



## Act 1240 District Waiver Request Extension

<b>District:</b>	<b>Dewitt</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	0101
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Dr. Nick Hill
<b>Email:</b>	nhill@dewittdragons.net
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Karen Eoff
<b>Contact Email:</b>	Karen.eoff@searkcoop.com
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	870-723-2074
<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 Extension Request #1

<b>Topic:</b>	Teacher Licensure
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	Ark. Code Ann §6-15-1004 Qualified teachers in every public classroom Ark. Code Ann §6-17-309 Certification to teach grade or subject matter Ark. Code Ann §6-17-401 Teacher Licensure Requirement Ark. Code Ann §6-17-902 Definition (definition of a teacher as licensed) Ark. Code Ann §6-17-908 Teacher Salary Fund Ark. Code Ann §6-17-919 Warrants void without valid certification Standard 4-D.1 Teacher licensure requirement of Arkansas Law Standard 4-F.1 Teacher licensure requirement of Arkansas Law Section 7 of Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	Five Year Waivers 2022-2027
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	Ark. Code Ann §6-15-1004, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-309, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-401, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-902, Ark. Code Ann §6-17-919, Standard 4-D.1, Held by Ark. Arts Academy  Ark. Code Ann §6-17-908 & Standard 4-F.1, Held by Ark. Virtual Academy

	Section 7 of Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure, Held by Ark. Connections Academy
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To</b>	K-12

**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.**

Dewitt School Districts recognizes that a highly qualified teacher in each classroom is the single most important factor influencing student learning. Dewitt School Districts greatest desire is to hire a fully licensed highly qualified teacher for each open position that exists in the district. However, the demand for fully licensed highly qualified teachers far exceeds the number of licensed teachers in our Co-op area. The Dewitt School District has had 24 openings since 2016 that we could not find licensed teachers to fill regardless of how many recruitment activities we conducted. We have hired 24 Act 1240 teachers and 12 of the college graduates hired have completed a licensure program and now hold an Arkansas Teaching License. One Act 1240 teacher acquired their license through micro credentialing and an additional teacher is in the process of finishing the micro credentialing process for a license. We recruited one paraprofessional that returned to school through UAM through the Para to Teacher Program. When the para obtained a degree, we employed her through the Act 1240 waivers and she is now a fully certified outstanding elementary teacher in our district. One Act 1240 teacher became the Gillett Library Media Specialist until we closed the school in 20-21. This teacher was such an outstanding, hardworking, dedicated, and motivational teacher that we moved her to an art opening we could not fill at DeWitt Elementary School this year. This teacher has continued her record of providing the very best for her students in this new position. Again, when this position was advertised we could not fill the position. We leave no stone unturned to recruit potential teachers in our small rural district. Several more Act 1240 teachers are in the process of finishing their requirements for licensure and need only to pass a Praxis test or complete an alternate program.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) has provided/produced only 58 student teachers from fall 2016 to spring 2021. UAM supplies the majority of traditionally trained teachers to our Co-op area schools. Southeast Co-op schools have had 430 open positions from 2016-2021 for which no licensed teacher could be recruited to fill the position. As you can see the number of vacant teaching positions far exceeds the number of teachers graduating from teacher education programs. We have a severe teacher shortage in our Co-op area and do not have enough licensed teachers to fill our open positions.

When we cannot find a licensed teacher to fill a vacant teaching position we then try to recruit a capable college graduate, preferably from our rural area and preferably with eighteen hours of college coursework in the area they will be teaching. The Act 1240 teacher's employment contract states that they must make adequate yearly progress toward licensure each year and must become licensed within three years. The Act 1240 teacher's principal evaluates the teacher using TESS, does classroom observations to ensure that the teacher is using appropriate teaching strategies and has appropriate classroom management. The teachers are assigned a buddy teacher by the district to coach/guide the teachers in the Southeast Co-op Novice Teacher Program. The district also provides a mentor teacher who is paid a stipend to observe the Act 1240 teacher, model lessons for them, and teach/guide them through the procedures of the district. The district math and literacy facilitators also model engaging lessons for the Act 1240 teachers. The district curriculum coordinator meets with the teachers monthly or quarterly based on need to review their progress

toward entering a licensure program, taking the required Praxis exams, and meeting the yearly progress requirements toward licensure to be rehired. The teachers must be supported in the journey toward licensure otherwise the journey becomes overwhelming! It is often stated that the first year of teaching is the hardest so you can imagine what it is like with the added requirements of obtaining a license through an alternate route.

We understand that this avenue for growing our own qualified teachers is a hard journey for both the college graduates and the administrators and teachers that support the Act 1240 teachers' journey. However, this innovative approach to "Grow Our Own" teachers works in our rural area. We have produced far more licensed teachers in our Co-op area than our preferred route of teacher education programs.

