



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Open Enrollment Public Charter School Renewal Application for

eStem Public Charter School

Deadline for Initial Submission: 5:00 PM on September 30, 2022



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Charter School Office
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.682.4472

Event/Deadline	Renewal Applications
Initial Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. submitted to ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov	September 30, 2022
Application Reviews with DESE	October 17-28, 2022
Application Revision Window	October 31-Nov. 14, 2022
Final Application Due by 5:00 pm Submitted to ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov	November 14, 2022
Charter Authorizing Panel Hearings	December 13-14, 2022
State Board of Education Meeting- Review of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions	January 12, 2023

Charter Information

Name of Charter:	eStem Public Charter School
LEA Number:	6047700
Authorization Date:	March 11, 2013
Expiration Date:	June 30, 2023
Enrollment Cap:	3,844
Grades Served:	K - 12
Superintendent/Director:	Dr. John Bacon
Charter Mailing Address:	200 River Market Avenue, Ste. 225 Little Rock, AR 72201
Charter Physical Address:	200 River Market Avenue, Ste. 225 Little Rock, AR 72201
Sponsoring Entity:	eStem Public Charter Schools, Inc.
Charter Management Organization	eStem Public Charter Schools, Inc.
Contact for Application:	Dr. John Bacon
Contact Email:	john.bacon@estemschools.org
Contact Phone:	501-324-9202

School Campuses

School Name	LEA Number	City	Grades Served
eStem Elementary School	6047701	Little Rock, AR	K - 6
eStem Junior High School	6047702	Little Rock, AR	7 - 9
eStem East Village Elementary School	6047704	Little Rock, AR	K - 6
eStem East Village Junior High School	6047705	Little Rock, AR	7 - 9
eStem High School	6047703	Little Rock, AR	10 - 12

Number of Years Requested for Renewal (1-20): 13

Section 1: Charter Data

Current Accreditation Status: Fully Accredited

Level of Support: Level 3 Coordinated Support for Reading (40.6% In Need of Support)

Enrollment (3rd Quarter ADM)

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
1,968.63	3,066.12	3,186.92	3,171.14	3,055.49

Graduation Rates

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
4 Year = 98.17% 5 Year = 98.40%	4 Year = 100% 5 Year = 98.17%	4 Year = 99.32% 5 Year = 100%	4 Year = 97.63% 5 Year = 99.32%	4 Year = 99.44% 5 Year = 97.63%

Letter Grades

School	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
eStem Elementary School (DTES)	B	C	N/A	No letter grade assigned	D
eStem Junior High School (DTJH)	B	C	N/A	No letter grade assigned	C
eStem East Village Elementary School (EVE)	-	C	N/A	No letter grade assigned	D
eStem East Village Junior High School (EVJH)	-	C	N/A	No letter grade assigned	C
eStem High School (EHS)	B	B	N/A	No letter grade assigned	C

ESSA School Index

School	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Overall Index					
eStem Elementary School	72.48	68.77	N/A	60.41	63.51
eStem Junior High School	71.52	67.79	N/A	64.40	69.55
eStem East Village Elementary School	N/A	67.01	N/A	59.61	61.48
eStem East Village Junior High School	N/A	63.99	N/A	62.01	69.75
eStem High School	68.88	70.96	N/A	64.68	66.93
Weighted Achievement					
eStem Elementary School	70.19	63.79	N/A	42.48	48.24
eStem Junior High School	64.12	59.22	N/A	48.61	56.97
eStem East Village Elementary School	N/A	60.51	N/A	42.40	44.27
eStem East Village Junior High School	N/A	51.17	N/A	44.75	55.48
eStem High School	51.28	53.05	N/A	38.03	45.39

Value-Added Growth					
eStem Elementary School	79.22	78.09	N/A	76.05	80.13
eStem Junior High School	82.44	79.42	N/A	80.80	84.50
eStem East Village Elementary School	N/A	78.62	N/A	75.93	78.01
eStem East Village Junior High School	N/A	80.79	N/A	80.77	86.14
eStem High School	81.21	82.34	N/A	82.81	82.77
SQSS					
eStem Elementary School	55.33	49.34	N/A	50.08	43.76
eStem Junior High School	52.40	49.02	N/A	46.57	49.07
eStem East Village Elementary School	N/A	43.50	N/A	45.37	46.56
eStem East Village Junior High School	N/A	37.90	N/A	39.78	48.41
eStem High School	51.79	57.79	N/A	51.02	48.32

Section 2: Charter Mission Statement

Previous mission statement:

Our mission is to develop students who are critical thinkers, problem solvers, and collaborative members of a learning community and society. We will encourage students to be risk-takers and enthusiastic life-long learners who are versed in engineering, science, technology, economics, mathematics, and literacy.

We recognize that all learners require high-quality, individualized, differentiated instruction. We will provide all our students with a rigorous, data-driven experience that holds all learners to high expectations. We will also create a learning environment where all students feel safe to take risks, collaborate, and problem solve.

If the mission statement for the charter will change, please provide the new mission:

What type of educational model does the school follow?

