

2023 New Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Application

Garfield Scholars' Academy

Name of Proposed Charter

☐ **Initial Application - Deadline May 15, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.**

Applications will not be accepted after this time.

☒ **Final Application - Deadline July 17, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.**

Applications will not be accepted after this time.

Any application that is substantially incomplete will not be forwarded to the authorizer for consideration. An application will be considered substantially incomplete if it does not provide enough information to enable staff at the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide a meaningful review.

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Charter School Office

Four Capitol Mall

Little Rock, AR 72201

501-683-5312

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Proposed Charter:	Garfield Scholars' Academy
Primary Contact for Application:	Joy Thomas Sawyer, EdS
Primary Contact Phone:	501-253-3707
Primary Contact Cell:	501-253-3707
Primary Contact Email:	77joy.lyn@gmail.com

Name of sponsoring entity:

Garfield Education Foundation

The sponsoring entity is eligible to apply for a public-school charter under the following category:

- ☐ A public institution of higher education
- ☐ A private nonsectarian institution of higher education
- ☐ A governmental entity

☒ An organization that is nonsectarian in its programs and operations and is, or will be, exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

Name of Charter Management Organization:

N/A

Other Schools Managed by the CMO:

Name of School	Location	Year Established
N/A		

1. Describe the public hearing which was held for the purpose of assessing support for the establishment of this public charter school. Include the number of attendees and the feedback and/or public comments that were received.

On March 14th, 2023, an initial presentation was requested and presented at the March City Council meeting by the Mayor of Garfield, Gary Blackburn. Subsequently, the required public hearing was called by the proposed Director of the Garfield Scholars' Academy on **Tuesday, April 25th, 2023**. Notices were published on 4/2, 4/9 and 4/16 in the Sunday edition of The Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette. The hearing was also promoted online through social media for the cities of Garfield, Gateway and Avoca who are all currently served by the Garfield School. The City of Garfield included information about the meeting in their water bill for April to residents.

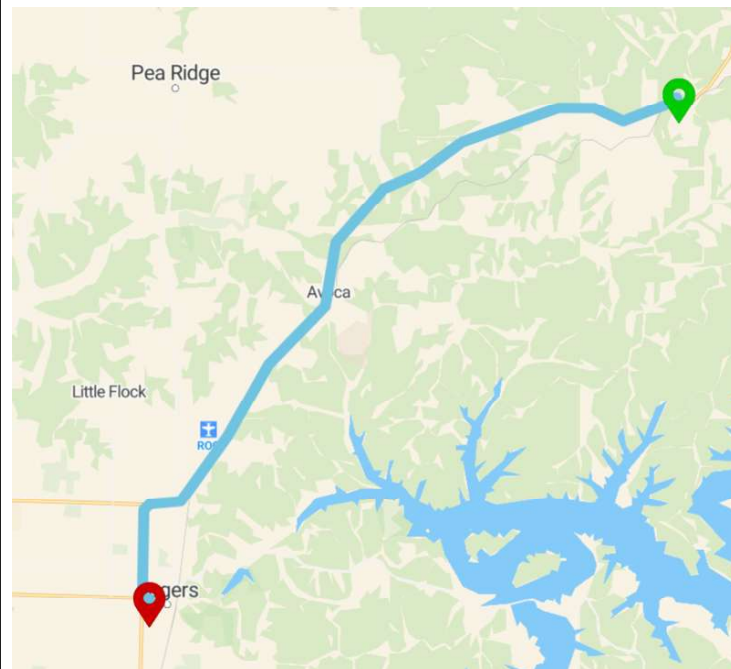
The Garfield Mayor, City Council and Community Stakeholders have been actively supportive of the Garfield Scholars' Academy from the beginning. We reached out to Senator Joshua Bryant who attended our public meeting. Twenty-six people and representatives from local news media were in attendance. A television interview of the proposed Director of Schools was conducted with KNWA-TV, outlining the relevant geographic need for a charter school in Garfield.

