



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Public School Waiver Request

District:	Ashdown
LEA Number:	4101000
Superintendent:	Debbie Greathouse, Interim
Email:	dgreathouse@ashdownschools.org
Contact for Waiver:	Debbie Greathouse
Contact Email:	dgreathouse@ashdownschools.org
Contact Phone:	870-898-3208
Date Received by DESE:	

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**

The Board of Directors for the Ashdown School District held a public meeting on January 13, 2025 to discuss the hiring of an interim superintendent. This was reported on by the local newspaper and circulated on our District social media account. All District employees were informed of the change in a memo by Superintendent, Casey Nichols. The response from the community and staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Mrs. Greathouse graduated from Ashdown High School and has lived and raised her family in our School District. She is widely known as a leader in our District.

Waiver Request #1

Topic:	Employment of Full-time Superintendent
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	4-B.1
Duration Requested:	February 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	Grades K-12 in the Ashdown School District
PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)	<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 Ashdown School Board of Education respectfully requests a waiver of Standard of Accreditation 4-B.1 requiring a District to employ a full-time superintendent from February 1, 2025 until June 30, 2025. This waiver will enable our District to provide a smooth transition period from February 1, 2025 when our current Superintendent, Casey Nichols, leaves our District until a new Superintendent can be hired by July 1, 2025 or earlier if possible. This will allow our Building level leaders to prioritize instructional leadership over operational tasks. By keeping all our other key personnel in their respective roles, the educational processes in the buildings in the District will not be interrupted. Administrators and leadership teams have plans in place to improve student achievement which will continue to be implemented. The District Federal Programs Coordinator will serve as the Interim Superintendent. Mrs. Debbie Greathouse has worked closely with Mr. Nichols for the past 6.5 years. She is the most knowledgeable employee about our budgets, personnel, policies, practices, accreditation, and accountability. She is extremely competent, organized and pays close attention to detail. In addition, Mrs. Greathouse will have the ability to consult with Mr. Nichols on a daily basis. He has agreed to mentor and guide her during the interim period. This gives the District great stability to continue all the initiatives, plans and programs under his guidance and advice.

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

This waiver supports the District's mission to maximize educational resources for the benefit of students. By adopting this plan for leadership, we can direct our attention, focus and resources toward practices that directly impact student learning. This plan will keep all current campus administrators in their respective buildings which allows them to be more effective and responsive to the education environment of all students.

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

The Board of Ashdown Schools will meet monthly with the interim superintendent to monitor all financial, operational and programmatic decisions.

Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Ashdown School District Requesting a Waiver of Standards of Accreditation 4-B.1

Whereas, the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts (Standard 4-B.1) require all school districts to employ a full-time superintendent;

Whereas, the Ashdown School District is committed to maintaining the highest standards of education and operational efficiency for the benefit of its students, staff, and community;

Whereas, the Ashdown School District believes that its unique circumstances, including the resignation of the full-time Superintendent, Casey Nichols, and the hiring of an Interim Superintendent, Debbie Greathouse, make it feasible to operate effectively without a full-time superintendent;

Whereas, the district has developed an alternative administrative plan to ensure continued leadership, accountability, and compliance with state education laws and policies;

Whereas, this alternative approach will allocate resources more effectively to support student achievement and educational priorities;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Ashdown School District formally requests a waiver from the Arkansas State Board of Education to the requirement outlined in Standard 4-B.1 to employ a full-time superintendent;

Be It Further Resolved, that the Ashdown School District shall implement its proposed administrative plan and provide regular updates to the Arkansas Department of Education to demonstrate continued compliance with accreditation standards and the effectiveness of the district's leadership structure;

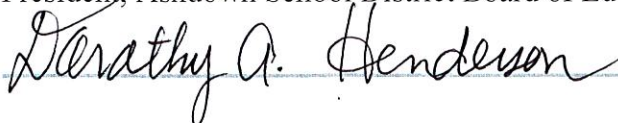
Be It Further Resolved, that this resolution shall be submitted to the Arkansas State Board of Education along with all necessary supporting documentation for their consideration and approval.

