



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **Act 1240 Waiver Request**

**Stakeholder Survey - Act 1240 Waiver**

**Staff Survey - Act 1240 Waiver**

<b>District:</b>	<b>Blytheville School District</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	4702000
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Veronica Perkins
<b>Email:</b>	vperkins@blythevilleschools.net
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Veronica Perkins
<b>Contact Email:</b>	vperkins@blythevilleschools.net
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	870-762-2053
<b>Date Received by DESE:</b>	

**The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:**

- 1. School Board Resolution approving the waiver request**
- 2. Evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families**

## Waiver Request #1

<b>Topic:</b>	Teacher Licensure
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	Standard for Accreditation 4-D.1 Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-1004, 6-17-309, 6-17-401, 6-17-418, 6-17-902, 6-17-908, 6-17-919 DESE Rules Governing Educator Licensure, Section 7.00 only
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	2022-2023 through 2024-2025
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	KIPP Delta Blytheville and Arkansas Connections Academy (ARCA)
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To</b>	All schools in district K-12
<b>PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Promote Innovation <input checked="" 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.**

Blytheville School District requests the ability to hire teachers regardless of licensure. Teacher candidates may include but are not limited to: teachers with career experience, outside career certification or licensure in a specific field but extensive education in a different content matter, and those with a bachelor's degree in a non-education field. All core subjects will be taught by instructors who are Arkansas Qualified Teachers (AQT) as defined by ADE Rules Governing Arkansas Qualified Teachers.

After collecting data from the needs assessment, we can conclude that our teacher turnover is larger than the applicant pool available. We have averaged between 24-39 new teachers across the district for the last five years with a low of 5 and a high of 21 of those being African American. The number of education graduates at Arkansas Colleges and Universities is slowly declining to supply the number of teachers needed in the state. Due to this shortage, it has been difficult to secure the number of licensed educators needed, especially in core content areas. At the career fairs we are competing not only with districts that can pay a higher salary or are located outside the Delta where the social and economic status is more appealing than it is locally. As teachers leave our district, we conduct exit interviews. Our exit interviews show that many teachers leave our district to move closer to their homes. Therefore, our goal is to recruit more individuals who are local that hold bachelor's degrees and provide them with professional development and multi-tiered support as they become effective teachers. In addition to the provided support, we will assist teachers with finding an alternative route to licensure that will ultimately decrease the number of unlicensed teachers within our

district. Another area of focus for recruitment is with African American members of our community who hold a bachelor's degree and want to teach and would be role models for our student population which is 81% African American. This would support our goals in our minority teacher and administrator recruitment and retention plan. The District also has an Educator Rising chapter to create a pipeline for students interested in the teaching profession.

The district currently partners with Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC), ArPEP (formally known as the APPEL program), and other non-traditional licensure options in order to recruit teachers and provide alternate routes to obtain licensure. Most other teachers hired on a 1240 waiver enter an MAT program. Even with these non-traditional paths for teachers, the Blytheville School District still struggles to employ licensed educators who are willing to come to our area. These waivers have provided opportunities for Blytheville School District to employ enthusiastic individuals, who are often from the local area, without licensure. The teachers that have been hired have brought in vast experience from their diverse backgrounds and have proved to be great role models for our students. The waivers will allow us to support the new residency models as we extend the opportunity to “grow our own.”

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

Students will have access to an instructor that holds a bachelor's degree and meets AQT in the content area and is working towards licensure to support their academic needs. All teachers on a 1240 waiver are being mentored for effectiveness, receiving intensive training or schooling depending on their alternate path, and are from the community or surrounding area. Our waiver teachers have content hours in the subject area they are teaching, and are committed to the students they serve; therefore, the students' learning will not suffer as a result of being taught by a waiver teacher. Waiver teachers are held to the same expectation as traditionally certified teachers.

