



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 Waiver Request

District:	Pottsville School District
LEA Number:	5804000
Superintendent:	Larry Dugger
Email:	larry.dugger@pottsvilleschools.org
Contact for Waiver:	Larry Dugger
Contact Email:	larry.dugger@pottsvilleschools.org
Contact Phone:	479.968.8101
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 District Calendar
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Statutes: Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-106
Duration Requested:	2024-2025 School Year
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Lisa Academy, Estem Public Charter, Academics Plus Public Charter
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	Pottsville Elementary, K-3 Pottsville Middle Grades, 4-6 Pottsville Junior High, 7-9 Pottsville High School, 10-12
PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Promote Innovation <input checked="" 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.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the school start date will be Monday, August 19. Pottsville School District would like consideration and approval for the start date to be changed to an earlier time and, thus, be given the same equity afforded to charter schools.

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

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

Here are the advantages of this waiver request:

- By starting the school year earlier, students will have more instructional minutes to learn the rigorous state academic standards and other curricula they need to comprehend in order to be successful on state exams such as ATLAS, ELPA, AP, etc. In fact, AP scores can influence college credit, so it is imperative enough instructional time is provided prior to the tests.
- The waiver will give greater assurance of school ending in May rather than extending into June. As a result, this will grant our teachers more time to provide high quality instruction to our students in order for them to learn the skills and strategies needed to be successful on assessments (prior to the tests being administered...instead of afterwards). Consequently, there will be less emotional stress on teachers as they will have the time to effectively teach students, and there will be less emotional stress on students as they will have the time to effectively learn.
- Beginning school during the week of August 12 will also allow students to complete the first semester before the December holiday break, rather than having to take tests or turn in big projects after being out of school for two weeks.
- As mentioned previously, beginning the school year earlier automatically results in more teacher-student interaction days before assessments. More days of instruction equates to an increase of student growth on tests and overall test scores.

At Pottsville School District, we want our students to be successful and to be given the same opportunity for learning and practicing skills as students in other districts. The waiver would permit us to maximize student learning to the fullest extent possible by helping us overcome the aforementioned barriers of starting school on August 19th, 2024.

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

A waive to the school calendar regarding the first day of school will not refrain from any services provided to students. With August 19th falling on a Monday and school not being allowed to start prior to this date, the waiver will help us meet the criteria of a very exceptional circumstance and give us the opportunity to meet our students' and teachers' needs.

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


Pottsville will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the waiver through the following means:

- Surveys with stakeholders-our staff, parents/families, and the community
- Attendance data
- Assessment data (ATLAS, ELPA, AP, interim, etc.)
- CWT data

Pottsville School District
Board of Education
Resolution 24-05

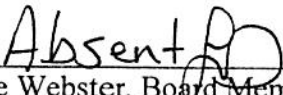
The Pottsville School District Board of Education has voted in an open public meeting held January 18, 2024 to allow PSD to pursue an Act 1240 Waiver that would allow PSD to start school earlier than August 19th.


Tracy Taylor, Board President


Jeff Akin, Board Vice President


David Potts, Board Secretary


Clint Hull, Board Member


Mike Webster, Board Member

Pottsville

2024-2025 District Calendar Survey (on the school start date and end date)

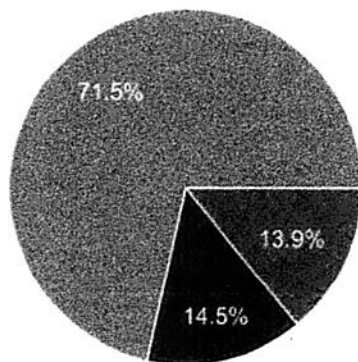
166 responses

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Options

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165 responses



- Option A: Students will start the school year on August 19th, 2024, and they will finish the school year on May 29th, 2025.
- Option B: Students will start school on August 21, 2024, and they will finish the school year on May 30th, 2025. Teachers...
- Option C (with a waiver): Students will start school on August 14th, 2024, and they...

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