The superintendents of the Rogers Public Schools and Pea Ridge Public Schools were notified by email on Monday, April 3 of the intention to apply for an open-enrollment charter school in Garfield, AR. Dr. Jeff Perry, Rogers Public Schools, responded on that same day that he was in receipt of the email. Keith Martin, Pea Ridge Public Schools did not respond to the email so a letter was sent via USPS with a return receipt on Wednesday, April 5th. The letter was delivered and signed for on Friday, April 8th. These notices and the returned receipt are attached.

The proposed mission, vision and curriculum overview were presented, along with the existing educational challenges in this community calling for an open-enrollment public elementary school option. Time was allotted for questions from the public. Two surveys, one for parents/guardians and one for community members were distributed on relevant social media outlets for the public-at-large. Results of the surveys were presented containing ideas from the community. The Slides presentation, attendance pages and relevant survey results regarding community support have been included in the attachments.

2. Describe the educational need for the charter in the geographical area to be served. Include quantitative data related to academic achievement.

On January 18, 2023, the Rogers Public School Board of Education reached the decision to close Garfield Elementary School after the 2023-2024 school year. This will create an educational desert for the students living in the small communities surrounding Garfield. There is both an educational need and a community need for the school to remain open as a charter school. The closure of this school creates a hardship for the families of these young students as the nearest elementary school in the Rogers Public School District is approximately 13 miles from their current campus. (See Map Attachment) Students who may be accepted as “school of choice” students in the Pea Ridge School District would still have a 10-12 mile drive to school. Travel time to and from school for students would increase to as much as or more than one and a half hours one way each day if they continue enrollment in a Rogers Public School. Providing a free public option to this community will allow students to, among other things, arrive at school awake, alert and ready to learn. Additionally, the distance to the school where students will be relocated will negatively impact parental involvement in their student’s education. In many cases parents would have to travel 30 minutes to an hour home after work, retrieve their child(ren) and then, turn around and drive the same distance to attend any school events. This creates an education desert for the students who live in the Garfield school zone. Having a public charter school option in this community will allow long-standing community relationships between the school and families to continue into the future.



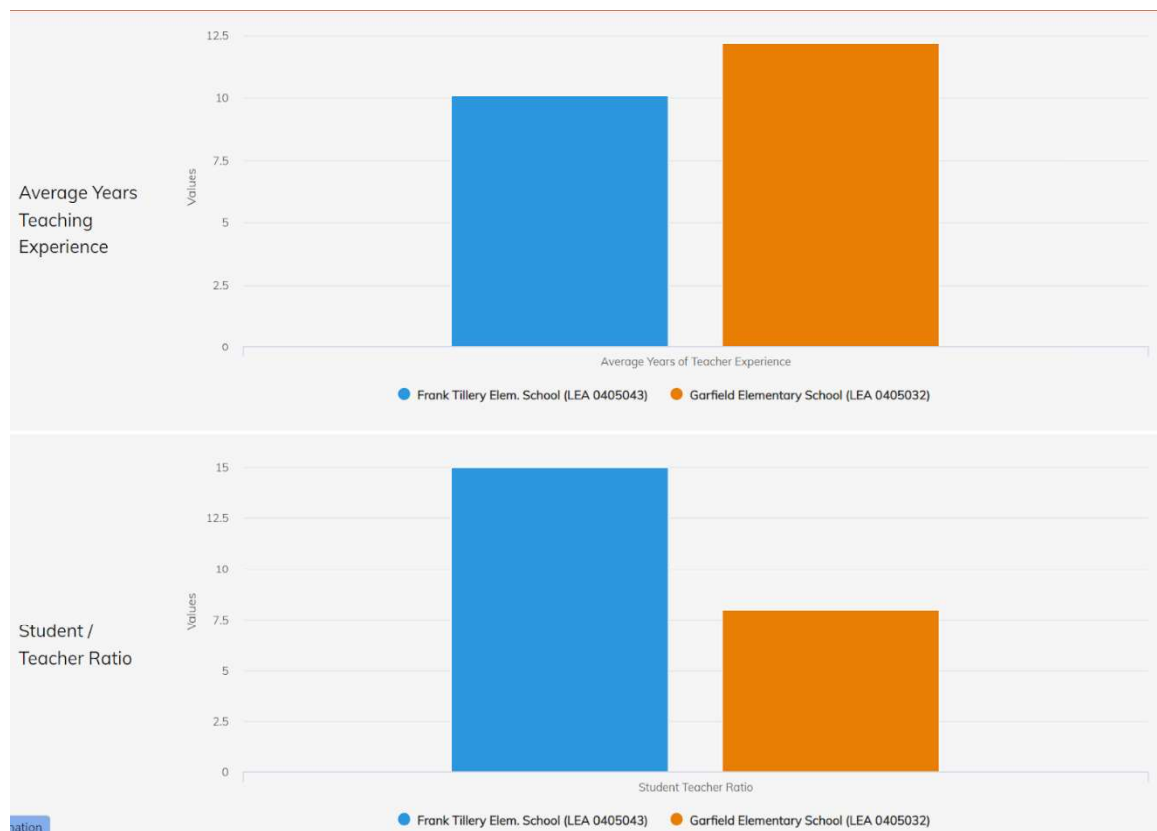
from 18432 Marshall Street, Garfield, Arkansas 72...
to 211 South 7th Street, Rogers, Arkansas 72756, ...