Adopted this 27th of January, 2025, by the Board of Education of the Ashdown School District.

Signed:



Chuck Davis
President, Ashdown School District Board of Education



Dorothy Henderson
Secretary, Ashdown School District Board of Education



**Ashdown School District
Office of the Superintendent**

751 Rankin Street
Ashdown, AR 71822
870-898-3208 FAX 870-898-3709

To: State Board of Education and Brooke McCain
From: Ashdown School District, Debbie Greathouse
Date: January 27, 2025
Subject: Waiver Request

The Ashdown School District is requesting to seek a waiver of Standard for Accreditation 4-B.1 for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

Standard of Accreditation 4-B.1 requires that "Each public school district shall employ a full-time superintendent or charter school executive officer to oversee all operations of the public school district" (D/P). The Ashdown School District is seeking a waiver under Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-202 (B) (2) (f) (3).

My name is Debbie Greathouse. I am currently serving as the Federal Programs Coordinator for the Ashdown School District. I am completing my 34th year in education. All of which have been in the Ashdown District. I have had the privilege to teach in a classroom for ten years, serve as a media specialist for ten years, and as the Federal programs coordinator for the last 14 years. In addition, I have served as a Dean of Students for parts of two school years while working on the Ashdown Jr. High campus.

The current superintendent resigned effective January 31, 2025. Therefore, the Ashdown School Board of Education has requested that I serve as the Interim Superintendent until June 30, 2025 or earlier, if a full-time superintendent can be hired. The Board has already advertised the position and will begin reviewing application in February of 2025.

I am currently licensed to teach grades K-12 as a media specialist and K-8 as a classroom teacher. During my 34 years of service to the Ashdown District, I have served as President of the PPC; been a member of both campus and district leadership teams; served as the District ACSIP chair; worked to create a teacher residency program with Southern Arkansas University; served as director over Novice Teacher training; and worked closely with DESE personnel in school improvement. In addition to serving as the Federal Programs Coordinator, I am responsible for teacher licensure, student/parent handbook; Board policies; standards of accreditation; District AR App coordinator; oversee parent involvement and homeless liaison; budget all state categorical funds; and monitor all standards of accountability.

I have had the opportunity to work side by side with three superintendents. I am confident that I can fulfill the duties and responsibilities for the district with the guidance and support from the resigning superintendent for the remainder of the year.



**Ashdown School District
Office of the Superintendent**

751 Rankin Street
Ashdown, AR 71822
870-898-3208 FAX 870-898-3709

The Ashdown School Board of directors will be working diligently to fill the position of Superintendent of Schools for the 2025-2026 school year.

I can be available at the State Board meeting in person or by zoom. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Greathouse". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Debbie Greathouse



ASHDOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

Christopher Casey Nichols

751 Rankin Street, Ashdown, AR 71822 • PHONE: 870-898-3208 • FAX: 870-898-3709

December 20, 2024

TO: Ashdown Public Schools Team
FROM: Casey Nichols, Superintendent
RE: The Future

Dear Ashdown Public Schools Team,

It is with mixed emotions that I share some important news about my professional journey. I have accepted the position of Superintendent of Schools for Queen City ISD in Queen City, Texas. While I am excited about this new opportunity, leaving the Panther Family after six and a half incredible years is truly bittersweet.

I will continue serving as Superintendent of Ashdown Public Schools through late January 2025. During this time, I am committed to working closely with our administrative team to ensure a seamless transition. My focus will remain on supporting our students, staff, and community while advancing the district's positive momentum.

Even after my departure, I will remain available to assist the district with the transition as needed. Please know that I am dedicated to making this process as smooth as possible. Ashdown Public Schools holds a special place in my heart, and I am grateful for the trust, collaboration, and shared commitment to excellence that have defined our work together.