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

Student learning opportunities are enhanced when Dewitt School District utilizes Act 1240 teachers instead of long term substitutes in our classrooms for vacancies we cannot fill. When we place highly capable college graduates in a classroom, enroll them in the three-year Novice Teacher Program at Southeast Co-op, assign them a buddy teacher at their school, provide daily support, outline the three-year timeline to obtaining a teacher licensure, and support each Act 1240 teacher on their journey to licensure, we enhance student learning. This approach provides a more qualified and committed teacher in the classroom than a long term substitute can ever provide. The Act 1240 teacher is vested in completing a licensure program. The Act 1240 teacher is vested in the learning gains of the students they teach. The Act 1240 teachers are vested in our community.

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

In our four year report summary to the State Board of Education on July 8, 2021 the following data was shared. Of the 237, Act 1240 teachers hired thru 2020 in our Co-op area, 131 teachers have become licensed teachers in Arkansas. Seventy one percent of these teachers are still teaching in a Co-op school district. As compared to education major teachers 61 of the 237 were ranked above average teachers, 155 of the 237 were ranked average teachers as compared to education major teachers and only 9% or 21 were ranked below average teachers as compared to education major teachers.

The effectiveness of the waiver can be shown by the following. We have filled all of the district's open positions posted on our website and AAEA job site. We have printed and placed a copy of the Arkansas License of the Act 1240 teachers who have acquired a license. We have buddy teacher assignment documentation. The principals have documented TESS observations of the teachers. We have sign-in sheets of the administrator meetings to review the teachers progress toward licensure. We have documentation of the district stipend schedule list showing sponsoring of a club or extracurricular activity.

**4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the past five years. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.**

The “Grow Our Own” teacher program provided for us by Act 1240 waivers is working for Dewitt School District. We will hire fully licensed teachers if we can find them for every classroom but we just do not have enough licensed teachers in our area to do that each year. Because of the ACT1240 waiver, Dewitt School District has been able to begin school for the past five years with all positions filled, as allowed by the waiver, thus providing our students with teachers that have completed a bachelor's degree, are committed to the district and are committed to earning their Arkansas Teaching License versus a long term substitute who may not feel the same commitment to the district and students. Also, the waiver has allowed the district to impact the teacher shortage in our area as noted by the 12 ACT1240 hires that have completed the requirements to earn their Arkansas license while being employed by our district.

From 2016-2021 we have had 430 open positions in our Co-op area that we could not recruit a licensed teacher to fill. Co-op wide, 169 teachers have already acquired a license with many more in the final stages of completing a license by micro credentialing, passing a Praxis test, or completing a program. Please continue to give our students the opportunity and access to have a highly qualified college graduate who wants to complete a teacher licensure program and become a fully licensed teacher in their classroom during this shortage time. These teachers are enhancing the student learning opportunities of our students and we are adding to the licensed teacher pool yearly in our area. We will continue to recruit and fill any open position with a fully licensed teacher if we can find them! However, the demand exceeds the supply so please continue to let us grow our own teachers by continuing our waivers for five years.

### **Waiver Extension Request #2**

<b>Topic:</b>	Teacher Licensure	
<b>Standards/Statutes/Rules:</b>	Ark. Code Ann §6-25-103 Library Media Services Program Ark. Code Ann §6-25-104 Library Media Specialists	
<b>Duration Requested:</b>	July 1, 2022 Through June 30, 2027	
<b>Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver</b>	Ark. Code Ann §6-25-103, Held by Ark. Virtual Academy Ark. Code Ann §6-25-104, Held by Ark. Connections Academy	
<b>Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To</b>	K-12	

- 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.**

Dewitt School District was unable to find a licensed library media specialist for the Gillett Elementary School when the long-time librarian retired. We absolutely could not recruit a licensed library/media teacher to the small rural campus at Gillett. We then hired an Act 1240 teacher, Joli Holzhaber, who agreed to enter a MAT program and then obtain a library/media license. This teacher immediately went to work making the library/media center the hub of learning for the school. Ms. Holzhaber is a very motivating teacher and has great rapport with her students. Ms. Holzhaber agreed to attend Talents Unlimited Training. This training (usually used by Gifted and Talented Teachers) trained her to develop every student's creative and critical thinking skills. Every student that entered the library media center then had an expanded opportunity for creative and critical thinking. Because of the teacher's intense desire to help students read on grade level she also was trained in and provided literacy interventions for struggling readers. She then worked