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

Blytheville Public School District partners with the Crowley's Ridge Educational Services Cooperative (CRESC) to ensure that all novice/unlicensed teachers receive support in the classroom. They are on an observation cycle with the co-op specialist teacher mentor program to ensure that novice and waiver teachers are receiving the instructional support needed to be successful in the classrooms. The novice teacher mentor provides updates on teacher progress. The updates that are provided help to increase awareness and understanding through the TESS model. Our district also provides teachers with support through professional learning communities, partner teachers and mentors. The focus from our strategic action plan will help us continue to support these non-licensed individuals and transform them into strong teacher leaders. In our quest to help teachers to obtain licensure, they have access to free study Praxis material through our partnership with CRESC. They are given an opportunity to utilize 240 tutoring for 60 days. Reports are generated and emailed to our curriculum director to help track progress of each unlicensed teacher. Teachers also have study sessions with the DESE online practice praxis session. With the assistance of the curriculum director and school improvement specialist of the district, each waiver teacher has a plan of licensure form that is reviewed, and updated quarterly. To encourage our waiver teachers to study and take the Praxis exam to work towards licensure, the district has agreed to reimburse teachers for their praxis fees; however, teachers must have documentation of their study sessions. Any new learning acquired from professional development through the co-op or PLC on site coaches are monitored for implementation by the principals and instructional facilitators. Principals meet with teachers to discuss the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) that provides a statewide system for observation and support of K-12 classroom and specialty teachers to assist them in better understanding instructional practices and what is under the surface of teaching. The district has outlined yearly requirements for those on a 1240 waiver to show progress for

licensure. A statement was added on all contracts to say if there was failure to make adequate progress, contracts may not be renewed.

**4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the period the waiver was in effect. PROVIDE DATA OR EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER.**

Blytheville School District receives a very small portion of licensed teachers who submit applications for certified positions. If we did not have the 1240 waiver, many classrooms would be left without a teacher as finding licensed teachers to work in a rural, high poverty area has been a challenge. Hiring teachers under Act 1240 waivers when there are no licensed teachers available has allowed us to recruit minorities in our community who have a Bachelors' degree and AQT for different content areas. As our minority population continues to grow, it is equally important that we offer a diverse experience of leadership and role models for our students to assist them in their development. The teachers and administrators hired have provided culturally relevant experiences to our students. Of all of the teachers hired under Act 1240 waiver, 85% are minorities. This has helped us reach goals for our minority teacher and administrator recruitment plan which supports diversity among the district staff and provides access to teachers and administrators that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the district's students. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, we began with 46 teachers that were unlicensed. In July 2021, the Curriculum Director and School Improvement specialist reached out to the recruitment and retention facilitator for Crowley's Ridge Education Cooperative and communicated the need for assistance in identifying pathways towards licensure to support teachers hired under Act 1240 waiver. The facilitator connected district support staff with the Assistant Commissioner of Educator Effectiveness & Licensure for the Arkansas Department of Education. From there, we developed a plan for the licensure team to meet with all teachers hired under a 1240 waiver. A licensure representative from the DESE support team met with all unlicensed teachers in October 2021 and counseled them for the most appropriate alternative licensure pathway. One of the greatest barriers in teachers gaining certification is passing scores on the Praxis. Teachers have had the opportunity to engage in 240 Tutoring to support their studying for the Praxis: this support has been offered free of service from our local co-op. Weekly reports of progress in the 240 Tutoring program are provided by the administrative assistant to the CRESC Novice Teacher Mentoring Coordinator/Recruitment and Retention Facilitator. Reports are sent to educators enrolled in the program and to building administrators and district support staff. The district also provides opportunities for teachers to engage in the DESE specific Praxis tutoring sessions when those occur during the school day. Teachers that participate are granted a school business day and come to the district administration building to participate in the Zoom session where they can be free of distractions. The breakdown of pathways are as follows: 46% Masters of Art in Teaching (with 20% completing their program of study and needing to pass Praxis), 20% are currently enrolled or are making application for the Professional Provisional Teaching License, 9% Arkansas Teachers Corps (ATC), and 5% enrolled in Arkansas Professional Educator Pathway (ArPEP). There are 20% of those on a 1240 waiver that are taking the Praxis and/or awaiting scores to apply for ArPEP or ATC. At the close of the 2021-2022 school year, 11% of the educators have received either standard or provisional licenses. All teachers who have not attempted and/or passed the Praxis are required by the district to take the Praxis during the summer before returning for the 2022-2023 school year. Based on those results, the district will arrange focus groups and provide additional tutoring for those in need.