Thank you for your dedication and unwavering support for our students. I look forward to our continued collaboration over the weeks ahead, and beyond.

With deepest gratitude and respect,

Casey Nichols
Superintendent
Ashdown Public Schools

January 15, 2025

The Ashdown Board of Education is pleased to announce that effective February 1, 2025, Mrs. Debbie Greathouse will serve as the appointed Interim Superintendent for Ashdown School District during our search for a permanent superintendent.

Mrs. Greathouse brings a wealth of experience in education and leadership serving over thirty years in the Ashdown School District across many roles. We are confident that Mrs. Greathouse will provide steady and capable leadership to guide our district through this transitional period.

The Board of Education has full faith in Mrs. Greathouse's ability to support our schools, students, and staff while continuing the district's work toward excellence. We encourage all employees to work collaboratively with her as we continue to focus on the success and well-being of our students and school community.

We understand that transitions can be a time of uncertainty, but we are assured that with Mrs. Greathouse at the helm, we will maintain a strong and positive trajectory. We trust that all of you will lend your full support during this time of change and work together in the spirit of partnership and shared goals.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our district. We Are Ashdown!

Sincerely,

Ashdown Board of Directors

Chuck Davis, President
Rosa Bowman, Vice-President
Dorothy Henderson, Secretary
Ricky Ward
Glenda Smedley
Danny Hooks
Dr. Ashley Aylett

Starting our 5th Year serving Little River County

FREE LITTLE RIVER Journal FREE

FREE • Vol. 5 • Issue 2 • Thursday, January 16, 2025 • 1 Section • 8 Pages • Published in Ashdown, Arkansas



First Aid & CPR Training by Kybiba Harris Johnson Saturday, January 18th at 10:00 am at Park of Life, 410 West Main Street in Ashdown. Learn life-saving skills including how to perform CPR on adults, children, and infants, basic first aid for injuries, burns, and other common emergencies, and how to handle choking, cardiac arrest, and more. Limited spots. Cost is \$78 per student. Call 870 667-2100 to register.

Foreman Public Schools: ATTENTION! The Miss Foreman Pageant has had to change the date. New dates Saturday, March 1st at the Foreman High School Auditorium. Forms are now due back by Monday, February 3.

Music Fest on Main April 19th, 11:00-2:00 pm in downtown Ashdown. Soils & The New Reflex hit the stage from 5-7 PM! Live music, classic cars, food trucks, kids area and downtown shopping.

TBR1 Training offered by For the Sake of One at 422 Hickory Street in Texarkana. This is a two day training. Friday, March 21 8-9 pm and Saturday, March 22 9:30 am-3:00 pm. You must attend both days to complete the training. We will provide snacks for the training and lunch on Saturday. The cost for this training is \$95. All foster parents, kinship caregivers, adoptive parents, and DCFS/DFPS case workers can sign up to attend the training for free. Trust based Relationship Intervention (TBR1) is an attachment based, trauma informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBR1 is an Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles to attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear based behaviors. In this training, you will get a condensed version of our entire TBR1 training.

One seasonal Millwood Marina position available, starting in March. 40 hours a week from March to November. \$12.51 per hr. Pick up applications at Millwood State Park Office.

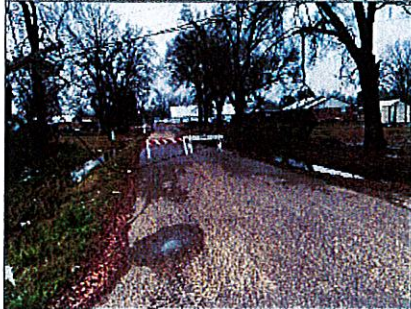
Harvest Regional Food Bank: Urgent Call for Volunteers! We need YOUR help to pack food boxes for our Senior Communities and Mobile Pantry Programs! The temps are dropping, but our community still needs us! Whether you're an individual or part of a group, your time and effort can make a HUGE difference! Call us at 870 774-1198 to volunteer today! Let's work together to fight hunger and support those in need!