with struggling readers in the library/media center as time permitted. The Gillett Elementary School was closed at the end of the 2020-21 school year. We then moved this outstanding teacher into an art position that was vacant and we could not fill at the Dewitt campus. The teacher is doing a wonderful job in art as well. This is truly a person who is "called to teach". The teacher is almost done with acquiring an art license. She has passed the Foundation of Reading Praxis, the PLT Praxis, and the Elementary Education Multiple Subject Praxis. The teacher only lacks the Art Praxis which she will take in January 2022 to become a fully licensed art teacher. We are so thankful for the Library Media Waivers because it allowed us to have the unbelievable teacher for two years at Gillett in the K-5 library/media center. This teacher was truly outstanding in the library media area and inspired our rural students to read and to think. This is proven by the fact that it was announced by Commissioner's Memo 22-070 on November 5, 2021 that Gillett Elementary of the Dewitt School District was one of the top 5% performers in the state in English Language Arts based on ASPIRE scores for 2020-21 school year. This Act 1240 teacher enriched the lives of the students in reading/language arts at Gillett and is now incorporating her love of the printed work and literature into art classes at Dewitt Elementary. Her students' English Language Art scores are a testament to the literacy interventions and the creative and critical thinking skills that she fosters in ALL her students. We would not have this wonderful teacher if not for the State Board of Education approving our Act 1240 waivers for teachers and library media specialists. The Talents Unlimited training she received while in library media is now being utilized in her art classes. Our students and our staff thank you!

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

Ms. Joli Holzhaber provided all the library/media services that are required for library media as observed by the principal plus she incorporated Talented Unlimited Thinking Skills into library media sessions with students and provided literacy interventions for struggling readers. She utilized and supervised the Accelerated Reader Program for students at Gillett. Ms. Holzhaber provided new and innovative activities for the small rural school such as Read Across America Day and One School, One Book. These activities encouraged the entire school staff and community to read along with the school and participate in joint reading activities.

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

The effectiveness of the Library Media Waivers can be shown and documented by the announcement of rewards for the Arkansas School Recognition Program released on November 11, 2021 by Commissioner's Memo COM-22-070 which announced that the Gillett Elementary School was in the top 5% in performance statewide based on the 2020-2021 ASPIRE student assessment results in English Language Arts. In addition to this outstanding achievement the principal evaluated the library media specialist using the TESS Model and the rubric for library media specialist. The principal conducted walk-throughs to ensure that the program fostered creative and critical thinking, instilled confidence in reading in multiple formats, and provided a safe and nurturing climate for all. The principal ensured that the library media specialist partnered with all teachers to provide print and digital materials to meet the diverse needs of the students. The principal ensured that the school library was a hub for supporting students and staff in our quest to improve the reading scores of all our students. There was no doubt that Joli Holzhaber was an outstanding library/media specialist during her time at Gillett Elementary School.

**4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the past five years. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.**

The effectiveness of the Library Media Waivers can be shown and documented by the announcement of rewards for the Arkansas School Recognition Program released on November 11, 2021 by Commissioner's Memo COM-22-070 which announced that the Gillett Elementary School was in the top 5% in performance statewide based on the 2020-2021 ASPIRE student assessment results in English Language Arts. The effectiveness can also be shown by the fact that Jodi Holzhafer is just one Praxis test away from becoming a licensed art teacher for the Dewitt Elementary School. When Gillett Elementary School was closed last year, we moved this outstanding library/media teacher to another open position we could not fill with a licensed teacher. Finding a licensed art teacher is almost as difficult as finding a licensed library media specialist in our rural area of Arkansas. The State Board of Education has provided our district a recruitment tool that provides us with a mechanism and the time to "Grow Our Own" teachers. These teachers are from our community and have a desire to become a licensed teacher. Yes, this journey is very hard and not all of our Act 1240's completes the journey. However, this tool is the most effective tool we have in our toolbox in our Co-op area. In our Co-op area, 169 teachers have completed the journey with many more in the final process of passing a Praxis exam, completing a program of study, completing an alternate pathway, or completing a micro credential. The five year waiver extension time frame gives us time to recruit talent from our area and get them in the pipeline to success as a teacher. We do not use the Act 1240 waivers unless our backs are up against the wall and we have no other alternative. Please extend our waivers!

## Agenda

### DeWitt Chamber of Commerce Meeting

September 16, 2021

Call to Order

Invocation

Lunch Sponsor

DeWitt Public Schools

Previous Meeting Minutes

Shawanna Wansley, Secretary

Financial Reports

Gena Jennings, Treasurer

ACT 1240 Waiver Presentation

Dr. Nick Hill

Speaker

John 3:16

### **Committee/Community Reports**

PCCUA

Public Schools

Pattillo

Other businesses in attendance

### **Other Business**

Chamber September 16, 2021  
Sign in Sheet

1. Ronda Golden
2. Amy DePam
3. Melissa Bogayus
4. Matt [unclear]
5. [unclear]
6. Whitney White
7. Charles McFee
8. Nick Johnson
9. Caleb Bishop
10. Gustavo Cotez
11. [unclear]
12. Todd Mulloy
13. Ja Charles
14. Nikki Poppinga
15. Whitney Meadows
16. Andrea Perry
17. Chandler Boyd
18. Heather McKenna



19. Wandana J

20. Yha Jennings

21. APRIL HERRING

22. SHARANA WANSLEY

23.

