



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **Act 1240 Waiver Request**

<b>District:</b>	<b>Cutter Morning Star School District</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	2601000
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Dr. Nancy Anderson
<b>Email:</b>	nancy.anderson@cmseagles.net
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Dr. Nancy Anderson
<b>Contact Email:</b>	nancy.anderson@cmseagles.net
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	501-262-2414
<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 Wavier 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 <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 Dawson 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 Schools.

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."

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 84 days while the spring semester will be 94 days, a difference of 10 days. With the waiver the fall semester will be 91 days and the spring semester 87 days, a difference of only 4 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 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 before 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 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.**

**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.**

**CUTTER MORNING STAR SCHOOL  
DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**2024-2025 Regional Early Start Date**

**WHEREAS** the Cutter Morning Star School District Board of Directors met in a special, open, and properly-convened board meeting on 2/9/24, in the Administration Office Board Room; and

**Whereas** 3 members were present, a quorum was declared by the chair; and

**WHEREAS** A.C.A. § 6-10-106 requires the first day of the school year for student attendance in the public elementary and secondary schools of the State of Arkansas shall be:

- (i) On or after the Monday of the week in which August 19 falls;
- (ii) Not earlier than August 14; and
- (iii) Not later than August 26.

(B) The date for beginning the school year shall be determined by the board of directors of the school district.

(C) Labor Day shall be celebrated as a school holiday in all the school districts of the state, and school shall not be held on that date.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of the Cutter Morning Star School District approves of a school start date of not earlier than August 12, 2024, for the 2024-2025 school year.

**ADOPTED** in special session by the Board of Directors of the Cutter Morning Star School District February 9, 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT

2/9/24  
\_\_\_\_\_



Angela Pittman <angela.pittman@cmseagles.net>

## Special Board Meeting

1 message

Angela Pittman <angela.pittman@cmseagles.net>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 11:27 AM

To: schools@hotsr.com

Cc: Nancy Anderson <nancy.anderson@cmseagles.net>, Laura Baber <laura.baber@cmseagles.net>, Tanya Sawrie <tanya.sawrie@cmseagles.net>

Cutter Morning Star School District will have a Special Board Meeting today, February 9, 2024 at 3:30pm in the boardroom.

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Angela Pittman  
District Secretary  
Cutter Morning Star School District  
2800 Spring Street  
Hot Springs, AR 71901  
(501) 262-2414 ext. 6 phone  
(501) 262-0670 fax

# Cutter Morning Star School District Early Start Date Waiver Stakeholder Input Survey

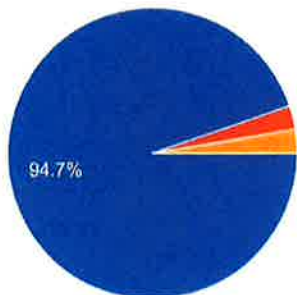
38 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

I belong to the following stakeholder group:

 Copy

38 responses

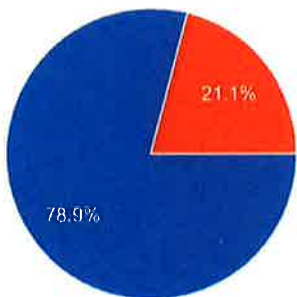


- Teacher/Staff of Cutter Morning Star School District
- Family of Cutter Morning Star School District Student(s)
- Community Member

Please choose one of the below regarding the Cutter Morning Star School District's Early Start Date Waiver.

 Copy

38 responses



- I Approve the District Applying for an Early Start Date Waiver
- I Do NOT Approve the District applying for an Early Start Date Waiver

## Comments regarding the Early Start Date Waiver

3 responses

I feel this would be better for our students overall

This seems very reasonable, and I appreciate the supporting arguments for making this decision.

I think the two greatest arguments are the higher test scores due to more instructional days and the fact that the semesters would be more balanced in length, alleviating some problems for one-semester classes. (Note: I am a student intern from Henderson)



# Google Forms



# Cutter Morning Star School District Family Early Start Date Waiver Stakeholder Input Survey

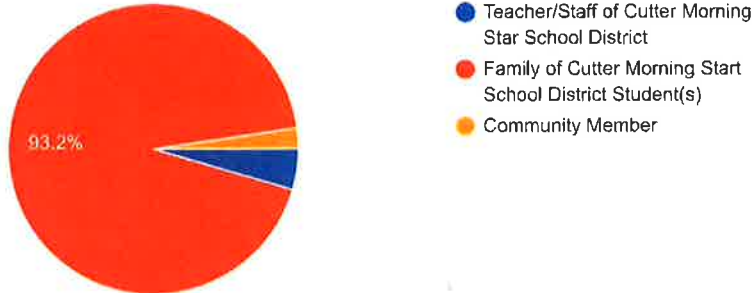
88 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

I belong to the following stakeholder group:

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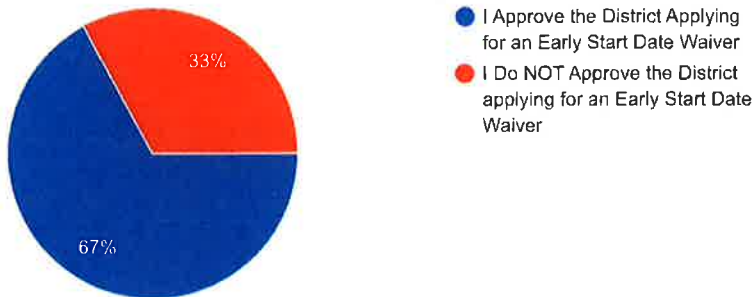
88 responses



Please choose one of the below regarding the Cutter Morning Star School District's Early Start Date Waiver.

 Copy

88 responses





## Comments regarding the Early Start Date Waiver

22 responses

It's already a longer 4 day week so I don't agree with starting school early!

If they start early do they get out earlier?

I appreciate y'all asking.

Takes time out of my kids summer vacation that we have plans for

just wish we could start in august 20-26th like we used to

Thank you for making this schedule work for the kids.

Split custody, it means I won't get much time during the summer with my children.

I believe the advantages out way the disadvantages. I would rather my student receive more instruction, take semester test before Christmas break and get out in May. Starting a week earlier will also help parents who work and will not have to pay for another week of Child Care..

I think this will be very beneficial for everyone.

The early start wouldn't have much affect to our home life overall but if it will help with scores and their learning I'm all for it.

Our son will be graduating so we will not have any students attending the in the fall. But I would approve if I had children attending in the 2024 2025 school year.

Because we take vacations 2 weeks before school, and we dont need to start early on school days because we are already here 3 or more hours after school everyday for practices, and 6 for game days. we need sleep if yall expect us to do school work and be focused during the day.

no i like my summer break

I want my summer break and ending it early is not a good idea. Plus the 4 day weekend is already great as it is, and each semester seems balanced to me. Like after Christmas is the next chapter of the semester. I think its nice how it is now.

I'm not willing to commit to this for 5 years. Can we not build in more make-up days for weather?

I feel as though the school year continues to start earlier and earlier every year and our children get less and less of a summer. At this point, if we are starting school that early, why



don't we consider going to a year-round schedule? Just a thought. Thank you for ALL that you do!

I think this is a great idea.

Seems pointless.

Why fix what isn't broken

N/A

My family does not want an earlier start. The kids need that extra week. And it is so nice to be linked on the same schedule as the surrounding schools.

Do what you need to do for our kids.

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# Google Forms