## Waiver Request #2

<b>Topic:</b>	Class Size and Teaching Load
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	1-A.5 Class Size 1-A.6 Teaching Load Ark. Code Ann. 6-17-812 DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	2022-2023 through 2024-2025
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	KIPP Delta Blytheville and Arkansas Connections Academy (ARCA)
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To</b>	All schools in district K-12
<b>PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Promote Innovation <input checked="" 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.**

Due to the limited number of certified teachers applying to Blytheville School District, we are seeking this waiver to provide more students with access to effective, certified teachers. Following the principles of opportunity culture, we would be able to increase equitable access to effective teachers. Multi-classroom leaders would guide the classes where the class size and teaching load exceeded standard limits with support provided from a reach associate. We have frequently experienced loss of highly effective teachers to nearby districts that pay more money and have more opportunities for leadership. Funding through the opportunity culture grant would allow us to provide monetary incentives to identified multi-classroom leaders to increase retention of highly effective teachers while providing opportunities for leadership without leaving the classroom.

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

The opportunity culture initiative will allow Blytheville School District to restructure schedules and repurpose staff to extend the reach of certified teachers that have expert knowledge in the designated content area. Classrooms where the opportunity culture model will be implemented may have an increased class size. The multi-classroom leader (MCL) will work in collaboration with a reach associate (paraprofessional) to better meet the needs of students in terms of grade level content and interventions. This model also allows the MCL to coach other content teachers. Multi-classroom leaders will be selected based on their record of high-growth for student learning and leadership competencies. The MCLs will teach part of the time and be responsible for leading collaborative teams in their content area. We will use this model to extend the reach of our most effective teachers and teams. The MCLs will provide feedback to reach associates to build their teaching capacity. Public Impact has agreed that they will work with the District to aggressively implement the model within the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year.

The opportunity culture model will allow time for students to work collaboratively on assignments which allow them to develop and utilize the skills of communication and collaboration. Students will also extend their capacity to engage in other 21st century skills. Students will gain the ability to view problems/situations from multiple lenses and assess how areas of studies overlap with common goals and themes. While working within these small groups, students will benefit from the collective wisdom of all of the class groups. Teacher interaction can vary according to student needs: either the MCL or reach associate teacher can be fielding general questions around the class as they work on projects/assignments, while the other conducts interventions with a group of students who are struggling to master a particular concept or supports students who are excelling and need enrichment activities related to the content.

Multi-classroom leaders would be able to offer targeted feedback to teachers in areas that administrators may lack content knowledge. This would be especially helpful given the high number of novice teachers that are employed in the district.

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

Our evaluation of the effectiveness of the waiver will be multi-faceted and rooted in the four instructional levers and three cultural levers outlined in Leverage Leadership. Details of our monitoring and evaluation system is identified in each lever as follows:

- Data-driven instruction
  - School leaders and teach teams will monitor assessment data for common formative assessments (CFAs) and interim assessments
  - Ensure that lessons/interventions are based on CFA and or universal screener data
  - District and School leaders will analyze where and why students are struggling
  - School leaders will help teachers implement new teaching strategies to respond to the analysis.
  - District and School leaders will create systems and procedures to ensure constant data- driven improvement
- Instructional planning
  - School leaders and multi-classroom leaders will be responsible for weekly review of lesson plans and learning targets
  - School leaders will closely monitor whole group tier 1 and small group instruction
  - School leaders will ensure that backwards design to lesson planning is implemented by providing templates for teams to follow
- Observation and Feedback
  - District and building leaders will develop an observation tracker to monitor the number of observations per teacher as well as track the action steps based on each observation
  - Ensure feedback follows the following six steps: precise praise, probe, identification of problem and action steps, practice, plan ahead, set timeline
- Professional development
  - District and school leaders will provide professional learning activities that align with the teacher's professional growth plan
  - District and school leaders will provide the opportunity for reflection and feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of training that has been provided and use the feedback to make necessary changes for future planning of professional learning activities.
- Student Culture
  - School leaders will set clear and compelling directions for students by creating a rubric for the following: strengths and areas of school growth in student engagement, joy, compliance, and consistency.
  - Establish clear routines and provide opportunities for students to practice expectations.
  - The culture team on each campus will monitor student culture through perceptual surveys and percentages from walkthrough data.

- Staff Culture
  - The district will use Brett Peiser’s staff culture rubric to assess
  - The district will issue a perceptual up to three times per year to gain insight in the culture for each school. The district team will review results with campus leaders and discuss areas for growth. Goals for each cycle will be developed based on the feedback provided by staff.
- Managing school leadership teams
  - District and school leaders will identify instructional leaders to assume multi-classroom leadership roles based on student achievement and growth results.
  - Building leaders will evaluate teacher-leaders/multi-classroom leaders effectiveness and provide feedback for the following areas:
    - data-driven instruction
    - observation and feedback
    - planning
    - leading professional development

The district will also utilize the Opportunity Culture online portal for additional structure support.

