



Act 1240 District Waiver Request Extension

District:	Dermott
LEA Number:	0901
Superintendent:	Kristi Ridgell
Email:	Kristi.ridgell@dermott.k12.ar.us
Contact for Waiver:	Karen Eoff
Contact Email:	Karen.eoff@searkcoop.com
Contact Phone:	870-723-2074
Date Received by DESE:	

The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:

1. School Board Resolution approving the waiver request
2. Evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families

Waiver Extension Request #1

Topic:	Teacher Licensure
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Ark. Code Ann §6-15-1004 Qualified teachers in every public classroom Ark. Code Ann §6-17-309 Certification to teach grade or subject matter Ark. Code Ann §6-17-401 Teacher Licensure Requirement Ark. Code Ann §6-17-902 Definition (definition of a teacher as licensed) Ark. Code Ann §6-17-908 Teacher Salary Fund Ark. Code Ann §6-17-919 Warrants void without valid certification Standard 4-D.1 Teacher licensure requirement of Arkansas Law Standard 4-F.1 Teacher licensure requirement of Arkansas Law Section 7 of Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure
Duration Requested:	Five Year Waivers. 2022-2027
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Ark. Code Ann §6-15-1004, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-309, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-401, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-902, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-919, Standard 4-D.1, Held by Ark. Arts Academy Ark. Code Ann §6-17-908 & Standard 4-F.1, Held by Ark. Virtual Academy

	Section 7 of Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure, Held by Ark. Connections Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	K-12

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.

Dermott School District recognizes that a highly qualified teacher in each classroom is the single most important factor influencing student learning. Dermott School District's greatest desire is to hire a fully licensed, highly qualified teacher for each open position that exists in the district. However, the demand for fully licensed highly qualified teachers far exceeds the number of licensed teachers in our Co-op area. The Dermott School District has had 29 openings since 2016 that we could not find licensed teachers to fill regardless of how many recruitment activities we conducted. We have hired 29 Act 1240 teachers and seven of these college graduates have completed a licensure program and now hold an Arkansas Teaching License. Two additional Act 1240 teachers have completed micro credentialing and are awaiting their license. Several more teachers are in the process of finishing their requirements for licensure. When Act 1240 teachers are hired in our district they are put on a 1240 Teacher Licensure Plan and must meet the specified requirements/progress to be rehired for the next year. If they do not meet the yearly requirements they are NOT rehired.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) has provided/produced only 58 student teachers from fall 2016 to spring 2021. Southeast Co-op schools have had 430 open positions from 2016-2021 for which no licensed teacher could be recruited to fill the position. UAM supplies the majority of traditionally trained teachers to our Co-op area schools. As you can see the number of vacant teaching positions far exceeds the number of teachers graduating from teacher education programs. We have a severe teacher shortage in our Co-op area and do not have enough licensed teachers to fill our open positions. When we cannot find a licensed teacher to fill a vacant teaching position we then try to recruit a capable college graduate, preferably from our area and preferably with eighteen hours of college coursework in the area they will be teaching. The Act 1240 teacher's principal evaluates the teacher using TESS, does classroom observations to ensure that the teacher is using appropriate teaching strategies and has appropriate classroom management. The teachers are assigned a buddy teacher and a mentor teacher by the district. The Dermott District collaborates with the SEARK Coop and UAM to provide guidance and support for each Act 1240 teacher. The district hires an independent consultant to provide guidance and support for the teachers including giving them study books for the Praxis tests, study sessions, modeling lessons in the classroom, time to observe other teachers and any other professional training needed.

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

Student learning opportunities are enhanced when the Dermott School District utilizes Act 1240 teachers instead of long term substitutes in our classrooms for vacancies we cannot fill. When we place highly capable college graduates in a classroom, enroll them in the three-year Novice

Teacher Program at Southeast Co-op, assign them a buddy teacher and mentor at their school, provide support, outline the three-year timeline to obtaining a teacher licensure, and support each Act 1240 teacher on their journey to licensure, we enhance student learning. This approach provides a more qualified and committed teacher in the classroom than a long term substitute can ever provide. The Act 1240 teacher is vested in completing a licensure program or they will not be rehired. The Act 1240 teacher is vested in the learning gains of the students they teach. The Act 1240 teachers are vested in our community and this is where they want to teach.

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

In our four year report to the State Board of Education on July 8, 2021 the following data was shared. Of the 237, Act 1240 teachers hired thru 2020 in our Co-op area, 131 teachers have become licensed teachers in Arkansas. Seventy one percent of these teachers are still teaching in a Co-op school district. As compared to education major teachers 61 of the 237 were ranked above average teachers, 155 of the 237 were ranked average teachers as compared to education major teachers and only 9% or 21 were ranked below average teachers as compared to education major teachers.

