



Act 1240 District Waiver Request Extension

District:	McGehee
LEA Number:	2105
Superintendent:	Linda Tullos
Email:	Linda.tullos@mcgeheeschool.org
Contact for Waiver:	Karen Eoff
Contact Email:	Karen.eoff@searkcoop.com
Contact Phone:	870-723-2074
Date Received by DESE:	

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

Topic:	Teacher Licensure
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	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
Duration Requested:	Five Year Waivers 2022-2027
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	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
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	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.

McGehee School District recognizes that a highly qualified teacher in each classroom is the single most important factor influencing student learning. McGehee School District's 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 McGehee School District has had 28 openings since 2016 that we could not find licensed teachers to fill regardless of how many recruitment activities we conducted. We have hired 28 Act 1240 teachers and 11 of the college graduates hired have completed a licensure program and now hold an Arkansas Teaching License. Several more are in the process of finishing their requirements for licensure. When Act 1240 teachers are hired in our district they are put on a 1240 Teacher Licensure Plan and must meet the specified requirements toward licensure to be rehired.

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 429 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 area and preferably with eighteen hours of college coursework in the area they will be teaching.

The Act 1240 teacher's principal evaluates the teachers using the TESS Model, does walk through observations, drop in observations, instructional rounds, and provides feedback to ensure that the teachers are using appropriate teaching strategies and have appropriate classroom management. Professional Growth Plans are in place to address weak areas. Literacy and math specialists and facilitators from the district and the Southeast Co-op observe the teachers, provide feedback and coaching. The specialists/facilitators also provide curriculum assistance; classroom assistance; resources and schedule professional development.

All Act 1240 teachers are assigned a buddy teacher/mentor to assist them with classroom management; content; instructional strategies; general and school procedures; Praxis study tips; co-teaching; observations; and emotional support. Act 1240 teachers are given time away from the classroom to attend Professional Learning Communities and reflect upon what they are learning from their peers. Peer observation feedback forms are utilized for providing input back to the teacher.

The Act 1240 teachers are encouraged to and allowed to attend the study sessions for the Praxis exams held at the Southeast Co-o. The district provides and allows school business leave days to

attend these sessions as well as days to take the Praxis exams. Act 1240 teachers have access to study.com and 240 tutoring.com to use for test preparation.

The district recognizes that the Act 1240 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 growing our own teachers works in our 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 McGehee 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/mentor 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 could 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 teacher is vested in our community. Our Grow Your Own teachers come from our communities. This program puts educators in the classroom that know the reality the students experience at home. The relationship between the teacher and student is incredibly important to student outcomes. Teachers who know their students' lived reality can support them in academic learning strategies/structures and emotional support systems needed to ensure their students success.

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 May 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 Act1240 teachers bring content knowledge and real world work experiences to their students.

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. We have printed and retained a copy of the Arkansas License of the Act 1240 teachers who have acquired a license. We have buddy teacher assignment records by year. The principals have documentation of observations of the teachers. We have school business leave records for prep sessions and time off to take the Praxis exams. We have sign-in sheets of the

principals/central office staff meetings to review with the teachers progress toward licensure. We have documentation of the extracurricular duty list and stipend list showing stipends for sponsoring a club or extracurricular activity. We try not to utilize Act 1240 teachers as sponsors.

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 your own teacher program provided for us by Act 1240 waivers is working for McGehee 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, McGehee School District has been able to begin school for the past five years with all positions filled, as allowed by the wave. The waivers have provided 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 11 ACT1240 teachers hired that have already completed the requirements to earn an Arkansas license while being employed by our district.

From 2016-2021 the Southeast Co-op schools had 430 open positions that we could not recruit a licensed teacher to fill regardless of how hard we recruited. 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 our 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

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

When we opened Conner Middle School we had an opening for a library media specialist. Let me share McGehee's real life example of what we must go through when an opening for a library media specialist occurs. Kathryn Chastain moved to McGehee in 2020 and needed a job. She recently married the director of the McGehee Boys and Girls Club. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Ministry. She has a passion for working with youth. When the high school library/media paraprofessional position became available Mrs. Chastain applied for the position. Mrs. Chastain was hired and quickly displayed exemplary skill in her daily work. She was so

outstanding that it was difficult for people to distinguish between the library media specialist and the library media paraprofessional. Mrs. Chastain transformed the library into an area that was welcoming, inviting, and where students wanted to be! McGehee School District has been in a construction project and a grade reconfiguration to move to a middle school that would house 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. When construction was completed the district advertised for a Conner Middle School Library Media Specialist. The district had **no licensed applicants** regardless of recruitment ads posted on social media and websites far and near.

