



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Public School Waiver Request

District:	Helena-West Helena School District
LEA Number:	5403000
Superintendent:	Dr. Keith McGee
Email:	kmcgee@hwhschools.org
Contact for Waiver:	Traci Holland
Contact Email:	tholland@hwhschools.org
Contact Phone:	870-338-4425
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:	School Start Date
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	§ 6-10-106
Duration Requested:	Three Years
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	KIPP Delta
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	J.F. Wahl Elementary, K-6, and Central High School, 7-12
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 Helena-West Helena School District is seeking innovative ways to enhance student learning outcomes. One way the district would like to enhance student learning outcomes is by moving the first day of school forward; for the 2024-2025 school year, this would mean the first day of school would be one week early for a total of five instructional days added to the first semester. This would allow the district the opportunity to increase the number of instructional days before summative assessments are administered in the spring. Additionally, the district would be able to balance more evenly the number of days in the first and second semesters. Based on 2023 ACT Aspire data, the Helena-West Helena School District currently has 57% of third through tenth graders in need of support in reading. The additional days of instruction prior to spring testing will allow teachers to maximize Tier I grade level instruction particularly in the area of reading and literacy. The additional instructional time prior to spring summative assessments will positively impact our student learning outcomes in reading and literacy as well as other content areas. This waiver to start school early will help the district in reaching our goal of 100% of our kindergarten through third grade students reading on grade level by the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

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

If this waiver is granted to the Helena-West Helena School District, no services will be waived for students. In fact, the opposite is true in that students will receive increased access to grade level instruction for additional days prior to spring summative assessments. Additionally, students will have increased access to grade level instruction during the first semester of school versus a higher discrepancy of instructional days between the first and second semesters.

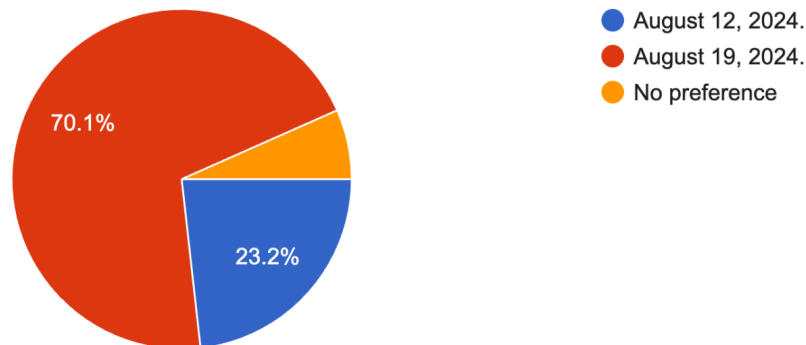
3. Provide a detailed explanation of how the district will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the waiver.

One of Helena-West Helena School District's goals is to have 100% of kindergarten through third grade students reading on grade level by the end of the 2025-2026 school year; increased access to grade level instruction will be key. If the district is granted this waiver for an early start to the school year, grade level instruction will begin on the first day of school and everyday thereafter. The district guiding coalition, along with building administrators, conduct instructional sweeps to monitor instructional practices, provide feedback to teachers, and to determine areas for additional training and support for teachers. Instructional sweeps will begin the first week of school to evaluate student access to grade level instruction. The instructional sweeps will continue each week of the school year to continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the grade level instruction provided to students. Additionally, the district guiding coalition and the building administrators will review student data including but not limited to dyslexia screening data, interim assessments, and CFAs (common formative assessments) to ensure student mastery of grade level standards.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

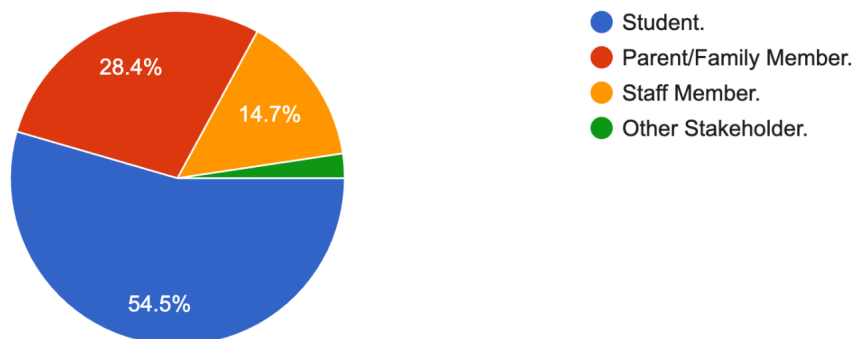
Helena-West Helena School District should start school on

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Helena-West Helena School District

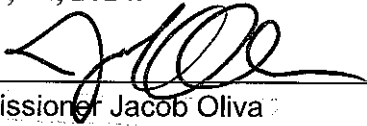
RESOLUTION OF HELENA-WEST HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-10-106;

WHEREAS, the Commissioner considered the district's request to submit a waiver application to the Arkansas Department of Education;

WHEREAS, the Commissioner, upon due consideration and deliberation, hereby approves this Resolution for the purpose of a Beginning Date of School Waiver and;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commissioner acting as the Board regarding all personnel related actions hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Helena-West Helena School District to immediately petition the State Board of Education for a waiver to start school on August, 12, 2024.



Date: February 26, 2024

Commissioner Jacob Oliva
Arkansas Department of Education