



MARVELL-ELAINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1870
Marvell, AR 72366
870.829.2101

March 29, 2022

Dear Arkansas State Board of Education/Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Board of Education.

Marvell-Elaine School District respectfully requests to petition the State Board for an extension of our Act 1240 District Waivers for Teacher Licensure and Guidance Counselor Licensure.

Our application packet includes the following documents:

- a completed completion,
- a signed copy of the resolution adopted by the board of directors authorizing the district to request the waivers, and
- evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families

Marvell-Elaine School District respectfully requests the consideration of our petition for an extension of its Act 1240 District Waivers.

If you have any questions or need additional documents, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Denetra Williams, Interim Superintendent
Marvell-Elaine School District

dwilliams@mesd1.org

870.829.2053 office

870.995.1833 cell



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 District Waiver Request Extension

District:	Marvell-Elaine School District
LEA Number:	5404-000
Superintendent:	Denetra Williams
Email:	dwilliams@mesd1.org
Contact for Waiver:	Denetra Williams
Contact Email:	dwilliams@mesd1.org
Contact Phone:	870.829.2101 Office 870.995.1833 Cell
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:	Standard 4-D.1 Teacher licensure requirement of Arkansas Law Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1004 Qualified teachers in every public classroom Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-401 Teacher Licensure Requirement Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309 Certification to teach grade or subject matter 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 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-418 Arkansas History Requirement DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity – Sections 7.09.1, 7.09.2, and 7.10 DESE Rules Governing Educator Licensure – Section 7.00
Duration Requested:	2021-2022 school year through the 2024-2025 school year
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	KIPP Delta Arkansas Virtual Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	Marvell-Elaine Elementary K-5 Marvell-Elaine High School 6-12

- 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.**

Marvell-Elaine School District (MESD) is aware of the positive outcomes and influences highly qualified teachers can have upon the educational outcomes of students. The District is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified, licensed teachers in all classrooms. Historically it has been hard for the district to recruit and retain teachers. This fact has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the present time, the number of openings for teachers exceeds the number of applicants and/or licensed teachers. Therefore, the District has chosen to apply for an extension of its Act 1240 Waivers as opposed to employing long-term substitutes to fill any of our available positions.

The District's base salary and geographical location have made it more difficult to recruit and retain highly qualified, licensed teachers. Through the use of the Act 1240 Waiver, the District can 'Grow Its Own Teachers' by hiring an individual who possess a Bachelor's degree/advanced degree or meets the requirements to participate in the Arkansas Teacher Residency Model. If the District cannot fill a vacant position, the District will try to recruit an individual with a college degree or a Reach Associate/paraprofessional currently employed in the District. A licensure plan will be developed for the individual and he/she must fulfill the requirements of the plan to be considered for rehire as a teacher. The licensure plan includes a specific Alternative Route towards certification which includes a pathway to licensure with a three-year timeline. While working under the licensure plan, the teacher will receive mentoring and support, participate in professional development, participate in Novice Teacher Training, and complete one of the Science of Reading (SoR) Pathways.

Approximately 11% of MESD's K-12 teachers live outside of Phillips County. Since most of our teachers are from the local communities, the students and teachers can develop a relationship. The teacher-student relationship can be vital to a student's success. The teacher can support the students by providing mentoring, strategies, and the emotional support that the students may need to ensure their success. By growing our own teachers, the District will invest in individuals from the local communities who have a desire to become teachers.

MESD has hired teachers under the Act 1240 Waiver who have and can demonstrate content knowledge. By participating in professional development offerings, PLCs, and teaching-and-learning experiences, the teachers have numerous opportunities to develop/increase their pedagogical knowledge. Hiring and developing teachers from our local area will help to enhance student learning opportunities, decrease turnover, and help to develop teachers who are vested in our communities. Also, this will help to provide teachers who have developed a relationship with our students, enhance the school's culture, and build capacity. The greatest benefit will be for our students because the District will have a plan and the means to provide qualified teachers in every classroom.

Due to a lack of or a shortage of teachers, the District understands the importance of 'Growing Our Own' teachers. This process may be demanding for teachers, administrators, and other personnel but it will yield significant benefits for the Act 1240 Waiver teachers and our students.