Alternative Learning Environment

Traditional

Virtual Only

College Prep

Credit Recovery

Other Focus Area: _____

Section 3: Charter Goals

Goal 1	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
<p>The three eStem schools will meet or exceed the ESEA Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for performance for “All Students” and for the “Targeted Achievement Gap Group” as identified by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) on the state-mandated criterion-referenced assessments by 2017.</p>	<p><i>Performance Goals - Literacy:</i></p> <p>2017 AMO for All Students</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 89.24 eStem Middle - 86.17 eStem High - 87.34</p> <p>2017 AMO for TAG Group</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 82.82 eStem Middle - 78.87 eStem High - 82.26</p>	<p>Use of the Arkansas Benchmark Exam as a state-mandated criterion-referenced assessment ended with the Spring 2014 administration. The assessment given to students transitioned first to PARCC exams and then to ACT Aspire. The specific goal can not be analyzed as AMO was not set for ACT Aspire performance and growth. Goal No Longer Applicable</p>
	<p><i>Growth Goals - Literacy:</i></p> <p>2017 AMO for All Students</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 95.52 eStem Middle - 85.35</p> <p>2017 AMO for TAG Group</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 92.43 eStem Middle - 80.13</p>	
	<p><i>Performance Goals - Mathematics:</i></p> <p>2017 AMO for All Students</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 90.83 eStem Middle - 86.61 eStem High - 75.46</p> <p>2017 AMO for TAG Group</p>	

	<p>eStem Elementary - 85.16 eStem Middle - 79.23 eStem High - 64.82</p> <p><i>Growth Goals - Mathematics:</i></p> <p>2017 AMO for All Students</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 84.62 eStem Middle - 82.22</p> <p>2017 AMO for TAG Group</p> <p>eStem Elementary - 77.28 eStem Middle - 73.92</p>	
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Goal 2	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
<p>eStem Elementary: By 2022, 75% of 4th grade students will perform at or above grade level on NWEA assessments. Grade level performance will be determined by comparison with performance of national norm group.</p>	<p>NWEA MAP Reading Student Achievement Norm for 4th Grade is 204.83 with a Standard Deviation of 16.31 points.</p> <p>NWEA MAP Mathematics Student Achievement Norm for 4th Grade is 210.51 with a Standard Deviation of 15.56 points.</p>	<p>More than 95% of eStem 4th grade students completed the NWEA MAP Assessments for Reading and Mathematics in May of 2022.</p> <p>A comparison of eStem student performance to the national norm for Reading Student Achievement, shows that 59.6% of eStem 4th grade students met or exceeded the national norm. While we fell short of the 75% goal, further analysis of eStem 4th grade student achievement shows that 87.4% of our students scored within one standard deviation of the national norm.</p> <p>A comparison of eStem student performance to the national norm</p>

		<p>for Mathematics Student Achievement shows that 56.3% of eStem 4th grade students met or exceeded the national norm. While we fell short of the 75% goal, further analysis of eStem 4th grade student achievement shows that 91.3% of our students scored within one standard deviation of the national norm.</p> <p>While eStem did not meet the goal by 2022, the table below reflects progress that was being made prior to the school closure due to COVID19 in March of 2020 and subsequent interruptions to traditional instructional delivery that occurred during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.</p> <p>Goal Not Met</p>
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eStem 4th Grade NWEA Reading - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
68.5	70.6	N/A	56.1	59.6

eStem 4th Grade NWEA Mathematics - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
66.8	70.2	N/A	53.5	56.3

Goal 3	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
<p>eStem Elementary: On average, students enrolled at eStem for two years or more will meet or exceed the annual state average grade level growth in the areas of reading and/or mathematics on state-approved norm-referenced assessments.</p>	<p>The state has identified the NWEA Reading and Mathematics MAP Assessment for students in grades K-2 as a state-approved norm-referenced assessment. The eStem elementary schools have chosen to administer the NWEA Reading and Mathematics MAP Assessment for students in grades 4-6, as well.</p> <p>As state average grade level growth in the areas of reading and/or mathematics has not been defined, eStem is using a comparison with the national Reading and Mathematics Student Growth Norms that have been set for each grade level.</p> <p>Reading Student Growth Norms:</p> <p>Kindergarten - 16.45 1st Grade - 15.47 2nd Grade - 13.22 3rd Grade - 10.50</p>	<p>More than 95% of eStem Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students completed NWEA MAP assessments in Reading and Mathematics in the spring of 2022.</p> <p>An analysis of student growth data shows that 78.4% of eStem elementary students who had been enrolled at eStem schools for at least two school years met or exceeded national norms for student growth in Reading. Further, 97.2% of eStem elementary school students grew within at least one standard deviation of the national norm in Reading.</p> <p>An analysis of student growth data shows that 89.2% of eStem elementary students who had been enrolled at eStem schools for at least two school years met or exceeded national norms for student growth in Mathematics. Further, 97.8% of eStem elementary students grew within at least one standard deviation of the national norm in Mathematics.</p> <p>Goal Met</p>

	4th Grade - 8.16 5th Grade - 6.50 6th Grade - 5.19 Mathematics Student Growth Norms: Kindergarten - 17.54 1st Grade - 16.35 2nd Grade - 14.38 3rd Grade - 12.60 4th Grade - 10.96 5th Grade - 9.61 6th Grade - 8.13	
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eStem Grades K-6th NWEA Reading - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Growth Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
78.0	77.5	N/A	75.5	78.4

eStem K-6th Grade NWEA Mathematics - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Growth Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
88.2	85.3	N/A	83.6	89.2