When McGehee could not find a licensed applicant to fill this position they turned to the “Grow Our Own Model.” Mrs. Chastain was hired under the Act 1240 Library Media Waivers. She agreed to return to school for an additional degree or to complete an additional program of study. Mrs. Chastain met the requirements for an Ancillary License and agreed to enroll and complete a Library Media Program at the University of Mississippi.

Now for the rest of the story! Mrs. Chastain has made the school library a hub of learning. Mrs. Chastain implemented STEM Fridays where students participate in STEM activities in the library every other Friday. The district had Accelerated Reader (AR) but with low participation. Mrs. Chastain reinvigorated the program with a series of motivating monthly challenges and reading and AR testing greatly increased. The October Challenge was Harry Potter Themed and students earned points in order to catch the Golden Snitch. Starting November 1, the challenge will be “Which Was Better Book vs Movie.” There will be 30 different book/movie combinations set up like a basketball tournament bracket. The library has become an exciting hub of learning and students love to participate in the reading challenges.

Mrs. Chastain is motivating, innovative, creative and one of the hardest working teachers you could find. She has great rapport with the students and they know she cares for them. It is wonderful to see the library alive with students that can't wait to get their hands on reading material. It is great to see the number of books being read greatly increase. By renewing these Act 1240 waivers we will be able to keep Mrs. Chastain in place in McGehee School District while she finishes her Masters in Library Media at the University of Mississippi. Please help us to keep this talented, dedicated, innovative, creative teacher in our area.

We seek to hire a fully licensed library media specialist when we have an opening. We will only use this waiver when we have exhausted all avenues of creative, innovative recruitment and have **no licensed applicants**. Please continue our waiver extension for library media specialists. We will not abuse this much appreciated route to providing our students with a motivated on fire teacher that motivates and increases the reading skills of our students.

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

All library/media services are being provided for students and teachers by Mrs. Chastain. The Accelerated Reading Program has been revived and reading/testing increased. Circulation of books has increased per circulation data. Participating in reading challenges has increased. STEM Fridays have been implemented in the library. Students participate in STEM Friday's every other Friday. The Conner Middle School Library has become a hub to support every student and every teacher in our building.

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

The principal will evaluate the library media specialist using the TESS Model and the rubric for library media specialist. The principal will do walk-throughs to ensure that the program fosters critical thinking, instills confidence in reading in multiple formats, and provides a safe and nurturing climate for all. The principal will ensure that the library media specialist partners with all teachers to provide print and digital materials to meet the diverse needs of the students. The principal will ensure that the school library is a hub for supporting students and staff in our quest to improve the reading scores of all our students.

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.

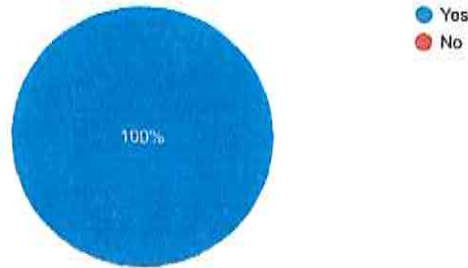
We have only used the library media waivers four times in our Co-op area since the waivers were granted. All four times the waivers have been used have been extremely successful. Mrs. Chastain, our example, has provided outstanding library media services to our students while becoming fully certified. Some of the indicators of success include: the library/media center becoming the beehive/learning hub of the school, an increase in books read and tests proficient in the Accelerated Reading Program, implementation of STEM Fridays, an increase in the number of books being checked in and out of the library/media center, an increase in the number of students with accounts/usage for digital libraries, an increase in numbers of teachers scheduling research/collaboration sessions with the library media specialists in the library/media center.

14 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

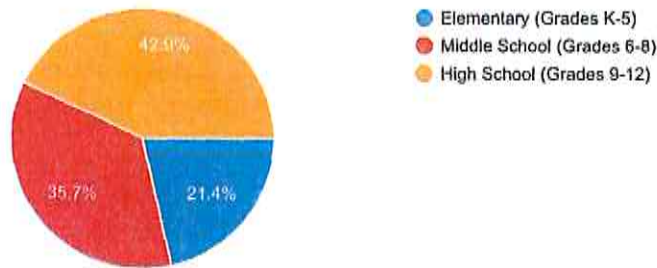
Do you think that there is a shortage of licensed teachers in our area?