Friday, January 10th basketball games between Ashdown and Fouke has been rescheduled to Monday, January 20th with a 4:00 pm tipoff.

The City of Wilton is facing several vacancies among their elected offices. The Mayor and Recorder Treasurer positions will be vacant ending March 31, 2025. The Alderman position is vacant in Ward #1 Position #2, and the Alderman position is vacant in Ward #1 Position #1. Interested residents in the city limits of Wilton can contact Mayor Raymond French at (870) 582-3261.

Arkansas Big Buck Classic. We are accepting early registrations

Winter Storm strikes Little River County



Dale Gathright, Jr.

LITTLE RIVER COUNTY - Moderating temperatures the past few days has allowed cleanup and repairs to move along following the first winter storm of the season.

A Little River County RDA main water line break has led to the Arkansas Department of Health issuing two Precautionary Boil Water Orders in Little River County. The complete Winthrop Water Association system is under the order. Little River County RDA, from the Wallace area west towards Foreman, north of Foreman including Gravley, Winthrop, and Cerro Gordo. The order was issued Monday morning and was still in effect at press time.

City officials in Foreman Sunday asked users to conserve water to allow the city's water tank levels to build up, and rural tanks were also beginning to refill.

Southwestern Electric Power Company and Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative both reported Monday that all

customers who could be restored now have service back. The exception is customers who needing additional repairs to their properties before service could be turned back on.

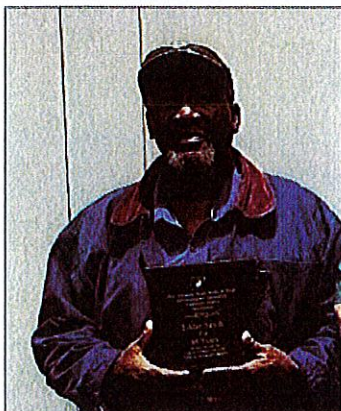
SWEPCO said some of their southwest Arkansas lines saw ice accumulations of up to 0.25 inches, mixed with heavy snow and sleet. The weight of that ice was concerning, making tree branches up to 30 times heavier than normal!

Out of the 36,637 outages caused by the storm, SWEPCO said its crews restored roughly 67% within the first 24 hours. "We had our work cut out for us as it required clearing approximately 1,000 downed trees and limbs from our lines and replacing about 183 spans of power lines."

As part of the storm response, their workforce expanded to nearly 1,000 utility and forestry personnel to tackle the job, including support from sister utilities, including AEP Texas and Public Service Company of Oklahoma, as well as tree crews



that traveled from near and far, 27,750 feet of power lines. SWEC reported that due to Storm, page 7



Congratulations to Eddie Dean Smith for being recognized recently by the 2024 Arkansas Water & Water Environmental Association, Southwest District, for 45 years of service, with the City of Foreman and to the Water & Wastewater Industry. City of Foreman photo

Ashdown City Council meets

Dale Gathright, Jr.

ASHDOWN - The January meeting of the Ashdown City Council dealt with a number of new year house-keeping actions. This included amending the 2024 city and water department budgets and adopting the 2025 city and water department budgets.

The city council adopted an ordinance setting salaries

Meets, page 7

Ashdown Superintendent Casey Nichols Resigns

RONDA POUNDS
Ashdown Public Schools

ASHDOWN — Ashdown Public Schools Superintendent Casey Nichols resigned at the January School Board meeting Monday night, effective February 2025. Nichols, who has served as Superintendent of Ashdown Public Schools since 2018, has been hired as the new Superintendent for Queen City Independent School District in Texas.



