



June 11, 2020

Commissioner Johnny Key  
Arkansas Department of Education  
Four Capitol Mall, Room 304-A  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Charter Amendment Request

As the Superintendent of North West Arkansas Classical Academy, I request a waiver of 4.02.5 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools, so that our requested amendment can be heard by the Charter Authorizing Panel at the July 14, 2020 meeting.

We will be presenting an amendment requesting an enrollment cap increase and approval to add an additional K-12 campus located in the Rogers Public School attendance zone. This request is needed as the timeline for the purchase of the proposed site property has been accelerated by the seller.

Thank you, for your assistance and consideration in this matter.

All the Best,

Steven Gast  
Superintendent  
North West Arkansas Classical Academy



# Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education*

**Johnny Key**  
*Secretary*

June 17, 2020

Steven Gast, Superintendent  
Sent via e-mail

**State Board  
of Education**

**RE: Charter Amendment Request**

Diane Zook  
*Melbourne*  
**Chair**

Dear Mr. Gast:

Charisse Dean  
*Little Rock*  
**Vice Chair**

I received your letter requesting a waiver of Section 4.02.5 of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools. You requested this waiver so that the Charter Authorizing Panel may hear your school's request for an amendment of its charter during the Charter Authorizing Panel's July meeting.

Susan Chambers  
*Bella Vista*

Dr. Fitz Hill  
*Little Rock*

Pursuant to my authority under Section 4.02.6 of the above rules, I grant a waiver of Section 4.02.5.

Kathy McFetridge  
*Springdale*

Dr. Sarah Moore  
*Stuttgart*

Sincerely,

Ouida Newton  
*Poyen*

R. Brett Williamson  
*El Dorado*

Johnny Key  
Secretary of Education

Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR  
72201-1019  
(501) 682-4475  
ArkansasEd.gov

*An Equal  
Opportunity  
Employer*



# FOUNDERS<sup>®</sup>

*Classical Academy*

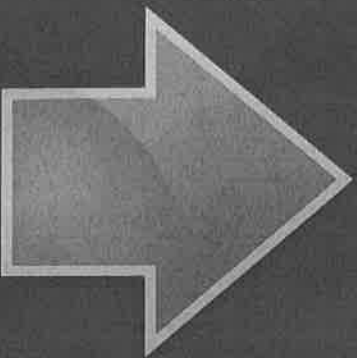
## Founders Expansion - NWA



# NWACA Brief History / Highlights

- Opened K-8 in 2013
- Grew to K-12 in 2018
- Three graduating classes so far
- Over \$800k in scholarships for 10 students in our first graduating class
- Over \$1 million in scholarships for 15 students in our second graduating class
- Over \$1.5 million in scholarships for 17 students in our third graduating class
- 2 National Merit Semi-Finalists
- 2 National Merit Finalist
- Achieving School and District "A" report cards
- Recognized by OEP for Outstanding School in multiple areas
- Athletic achievements / championships
- All-State Choir members

# Current Enrollment



GRADE	2019-2020 CAPACITY	2019-2020 CURRENT ENROLLMENT
K	100	100
1	115	115
2	92	92
3	92	92
4	100	100
5	75	75
6	75	75
7	50	50
8	75	54
9	50	28
10	50	24
11	50	23
12	50	18
	974	846

# Current 19-20 Waiting List



Kindergarten - 7th Grade  
**610** Students on current waitlist

Grade	Number on Waiting List
K	193
1	78
2	82
3	92
4	25
5	77
6	54
7	9
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12	0

# 2020-2021 Applications by Grade (as of Jan.31)

Grade	Number of Apps	Enrollment Cap	Available Openings After Siblings & Staff Students & Re-enrollment
K	301	100	45
1	110	115	11
2	102	115	0
3	89	92	0
4	74	100	0
5	44	100	2
6	61	75	1
7	29	75	0
8	12	50	2
9	12	50	0
10	6	50	21
11	7	25	1
12	1	25	4

# 848 Students

Applied for 87 available openings for  
the 2020-2021 school year during our  
Open Application Period



**What do we want to do to solve the current space issue at NWACA and also allow for more families to attend Responsive Ed schools?**

- Open a K-8 Campus in Rogers
- Convert current NWACA to K-8 at existing location (with renovations)
- Open a 9-12 Campus in Rogers in which both the Bentonville K-8 and Rogers K-8 can feed

