



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **Public School Waiver Request**

<b>District:</b>	<b>Little Rock School District</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	6001000
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Dr. Jermall D. Wright
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Jermall.wright@lrsd.org">Jermall.wright@lrsd.org</a>
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Shawn Burgess
<b>Contact Email:</b>	Shawn.burgess@lrsd.org
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	501-447-1105
<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**

## 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>	Arkansas Virtual Academy
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To</b>	K-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 Little Rock School District requests a waiver from A.C.A 6-10-106 which establishes the first allowable day of class as the Monday of the week that contains August 19<sup>th</sup>. For the 2024-25 school year that date will be Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. We would appreciate approval for the early start date for the Little Rock School District giving public schools the equity to Charter Schools and other Public Schools.

The specific waiver being requested is to allow the Little Rock School District to set their first day of class to be “no early than Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>”.

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<sup>th</sup>, which was the case in this school year – the fall of 2023. The latest possible first day is August 20<sup>th</sup>, which, under the law will be – the fall of 2029. This waiver would allow the Little Rock School District 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 81 days while the spring semester will be 93 days, a difference in 12 days. With the waiver, the fall semester will be 86 while the spring semester will be 88, a difference of only 2 days. The more unbalanced the semesters are, the greater the issue for classes that are one semester in length.
- The alternative solution for unbalanced semesters is to not end the fall semester until after Winter Break. This results in semester/final exams shortly after the approximately two (2) 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. Some research indicates a decrease in learning past Memorial Day holiday.
- Beginning school earlier automatically results in more days of instruction before Spring testing dates. More days of instruction will result in greater opportunity to improve test scores and improve student achievement.

- Activities such as football will begin next fall on the same relative date as they did this fall, with or without the waiver. Therefore, many 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 student in other activities such as golf, tennis, cross country, volleyball, band, cheer, dance, JROTC, Student Council, National Honor Society, etc...

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

The school district will create an alternative school calendar with an earlier start date providing more flexibility throughout the school year. The school year will remain similar to the alternative school calendar approved due to inclement weather this school year. It simply allows the Little Rock School District to continue with a school calendar structured as closely as possible to the current school calendar and avoids the dramatic change to the calendar, which will result without the waiver.

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

The Little Rock School District will monitor student assessment results and student attendance data related to the earlier start date to determine the effectiveness of the early start date.

**Stakeholder Involvement:**

The LRSD PPC met on April 1, 2024 and a total of 20 members unanimously approved the Option 2 – Alternative Early Start Date calendar with the first day of school being August 12, 2024.

There is a total of 42 PPC members representing EACH School Campus that consists of Administrators, teachers with some teacher/parents in the member group.

Therefore, we are in support of the LRSD Board approved attached Early Start Date calendar and administration to begin August 12, 2024.

**Little Rock School District**  
**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LITTLE ROCK**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO REQUEST AN**  
**EARLY START DATE THROUGH AN ACT 1240 WAIVER**  
**Resolution**

WHEREAS, the Little Rock School District (LRSD) Board of Directors, met and approved the Administration and PPC approved Option 2 Calendar to request a waiver from A.C.A 6-10-106 which establishes the first allowable day of class as the Monday of the week that contains August 19<sup>th</sup>. For the 2024-25 school year that date will be Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. We would appreciate approval for the early start date for the Little Rock School District giving Little Rock School District the equity afforded to Charter School and other Arkansas Public Schools.

WHEREAS, the specific waiver being request is to allow the Little Rock School District to set their first day of class to be no early than Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>.

WHEREAS, the law as presently constructed results in a wide range of allowable opening date of school. At the earliest, it can be August 14<sup>th</sup>, which was the case in the school year – the fall of 2023. The latest possible first day is August 20<sup>th</sup>, which, under the law will be – the fall of 2029. This waiver would allow the Little Rock School District to open next year and years to follow on the same relative date as this year.

WHEREAS, LRSD will create a calendar with an earlier start date with will be shared with students and families. This timeframe will provide more flexibility throughout the school year and will more equitably align the semester days. Importantly, the length of the school year will remain unchanged. Additionally, this waiver allows the Little Rock School District to adhere to a school calendar structured as closely as possible to the current one, preventing the dramatic yearly changes that would occur without the waiver.

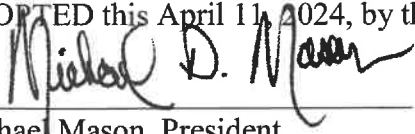
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District hereby authorizes the district administration to formally request a waiver for the School Start Date A.C.A. 6-10-106.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary steps and actions to submit the waiver request, including providing any additional information or documentation required by the relevant Authorities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors expresses its support for the waiver request and acknowledges the importance of flexibility in addressing the unique needs and circumstances of the district.

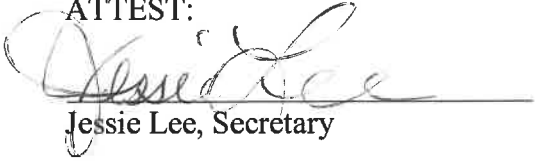
This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this April 11, 2024, by the Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District.



Michael Mason, President  
Board of Education, Little Rock School District

ATTEST:



Jessie Lee, Secretary