**4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the period the waiver was in effect. PROVIDE DATA OR EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER.**

Blytheville School District Administration as well as building administrators has monitored the course, instructors, and student behavior in which there have been waivers for class size and teaching load. There has been frequent observation and communication with the teachers. School administrators have monitored lesson plan submissions, conducted weekly observations, participated in PLC discussions with teachers and provided feedback as needed. The district has provided yearly surveys to students, staff, and parents to assess school culture. The building guiding coalition teams along with district leadership teams have reviewed PLC needs assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness and determine if revisions are needed. The District has also created a partnership with Arkansas Teacher Corp to provide support to the PLC and RTI processes.

The waiver has been used in several ways that have supported equitable access to effective teachers. Over the years, there have been times when critical shortage areas, such as art, business, math, french, biology, physics, and chemistry have not had an effective teacher or any teacher for that matter due to the lack of certified applicants for our area. Based on cultural/climate survey data that has been provided to students over the years, students have benefited from having an effective teacher that has exceeded a teaching load as opposed to students that had a series of short term/long term substitutes. We were also able to provide access to effective teachers for students in 6th grade when we were short art teachers by providing the art content through history courses. The incorporation of interdisciplinary practices has been helpful in students understanding patterns and trends from one content area to another. Lastly, when unlicensed teachers have worked with licensed/experienced teachers in the form of co-teaching, it has provided opportunities to build teaching capacity. Exposure to modeling of effective instructional and behavior strategies have strengthened the practice of our unlicensed teachers.

# Act 1240 Waiver Staff Survey

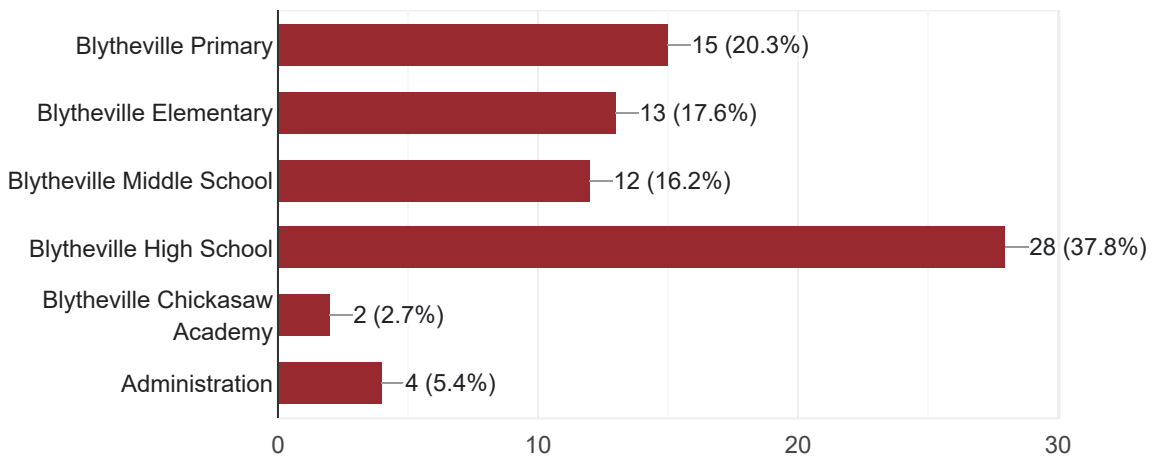
74 responses

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I am an educator in the following building:

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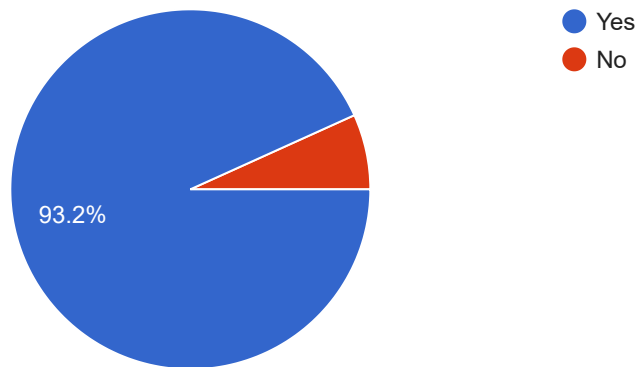
74 responses



Do you think the district should apply for Act 1240 waivers to provide qualified teachers and administrations, counselors, flexible schedules, curriculum and class sizes?

