



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 Waiver Request

District:	Searcy County School District
LEA Number:	6502
Superintendent:	Valorie McCleary
Email:	valorie.mccleary@scsd.info
Contact for Waiver:	Heather Bohannon
Contact Email:	hbohannon@scsd.info
Contact Phone:	870-448-7101
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:	A.C.A. 6-10-106
Duration Requested:	5 years
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Arkansas Virtual Academy or Arkansas Connections Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	K-12
PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)	<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 Searcy County School District is submitting an individual request for a waiver from A.C.A. 6-10-106. Additionally, the district is collectively requesting a waiver from A.C.A. 6-10-106 with member districts in the Ozarks Unlimited Resources Service Cooperative. A.C.A. 106 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 an early start date for our school district.

The specific waiver being requested is to allow the Searcy County School District to set the 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 could result in 91 days and the spring semester 87 days, a difference of only 4 days. The more unbalanced the semesters are, the more difficult it is to balance semester-only courses.
- An 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, allowing for more instructional days to occur prior to spring testing.
- 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, cross country, volleyball, band, cheer, 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.

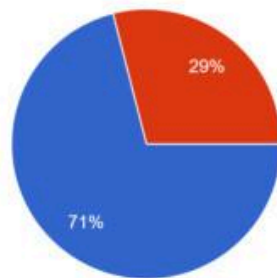
The district will monitor state, district, and classroom student assessment results to determine effectiveness of the early state data. Additional data to be monitored includes teacher/staff and student attendance data.

SEARCY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY STAKEHOLDER AND TEACHER/STAFF RESPONSES FOR EARLY START WAIVER

STAKEHOLDERS:

The District has the opportunity to submit a separate waiver through our educational cooperative for an earlier start (no earlier than August 12) than the s... of the ability to propose this flexibility if needed.

169 responses

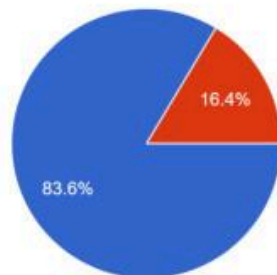


- I support the district's waiver application to implement an earlier start date (this date would be no earlier than August 12)
- I do not support a waiver request to implement an earlier state date.

STAFF:

The District has the opportunity to submit a separate waiver through our educational cooperative for an earlier start (no earlier than August 12) than the s...of the ability to propose this flexibility if needed.

61 responses



- I support the district's waiver application to implement an earlier start date (this date would be no earlier than August 12)
- I do not support a waiver request to implement an earlier state date.

**SEARCY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

2024-2025 Regional Early Start Date

WHEREAS the Searcy County School District Board of Directors met in a special, open, and properly-convened board meeting on February 12, 2024, in the Searcy County School District Board Room; and

Whereas four 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 earlier than August 14; and
- (iii) 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 Searcy County School District approves of a school start date of no earlier than Monday, August 12th for the 2024-2025 school year.

ADOPTED in regular (change to "special" if true) session by the Board of Directors of the Searcy County School district on February 12, 2024.



PRESIDENT



SECRETARY