



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **Act 1240 Waiver Request**

<b>District:</b>	<b>Harmony Grove School District</b>
<b>LEA Number:</b>	5205000
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Dr. Albert Snow
<b>Email:</b>	snowa@hgsd1.com
<b>Contact for Waiver:</b>	Jeff Mock, Principal, Harmony Grove High School
<b>Contact Email:</b>	mockj@hgsd1.com
<b>Contact Phone:</b>	870-574-0867
<b>Date Received by DESE:</b>	

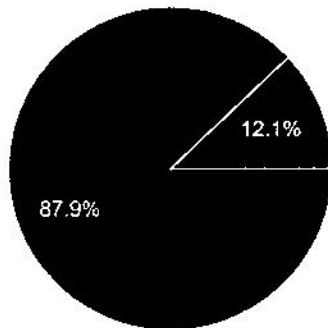
**The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:**

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

Stakeholders: 102 to 14 in favor.

Would you support the school's efforts in seeking a waiver to start school as soon as August 12, 2024, in place of August 19, 2024?

116 responses



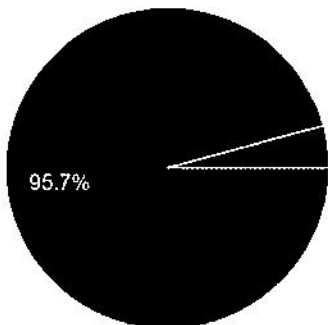
- Yes
- No



Faculty and Staff: 67 to 3 in favor.

Would you support the school's efforts in seeking a waiver to start school as soon as August 12, 2024, in place of August 19, 2024?

70 responses



- Yes
- No

## 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 Arkansas Connections 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 South Central 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 2023-2024 school year that date will be Monday, August 19.

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 — 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. Without this waiver, 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 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 and student attendance.**

**The advantage is having more student instruction days prior to the state assessment.**

Harmony Grove School District  
401 Ouachita  
1/11/2024

Resolution Number:

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF Harmony Grove School District AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO REQUEST A WAIVER**

WHEREAS, the Harmony 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, The Harmony Grove School District is seeking a waiver to start school before August 19. ;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of Harmony Grove School District hereby authorizes the district administration to formally request a waiver for [Include specific details regarding the waiver, such as the name of the waiver, the regulation or requirement it pertains to, and the reasons for seeking the waiver];

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 January 10, 2024, by the Board of Directors of Harmony Grove School District.



Mathew Nutt President  
Harmony Grove School District Board of Directors

ATTEST:



Mason Stone, Secretary