



## Public School Waiver Request

<b>District:</b>	<b>Buffalo Island Central</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	1605
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Gaylon Taylor
<b>Email:</b>	gaylon.taylor@bicschools.net
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Kima Stewart
<b>Contact Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:kima.stewart@bicschools.net">kima.stewart@bicschools.net</a>
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	870-486-5411, ext. 32
<b>Date Received by DESE:</b>	

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
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### RESPONSES:

1. The formal resolution will be voted on at the February 22, 2024 meeting of the Board of Education. Prior discussions indicate that the School Board will be in favor of an earlier start date.
2. A proposed calendar was shared with faculty and parents and responses/input was sought regarding opinions comparing early and late school start dates. The respondees indicated a preference for an early start date. The Personnel Policy Committee also created possible calendars for consideration to propose to the faculty: one indicating an early start date; the other one indicating a late start date. The members of the Personnel Policy Committee selected the early start date to propose to the faculty for the 2024-25 school year.

## Waiver Request #1

<b>Topic:</b>	School Start Date
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	A.C.A. 6-10-106
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	5 years
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	Buffalo Island Central
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To</b>	PK - 12
<b>PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)</b>	<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 member schools of Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative, both collectively and individually, are requesting a waiver for A.C.A. 6-10-106, which establishes the first allowable day of class of the Monday of the week that contains August 19. For the 2024-25 school year, that date be Monday, August 19. Buffalo Island Central is requesting approval for an earlier start date. Specifically, the waiver being requested is to allow the applying school districts to set their individual district's first day of class to be "no earlier than Monday, August. 12."

Current law results in a wide swing regarding the allowable opening date of school. At earliest, it can be August 14 (as indicted in Fall 2023). The latest possible first day is August 20, which under current law will affect the Fall 2029. The approval of this waiver would allow the school to open next year (Fall 2024) and in subsequent years on the same relative date as the current school year (2023-24).

The approval of this waiver would offer these advantages:

\*The Fall and Spring semester lengths would be closer in number. As a four-day school, our current semester lengths are: Fall semester = 67; Spring semester = 76. A later start date would further unbalance the length of the semester which is problematic for classes that are one semester long. Likely, this would require extending the Fall semester into the month of January and would result in final exams being scheduled after the two week Christmas break; additionally, exams could be postponed due to winter weather events.

\*Approval of this waiver would give greater assurance of school ending in late May rather than extending into June. There is research to support a decrease in learning past the Memorial Day holiday. Also, this interferes with our extended programs during the summer that have included Summer school programs, ACT Boot Camp, Credit Recovery, and summer sports camps.

\*An earlier start date automatically results in an increase of days of instruction prior to Spring testing. These added days could have a positive impact on assessment result as well as affording more test preparation opportunities.

**\*Because sports and other extracurricular activities are set annually to begin on or about the same relative day as Fall 2023, with or without the waiver, a large population of students will already have returned to campus to practice and/or prepare for these activities regardless of the opening date of the school year.**

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

**Buffalo Island Central will create a calendar with an earlier start date in order to have more flexibility during the school year. The school year will remain the same length with the same instructional hours. This simply would allow the school district to continue with a school calendar structured as closely as possible to the current one, avoiding the drastic changes that would result without the waiver.**

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

**Buffalo Island Central will monitor student assessment results and student attendance data related to the earlier start date in order to determine the effectiveness of the earlier start date.**

**Buffalo Island Central**  
**2024-2025**  
**Proposed School Calendar**

August 12, 13	Professional Development
August 12	Open House
August 14	First Day of School
September 2	Labor Day—No School
October 15	End of 1st quarter (35)
October 17	Parent Teacher Conference 4:30-7:30
November 25-28	Thanksgiving Break
December 19	End of 2nd quarter (34)
December 23-January 2	Christmas Break
January 6	First day of 2nd semester
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 13	Parent Teacher Conference 4:30-7:30
March 13	End of 3rd quarter (39)
March 24-27	Spring Break
May 21	End of 4th quarter (35)

Inclement Weather Days, in order of priority:

1. The Friday immediately following a missed day for inclement weather will be considered as the first option to make up any missing days from the same week.
2. May 22  
**(First makeup day if step 1 cannot be used.)**
3. January 31, February 28, March 14, April 25  
**(These will only be used to help us avoid going after Memorial Day if steps 1 and 2 cannot be used.)**

Student instruction 7.5 hrs (8.5 total hrs)      7:50-4:20

143 student-teacher contact days

Days:  $35+34+39+35=143$

Dates of quarters and semesters: Aug 14 - Oct 15 (35)  
Oct 16 - Dec 19 (34)  
Jan 6 - Mar 13 (39)  
Mar 17 - May 21 (35)