# Campus Configurations

## Bentonville

- 2020-2024
  - K-12 Campus at existing location
- 2024-2025
  - Becomes K-8 Campus
  - 9-12 transitions to Rogers campus

## Rogers

- 2020-2022
  - Purchase land / Build K-8 Campus and Gym
- 2022-2023
  - Open K-8 Building and Gym
- 2023-2024
  - Conservative Plan: Increase 7th & 8th Grade Sections
  - Aggressive Plan: Open 9-12 Building
- 2024-2025
  - Open 9-12 Building to serve both Bentonville and Rogers K-8 Campuses

# Northwest Arkansas Community

**Northwest Arkansas continues to lead state growth, 13th fastest-growing U.S. metro over past decade**

Link to article:

<https://talkbusiness.net/2020/03/northwest-arkansas-continues-to-lead-state-growth-13th-fastest-growing-u-s-metro-over-past-decade/>

**1,000 people per month are moving to Northwest Arkansas**

# Goal

To continue to provide an open-enrollment public Classical education to the additional families of Northwest Arkansas who desire to be a part of our school.

To be able to have the facilities to match the stellar education taking place at NWACA.

# Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy ENROLLMENT REPORT

Enrollment Date: May 22, 2020

Enrollment Count	Asian			Black			Hispanic			Native American		Two or More			White			Grade Totals	
	Females	Males	Race Totals	Females	Males	Race Totals	Females	Males	Race Totals	Males	Race Totals	Females	Males	Race Totals	Females	Males	Race Totals		
Northwest Ark Classical Academy	01	21	28	49	2	1	3	4	5	9	1	1	1	1	2	21	29	50	114
	02	21	19	40		3	3	4	1	5						18	26	44	92
	03	14	20	34				4	3	7						22	28	50	91
	04	18	16	34	2	1	3	4	4	8		1	1	2	2	28	24	52	99
	05	11	10	21				6	9	15			1	1	1	21	17	38	75
	06	7	16	23	1		1	2	10	12	1	1	2	2	2	20	16	36	75
	KF	23	16	39				3	2	5			3	3	6	33	17	50	100
	Building Totals	115	125	240	5	5	10	27	34	61	2	2	8	5	13	163	157	320	646
	Northwest Ark Classical Academy High School	07	1	7	8		2	8	7	15			1	1	2	9	14	23	50
		08	6		6		1	1	4	5						20	22	42	54
		09	1	1	2				4	1	5					11	12	23	30
		10	2	1	3				3	3	3		1	1	1	8	8	16	23
11			1	1				1		1			1	1	1	8	10	18	21
12			3	3						1		1	1	1	9	5	14	18	
Building Totals	10	13	23		3	3	20	9	29			1	4	5	65	71	136	196	
West Little Rock Classical Academy	06				5	3	8					1	1	2	3	3	6	16	
	07		1	1	5	1	6		1	1		1	1	1	5	3	8	17	
	08				6	4	10	1		1					6	6	12	23	
	09				4	4	8	1	1	2		1	1	1	6	6	12	23	
	10	1		1	6	5	11					2	1	3	7	12	19	34	
	11		2	2	2	5	7	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	6	13	19	32	
	12				2	2	4								4	2	6	10	
	Building Totals	1	3	4	30	24	54	3	3	6	1	1	5	3	8	37	45	82	155
	Total	126	141	267	35	32	67	50	46	96	3	3	14	12	26	265	273	538	997

# Student Demographic Percentages

Excludes PK Students

1,018 Total Active Students On May 22, 2020

NOTE: Program Field counts/percentages reflect the field values on May 22, 2020. Non-program field (504, Homeless, Migrant & Home Language) counts/percentages are based on the current values of these fields.

## Meal Status Percentages

Program Value	Student Program	Meal Status Count	Meal Status Percentage
01		52	5.24%
02		27	2.72%
03		856	86.20%
04		58	5.84%
<b>Meal Status - Total</b>		<b>993</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy  
1302 Melissa Dr Ste 100, Bentonville, AR 72712

Note: We lease a small portion of the adjacent building due to space limitations.