14 responses



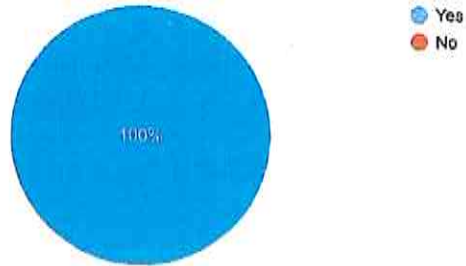
If you think there is a shortage of licensed teachers, what level do you think is affected the most?

14 responses



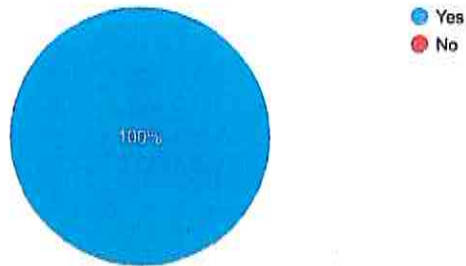
If the McGehee School District is unable to find a licensed teacher, do you think the District should hire someone with a bachelors degree who is working toward getting licensed?

14 responses



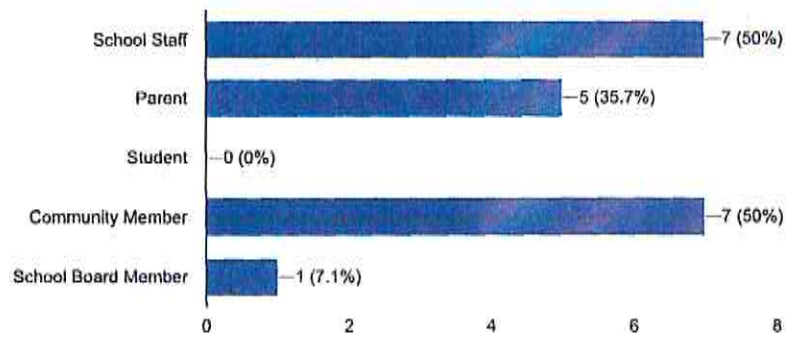
Our current 5 year ACT Waiver for Teachers licensure is expiring. Do you think the McGehee School District should apply for an extension of this waived.

14 responses



What is your stakeholder classification for the McGehee School District?
(Select all that apply)

14 responses



This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)



McGehee School District
ACT 1240 Waiver
Stakeholder Meeting

What is an ACT 1240 Waiver?

ACT 1240 allows Arkansas Public Schools to apply for the same waivers from rules and standards that are granted to Arkansas Public Charter Schools.

The Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative Member Schools applied for ACT 1240 Waivers five years ago due to the teacher shortage in Southeast Arkansas. The local university is not graduating enough teacher to fill vacancies due to the fact that very few students are entering the Teacher Education Program.

The McGehee School District was granted a waiver from teacher licensure under the ACT 1240 Waiver. That ACT 1240 Waiver is expiring. The district is seeking feedback from stakeholders on applying for an extension of this waiver.

The ACT 1240 Waiver from Teacher Licensure allows the district to hire unlicensed teachers who meet the Arkansas Qualified Teacher requirements and are on a path to licensure.

- ❖ Must have a bachelor's degree or higher
- AND Meet One of the Following Eligibility Requirements
- ❖ Degree is in the content area to be taught
 - ❖ Has a minimum of eighteen (18) college credit hours in content area to be taught
 - ❖ Has successfully completed a content area assessment approved by the State Board of Education for the content area to be taught
 - ❖ Has National Board Certification in the content area to be taught
 - ❖ Has documented successful, relevant work experience in the content area to be taught.

Stakeholder Survey

Please take a few minutes to take our stakeholder survey to give us feedback on applying for an extension of our ACT 1240 Waiver from teacher licensure.



McGehee School District
P.O. Box 767
McGehee, AR 71654
Telephone: (870) 222 - 3670 Fax: (870) 222 - 6957

Linda Fullos, Superintendent



Home of the Owls!

ACT 1240 Stakeholder Meeting

July 13, 2021

10:00 A.M.