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

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30.

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**DeWitt Chamber of Commerce 9/16/21**

**ACT 1240 Questions/Comments:**

Is there a limit on how many ACT 1240 waivers you can have in the district?  
(McGee)

Would we have been able to fill all vacant positions if we had not had this waiver  
for the last 5 years? (Jennings)

Sounds like a great opportunity for the School District to retain hometown  
teachers. (Chambless)

What happens to our 1240 waiver teachers if this is not renewed? (McKewen)



## ACT 1240 WAIVERS

Dr. Nick Hill

SEP 16, 2021

### What are Act 1240 waivers?

Act 1240 allows school districts to petition the State Board of Education for the same waivers granted to open-enrollment charter schools if any students residing in the district attend a charter school.

### Does the DeWitt School District hold any 1240 waivers?

The DeWitt School District requested and was granted ACT 1240 waivers in 2016 along with other school districts in the Southeast Educational Cooperative. The application was submitted and granted for all Southeast Arkansas schools.

If you have a question or comment, please click on the link below.  
[ACT 1240 Waiver Comment Form](#)



### Find Us

DeWitt School District  
1841 S. Grandview Drive  
DeWitt, Arkansas AR 72042  
870.946.3576  
870.946.1491

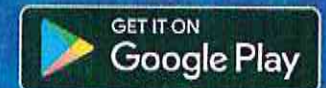
### Schools

- DeWitt School District
- DeWitt High School
- DeWitt Middle School
- DeWitt Elementary School
- Gillett Elementary School



Juniper Counseling

### Stay Connected



### Question/Comment

6 responses

Are parents made aware if their child's teacher is on a 1240 waiver?

I think this is great for our district but am curious as to how many schools in our area use this waiver?

Sounds to me like a good resource for the district. It takes special people to teach, and we need to support them any way possible.

I think this is an awesome way to get more teachers for our kiddos who obviously love our community and our kids but do not have the degree that it normally would take to teach!

This sounds like a great opportunity for our community!

I am very proud of our district and support them for all they do for our teachers and kids. I have a friend who is able to teach because of the 1240 waiver so I am thankful the district offers this for them.



## RESOLUTION OF THE DEWITT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHEREAS, the DeWitt School District is a public school district in Arkansas County in the great state of Arkansas; and;

WHEREAS, the DeWitt School District recognizes that teachers are the greatest single factor in the learning of the students; and,

WHEREAS, the DeWitt School District has enlisted many partners to assist in placing teachers in classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, the DeWitt School District is facing extreme challenges employing licensed teachers for all classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, waivers of certain state laws and administrative rules would allow the DeWitt School District more flexibility in placing teachers in classrooms; and,

WHEREAS, Act 1240 of 2015, codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103, allows public school districts to petition the State Board of Education for all or some of the school waivers granted to an open-enrollment public charter school that draws students from the public school districts; and,

WHEREAS, Arkansas Virtual Academy is an open enrollment public character school that draws students from DeWitt School District; and,

WHEREAS, the Arkansas State Board of Education granted Arkansas Virtual Academy a series of waivers, including waivers from the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, inclusive of section 15.03 and 16.03; and, Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated, including: (1) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1004; (2) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309; (3) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-401; (4) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-902; (5) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-908; (6) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-919; (7) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-103, and, (8) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE DEWITT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

1. Pursuant to Act 1240 of 2015, codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103, the DeWitt School District Board of Directors is hereby authorized to request the following waivers from the Arkansas State Board of Education be entered through 2027;
  - a. Section 15.03 and 16.02 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts;
  - b. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1004;

- c. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-309;
- d. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-401;
- e. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-902;
- f. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-908;
- g. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-17-919;
- h. Ark.Code Ann. § 6-25-103;
- i. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104; and;
- j. Any other such waivers as may legally be required and granted by the Arkansas licensed teachers in classrooms.
- k. Standard 4-D.1 Teacher license requirement of Arkansas Law granted to Arkansas Arts Academy
- l. Standard 4-F. 1 Library media specialist licensure requirement of Arkansas law Arkansas Virtual Academy
- m. Ark. Dept. of Education rules governing education licensure granted to Arkansas Connections Academy

2. The DeWitt School District seeks these waivers for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027

3. The DeWitt School District Board of Directors agreed upon this resolution by vote on 8-10-21, during an open, regularly scheduled meeting.

By: Drew H. Haring  
Board President

By: Shawanna W. Wansley  
Board Secretary