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

Through the use of the Act 1240 Waiver, Marvell-Elaine School District will recruit and employ individuals who possess at least a Bachelor's degree or who meet the criteria to participate in Arkansas Teacher Residency Model. Employing teachers under the Waiver, will help to reduce or minimize the District's reliance on long-term substitutes or virtual teachers. Most students prefer receiving instruction from local, on site teachers as opposed to virtual instruction. The District has offered virtual instruction with licensed, virtual teachers and it may be necessary to continue this practice in the future.

By 'Growing Our Own Teachers' through the use of the Act 1240 Waiver, we will provide highly qualified teachers in the classrooms. The teacher is vested in the community and committed to obtaining a license. His/her commitment demonstrates a commitment to our students. The commitment to our students means the teacher is committed to increasing his/her pedagogical competencies, improving the school's culture, developing a relationship with the students, and increasing the educational outcomes for the students. The professional growth and professional learning opportunities for the teachers will exceed that of certified teachers because of the requirements in their licensure plan.

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

MESD will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Act 1240 Waiver teachers through a multi-tiered support system and the evaluation program.

The multi-tiered support system includes providing or having available individuals to assist the Act 1240 teacher as he/she pursues a pathway to licensure. A team teacher or a teacher in close proximity will be available to answer questions, clarify procedures, provide information about processes/procedures, or be a listening ear. The teachers will be assigned a mentor who will assist with rituals and routines, lesson planning, curriculum, instructional strategies, and classroom management strategies. By participating in a Professional Learning Community (PLC), the teachers will develop an understanding of how to use data to make instructional decisions, monitor student learning, establish goals for a student or groups, or to plan next steps in the teaching-and-learning process. Specialists, within the district or outside of the district, will model instructional strategies or lessons, observe the teachers, and determine relevant professional development for the teachers. Additional supports to be provided to the teachers include observing teachers within their building, Praxis support, and professional development based upon the teacher's Professional Growth Plan.

The Waiver teachers will be evaluated using the same methods and tools which are used to evaluate licensed teachers. The principal evaluates the teachers and will recommend renewal or non-renewal based upon the evaluation instrument and completion of the required actions in the licensure plan. The teacher's principal will evaluate him/her using TESS through the use of classroom walkthroughs and observations. Formal and informal observations will be conducted throughout the year to collect data in regards to the teaching strategies being used, classroom management, local initiatives, and grows/gloves. The teachers will receive feedback from the principal/school improvement specialist, coop specialists, and external providers. The principal may recommend professional development for the teacher based upon the data collected during observations, walkthroughs, or PLCs.

Kelsey Riley, Recruitment and Retention Facilitator at GRESC will help to develop a plan and monitor the teachers as he/she work towards obtaining a license. A goal of the District is to 'Grow Its Own Teachers' by recruiting and providing opportunities for our Educators Rising students to be motivated to pursue a career as an educator.

4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the period the waiver was in effect. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.

Prior to being approved for the Act 1240 Waiver, Marvell-Elaine School District hired long-term substitutes fill any vacancies. MESD has employed teachers under the Act 1240 during the period the waiver has been in effect. These teachers enrolled in a pathway to licensure which primarily included the APPEL or M.A.T. program. While pursuing a license, the teachers participated in Novice Teacher Training, were assigned a Mentor, and completed professional development.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the District renewed the contracts of three Act 1240 Waiver teachers. One of the teachers received a Standard License last month. One teacher received a Non-Traditional APPEL License. The third teacher is taking her Praxis II for Middle School Science in April. She will be issued a Letter of Eligibility for a Provisional Professional Teaching License if she obtains a passing score on the Praxis.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the District hired eight (8) teachers under the Act 1240 Waiver. One of the teachers is enrolled in the M.A.T. program and is scheduled to graduate in May. One teacher is participating in the APPEL program and is scheduled to take the Praxis – Elementary Education: Mathematics Subtest in April. She should be licensed by the end of the 2021-2022 school year. One teacher will enroll in ArPEP and one is enrolling the M.A.T. Program.