Signature	Title (Parent, Student, Community Member, Staff)
<u>Amanda Bittle</u>	<u>Fed Pro Coord</u>
<u>Duhli Muncher</u>	<u>Tec Director</u>
<u>Elizabeth Robinson</u>	<u>Principal, Parent</u>
<u>Justin Holt</u>	<u>Principal</u>
<u>Dana Henderson</u>	<u>K-5 Math IF</u>
<u>Ashton Cox</u>	<u>K-5 English Lit IF</u>
<u>Krista Jesterly</u>	<u>Director of Special Services / Parent</u>
<u>Quon Pac</u>	<u>Dos Connor, Jr. High</u>
<u>Grenda Campbell</u>	<u>Middle School Principal / Parent</u>
<u>Marcus R. Haddock</u>	<u>H.S. DOS</u>
<u>Katy Sallen</u>	<u>6-12 Lit IF</u>
<u>Jeff Owyang via Zoom</u>	<u>Community / Board Member</u>

McGehee School District

P.O. Box 767

McGehee, AR 71654

Telephone: (870) 222 - 3670

Fax: (870) 222 - 6957

Linda Tullis, Superintendent



Home of the Owls!

ACT 1240 Stakeholder Meeting

July 13, 2021

10:00 A.M.

Signature

Title (Parent, Student, Community Member, Staff)

Stephanie Jarrett - zoom

MHS Teacher

Amanda McBraw - zoom

MES Teacher

Stacy Baker - zoom

CMS Teacher / parent

Yogi Denton - zoom

MHS Teacher

Becky McCallie - zoom

MSD Staff

Katy Chustain - zoom

CMS Teacher

Wes Hilden

Sups admin staff

McGehee School District

P.O. Box 767

McGehee, AR 71654

Telephone: (870) 222 - 3670

Fax: (870) 222 - 6957

Linda Tullos, Superintendent



Home of the Owls!

ACT 1240 Stakeholder Meeting

July 13, 2021

5:00 P.M.

Signature	Title (Parent, Student, Community Member, Staff)
<u>Amanda Bitt</u>	<u>Fed Pro Coord</u>
<u>Austin Juty</u>	<u>Staff / Parent</u>
<u>Elizabeth Robinson</u>	<u>Staff / Parent</u>
<u>Justin Holt</u>	<u>Staff / Community Member</u>
<u>Grenda Campbell</u>	<u>Parent /</u>
<u>Willie Campbell</u>	<u>Parent</u>
<u>Wendy Michew</u>	<u>staff</u>
<u>Debbie Minchew</u>	<u>staff</u>
<u>Stacy Reynolds - zoom</u>	<u>staff / parent</u>
<u>Martina Bennett - zoom</u>	<u>staff</u>
<u>Kem - zoom</u>	<u>staff</u>
<u>John Robin</u>	<u>community</u>
<u>Debra Carver</u>	<u>Parent</u>

McGehee School District
P.O. Box 767
McGehee, AR 71654
Telephone: (870) 222 - 3670 Fax: (870) 222 - 6957

Linda Tullos, Superintendent



Home of the Owls!

ACT 1240 WAIVER
Stakeholder Meeting
July 22, 2021
12:00 P.M.

Signature	Title (Parent, Student, Community Member, Staff)
<u>Amanda Bell</u>	<u>Fed Pro Coord</u>
<u>Linda Tullos</u>	<u>Supt</u>
<u>Chris Cook</u>	<u>Customer Service</u>
<u>Ashton Cox</u>	<u>Lit Facilitator</u>
<u>Kathy Saylor</u>	<u>Lit Facilitator</u>
<u>Pallyanna Elton</u>	<u>Hospice Home Care</u>
<u>Ed Gray</u>	<u>MAYOR</u>
<u>Paula Motte</u>	<u>Chamber</u>
<u>Alton Wesson</u>	
<u>Steph Dicks</u>	
<u>Spencer Chastain</u>	<u>BLL - CEO</u>
<u>Jacob Box</u>	<u>CM</u>

McGehee School District

P.O. Box 767

McGehee, AR 71654

Telephone: (870) 222 - 3670

Fax: (870) 222 - 6957

Linda Tullis, Superintendent



Home of the Owls!

ACT 1240 WAIVER

Stakeholder Meeting

July 22, 2021

12:00 P.M.

Signature

Title (Parent, Student, Community Member, Staff)

Cynthia Smith
Frank Calvert
Courtney Thompson

RESOLUTION OF THE MCGEHEE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the McGehee 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 McGehee 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 McGehee 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 MCGEHEE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

1. Pursuant to Act 1240 of 2015, codified at Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-103, the McGehee 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;