Goal 4	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
<p>eStem Middle (now Junior High):</p> <p>By 2022, 75% of 8th grade students will perform at or above grade level on NWEA assessments. Grade level performance will be determined by comparison with performance of national norm group.</p>	<p>NWEA MAP Reading Student Achievement Norm for 8th Grade is 221.66 with a Standard Deviation of 16.87 points.</p> <p>NWEA MAP Mathematics Student Achievement Norm for 8th Grade is 230.30 with a Standard Deviation of 19.95 points.</p>	<p>More than 95% of eStem 8th grade students completed the NWEA MAP Assessments for Reading and Mathematics in May of 2022. A comparison of eStem student performance to the national norm for Reading Student Achievement, shows that 67.5% of eStem 8th grade students met or exceeded the national norm. While we fell short of the 75% goal, further analysis of eStem 8th grade student achievement shows that 96.6% of our students scored within one standard deviation of the national norm.</p> <p>A comparison of eStem student performance to the national norm for Mathematics Student Achievement shows that 68.7% of eStem 8th grade students met or exceeded the national norm. While we fell short of the 75% goal, further analysis of eStem 8th grade student achievement shows that 91.3% of our students scored within one standard deviation of the national norm.</p> <p>While eStem did not meet the goal by 2022, the table below reflects progress that was being made prior to the school closure due to COVID19 in March of 2020 and subsequent interruptions to traditional instructional delivery that occurred during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. In spite of these interruptions, 8th grade</p>

		<p>students at eStem junior high schools actually recovered all losses and exhibited performance in 2021-2022 that was higher than at any point during the previous five years.</p> <p>Goal Not Met</p>
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eStem 8th Grade NWEA Reading - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
65.8	66.9	N/A	63.2	67.5

eStem 8th Grade NWEA Mathematics - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
64.8	67.7	N/A	64.1	68.7

Goal 5	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
<p>eStem Middle (now Junior High):</p> <p>On average, students enrolled at eStem for two years or more will meet or exceed the annual state average grade level growth in the areas of reading and/or mathematics on state-approved norm-referenced assessments.</p>	<p>There is currently no state-mandated norm-referenced assessment for students above grades K-2. The eStem junior high schools have chosen to administer the NWEA MAP Reading and Mathematics Assessment for students in grades 7-9.</p> <p>To assess progress</p>	<p>More than 95% of eStem 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students completed NWEA MAP assessments in Reading and Mathematics in the spring of 2022.</p> <p>An analysis of junior high student growth data shows that 63% of eStem students who had been enrolled at eStem schools for at least two school years met or exceeded national norms for student growth in Reading. Further, 92.9% of eStem junior high school students grew within at least one standard deviation of the national</p>

	<p>toward this goal, eStem student growth data was compared to NWEA Student Growth Norms for Reading and Mathematics.</p> <p>The current Reading Student Growth Norm for 8th grade students is 3.65 points with a Standard Deviation of 7.46. The current Mathematics Student Growth Norm for 8th grade students is 5.38 points with a Standard Deviation of 6.93.</p>	<p>norm in Reading.</p> <p>An analysis of junior high student growth data shows that 70.6% of eStem students who had been enrolled at eStem schools for at least two school years met or exceeded national norms for student growth in Mathematics. Further, 97.1% of eStem junior high students grew within at least one standard deviation of the national norm in Mathematics.</p> <p>Goal Met</p>
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eStem Grades 7th-9th NWEA Reading - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Growth Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
65.6	62.5	N/A	59.8	63.0

eStem 7th-9th Grade NWEA Mathematics - % Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Growth Norms

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
70.2	65.3	N/A	67.2	73.6

Goal 6	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
By 2022, 100% of 12th grade students who attend eStem for at least grades 9-12 will graduate on time with their class.	To assess progress toward this goal, transcripts of all students meeting the criteria were examined to determine official graduation status	For the 2021-2022 school year, 100% of students meeting the criteria for this goal graduated on time with their cohort class. This is also true for each of the preceding four graduating classes dating to the 2017-2018 school year. Goal Met

eStem Graduation Rate - % of Students Graduating on Time with Cohort Class

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal 7	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
By 2022, 95% of 12th grade students who attend eStem for at least grades 9-12 will pursue higher education, technology training/certification, and/or military enrollment.	Assessment of this goal was conducted by analyzing actual enrollment documentation obtained for graduates through confirmation by attending institutions or organizations.	While we did not meet this goal, our efforts were building toward an increased percentage of graduates formally participating in higher education, technology training/certification, and/or military enrollment. Unfortunately, the interruptions and economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in the spring of 2020 resulted in an increased percentage of our graduates choosing to transition directly to the workforce. Goal Not Met

eStem Graduates - % Pursuing Higher Education, Technology Training, Military

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
86%	87%	76%	74%	TBD

Goal 8	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
By 2026, 75% of 12th grade students who attend eStem for at least grades 9-12 will have successfully completed at least one Advanced Placement or concurrent credit course.	Assessment of this goal was conducted by analyzing official transcripts of graduating students each year. Successful completion was defined as achieving a course grade of at least a "C" and/or scoring at a level of 3	As you can see from the data table below, eStem had actually met the goal of 75% completing at least one AP or concurrent credit course in 2017-2018. Our progress toward this goal was definitely impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, and we are redoubling our efforts to prepare students to enroll in and successfully complete advanced coursework. Goal Partially Met/Goal In Progress

<p>While this is a high bar, we believe that a renewal of our charter for a minimum of 13 years will ensure that we have the opportunity to work with a group of students for their full educational experience from kindergarten to high school graduation.</p>	<p>or higher on the AP exam.</p>	
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eStem Graduating Students - % Completing at Least One Advanced Placement or Concurrent Credit Course

2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
77%	67%	56%	45%	42%

Section 4: New Goals

Select performance goals for the period of time requested for renewal that are related to the specific mission of the charter.

SMART Goal
Each year, a majority of eStem schools will meet or exceed a score of 80.00 on the state determined Value Added Growth measure used in annual ESSA calculations.
By 2028, students who have attended eStem schools for at least grades 9 through 11 will exceed state (Composite) performance on the 11th Grade state-mandated ACT assessment by at least 0.5 points.
By 2033, at least 90% of students who graduate from eStem High School each year will be accepted to at least one four-year or two-year institution of higher education.
By 2033, the percentage of eStem High graduates who have attended eStem schools for at least grades 9-12 and who actually enroll in a four-year or two-year institution of higher education will meet or exceed the state average for enrollment.
By 2036, at least 70% of students who have attended eStem schools for two or more years will meet or exceed national student growth norms in reading and/or mathematics on NWEA assessments. This goal will be assessed by examining fall to spring growth annually at 2nd, 5th, and 8th grades.