Each Act 1240 teacher in Dermott School District is evaluated by the principal of the building using TESS. Each Act 1240 teacher is observed by the principal to assess the teacher's classroom management strategies and teaching effectiveness. Each Act 1240 teacher must meet twice a year with their principal to review the yearly goals established as they progress toward licensure to be rehired each year. Each Act 1240 teacher must meet the yearly requirements of the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program at the Southeast Co-op each year to complete the Novice Program.

4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the past five years. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.

The "Grow Our Own" teacher program provided for us by Act 1240 waivers is working for Dermott School District. We will hire fully licensed teachers if we can find them for every classroom but we just do not have enough licensed teachers in our area to do that each year. Because of the ACT1240 waivers, Dermott School District has been able to begin school for the past five years with all positions filled thus providing our students with teachers that have completed a bachelor's degree, are committed to the district and are committed to earning their Arkansas Teaching License versus a long term substitute who may not feel the same commitment to the district and students. Also, the waiver has allowed the district to impact the teacher shortage in our area as noted by the seven ACT1240 hires that have completed the requirements to earn their Arkansas license while being employed by our District. We have several other Act 1240 teachers that have completed the MAT coursework and only need to only pass one Praxis test.

Since 2016 we have had 430 open positions in our Co-op area that we could not recruit a licensed teacher to fill. 169 of these teachers have already obtained an Arkansas Teaching License. We have recruited para professionals, AmeriCorps members, and substitutes that are willing to return to college to complete a teaching degree. We explain the options to all routes that lead to teaching! Please continue to give our students the opportunity and access to have a highly qualified college graduate who wants to complete a teacher licensure program and become a fully licensed teacher in their classroom during this shortage time. These teachers are enhancing the student learning opportunities of our students and we are adding to the licensed teacher pool yearly in our area. We will continue to recruit and fill any open position with a fully licensed teacher

if we can find them! However, the demand exceeds the supply so please continue to let us grow our own teachers by continuing our waivers for five years.

Waiver Extension Request #2

Topic:	Teacher Licensure (Library Media Program & Library Media Specialists)
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Ark. Code Ann §6-25-103 Library Media Services Program Ark. Code Ann §6-25-104 Library Media Specialists
Duration Requested:	July 1, 2022 Through June 30, 2027
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Ark. Code Ann §6-25-103, Held by Ark. Virtual Academy Ark. Code Ann §6-25-104, Held by Ark. Connections Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	K-12

- 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.**

When our library media specialist told us that she was relocating we knew we would have a hard time replacing her. The shortage of licensed library media specialists in our area is even worse than our shortage of teachers due to the additional requirements for a license.

The Dermott School District advertised on local and state websites and social media for a library media specialist and had **not one** licensed applicant for the position. None of the current faculty were interested in returning to school to acquire the license. The district did receive two applicants for the advertised position who had a college degree and were very interested in becoming a library media specialist. Both Act 1240 candidates agreed that if hired they would return to school to complete a library media program of study and take the required Praxis exams. After intensive interviews a candidate was chosen. The Act 1240 teacher has completed all coursework for the Master of Teaching Program (MAT) at UAM and only needs to pass his Praxis exam to be able to finish his MAT program and move into a Library Media Program of Study. The district only used the library waiver when no licensed applicant could be found. We did find someone who had an intense passion for reading and a great desire to become a library media specialist.

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

The Act 1240 Library Media Specialist, Brandon Bolden, is doing Accelerated Reading with motivational incentives for reading great books and testing for reading comprehension. He oversees all the K-8 testing and designs the motivational incentives. The secondary teachers oversee their own testing. The secondary English teacher has been the most responsive to work with him in incorporating the Accelerated Reading program at the secondary level. Brandon has scheduled every K-8 classroom into the library weekly for a time of reading, researching, and learning. Brandon works with both elementary and secondary teachers to incorporate reading into their curriculum either by incorporating Accelerated Reading into the regular class or developing reading interest around certain content in their classroom. Brandon has implemented EPIC, an online digital library program, for students to check out books virtually. He also established a

testing link for Accelerated Reading testing for students as well as all teachers having access to EPIC in their classrooms. He also established our first online book fair that was very successful and well received by our parents.