## Enrollment Sections by Year: Bentonville

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	5	5	5	3	3	4	4
1st	5	5	5	3	3	4	4
2nd	4	5	5	3	3	4	4
3rd	4	4	5	3	3	4	4
4th	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
5th	3	4	4	3	3	4	4
6th	3	3	4	3	3	4	4
7th	2	3	3	2	2	3	3
8th	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
9th	2	2	2	2	3		
10th	1	2	2	2	2		
11th	1	1	2	2	2		
12th	1	1	1	2	2		

## Enrollment Cap Numbers by Year: Bentonville

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	100	100	100	60	60	80	80
1st	115	115	115	69	69	92	92
2nd	92	115	115	69	69	92	92
3rd	92	92	115	69	69	92	92
4th	100	100	100	75	75	100	100
5th	75	100	100	75	75	100	100
6th	75	75	100	75	75	100	100
7th	50	75	75	50	50	75	75
8th	75	75	75	50	50	75	75
9th	50	50	50	50	75		
10th	25	50	50	50	50		
11th	25	25	50	50	50		
12th	25	25	25	50	50		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>



## Enrollment Sections by Year: Rogers

	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	4	4	4	4
1st	4	4	4	4
2nd	4	4	4	4
3rd	4	4	4	4
4th	4	4	4	4
5th	4	4	4	4
6th	4	4	4	4
7th	2	3	3	3
8th	2	2	3	3
9th			3/4	3/4
10th			3/4	3/4
11th			3/4	3/4
12th			3/4	3/4

## Enrollment Cap Numbers by Year: Rogers

	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	80	80	80	80
1st	92	92	92	92
2nd	92	92	92	92
3rd	92	92	92	92
4th	100	100	100	100
5th	100	100	100	100
6th	100	100	100	100
7th	50	75	75	75
8th	50	50	75	75
9th			75	75
10th			75	75
11th			50	75
12th			50	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>1,106</b>

# Total Number Served in NWA

## 1 Campus

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
<b>TOTAL</b>	1070	1120	1145	1170	1170

## 2 Campuses

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
<b>Bentonville</b>	1070	792	817	806	806
<b>Rogers</b>	N/A	806	806	1,106 / 1,206	1,106 / 1,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>1,623</b>	<b>1,912 / 2,012</b>	<b>1,912 / 2,012</b>

Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy  
Desegregation Analysis

This desegregation analysis is in support of Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy's amendment request. To the extent that Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 applies to charter renewals or amendments, Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy is required to carefully review the potential impact its operations would have upon the efforts of Rogers School District (RSD) and surrounding districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy is currently located within the boundaries of the Bentonville City limits. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy currently draws students from the RSD, Springdale School District (SSD), and Bentonville School District (BSD). The charter school currently provides instruction to students in Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade.

II. The Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy Data

According to the 2019-2020 school year enrollment figures as maintained by the ADE Data Center, RSD had a student population of 15,721 students and the entire Benton County has a student enrollment population of 48,196. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy's 2019-2020 school year enrollment figures show a student population of 1,064 students with 914 if those students in Northwest Arkansas. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy's current student population is equal to 1% of the entire Benton County student population. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy is unaware of any federal desegregation court orders affecting the Bentonville, Springdale, Fayetteville, or Rogers School Districts. Under Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306(6)(A), Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy must be race-neutral and non-discriminatory in its student selection and admission process. While it is impossible to project its future racial composition accurately, Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy will continue to implement admissions policies that are consistent with state and federal laws, regulations, and/or guidelines applicable to charter schools.

In addition, Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that the charter operations will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state.

III. Conclusion

Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy submits that upon the basis of its review, that the proposed amendment request will not hamper, delay, cause any undue hardship, or in any manner affect the desegregation efforts of the BSD, SSD, FSD, and RSD or any school districts in the State of Arkansas.



## NORTHWEST ARKANSAS CLASSICAL ACADEMY

1302 Melissa Drive, Suite 100  
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712

(479) 715-6676 FAX: (866) 821-7385

<http://www.nwaclassical.com>

May 26, 2020

To Whom it may Concern:

I would like to make a formal request to purchase land in Rogers for a K-8 Founders campus. Currently we have one campus in Bentonville serving grades K-12 with 850 students enrolled and 603 students on the 2019-2020 waitlist. As with many classical schools, the 9-12 grades are challenging to keep at an enrollment that is sustainable / affordable. Our high school currently has roughly 100 students in grades 9-12. For the 2020-2021 school year, we had 848 students apply for 87 available openings during our open-application period that ran from December 1, 2019 - January 31, 2020.