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74 responses

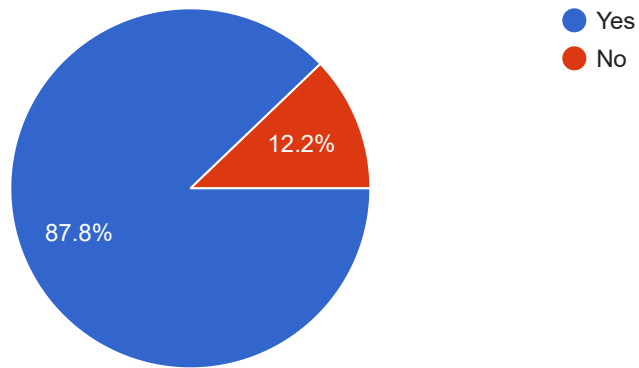




Do you believe Act 1240 waivers are beneficial?

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74 responses



The Act 1240 is very beneficial for teachers who are going to school to become a teacher. Without that 1240 there wouldn't be teachers trying to go to school for their teachers degree because they wouldn't be able to practice their skills any where.

I feel like this needs to be explained a little better. Will class sizes increase? Will the teachers not be certified?

Alternative teacher recruitment; life experienced applicants can develop a passion for th field; it help me the teacher shortage needs in core content area.

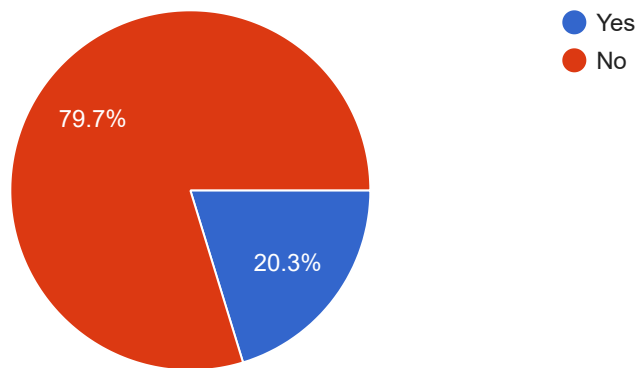
Because I think the waiver will help with retention

To help give relief of the teacher shortage.

I am currently employed under an Act 1240 waiver?



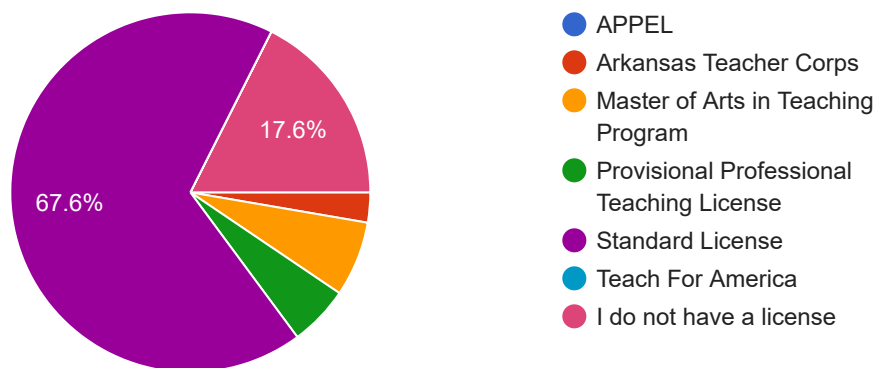
74 responses



How did you obtain your teacher's license?