Student learning opportunities have been enhanced by Branden Bolden because he has a passion and a desire to motivate students to read great literature, think critically, make the school library a learning hub for homework, and provide a safe and nurturing climate for students. Please do not force us to go back to using a long term sub in our library media center when we can have Branden who has a passion to help our students. We have placed a highly capable college graduate in our library media center, enrolled him in the three year Novice Teacher Program at Southeast Co-op, assigned him a buddy teacher at the school, outlined the three year timeline to obtaining a licensure, and supported him on his journey to licensure. This approach provides a more qualified teacher in the library media center than a long term substitute can ever provide. Brandon is vested in completing a licensure program because he has found his passion and calling and wants to be licensed in this area. Brandon is vested in the reading gains and critical thinking of all of the students that enter the door of the library media center. Brandon is vested in our community. Our "Grow Our Own" teacher is from our area. The waivers put a person in the classroom that knows the reality the students experience at home. Brandon knows our students, our community, and the hardships that our students have to overcome. He works well with our parents and explains to them the importance of the Accelerated Reading program, how it works, and how they can support their students reading at home.

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

The principals (elementary and secondary) will evaluate the library media specialist using the TESS Model and the rubric for library media specialist. The principals will do walk-throughs to ensure that the program fosters critical thinking, instills confidence in reading in multiple formats, and provides a safe and nurturing climate for all. The principals will ensure that the library media specialist partners with teachers to provide print and digital materials to meet the diverse needs of the students. The principals will ensure that the school library/media center is a hub for supporting students and staff in our quest to improve the reading scores of all our students.

4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the past five years. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.

The Act 1240 Waivers for Library Media has given us the opportunity to "Grow Our Own" library media specialist. By being able to recruit a teacher with a passion to become a fully licensed Dermott Library Media Specialist, we have a pathway to keep this teacher in our school district for many years to come. He wants this position badly enough he is willing to finish his master's degree and enter a program of study in library media. Please extend our waivers and help us keep Brandon Bolden in our school district.

Community School Wide Meeting

A G E N D A

- I. Welcome
- II. Purpose of Meeting
- III. COVID protocol/procedures
- IV. ESSER
- V. 1240 Waiver
- VI. Questions
- VII. Other Concerns/Misc
- VIII. Adjournment

August 5, 2021
5:30 pm
DES Cafeteria



*Dermott School
District*

Dermott School District
Community School Wide Meeting
Sign-In Sheet
August 5, 2021
5:30 pm at DES Cafeteria
CDC Guidelines will be enforced

Lu K	Stephanie Jones
DO N GLOVER	Ashley Jones
Eloyn Mh	Hele King
Mera Turner Blipp	Patrick Williams
Shena Arberru	Stephanie Mumphrey
Carrie Smith	Callie Mumphrey
Julia Baune	Glen Ed
Ducan Thompson	Kiessence Ma
Shamonda Parker	
Ralph Carkey E	
Cynthia Gaskin	
Wes	
Jason Orr	
Carl Brian McDonald	
Sandra J. Jordan	
Quin Williams	

RESOLUTION OF THE Dermott SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHEREAS, the Dermott School District is a public school district in Chicot County in the great state of Arkansas; and;

WHEREAS, the Dermott School District recognizes that teachers are the greatest single factor in the learning of the students; and,

WHEREAS, the Dermott School District has enlisted many partners to assist in placing teachers in classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, the Dermott School District is facing extreme challenges employing licensed teachers for all classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, waivers of certain state laws and administrative rules would allow the Dermott school district more flexibility in placing teachers in classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, Act 1240 of 2015, codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103, allows public school districts to petition the State Board of Education for all or some of the school waivers granted to an open-enrollment public charter school that draws students from the public school districts; and,

WHEREAS, Arkansas Virtual Academy is an open enrollment public character school that draws students from Dermott School District; and,

WHEREAS, the Arkansas State Board of Education granted Arkansas Virtual Academy a series of waivers, including waivers from the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, inclusive of section 15.03 and 16.03; and, Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated, including: (1) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1004; (2) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309; (3) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-401; (4) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-902; (5) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-908; (6) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-919; (7) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-103, and, (8) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Dermott SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

1. Pursuant to Act 1240 of 2015, codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103, the Dermott School District Board of Directors is hereby authorized to request the following waivers from the Arkansas State Board of Education be entered through 2027;
 - a. Section 15.03 and 16.02 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts;
 - b. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-15-1004;

- c. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-309;
- d. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-401;
- e. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-902;
- f. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-908;
- g. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-919;
- h. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-25-103;
- i. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104; and;
- j. Any other such waivers as may legally be required and granted by the Arkansas licensed teachers in classrooms.
- k. Standard 4-D.1 Teacher license requirement of Arkansas Law granted to Arkansas Arts Academy
- l. Standard 4-F. 1 Library media specialist licensure requirement of Arkansas law Arkansas Virtual Academy
- m. Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure granted to Arkansas Connections Academy

2. The Dermott School District seeks these waivers for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027

3. The Dermott School District Board of Directors agreed upon this resolution by vote on August 10, 2021, during an open, regularly scheduled meeting.

By: Stephanie Jones
Board President

By: Alexa McFadden
Board Secretary