← Search again

18 mins (21.91 km)

Currently, Garfield Elementary School is achieving the Report Card grade of a B. In the 2021-22 school year, the performance in Mathematics at Garfield for 3rd and 4th grades were higher than both the state and the relocation school, Frank Tillery Elementary. I seek to continue and improve this performance level by ensuring that students arrive at school alert and ready to learn, parents have many opportunities to be involved in their child's education and community members act as mentors so those students whose parents can't be as involved as they would like to be for whatever reason have someone in their corner helping them to succeed.

Due to the COVID pandemic, there are no ACT Aspire scores on the report card for the 2021-22 or the 2022-23 school year.



Smaller class sizes and a higher average years of teaching experience give students access to more expert individual attention. All current Garfield teachers will be given the opportunity to remain employed at Garfield.

3. Describe in general terms, the area within the boundaries of the school district where the applicant intends to obtain a facility to be used for the open-enrollment public charter school.

The current facility operating as Garfield Elementary School at 18432 Marshall St., Garfield, AR 72732, is the proposed location of Garfield Scholars' Academy. This historic school building is located 13.6 miles from the nearest elementary within the Rogers Public School system. Pea Ridge School District Primary School is 11 miles away. Students served by this building live as many as 20 miles away from the nearest Rogers Public School where they would be relocated. This building serves the communities of Garfield, Gateway and Lost Springs Village. It is also near Avoca and other areas of rural Benton County in NWA.

While the city of Garfield has been promised acquisition of this property by the Rogers School District, we will plan for an alternative site if this does not occur. Should the current school building not be available, we will seek use of a church or municipal facility to partner with until funding can be secured for a new building. Our first choice, however, is to be able to continue school operations in the current elementary school location.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Grades to be Offered	K-5	PK-6	PK-7	PK-8	PK-8

Enrollment Cap	200	250	280	310	340
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Charter Site Address:	18432 Marshall Street
City:	Garfield, Arkansas 72732
Chief Operating Officer:	Joy Thomas Sawyer, EdS
Phone:	501-253-3707
School District Where Charter Will be Located:	Rogers Public Schools
List the districts from which the charter school expects to draw students:	Rogers Public Schools Pea Ridge Public Schools

4. What type of educational model will the school follow?

☒ **Traditional**

- ☐ 100% Virtual-
- ☐ College Prep
- ☐ Credit Recovery/ALE
- ☐ Community School