



MARVELL-ELAINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1870
Marvell, AR 72366
870.829.2101

September 29, 2021

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

Marvell-Elaine School District respectfully requests to petition for an Act 1240 District Waiver affecting the class size for the 2021-2022 school year.

Please find included (1) a completed application, (2) a signed copy of the resolution adopted by the school district's board of directors authorizing the district to request the waiver; and (3) evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families.

The district respectfully requests the consideration of our petition for an Act 1240 District Waiver.
Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Denetra Williams, Interim Superintendent
Marvell-Elaine School District
dwilliams@mesdl.org
870.829.2053 office
870.995.1833 cell



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Act 1240 District Waiver Request

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:	870.829.2053
Date Received by DESE:	

The following documents must be submitted with the waiver request:

- 1. Board resolution approving the waiver request**
- 2. Evidence of stakeholder involvement, including teachers and student families**

Waiver Request #1

Topic:	Division's Rules Governing Class Size
Standards/Statutes/Rules:	AR DESE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of AR Public Schools and School Districts – 1-A.5 DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load (Section 3.00) Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-812
Duration Requested:	2021-2022 School Year (1 year)
Name of Open-Enrollment Charter Holding the Waiver	KIPP Delta College Preparatory School – Helena West Helena
Schools, Grades or Classes the Wavier Will Apply To	Marvell-Elaine Elementary School Kindergarten 3 rd Grade

- 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 Elementary has one class per grade level in the kindergarten through fifth grade (6 classrooms, 6 teachers). There are 23 students enrolled in kindergarten and 26 students enrolled in third grade. The enrollment numbers are over the threshold of standards for class size teaching ratio.

According to DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load the standard states:

3.01.1 For Kindergarten (K), there shall be no more than twenty (20) students per teacher in any classroom. However, the kindergarten class maximum may be no more than twenty-two (22) with a one half-time instructional aide being employed for those classes.

3.01.2 For Grades One through Three (1-3), the average student/teacher ratio in a school district shall be no more than twenty-three (23) students per teacher in a classroom. There shall be no more than twenty-five (25) students per teacher in any classroom.

After evaluating student data and available options, the best accommodation to provide all students with on grade level content and grade level instruction is to request a class size waiver. At this time, the students would benefit most through use of this waiver and allow the district to meet the required standards.

The elementary employs three highly qualified classified staff members (2 Reach Associates and 1 instructional paraprofessionals). These individuals provide student support in each of the classrooms. In order to provide immediate support for the students in the classrooms for which the waiver is being requested, a full-time Reach Associate will be placed in both of the classrooms.

Because of the licensed teacher shortage, the district struggles to hire certified teachers. The district has a retention and recruitment plan in place that provides a high priority bonus and other incentives to recruit high quality, licensed teachers. Even with these measures in place, the teacher applicant pool is sparse. The district will advertise for highly qualified Reach Associates or instructional paraprofessionals to provide additional support for the remaining classrooms in the absence of the two Reach Associates that are being utilized in the kindergarten and third classrooms.

The district will re-evaluate the current enrollment and projected enrollment numbers at semester to determine the need to advertise for an elementary classroom teacher.

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

There will be a Reach Associate in each of the classrooms to provide additional supports to the students and teacher. All of the classified staff members have completed the Science of Reading (SoR) Pathway D: ArkansasIDEAS Science of Reading Learning Path. The kindergarten Reach Associate has completed SoR Pathway A: K-2 R.I.S.E. Academy. The third grade Reach Associate is enrolled in SoR Pathway C: 3-6 R.I.S.E. and the last session is scheduled for March 30, 2022.

This waiver will provide the students the opportunity to remain in a classroom with a teacher and paraprofessional that:

- is trained or currently being trained in the SoR
- has completed the professional learning for approved SoR curriculum programs (Heggerty, Foundations, Wit and Wisdom, Just Words)
- has and is participating in ongoing training and coaching from an ADE/DESE R.I.S.E. Specialist
- has an established relationship with the students

The school's PLCs are collaboratively working together to identify and implement strategies and practices which promote student achievement. In addition to this collaborative process, the teachers provide support for each other. Through a National Institute of Excellence in Teaching (NIET), the school and district participate in professional learning exercises and receive additional support.

The teachers also receive weekly on-site literacy support from an ADE/DESE R.I.S.E. Specialist, GRESC Literacy Specialist. The district receives direct support from the ADE/DESE Office of Coordinated Supports Services.

A social worker and behavior specialist on-site can provide additional support to the students and teachers.

