



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **Act 1240 Waiver Request**

|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>District:</b>              | Vilonia                       |
| <b>LEA Number:</b>            | 2307                          |
| <b>Superintendent:</b>        | Doug Adams                    |
| <b>Email:</b>                 | doug.adams@viloniaschools.org |
| <b>Contact for Waiver:</b>    | Doug Adams                    |
| <b>Contact Email:</b>         | doug.adams@viloniaschools.org |
| <b>Contact Phone:</b>         | (501) 796-2113                |
| <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**

## 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 Waiver 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<br><input type="checkbox"/> Promote Innovation<br><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 school districts of the Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative are collectively and separately requesting 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. For the 2024-2025 school year that date will be Monday, August 19. We would appreciate approval for the early start date for the listed schools in our region giving public schools the equity afforded to Charter School.

The specific 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." It is anticipated that the Vilonia School District would begin school on Thursday, August 15, 2024.

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, which was the case this year— fall of 2023. The latest possible first day is August 20 which, under the law will be — the fall of 2029. This waiver would allow the school 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 83 days while the spring semester will be 90 days, a difference of 7 days. With the waiver the fall semester will be 85 days and the spring semester 88 days, a difference of only 3 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 Christmas break. This results in final exams occurring shortly after being out of school for two weeks, 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, as would have been the case this year, due to the extensive and prolonged inclement weather. Some research indicates a decrease in learning past the Memorial Day Holiday.

- Beginning school earlier automatically results in more days of instruction before spring testing. More days of instruction will hopefully result in higher test scores.
- Activities such as football will begin next fall on the same relative date as they did this fall, with or without the waiver, Therefore a large number of 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 students who participate in groups such as golf, tennis, cross country, volleyball, band, cheer, dance, ROTC, Student Council, and National Honor Society, as well as others.

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

The school districts will create a calendar with an earlier start date which will provide them with more flexibility throughout the school year. The school year will remain the same length. It simply allows a district to continue with a school calendar structured as closely as possible to the current one and avoids the dramatic change to the calendar which must result without the waiver.

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

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The 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.



VILONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

PO Box 160  
Vilonia, AR 72173

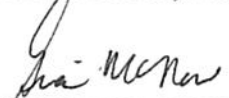
P: 501-796-2113  
F: 501-796-3134  
viloniaschools.org


RESOLUTION  
February 12, 2024

The Vilonia School Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to request an Act 1240 Waiver from the State Board of Education, which would allow the first day of school to be August 15, 2024.

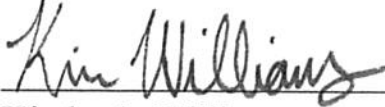
This resolution is approved on February 12, 2024 by the signatures below:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kent Charles, Board President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gina McNew, Board Vice-President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Austin, Secretary

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Tim Nolan, Primary Disbursement Officer

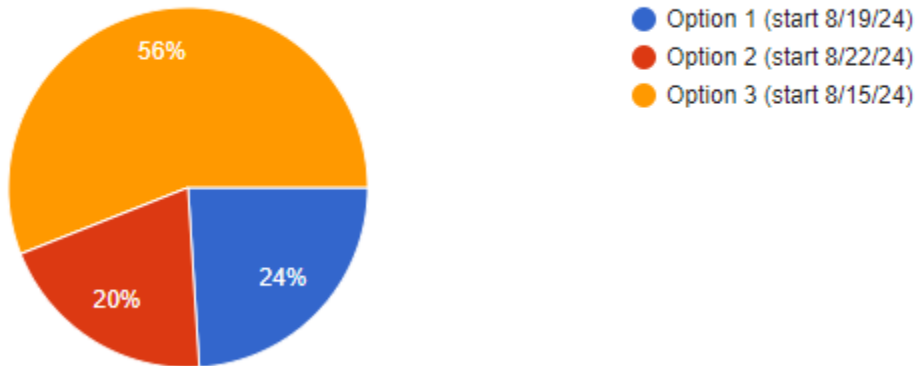
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly Williams

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Trey Foster

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jack Martin

Vilonia School District Stakeholder Feedback  
Early State Date 24-25

**Certified:**



**Classified:**