Section 5: Waivers

Waiver #1	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Alternative Learning Environment	A.C.A §§ 6-15-1005(b)(5) A.C.A §§ 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i) A.C.A §§ 6-48-101 et seq. DESE Rule - Student Special Needs Funding	Continue Waiver
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>eStem Public Charter School has strived to promote student success at varying levels through differentiated instruction, opportunities in each classroom for small group and one-on-one learning, and through tiered intervention programs. Our methods of instruction are very hands-on and at appropriate levels. We believe that our process offsets many student’s struggles with classroom behavior, which reduces our need for alternative learning education programs. Should a student require services beyond what we can provide, we will seek the resources necessary to give this student the level of support needed to be successful.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>No</p>		

Waiver #2	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Arkansas History	1-A.1.2.8 A.C.A §§ 6-16-124	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver so that it could incorporate Arkansas History into an integrated social studies curriculum. This integration allows us the opportunity to expose our students to a wider variety of topics that wouldn't be explored if we dedicate courses solely for Arkansas History. By integrating Arkansas History content into other subject courses, we are able to enhance student learning opportunities across the curriculum.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #3	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Board of Directors	A.C.A §§ 6-13-619(d) A.C.A §§ 6-13-630 A.C.A §§ 6-14-101 et seq. A.C.A §§ 6-13-608 A.C.A §§ 6-13-619(c) A.C.A §§ 6-13-616 A.C.A §§ 6-13-634 A.C.A §§ 6-13-611	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested a waiver in these areas to allow our board the opportunity to fully govern and perform their duties while allowing the flexibility to do so. Many of the statutes listed above relating to board size, qualifications, residency within a particular school district, elections, duties, powers, terms, meeting times and locations, and vacancies are not applicable to open-enrollment public charter schools. We requested a waiver from these statutes to ensure that there is no confusion as to the applicability of these statutes to the governance of our charter. This waiver also allows our board members to have alternative meeting options (conference call, zoom, etc.) in order to be counted for the purpose of a quorum or a vote. These waivers have increased the ability of our board to recruit and retain a diverse group of professionals with experiences in the areas of higher education, school finance, law, and business management. This innovative approach allows our board the ultimate flexibility to function in its oversight role for the schools.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #4	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Class Size & Teaching Load	1-A.5 1-A.6 A.C.A §§ 6-17-812 A.C.A §§ 6-17-812(a)(2) DESE Rule - Class Size and Teaching Load	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested flexibility to have its teachers assigned no more than five (5) students above the permissible student/teacher ratio per grade level and/or teaching load, only on an as-needed basis, to maximize its teaching resources.</p> <p>With increased availability of distance learning capabilities for courses, academic outcomes can be achieved for class sizes and teaching loads that may be larger than the current maximums. While eStem endeavors to maintain smaller class sizes than required by standards at the elementary level, this waiver has provided opportunities for ensuring students have access to effective teachers. At the secondary level, this flexibility has allowed the schools to enroll, as needed, more than the current maximum of 30 students in courses and to exceed the current maximum of 150 students served by an individual teacher in courses for which students may receive credit towards graduation. This has ensured that all students will have access to an enhanced learning experience by removing limitations to participation in a variety of courses.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #5	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Clock Hours - Standard Only	1-A.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Due to the partnership between UA-Little Rock and eStem Public Charter School, we requested this waiver to the above-mentioned standard so that eStem students would have the opportunity to take concurrent and dual enrollment classes on UALR's campus. The college schedule does not match the high school schedule; therefore, the total hours in class may be less than the required 3600 minutes per semester. eStem was not, by this request, asking for a waiver of graduation requirements. The granting of this waiver does not create a dilution of the coursework required to meet all necessary standards and frameworks for graduation. This waiver makes it easier for eStem students to obtain college credits concurrently with high school credits thus enhancing students' abilities to experience additional learning opportunities.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #6	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Comprehensive School Counseling Program & School Counselor	2-C.1 2-C.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested a waiver for a comprehensive school counseling program to ensure maximum flexibility for our school counselors to assist our students in their social/emotional, educational, and career development needs. This flexibility also allows our guidance counseling team to be creative in developing counseling programs to meet the unique needs of our individual students. Despite the waiver, we endeavor to provide counseling support that meets the ratio of no more than 450 students per guidance counselor. In recent years, we have partnered with a number of outside organizations to provide extended mental health support for our students at all grade levels which we believe has allowed us to improve access to support for our students during a challenging time.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #7	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Curriculum - Fine Arts	1-A.1.1.5 1-A.1.2.5 1-A.1.3.6 A.C.A §§ 6-16-130 DESE Rule- Visual Art and Music Instruction	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver solely to provide our schools the flexibility to integrate fine arts into our STEM-focused curriculum. Given this flexibility, eStem PCS can provide its students with the opportunity to engage in cross-curricular learning, which helps students recognize how different discipline areas are interconnected. Integrating fine arts into our curriculum also promotes teacher collaboration and provides creative ways to present content, which enhances student learning. Through implementation of this waiver, we have been able to ensure that all students have access to a variety of fine art experiences throughout their enrollment at eStem.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #8	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Eye and Vision Screening	DESE Rule - Eye and Vision Screening Report	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver since it had formed contractual agreements with health providers in the community to facilitate the execution of these services. Through implementation of this waiver,we continue to ensure all requirements for eye and vision screening are met.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>No</p>		