Because we have so many students in our area on our K-8 waitlist and applying for grades K-8, it makes sense to open another campus that can literally pull from that list for students. By opening another K-8 campus in Rogers, we can then feed both the Rogers and Bentonville campuses into one 9-12 Founders High School. After 2022-2023 (when the lease on the 1300 building expires), we will not be able to accommodate the number of sections needed to roll up the "bubble" and we will have to begin cutting sections. While the initial reaction would be to close the high school, from a marketing and image standpoint, this would be negative attention for Responsive Ed schools in Arkansas. Additionally, that denies students who desire this type of education the ability to participate in it. Given the current state of our elementary waitlist, it would be even worse if we started dropping elementary sections. Once we start cutting sections, the perception in the community will be that our school is not doing well and we will see an overall decrease in enrollment.

We formally request the purchase of 20 acres in north Rogers on the west side of I49 for us to build the Founders Rogers K-8 Campus and the Founders Rogers High School building. This land is 4 miles from our current location on Dodson Road, Rogers.

Sincerely,

Susan Provenza, NWACA Headmaster

In affiliation with



HILLSDALE COLLEGE  
PURSUING TRUTH • DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

# AVAILABLE LAND SITES

PRESENTED TO:



5/16/2019

Land For Sale

**13.35 +/- ACRES**

SW Regional Airport Blvd, Bentonville, AR



**PAUL ESTERER**

Principal & Northwest Arkansas President



Newmark Moses Tucker Partners  
805 S Walton Blvd, Suite 690  
Bentonville, AR 72712  
C 479.685.6612  
T 479.271.6118  
[pesterer@newmarkmtp.com](mailto:pesterer@newmarkmtp.com)

**Professional Background**

Paul Esterer serves as Principal and Northwest Arkansas President of Newmark Moses Tucker Partners. Esterer is one of the leading commercial brokers in the state of Arkansas, as well as licensed in Missouri and Ohio, on national office, retail, multifamily and industrial properties. With his combined 28 years' experience in commercial real estate and banking, he has risen to the top as a respected commercial real estate executive, developer and broker.

Esterer uses his significant track record in project development involving urban living, retail dining and office space to help clients bring to life large scale economic development efforts. He is also active in local, state and federal legislative and governmental affairs in Arkansas. As part of the well-rounded services Newmark Grubb Arkansas offers, Esterer is a frequent speaker at economic developer, urban redevelopment and financial conferences across the United States.

**Representative Transactions**

**Development & Leasing Highlights:**

- 8W Center; 85,000 SF; Office Building; Bentonville, AR
- 8th Street Market; 85,000 SF; Office, Restaurant & Education; Bentonville, AR
- Bentonville Commerce; 120,000 SF; Office Building; Bentonville, AR (Landlord Rep)
- Roberts Law Firm; 10,000 SF; Office Building; Bentonville, AR (Tenant Rep)

**Land Sale Highlights:**

- 21 Ac + Primrose Retirement Senior Living Site
- 20 Ac + Simmons Kourtis Multi Family Group, Rogers, AR
- 22 Ac + Richsmith: The Point at Bentonville apartments
- 24 Ac + Walton Family, Bentonville
- 9.5 Ac + Walton Family, Bentonville
- 70 Ac + Buffington Homes Subdivision, Bentonville

**Acquisitions & Sales Highlights:**

- Retail Portfolio; (6 Properties); \$27,000,000; various sites
- 5th Street Offices; 60,000 SF; \$6,000,000; Bentonville, AR
- MOB: Boozman Hof; 22,000 SF; \$5,200,000; Rogers, AR
- Stadium Apartments; Retail & Multifamily; \$6,675,000; Fayetteville, AR
- South Creekside Apartments; Multifamily; \$8,000,000; Fayetteville, AR

**Paul Esterer** Principal & Northwest Arkansas President 479.685.6612 [pesterer@newmarkmtp.com](mailto:pesterer@newmarkmtp.com)

# Founders Bentonville & Founders Rogers: 2 Campuses feeding to 1 HS

## Current State:

Currently have one campus in Bentonville serving grades K-12 with 850 students enrolled and 603 students on the 2019-2020 waitlist. As with many classical schools, the 9-12 grades are challenging to keep at an enrollment that is sustainable / affordable. Our high school currently has roughly 100 students in grades 9-12. For the 2020-2021 school year, we had 848 students apply for 87 available openings during our open-application period that ran from December 1, 2019 - January 31, 2020.

