



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Public School Waiver Request

District:	Mt. Vernon-Enola School District
LEA Number:	2306
Superintendent:	Zebulon Prothro
Email:	zprothro@mviewarhawks.org
Contact for Waiver:	Zebulon Prothro
Contact Email:	zprothro@mviewarhawks.org
Contact Phone:	501-849-2220
Date Received by DESE:	

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

Topic:	Early Start Date Request
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Statutes: Statutes: Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-106
Duration Requested:	2024-2025 School year
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	Lisa Academy, Estem Public Charter, Academics Plus Public Charter
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	Mount Vernon-Enola Elementary K-6 Mount Vernon-Enola High School K-12
PURPOSE OF THE WAIVER (Must check at least one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Student Learning Opportunities <input checked="" 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.**

Implementing an alternative calendar at the school, the mandated commencement on August 19th presents challenges that impede student academic achievement. By obtaining a waiver for the start date, students will experience improved learning opportunities and the elimination of obstacles that may hinder their progress.

Commencing school on August 19, 2024, to ensure completion of the first semester before the Christmas break, the distribution of instructional hours across the first and second nine weeks would be uneven compared to the third and fourth nine weeks. Since many courses are semester-based, students in first-semester classes would receive fewer instructional hours than those in second-semester classes. A waiver permitting an earlier start date than August 19th would enable the district to devise a calendar with a more balanced allocation of instructional time between semesters.

An earlier start date would provide equal instructional time for both Fall and Spring semesters on our alternative calendar. A waiver for the start of school would enrich student learning opportunities by affording them more instructional hours to master rigorous state academic standards before undertaking mandated state exams, typically conducted in April or early May. Given the propensity for winter weather-related school closures, it is crucial to maximize instructional hours in August rather than in late May and early June. Advancing the start date by one week ensures that these hours are utilized before the testing period concludes. This waiver would guarantee a May conclusion to the school year, preventing potential extensions into June. Increased instructional days and an earlier release date would facilitate an early boost for tourism in our state.

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

A waiver regarding the school calendar and the start date of classes will not exempt any services offered to students. Since August 19th falls on a Monday and schools are prohibited from commencing before this date, this situation meets the criteria of a highly exceptional circumstance.

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

The district will assess the impact and efficacy of the waiver through:

1) Stakeholder input: Soliciting feedback from all stakeholders, including staff, parents/families, and the community.

2) Survey results: A survey was distributed to stakeholders, staff, and parents, yielding overwhelmingly positive support for an early start date.

3) Attendance records: Our data demonstrates significantly higher attendance rates in August compared to late May.

4) State assessment data: The district aims to maximize instructional days before state testing commences in April and May. Extending the school year by an additional week will contribute to achieving this objective.

**Mount Vernon-Enola School District
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

2024-2025 Regional Early Start Date

WHEREAS the Mount Vernon-Enola School District Board of Directors met in a (regular/special), open, and properly-convened board meeting on 2/19/24, in Mt. Vernon; and

Whereas 5 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 Mount Vernon-Enola School District approves of a school start date of 8/14/2024 for the 2024-2025 school year.

ADOPTED in regular (change to "special" if true) session by the Board of Directors of the Mount Vernon-Enola School district on 2/19/2024



PRESIDENT



SECRETARY



Board of Education Action Item

TO: Mt. Vernon-Enola School Board
FROM: Mr. Zeb Prothro
SUBJECT: 24-25 Early Start Date Resolution Action Item
DATE: 2/19/2024

BACKGROUND: 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.

In order to have a start date earlier than those listed above, the school district Board of Education must pass a resolution approving an earlier start date. The request must then be sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for approval.

RATIONALE: By passing this resolution, the Board allows the district to have a start date earlier than August 19, 2024 if that is the option voted on by the staff. This will allow us the flexibility of being out of school before Memorial Day.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the resolution as presented.

Would you be in favor of the district considering a school calendar with an earlier start date than August 19, 2024?
113 responses

DOCUMENTATION:
[Early Start Date Board Resolution](#)
[Waiver for Early Start Date](#)