Waiver #9	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Financial Management - Business Manager	3-A.5 A.C.A §§ 6-15-2301 DESE Rule - Minimum Qualifications for General Business Managers	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
eStem Public Charter School sought exemption from this portion of the Education Code to have flexibility to hire a general business manager that was able to address the needs of our district's business model. By promoting this innovative approach to managing our business office, we have created flexibility within our system while continuing to meet all required business and audit requirements annually.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #10	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Gifted & Talented	2-G.1 A.C.A §§ 6-20-2208(c)(6) A.C.A §§ 6-42-101 et seq. DESE Rule - Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>A waiver for a Gifted and Talented Program was requested by eStem Public Charter School because we believe that our educational system is built on the differentiation of instruction according to subject matter and student ability. While providing enriched curriculum across the board to enhance our students' individual interests and skills, eStem also offers things such as honors and advanced classes, Advanced Placement courses, and concurrent credit courses to enhance rigor and provide accelerated classwork to students proving competence through above average grades and test scores. We believe all students should continue to be provided extensive academic enrichment opportunities which will serve to enhance student achievement.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #11	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Health Services	1-B.3 DESE Rule - Nutrition & Physical Activity Standards	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver since the intent of this act may be met through cooperative and/or contractual agreements with food service and physical health providers in the community. The eStem elementary schools continue to meet all minimum time requirements for recess and physical activity.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #12	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Health & Safety Services	2-E.1 2-E.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>At present, eStem Public Charter School provides a Registered Nurse for each school building with additional health and safety support at our elementary schools which serve larger student populations. eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to allow for flexibility in the event that a particular school's licensed registered nurse is absent for an extended period of time. We will provide in-depth training and resources to the individual(s) who will provide nursing services during this time and we will ensure that they have the necessary certifications to act in this capacity. eStem PCS has contractual agreements with local health agencies so that it can utilize their services in situations that can be handled only by a licensed registered nurse.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #13	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Leased Academic Facilities	6-A.2 A.C.A §§ 6-20-1401 A.C.A §§ 6-20-1407	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School sought exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it required that facilities leased by eStem PCS to conform to the school facility standards defined in the Arkansas School Facility Manual. We ensure that any and all facilities leased for academic purposes shall comply with all state and local health and safety codes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We have committed to transforming historic structures in our community that were originally designed for different purposes into modern school facilities as part of our commitment to enhancing existing neighborhoods through innovative and creative design.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #14	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Library Media Services	2-D.1 A.C.A §§ 6-25-101 et seq.	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School relies on our local library systems for print media and our technology staff is responsible for digital media management. As a STEM school, eStem Public Charter Schools places many technology tools in the hands of our students and teachers to access their own media as directed by educational programs. In the 2020-2021 school year, eStem became a one-to-one district where we became able to provide each student with their own chromebook or laptop. eStem also seeks to put print media directly in the hands of our students; therefore, each elementary and junior high campus allots time during the year for our children to visit our local libraries. Our elementary campuses host book fairs so that our children can access print media for home usage, and our high school students, under the supervision of their teachers, are able to access the Ottenheimer Library on UALR's campus for their print media and other resources.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #15	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Library Media Specialist	4-F.1 4-F.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School originally asked for the flexibility of not having to meet the requirements of employing at least one full-time licensed library media specialist for every school in our district having 300 or more students. We would like to continue utilizing the funds saved through this flexible approach to provide increased technological and media resources to our students. eStem is currently a one-to-one technology district in that each student is provided with access to their own digital media device during the school year. Our classrooms are set up so that each teacher is the media specialist for their own classroom having their own media center. Our teachers provide guidance and support to our students as they use online media to enhance their educational experience.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #16	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Classified Employee Personnel Policies	A.C.A §§ 6-17-2301 et seq. A.C.A §§ 6-17-2302 DESE Rule - Waivers for Substitute Teachers	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School uses a compensation policy for its classified employees, which includes a salary schedule, is comparable to compensation policies offered by our surrounding school districts, and is fair to all of our employees. The district requested this waiver to reserve the right to use our own salary schedule and to make adjustments as conditions change. We believe this innovative approach allows flexibility in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of high quality classified employees and staff.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #17	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Committee on Personnel Policies	A.C.A §§ 6-17-203	Continue
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>eStem values the opinions of all its stakeholders and offers a platform for ideas to be heard and concerns addressed before making any finalized decisions regarding our personnel policies. Input from all teachers and staff is regularly sought through a variety of methods, including formal and informal conversations, focus groups, and surveys. We believe this innovative approach allows our organization the flexibility to be nimble in providing recommendations to our board of directors related to changes in personnel policies.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?</p>		
<p>No</p>		