## Opportunities and Challenges:

Because we have so many students in our area on our K-8 waitlist, it makes sense to open another campus that can literally pull from that list for students. By opening another K-8 campus in Rogers, we can then feed both the Rogers and Bentonville campuses into one 9-12 Founders High School. After 2022-2023 (when the lease on the 1300 building expires), we will not be able to accommodate the number of sections needed to roll up the “bubble” and we will have to begin cutting sections. In terms of location, we are seeking a purchasing agreement to acquire 20 acres in north Rogers on the west side of I49. This is land that he would then sell to us for \$2 million for us to build the Founders Rogers K-8 Campus and the Founders Rogers High School building. This land is 4 miles from our current location.



## Benefits to two K-8 campuses feeding into one HS:

- Larger, more sustainable and affordable high school than current model
- More families served by Founders schools in NWA where there is already a waitlist

→ By keeping the Bentonville campus that is currently owned by Responsive Ed, we are utilizing financial best practices

### Timelines:

2020-2021:

- Need 2 additional general education classrooms for 2nd and 5th grades - Leased office space on first floor of 1300 building so that we can create more room in the 9-12 building for the 20-21 school year
- Need 3 additional specialty classrooms for art, music and Special Education - solved with lease mentioned above
- Purchase land in Rogers

2021-2022:

- Need another 2 general education classrooms for 3rd and 6th grades - solved with lease mentioned above
- Begin construction in Rogers

Year 1 - 2022-2023:

- Open Rogers Campus: K-8
- Renovate Bentonville Campus: K-12 (no longer leasing 1300 building)

Year 2 - 2023-2024:

- Increase sections in Rogers Campus: K-8
- Renovate Bentonville Campus: K-12

Year 3 - 2024-2025:

- Expand Rogers Campus: K-12
  - Open HS building serving both Bentonville and Rogers campuses
- Bentonville Campus: K-8



## Enrollment Sections by Year: Bentonville

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	5	5	5	3	3	4	4
1st	5	5	5	3	3	4	4
2nd	4	5	5	3	3	4	4
3rd	4	4	5	3	3	4	4
4th	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
5th	3	4	4	3	3	4	4
6th	3	3	4	3	3	4	4
7th	2	3	3	2	2	3	3
8th	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
9th	2	2	2	2	3		
10th	1	2	2	2	2		
11th	1	1	2	2	2		
12th	1	1	1	2	2		

## Enrollment Cap Numbers by Year: Bentonville

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	100	100	100	60	60	80	80
1st	115	115	115	69	69	92	92
2nd	92	115	115	69	69	92	92
3rd	92	92	115	69	69	92	92
4th	100	100	100	75	75	100	100
5th	75	100	100	75	75	100	100
6th	75	75	100	75	75	100	100
7th	50	75	75	50	50	75	75
8th	75	75	75	50	50	75	75
9th	50	50	50	50	75		
10th	25	50	50	50	50		
11th	25	25	50	50	50		
12th	25	25	25	50	50		
TOTAL	899	997	1070	792	817	806	806

## Enrollment Sections by Year: Rogers

	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	4	4	4	4
1st	4	4	4	4
2nd	4	4	4	4
3rd	4	4	4	4
4th	4	4	4	4
5th	4	4	4	4
6th	4	4	4	4
7th	2	3	3	3
8th	2	2	3	3
9th			3/4	3/4
10th			3/4	3/4
11th			3/4	3/4
12th			3/4	3/4

## Enrollment Cap Numbers by Year: Rogers

	2022-2023 Year 1	2023-2024 Year 2	2024-2025 Year 3	2025-2026 Year 4
Kindergarten	80	80	80	80
1st	92	92	92	92
2nd	92	92	92	92
3rd	92	92	92	92
4th	100	100	100	100
5th	100	100	100	100
6th	100	100	100	100
7th	50	75	75	75
8th	50	50	75	75
9th			75	75
10th			75	75
11th			50	75
12th			50	75
TOTAL	756	806	1,056	1,106

# Total Number Served in NWA

## 1 Campus

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
<b>TOTAL</b>	1070	1120	1145	1170	1170

## 2 Campuses

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Bentonville	1070	792	817	806	806
Rogers	N/A	806	806	1,106 / 1,206	1,106 / 1,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>1,623</b>	<b>1,912 / 2,012</b>	<b>1,912 / 2,012</b>