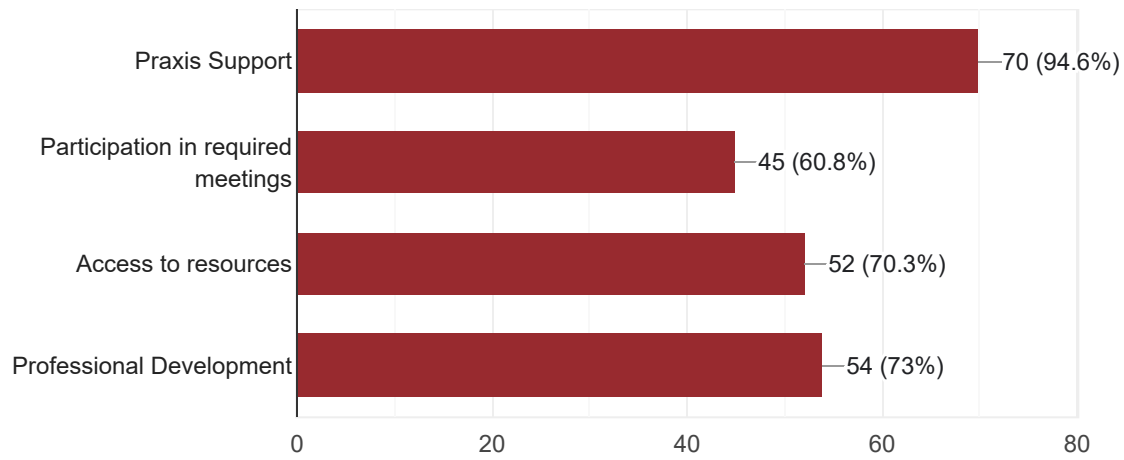
74 responses

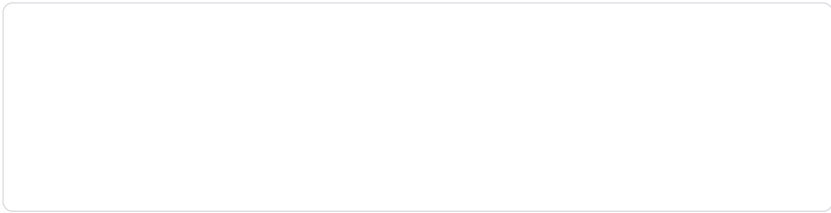


What additional supports should be provided to teachers that are seeking alternative certification? (choose all that apply)



74 responses





# Act 1240 Waiver - Stakeholder Survey

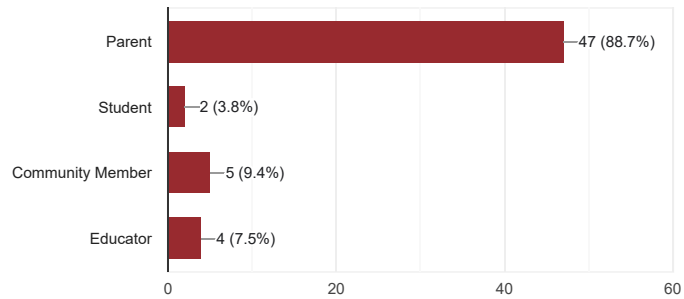
53 responses

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I am a/an (choose all that apply)

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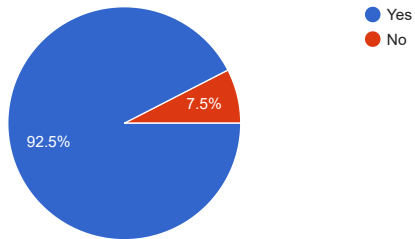
53 responses



Do you think the district should apply for Act 1240 waivers to provide qualified teachers and administrations, counselors, flexible schedules, curriculum and class sizes?

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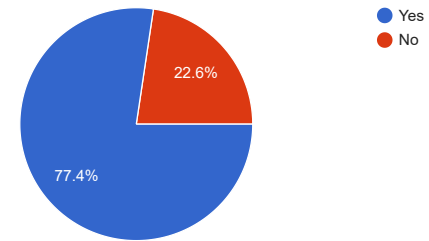
53 responses



Do you believe Act 1240 waivers are beneficial?

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53 responses



# Blytheville School District

## RESOLUTION OF BLYTHEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Blytheville School District School Board met in a special, open, and properly-called meeting on June 3, 2022 in Blytheville, Arkansas;

WHEREAS, six members were present, a quorum was declared by the chair;


WHEREAS, pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § §§ 6-11-105, 6-15-103, and 25-15-201 et seq.

WHEREAS, the Board convened to consider the Superintendent's request to submit District waivers application to the Arkansas Department of Education.

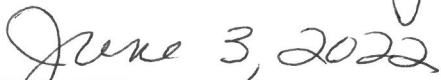
WHEREAS, the Board, upon due consideration and deliberation, hereby approves and adopts this Resolution for the purpose of ACT 1240 WAIVERS and;

NOW THEREFORE, this Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Blytheville School District to immediately submit a waiver application and take necessary steps to support the application's process. The Superintendent shall take the necessary steps to create, submit and support tasks pursuant to approval of the all other necessary and proper action in order to give notice and effectuate the Board's Resolution.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BOARD PRESIDENT

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BOARD SECRETARY

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE