



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 Waiver Request

District:	East Poinsett County
LEA Number:	5608
Superintendent:	Michael Pierce
Email:	mpierce@epc.k12.ar.us
Contact for Waiver:	Michael Pierce
Contact Email:	mpierce@epc.k12.ar.us
Contact Phone:	870-919-1577
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**

Waiver Request #1

Topic:	School Start Date
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	A.C.A. 6-10-106
Duration Requested:	5 years
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Arkansas Virtual Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	k-12
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.

Several member school districts of the Crowley's Ridge 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 2023-2024 school year that date will be Monday, August 19.

The specific waiver being requested is to allow East Poinsett County School District (the applying school district) to set their first day of class to be no earlier than Monday, August 9.

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 — fall of 2029. This waiver would next year allow school to open 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 (with a break between the semesters being Christmas Break). The more unbalanced that semesters are, the greater is the issue for classes that are one semester in length.
- The alternative solution for unbalanced semesters is to not end fall semester until after Christmas break. This results in final exams shortly after two 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 the Memorial Day Holiday.
- Beginning school earlier automatically results in more days of instruction prior to spring testing. More days of instruction will 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 that play football, this would include students that are participants in groups such as volleyball, band, cheer, Student Council and National Honor Society, as well as others.
- The granting of this waiver does not affect any other law, rule or procedure. The school year will remain the same length. It simply allows a district to continue with a school calendar that is structured as closely as possible to the current one, and avoids the dramatic change to the calendar which must result without the waiver.

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

There will not be a loss of services for students under this waiver.

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

The district will monitor student assessment results and student attendance data related to the earlier start of the school year by no more than five days. The movement of the start date should have a positive effect on state assessment scores, student achievement and overall school moral.

East Poinsett County School District
502 McClellan
Lepanto, AR 72354
February 12, 2024

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EAST POINSETT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO REQUEST A WAIVER

WHEREAS, the East Poinsett County School District's Board of Directors is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students with the district;

WHEREAS, certain circumstances or regulations may require the district to seek waivers to better address the unique needs or challenges faced by the district;

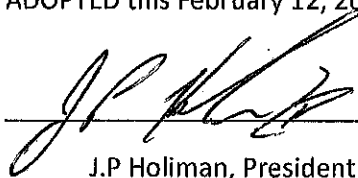
WHEREAS, the East Poinsett County School District is seeking a 1240 waiver for an Early Calendar Start, one full week before what is currently allowed by law. A.C.A. 6-10-106, (no earlier than August 9) for the next 5 years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent 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.

The resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this February 12, 2024 by the Board of Directors of East Poinsett County School District.



J.P. Holiman, President



Robin Neal, Secretary



ATTEST



DATE

2024-2025 School Start Date Survey

250 responses

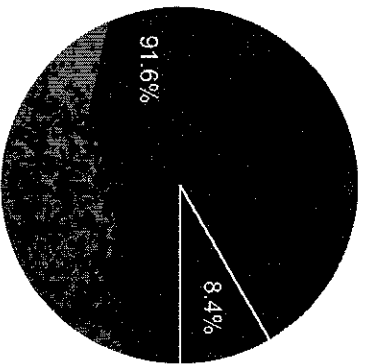
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The state has opened a window for schools to request a waiver for start date of school. The specific waiver being requested is to allow the

applying school districts to set their individual district's first day of class to be "no earlier than Monday, August 12". This would extend our summer break.

Are you in favor of the district pursuing this option?

250 responses



Yes
 No

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East Poinsett County Personnel Policy Committee Meeting February 7, 2024

Members	Present (+)
Jennifer Fithen	+
Angie Allison	+
Leslie Hall	+
Michelle Jones	+
Paige Tacker	+
Sharon White	+
Mitzi Malone	
Tabatha Burcham	+
Jennifer Scyoc	+
Ashley Stone	+
Bonnie Cox	+
Michael Pierce	+
Marilyn Rece	

Meeting: 3:45

Agenda Item: Discuss the option of starting school on August 12, 2024.

Starting with 2024-2025, EPC is considering asking for a waiver to change the start day of school to the week prior to the 19th. This would allow for a longer summer than our year-round calendar and a shorter summer than the traditional.

Voting: All in favor of proceeding with the waiver request.