Waiver #18	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Daily Planning Period	A.C.A §§ 6-17-114	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>It is eStem’s intent to provide our teachers with at least 200 minutes of planning time per week, but the district has requested greater flexibility in scheduling this time than is provided by the code. Our master schedules are designed to provide for common planning by grade level (elementary) and subject (secondary) to promote horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum and instructional methods. Common planning time periods can be used for professional learning community development and discussion of ideas/content that will enhance the effectiveness and efficacy of all teachers. We believe this flexible approach to daily planning increases equitable access of effective teachers to all students.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #19	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Employment of Licensed Personnel	A.C.A §§ 6-17-201 et seq. A.C.A §§ 6-17-2403 A.C.A §§ 6-17-301	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter Schools requested this waiver from the specific salary minimum and schedule that was set by the State of Arkansas. Our school district does use a compensation policy, which includes a salary schedule, and it is comparable to compensation policies offered by our surrounding school districts and it is fair to all our employees. Continuing to use our own schedule will ensure that eStem PCS is able to pay our teachers and staff fairly while balancing our budget. Our current starting salary for teachers with a Bachelor level degree is \$40,000 and for teachers with a Master level degree is \$45,000. We believe this flexibility affords us the ability to recruit and retain teachers in order to pursue our goal of providing effective teachers for every classroom.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #20	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Non-Instructional Duties	A.C.A §§ 6-17-117	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver because, on occasion, it may be necessary for our teachers to assist with school-wide activities during their lunch and/or planning time. Our employees are fully aware that these interruptions to their day may exist and our school directors provide advanced notice regarding these events so that their teachers can plan accordingly. The nature of our schools require that all staff work together, especially when an event or activity involves the entire student body. Additionally, our facility limitations due to being located in the downtown business district, may require us to assign teachers to assist with non-instructional duties such as providing supervision for inside activities on days when outside activities are limited due to weather or other conditions. This waiver enhances student learning opportunities by ensuring appropriate guidance and supervision is available at all times to limit interruptions during the school day.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #21	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Public School Employees' Fair Hearing Act	A.C.A §§ 6-17-1701 et seq.	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Since a school charter may be revoked by the state for non-performance at any time, extending that same right to charter schools ensures we have the ability to dismiss employees who are not providing for the academic progress of our students. If an employee's actions in any way diminishes student learning opportunities and negatively impacts student achievement, the district should be able to take corrective action, up to and including termination, at the appropriate time. Implementing this waiver provides our school leaders with the opportunity to continually evaluate performance and ensure all students have access to effective teachers. All employees will continue to be afforded due process rights when consideration of dismissal/termination as a disciplinary action.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #22	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Teacher Fair Dismissal Act	A.C.A §§ 6-17-1501 et seq.	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to enable us to establish an “at-will” employment system for all of our staff members (both instructional and non-instructional). With this waiver, we can make prompt personnel decisions, if ever necessary, and immediately address performance issues and/or concerns that negatively impact the operation of our schools and/or our district. All employees will continue to be afforded due process rights when consideration of dismissal/termination as a disciplinary action.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #23	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Physical Education	A.C.A §§ 6-16-132 1-A.1.1.6 1-A.1.2.6	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
eStem Public Charter School requested the above waiver to have flexibility regarding how physical education is incorporated into our curriculum. All students have access to physical education instruction, and the flexibility provided by this waiver ensures time is available for additional enhanced student learning activities and experiences.		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #24	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Principal	4-C.1 4-C.2 A.C.A §§ 6-17-302	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School has hired Academic Directors that manage the day-to-day instructional and administrative decisions and perform academic officer duties for each school. These individuals are responsible for developing the culture of the school and establishing strong connections with all district stakeholders (students, parents, staff, and community). We requested a waiver to allow for the flexibility needed to hire individuals that we know can best serve our schools. If an unlicensed candidate is selected, we make every effort to encourage and provide resources so that this candidate can attain building level administrator endorsement. We believe this innovative approach ensures increases the pool of acceptable candidates for consideration for leadership positions in our schools.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #25	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Professional Development	4-G.1	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School continues to offer opportunities for professional development for all teachers and staff that exceed the minimum number of hours required by state statute. This year’s school calendar includes twelve work days that can be devoted to professional development activities. We requested this waiver to ensure our school directors have the authority to make final decisions regarding whether or not their staff member(s) could attend external professional development sessions. Our eStem directors and their leadership teams have developed carefully planned professional development calendars that are extensive in nature and align with the needs and goals of their schools. At times, the director may decide that attendance to an external professional development session would be most beneficial for his or her teachers and/or staff, and attendance at such sessions will be the ultimate authority of the school director. Providing professional development primarily through internal training sessions should contribute to an increased access to effective teachers in each classroom.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #26	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Report Cards	A.C.A §§ 6-15-902 DESE Rule - Uniform Grading Scales for Public Secondary Schools and for Optional Use in Public Elementary Schools	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to allow flexibility in how our elementary schools measure achievement in their lower level grades. eStem PCS will continue to grade all high school and junior high school students using the uniform grading scale for public secondary schools. For our elementary schools, this uniform grading scale has traditionally been used in grades 2 - 6. Achievement levels for our kindergarten and 1st grade students are assessed quarterly using a skills/readiness checklist which we believe enhances student learning opportunities by providing awareness of targeted skill development levels for use by students, parents, and teachers.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #27	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Salaries and Compensation	A.C.A §§ 6-17-807 A.C.A §§ 6-17-902 A.C.A §§ 6-17-908 A.C.A §§ 6-17-919 DESE Rule - School District Requirements for Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to District Websites	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School sought a waiver regarding the above mentioned statutes and rules so that our Board of Directors could adopt personnel policies, including, but not limited to, salary schedules, fringe benefits, other compensation issues, annual school calendar, including work days and holidays, termination or suspension, reduction in force, and assignments. eStem Public Charter School endeavors to provide compensation that is competitive with local public school districts. We reserve the right to determine a specific salary by taking into account a teacher’s years of applicable work experience, current salary, skill, education, and other qualifications. eStem Public Charter School also sought exemption from this portion of the education code to the extent that it requires insurance or other fringe benefits to be approved by a majority of the teachers in the school district. Instead, the provisions of insurance or other fringe benefits are considered and provided pursuant to action by our Board of Directors. We believe this waiver supports our efforts to provide equitable access to effective teachers in all our schools and classrooms.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #28	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Calendar	A.C.A §§ 6-10-106	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School develops a school calendar each year where we operate on both an extended day and an extended school year to increase instructional time for our students. We believe this additional instructional time is necessary to improve student achievement outcomes as it allows more flexibility and opportunities during the school day and the school year to provide students with enrichment and/or intervention programs. We believe these experiences enhance our students' overall well-being and academic success.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #29	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Counselor	4-E.1 4-E.2	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested a waiver to allow for the flexibility needed to hire individuals that we know can best serve our schools. If an unlicensed candidate is selected, we will make every effort to encourage and provide resources so that this candidate can attain his or her school counseling licensure or successfully complete an ALP. All counselors will continue to be evaluated annually and are required to complete all mandatory professional development. At present, all eStem schools are staffed by licensed counselors that fall within the guidelines for counselor:student ratios. Additionally, this flexibility provides for enhanced support for our students through partnerships with a variety of mental health provider organizations who work directly with students on each of our school campuses.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #30	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Student Discipline Procedures	DESE Rule - Guidelines for the Development, Review and Revision of School District Student Discipline and School Safety Policies	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to allow our schools the flexibility to adopt our own student discipline policies based on the student demographic in each building. We have created policies that comply with all state and federal laws, but our main goal was/is to seek processes for our schools that will best serve our students. We have sought to use the most progressive discipline management techniques such as restorative justice, low-profile intervention, active monitoring, and modeling whenever appropriate. Students are most successful when they are in the classroom, so we use the flexibility provided by this waiver to explore disciplinary actions that make classroom retention our number one priority. Major behavioral infractions are handled on a case by case basis and our district embraces the autonomy to make decisions that are best for both the students and our schools. By keeping students in school/class, we are enhancing student learning opportunities and providing ongoing access to effective teachers.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #31	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Superintendent	4-B.1 4-B.2 A.C.A §§ 6-13-109 A.C.A §§ 6-17-427 DESE Rule - Superintendent Mentoring Program	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver so that our School Board would have the discretion to hire the best leader for our district. Our priority is hiring a superintendent whose mission and vision align with those of the Board and our school stakeholders. This creates a positive culture and fosters a strong sense of community, which increases the overall happiness and productivity of our support staff, teachers, and students. Other school administrators may be hired or contracted as necessary and training will be provided to supplement the superintendent mentoring program. eStem also requested this waiver to indicate that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of eStem serves in the capacity of School Superintendent; there is no named “school superintendent” position within the eStem structure. The CEO serves “at will” at the discretion of the eStem Board of Directors. This flexibility promotes innovative school practices within our school system by allowing the Board to engage in a flexible process in the selection, support, and retention of a leader.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #32	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Teacher Licensure	4-D.1 A.C.A §§ 6-15-1004 A.C.A §§ 6-17-309 A.C.A §§ 6-17-401 A.C.A §§ 6-17-418 DESE Rule - Educator Licensure DESE Rule - Parental Notification of an Assignment of a Non-Licensed Teacher to Teach a Class for More than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days	Continue
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to provide our school directors with the flexibility and autonomy needed to hire qualified individuals who are best suited to implement our vision and can best meet each school's specific needs. In some of the areas that we teach, our instructors may not carry a valid Arkansas teaching license, but we are confident that their knowledge and content expertise tremendously enhances student learning. We meet all Background Check requirements for classroom teachers and do not hire anyone who has had a teaching license revoked or who cannot pass the mandatory background check. All of our teachers continue to be evaluated under the state-approved system. All teachers are also required to complete mandatory professional development. eStem Public Charter School requested this waiver to have the flexibility to hire/ promote classroom teachers where we see fit so that we can recruit, promote, and retain the most talented staff possible. We have developed a competitive but flexible compensation schedule and will continue to adhere to our district's non-discrimination compensation policy as well as all relevant laws.</p>		
If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?		
No		