The Act 1240 Waiver has been very beneficial to the District because the District was able to provide highly qualified teachers in the classrooms. The District is committed to hiring licensed teachers or 'Growing Its Own Teachers' if we can't hire a licensed teacher.

Waiver Extension Request #2

Topic:	Guidance Counselor Licensure
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	Standard 4-E.1 Guidance School Counselor (Licensure)
Duration Requested:	2021-2022 school year through the 2024-2025 school year
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	KIPP Delta Arkansas Virtual Academy
Schools, Grades or Classes the Waiver Will Apply To	Marvell-Elaine Elementary School K-5 Marvell-Elaine High School 6-12

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.

It has been difficult for the Marvell-Elaine School District to fill some of its classroom teacher positions with licensed teachers. The District’s initial intent is to advertise for and hire a licensed Guidance Counselor. If the District does not receive an application from a licensed applicant, then the District will have to recruit an individual who does not possess a license. In essence the District will ‘Grow Its Own’ by hiring an individual employed in the District or within the communities.

When an opening for a Guidance Counselor exists and we are not able to hire a licensed Guidance Counselor, it may be necessary that the District hire a licensed teacher or an individual who possesses at least a Bachelor’s degree. A licensure plan will be developed for the highly qualified individual to obtain licensure. The Guidance Counselor will be vested in our community and committed to obtaining a license.

The Guidance Counselor’s commitment and relationships with the students will help to enhance learning opportunities. The relationships will support and help to increase student outcomes. The Guidance Counselor will work with the students to develop Student Success Plans, help the student to develop short and long term goals, inform the students of camps or other opportunities to participate in events outside of the school district, and help to address the social-emotional needs of the students. These things cannot be accomplished if the students don’t develop a relationship with the counselor. The counselor works with the principal to develop the building’s master schedule.

Initially, the District did not receive any applicants for the Guidance Counselor position for the 2021-2022 school year. A teacher in the District applied for the position and the District was able to hire the individual. She is currently taking the required coursework to obtain a Master’s degree in School Counseling. In addition to completing the coursework, she is being mentored by a counselor, is enrolled in the Novice Counselor program, participates professional development, and receives support from the APSCN Field Analyst.

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

Through the use of the Act 1240 Waiver, Marvell-Elaine School District will recruit and employ individuals who are licensed teachers or possess at least a Bachelor's degree. Employing teachers under the Waiver, will help to reduce or minimize the District's reliance on long-term substitutes.

By 'Growing Our Own Counselor' through the use of the Act 1240 Waiver, we will provide a highly qualified counselor who provides services for our students and teachers. The counselor is vested in the community and committed to obtaining a license. His/her commitment demonstrates a commitment to our students. The commitment to our students means the counselor is committed to increasing his/her competencies, improving the school's culture, developing a relationship with the students, and increasing the educational outcomes for the students.

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

MESD will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Act 1240 Waiver through a multi-tiered support system and the evaluation program. The counselor will be evaluated using the same methods and tools which are used to evaluate licensed counselors. The principal will evaluate the counselor and will recommend renewal or non-renewal based upon the evaluation instrument and completion of the required actions in the licensure plan. The principal will evaluate and observe the Guidance Counselor using the TESS Rubric for Guidance Counselors. Formal and informal observations will be conducted throughout the year to collect data, examine artifacts, and monitor the implementation of the school's guidance plan. The Guidance Counselor will receive feedback from the principal/school improvement specialist, the APSCN Field Analyst, and the Guidance and Counseling Coordinator. The principal may recommend professional development for the counselor. Additional supports to be provided include mentoring, working with counselors and analysts from other school districts or at the state level, Praxis support, and participating in professional development based upon the counselor's Professional Growth Plan.

4. Describe how the waiver has ensured success in the school or district over the period the waiver was in effect. Provide data or evidence to support your answer.

The Waiver for the Guidance Counselor position was used for the first time during the 2021-2022 school year. The counselor is currently completing the required coursework to obtain a Master's degree in School Counseling. The Act 1240 Waiver was beneficial to the District because the District was able to fill the position with a qualified individual. The District is committed to hiring a licensed Guidance Counselor or 'Growing Its Own' if we can't hire a licensed Guidance Counselor.