



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 District Waiver Request

District:	PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT
LEA Number:	3505000
Superintendent:	Barbara Warren
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Contact for Waiver:	Monica McMurray
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Date Received by DESE:	

The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:

1. Board resolution approving the waiver request

Community survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeib-vFBorxrSIHEXSpG12ItT19FFm6nFoKKVUGIH D3QZsJ7g/viewform?usp=sf_link

Waiver Request #1

Topic:	Class Size and Teaching Load
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Standard 1-A.5; DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load; Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-812
Duration Requested:	3 years
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Arkansas Virtual Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	All courses, all schools, all grades

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. Due to the ever-increasing high stakes in student achievement and lack of parallelization of teacher pay, the entire nation has experienced a severe shortage of teachers. As a result, the Pine Bluff School District has struggled over the years to employ licensed teachers to fill teacher vacancies thus resulting in Standards for Accreditation issues and low academic growth across the entire district. While sign-on bonuses are a part of our efforts to recruit qualified teachers, overall teacher retention has waned due to limitations to include incentive pay for the entire workforce. Currently the district collaborates with the College of Education Departments at Universities to provide undergraduates student teaching opportunities as part of their course work. Because of the shortage in licensed educators, the district would like to further this partnership with the Universities and utilize the student teaching interns as classroom teachers.

The lack of licensed teachers has created teaching vacancies. The District will be required to fill these vacancies with substitutes. In most cases, the substitute has limited education in the teaching field. The District would like to fill that vacancy with an actual education major; who has a desire to become an educator and has participated in course work within the field of education. Allowing the District to utilize these interns as classroom teachers also provides the District the opportunity to “grow their own” teachers in regards to retention and recruitment.

Additionally, as we enter into the 3rd academic year of COVID-19, the use of college interns in the classroom will create learning environments led by future teachers, more one explicit instruction, fewer classroom distractions, and more opportunities for teaching and learning in each classroom. Partnerships have been formed with our institutions of higher learning, ministerial alliance, AEA, Go Forward Pine Bluff and Retired Teacher Association, our local educational service cooperative, and others to provide intensive support in our efforts. Lead teachers, school improvement specialists, and teachers in training will receive training and development that is intentionally designed to support our college interns to ensure capacity building and teacher retention. Below are additional supports that will be given to college interns:

- Education service cooperative novice mentoring
- Classroom management/behavior
- Common planning time
- Additional Planning Time
- Monthly meetings with university internship/teacher training supervisor
- Other: _____

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

Since the college intern will not hold a Bachelor's Degree until after the student internship is completed, the district cannot assign the intern as the "teacher of record" for the students. The class load waiver is necessary to assign a partner teacher as the "teacher of record". The waiver will allow for the increase in the number of students that a standard licensed teacher can have on record. In doing so, it will create opportunities for the PBSB to employ needed instructional staff. The college level interns will work under the guidance of the partnered classroom teacher while in separate classrooms.

Another benefit to utilizing this waiver is it would strengthen our partnership with our local institutions of higher learning while we work in concert to ensure college interns receive the necessary job embed skills needed to matriculate the educational process toward standard teacher license.

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

The Pine Bluff School District will monitor the effectiveness of the class load waiver through a continuous mentoring process. The District Retention and Recruitment Director will create a support plan that is communicated with the building leadership to ensure the student intern teacher has scheduled times with the partner teacher to plan, collaborate, and learn. The support plan will include the school improvement specialist, social worker, and building level principal in regards to professional learning, coaching, and feedback. The support team will coordinate activities around each academic and teacher's learning goal to ensure a system of evaluation and reflection designed to provide continuous improvement. Monthly meetings will be held with School Improvement Teams to evaluate student learning outcomes. These meetings will focus on academic areas intentionally identified to close the achievement gap.

Data sets that will be used during the monthly meetings will include: formative assessments, common assessments, interim assessments, lesson plans, CWT's and summative assessment. Professional learning will be evaluated to assess the level of effectiveness based on the needs of the waiver. Data will be maintained around the number of student interns employed in the district, and the percentage of interns completing the college program and obtaining a teacher license.