Waiver #33	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Digital Learning Program Attendance Class Size/Teaching Load Six Hour Instructional Day Clock Hours Recess	6-18-213(a)(2) 1-A.5 1-A.6 DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load 6-17-812 6-17-812(a)(2) 1-A.4.2 6-16-102 6-10-126 1-A.2 1-A.4.3 6-16-102(a)(5) DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards and Body Mass Index Section 7.11	Continue

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

eStem Public Charter School requested the above series of waivers so that we could develop a digital learning program for students who requested this alternative instructional pathway during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2022-2023 school year, we are no longer offering extensive fully-virtual learning options to students; however, there are a limited number of students for whom the ability to attend school in-person may be compromised for a period of time due to health concerns. While we believe our best results for students are

obtained when students attend classes on-site at our schools daily, we believe a continuation of this set of waivers, only for students attending school virtually, will allow us to continue to provide innovative teaching and learning conditions to meet the individual needs of our students.

If the waiver is continued, will the service be provided in an alternate way?

No

Section 6:

Provide information on new waivers that are being requested.

No new waivers are being requested at this time.

Waiver Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rationale

Section 7: Amendment Requests

List any amendment requests and provide a rationale for each (i.e., changes to grade levels, enrollment cap, location, addition of campus)

No amendments are being requested at this time.

	Topic	Rationale

Section 8: Desegregation Analysis

Describe the impact, both current and potential, of the public charter school on the efforts of affected public school district(s) to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

eStem Public Charter Schools Desegregation Analysis

eStem Public Charter Schools (eStem) is seeking the renewal of its open-enrollment charter from the State's charter authorizer. eStem is located within the boundaries of the Little Rock School District and, as an open-enrollment public charter school unconfined by district boundaries, expects to continue to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Little Rock (LRSD), North Little Rock (NLRSD), Pulaski County (PCSSD) and Jacksonville-North Pulaski (JNPSD) School Districts.