To ensure a smooth transition, the Ashdown Board of Education appointed the district's Federal Programs Coordinator Debbie Greathouse as interim superintendent while starting a search for a permanent superintendent for the 2025-2026 academic year.

"It has been an honor to serve the Ashdown Public Schools community," said Nichols. "While I am excited about this new opportunity in Queen City, I will always cherish my time here and the relationships I've built with students, staff, and the greater community."

Board President Chuck Davis expressed gratitude for Nichols' service, stating, "Superintendent Nichols has been a visionary leader for our district. His contri-

Debbie Greathouse has set a strong foundation for Ashdown Public Schools to continue its commitment to academic success and community engagement. We wish him the best in his new role."

In a statement, Ashdown Public Schools said, "During his tenure in Ashdown, Superintendent Nichols has been instrumental in advancing educational excellence and fostering a supportive and thriving learning environment for students, staff, and families. His leadership and dedication have left an indelible mark on the Ashdown school community. The district is committed to maintaining its focus on student achievement and community collaboration during this transition period."



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Resource Center, as
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Texarkana
Independent
School Dis-
trict's Family

Ashdown Public Schools installs its new interim superintendent

Former superintendent will take over Queen City Independent School District

MALLORY WYATT
TEXARKANA GAZETTE

ASHDOWN, Ark. — Ashdown Public Schools is in the process of fine tuning its leadership selection process.

Casey Nichols has resigned as superintendent, effective next month, to become superintendent at Queen City Independent School District.

The district's Education Board has appointed Debbie Greathouse, the federal programs coordinator, as the interim superintendent. Pounds said the board is reviewing its hiring process for the position.

Ronda Pounds, Ashdown schools' communications chief, said the district is sad to see Nichols go.

"Over the past six and a half years, he has been dedicated to providing unwavering support to our students, staff, parents and community," Pounds said. "We are confident he will excel in his new district and we wish him nothing but the best."

In a news release, Nichols said it was his honor to serve the community of Ashdown.

"While I am excited about this new opportunity in Queen City, I will always cherish my time here and the relationships I've built with students, staff and the greater community," Nichols said.

School board President Chuck Davis called Nichols "a visionary leader for the district."

"His contributions have set a strong foundation for Ashdown Public Schools to continue its commitment to academic success and community engagement," Davis said. "We wish him the best in his new role."



CASEY NICHOLS

Unger Law Firm

is pleased to announce that

Michael R. Unger

having successfully passed the
2024 attorney certification examination,
is hereby

Board Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization
in Residential Real Estate Law.



RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE LAW

Unger Law Firm is located at 4608 Summerhill Rd., Texarkana, TX 75593

Mr. Unger is licensed to practice law in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana



Compassionate,



Ashdown Public Schools



January 14 at 11:29 PM · 🌐

Ashdown, AR — Ashdown Public Schools announces the resignation of Superintendent Casey Nichols, effective February 2025. Nichols, who has faithfully served as Superintendent of Ashdown Public Schools since 2018, has been hired as the new Superintendent for Queen City Independent School District in Texas.

During his tenure in Ashdown, Superintendent Nichols has been instrumental in advancing educational excellence and fostering a supportive and thriving learning environment for students, staff, and families. His leadership and dedication have left an indelible mark on the Ashdown school community.

"It has been an honor to serve the Ashdown Public Schools community," said Nichols. "While I am excited about this new opportunity in Queen City, I will always cherish my time here and the relationships I've built with students, staff, and the greater community."

To ensure a smooth transition, the Ashdown Board of Education has appointed Debbie Greathouse as interim superintendent while starting a search for a permanent superintendent for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Board President Chuck Davis expressed gratitude for Nichols' service, stating, "Superintendent Nichols has been a visionary leader for our district. His contributions have set a strong foundation for Ashdown Public Schools to continue its commitment to academic success and community engagement. We wish him the best in his new role."



DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Board Accepts Nichols Resignation

Send message

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Ashdown Public Scho...