



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Public School Waiver Request

District:	Pocahontas
LEA Number:	6103
Superintendent:	J. Lance Arbuckle, Ed.D
Email:	Lance.arbuckle@pocahontaspsd.com
Contact for Waiver:	J. Lance Arbuckle, Ed.D
Contact Email:	Lance.arbuckle@pocahontaspsd.com
Contact Phone:	870.892.4573
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:	Five 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.**

The member school districts of the Northeast Arkansas 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, it will be Monday, August 19, 2024.

We respectfully request a waiver to allow the Pocahontas School District to set their start date “no earlier” than August 12 for each of the next five school years.

The advantages of the early start option include the following:

1. It gives us a greater chance of having more instructional time before state testing, even in years when we miss a significant number of days due to inclement weather.
2. It allows us to begin in mid-August when students and staff are eager to return to the new year and complete the year by the end of May before many of the summer activities begin in early June.
3. It provides a greater balance between the number of days in the first and second semesters of the school year.

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

The requested waiver will not impact the calendar length chosen by the Pocahontas School District. It will only provide the flexibility to begin the school year earlier, providing the above advantages to students, staff, and parents. The services provided to our students will be the same as those supplied without waiver approval regarding days and/or hours of instruction.

Pocahontas School District
2300 N. Park St.
Pocahontas, AR 72455
February 5, 2024

Resolution Number: CW-1

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF POCAHONTAS AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO REQUEST A WAIVER

WHEREAS, the Pocahontas Board of Directors is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students within 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, opportunities arise to further ensure all students have access to a maximum number of instructional days prior to state assessments, a waiver of A.C.A 6-10-106 which defines the start date of school becomes a tool for improvement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of Pocahontas School District hereby authorizes the district administration to formally request a waiver for the implementation of the start date of school to be no earlier than August 12 of each school year, thus waiving the requirements of 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 February 12, 2024 by the Board of Directors of Pocahontas School District.


Brent Massey, President

Pocahontas School Board of Directors

ATTEST:

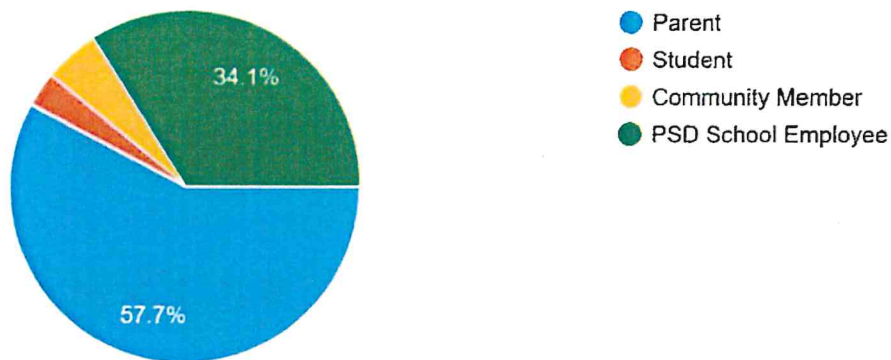

Jennifer Rawls, Secretary
Pocahontas School Board of Directors

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

The district will monitor the following items: 1) # of instructional days or hours gained in advance of state testing by starting earlier, 2) student and staff attendance on those dates, and 3) state test results to try and determine what correlation exists between achievement results and instruction time before testing.

Please choose the stakeholder group that best describes you.

352 responses



Would you support the district's efforts in seeking a waiver to start school as soon as August 12, 2024? (Current start date is August 19, 2024)

351 responses