I. The Status of Pulaski County Desegregation Litigation

eStem is providing this desegregation analysis in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 to review the potential impact that its charter renewal application would have upon the efforts of all four (4) of the Pulaski County school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, eStem has substantiated that the LRSD and the NLRSD have been declared unitary in all respects of their school operations. The Pulaski County desegregation litigation was first filed in 1982. *Little Rock School District, et al v. Pulaski County Special School District, et al.*, Case No. 4:82:cv-00866-DPM. In 1989, the parties entered into a settlement agreement (the "1989 Settlement Agreement") under which the Arkansas Department of Education, the then-three (3) Pulaski County school districts, and the intervenors agreed to the terms of state funding for desegregation obligations.

LRSD successfully completed its desegregation efforts in 2007 and was declared fully unitary by the federal court in 2007. *Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District*, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed February 23, 2007. In 2010, LRSD filed a motion to enforce the 1989 Settlement Agreement. The motion contended that operation of open-enrollment public charter schools within Pulaski County interfered with the "M-M Stipulation" and the "Magnet Stipulation." On January 17, 2013, Judge D.P. Marshall Jr. denied LRSD's motion, stating:

"The cumulative effect of open enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County on

the stipulation magnet schools and M-to-M transfers has not, as a matter of law, substantially defeated the relevant purposes of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, the magnet stipulation, or the M-to-M stipulation.”

Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed January 17, 2013. LRSD appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

One (1) year later, on January 13, 2014, Judge Marshall approved a Settlement Agreement that included a provision stipulating to the voluntary dismissal with prejudice of LRSD’s pending appeal concerning the charter school issues. In light of LRSD’s unitary status and the parties’ 2014 Settlement Agreement, eStem’s requested charter renewal cannot interfere with the purposes of the Pulaski County desegregation litigation, which has been fully concluded as to LRSD. After the dismissal and the settlement agreement, the case was completely concluded for all purposes as to LRSD, and the federal court terminated all jurisdiction in the matter. Because of that, there is no possibility that eStem’s requested charter renewal could impact LRSD’s unitary status. To be clear, eStem’s charter renewal application cannot impact LRSD’s unitary status because 1) there is no case in which LRSD’s unitary status could be an issue; 2) LRSD made a claim regarding operation of open-enrollment charter schools in federal court in 2010 and lost it; and 3) as a consequence of the 2014 Settlement Agreement, the LRSD released any claims it had concerning the charter school issues. On January 30, 2014, the Court also approved a stipulation among the parties that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Assignment of Students and Advanced Placement, Gifted and Talented and Honors Programs. Based on the stipulation, the Court released PCSSD from supervision and monitoring in these areas. Thus, as of January 30, 2014, LRSD, NLRSD and PCSSD are unitary in the area of student assignments. On April 4, 2014, the court found that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Special Education and Scholarships. Subsequently, PCSSD was also found to be unitary in the areas of Staff and Monitoring. Pursuant to Judge Marshall’s order on May 6, 2021, both PCSSD and JNPSD are unitary in all areas except School Facilities.

Upon review, eStem believes that its request to obtain the renewal of its open-enrollment public charter shall have no negative effects on the efforts of the PCSSD and JNPSD to attain unitary status.

II. Data

According to last year's third-quarter Average Daily Membership enrollment figures as maintained by the DESE Data Center, LRSD had a student population of 20,518 students, of which 59.94% were Black/African- American; 19.57% were White, and 16.02% were Hispanic. NLRSD's student population was 7,640 students, of which 57.19% were Black/African-American; 25.75% were White, and 11.45% were Hispanic. PCSSD's student population was 11,227 students, of which 44.37% were Black/African- American; 38.61% were White, and 10.17% were Hispanic. JNPSD's student population was 3,841 students, of which 54.81% were Black/African-American; 33.85% were White, and 7.54% were Hispanic. eStem's student population was 3,055 students, of which 63.79% were Black/African-American; 19.56% were White, and 9.34% were Hispanic.

Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that eStem's continued operation will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. As explained in more detail above, eStem's careful review of the relevant statutes and court orders affecting the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, and JNPSD and their student populations, and its own student population, shows that such negative impact is not present here.

III. Conclusion

eStem submits that upon the basis of its review, neither any existing federal desegregation order affecting the PCSSD, LRSD, NLRSD, and JNPSD, nor the 1989 Settlement Agreement prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from granting its renewal application to continue operating an open-enrollment public charter school within the geographic boundaries of the LRSD.

Section 9: Disclosures

Provide the names and contact information for each board member and administrator.

List Board Members and Administrators Name, Contact, and Title	Provide any Relationship to Another Board Member or Administrator
Jess Askew III, CMO Board President jess.askew@kutakrock.com	None
Vernard Henley, Jr., School Board President vwhenley@ualr.edu	None
William Dillard III, Board Member dillawt@dillards.com	None
Melissa B. Walsh, Board Member walsh2@gmail.com	None
John Bacon, Chief Executive Officer john.bacon@estemschools.org	None
Johnecia Howard, Chief Operating Officer johnecia.howard@estemschools.org	None

<p>Angela Miller, Chief Financial Officer angela.miller@estemschools.org</p>	None
<p>Maurice Guest, Director - eStem High School maurice.guest@estemschools.org</p>	None
<p>ShaVonya Berry, Director - eStem East Village Junior High School shavonya.berry@estemschools.org</p>	None
<p>Melissa Gray, Director - eStem Junior High School melissa.gray@estemschools.org</p>	None
<p>Stephanie Franklin, Director - eStem East Village Elementary School stephanie.franklin@estemschools.org</p>	None
<p>Melissa Hurst-Bravo, Director - eStem Elementary School melissa.hurst@estemschools.org</p>	None