic: Library Media Specialist Licensure and Staffing – Lucy Minardi
Arkansas Code Annotated:	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104
Standard for Accreditation:	4-F.1 and 4-F.2 – Library media specialist licensure and staffing requirements (6 CAR § 61-507(a)-(b))
DESE Rules Governing:	DESE Rules Governing Educator Licensure – Section 7 (6 CAR §§ 180-701 through 180-708)
Rationale:	Garfield Scholars' Academy requests waivers related to the library media specialist assignment for Lucy Minardi. The Accreditation Exception identifies Ms. Minardi in job code 5010 and shows that her active Arkansas licenses do not include a license code valid for the library media specialist assignment. GSA enrolled 93 students as of the October 1, 2026 enrollment count, and Ms. Minardi works one day per week, the equivalent of 0.2 FTE. Because GSA can support this position only on a limited schedule, the school requests relief from Standard 4-F.2 in addition to the licensure relief under Standard 4-F.1. Recruiting an individual who is both available for this limited schedule and already holds the specific library media license has been difficult. GSA will continue to provide library/media services and access to appropriate print, non-print, and electronic resources, continue working toward proper licensure and staffing for the position, and rescind the waiver when the applicable requirements can be met.

Request # 3	Waiver Topic: Teacher Licensure – Grades 3–6 Elementary Classroom Teacher
Arkansas Code Annotated:	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-1004; 6-17-309; 6-17-401; 6-17-902; 6-17-908; 6-17-919
Standard for Accreditation:	4-D.1 – Classroom teacher licensure requirement (6 CAR § 61-505(a))
DESE Rules Governing:	DESE Rules Governing Educator Licensure – Section 7 (6 CAR §§ 180-701 through 180-708)
Rationale:	Garfield Scholars' Academy requests a teacher-licensure waiver for one grades 3–6 elementary classroom teacher who does not currently hold an

Arkansas teaching license. As a small rural charter school, GSA has a limited applicant pool and needs flexibility to employ a qualified individual who can effectively serve students while the school continues recruitment and licensure support. The individual will complete all required background checks, receive ongoing mentoring and professional development, and be supported in implementing GSA's Arkansas-standards-aligned curriculum and high-quality instructional materials. For any core academic subject taught under the waiver, GSA will comply with Arkansas Qualified Teacher requirements. The waiver will provide staffing continuity and preserve consistent instruction for students while the employee works toward appropriate licensure or GSA secures an appropriately licensed teacher. A plan is in place to facilitate licensure through an alternate method, with required testing to be completed, including Praxis and Foundations of Reading.

Updated October 12, 2026, to incorporate the legal review recommendations concerning superintendent licensure, library media specialist staffing/licensure, and teacher licensure citations.