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

During this process, the teachers will receive and participate in individualized professional learning experiences, analyze student data, and engage in reflection. District level and building level administration will consistently observe the classroom and students. DESE RISE Specialist and GRESC Literacy Specialists will provide support and feedback regarding adjustments or necessary changes to meet the needs of all students and teachers. The district will monitor enrollment data and student assessment data to make necessary decisions. At semester the district will seek support regarding projected enrollment and the need for an additional teacher.

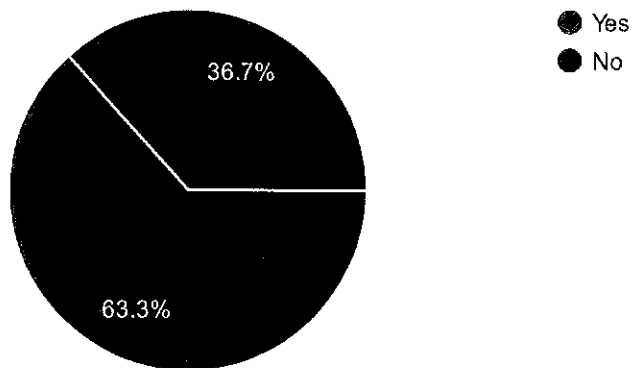
Act 1240 Waiver-Class Size

49 responses

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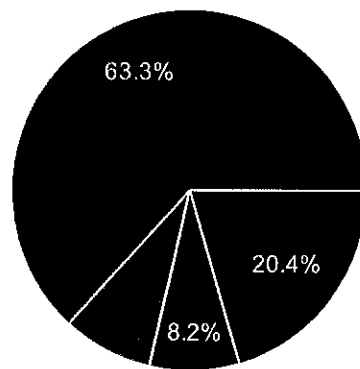
Do you have a child in the MESD?

49 responses



What are some strengths of MEES?

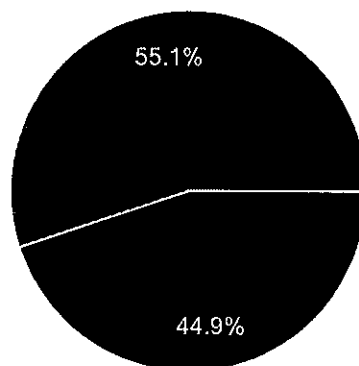
49 responses



- Caring/Committed Staff
- The teachers knows where the students are academically.
- The teacher plans and provides engaging lessons
- All the above

As a stakeholder what is the most important to you?

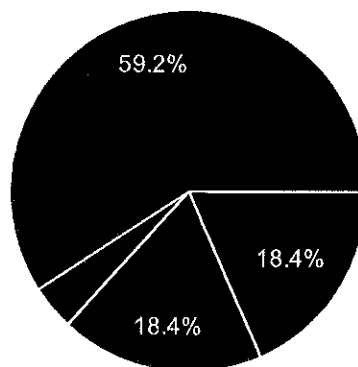
49 responses



- Students receiving a quality education.
- Students being promoted to the next grade.
- Students being supervised.
- All the above.

Why would the school apply for a class size waiver?

49 responses



- Teacher shortage
- To comply with the standards
- Enrollment increase
- All the above

What are your concerns if the school receives a class size waiver?

49 responses

None

none

N/A

None at the moment.

Providing a quality education for the students of the district.

How often will the district have to re-apply for this voucher?

I do not have enough information to voice my concerns.

Some class sizes are too large. The academic ability of the students or lack therefore should warrant more bodies inside the classroom to help with intervention.

finding a teacher

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What are your concerns if the school receives a class size waiver?

None at the moment.

Providing a quality education for the students of the district.

How often will the district have to re-apply for this voucher?

I do not have enough information to voice my concerns.

Some class sizes are too large for the teaching ability of the students. When the class size is too large, the students are less likely to help with intervention.

none

finding a teacher

Behavioral issues as students are not accustomed to being in a larger class.

My concern is that teachers are hired.

N/A

None

No concerns at this moment.

safety reasons

I have no concerns

Small classroom space and teachers being overwhelmed

None

none

there are too many students in one class. Also, covid is still a thing and trying to keep students from spreading it gets harder the more there are in one place.

None

None

Even worse behavior of students and even less learning.

The spread of the virus and the number of students that may fall behind for the larger classes.

Assuring that all students are safe and receive a good quality education

That kids are learning

Yes

Need more information

More learning

Children staying safe

None

Students receiving a quality education

I don't know

I'm concerned about increasing class sizes. I really don't think it's a good idea. Knowing that this Covid situation hasn't gotten any better!

I don't know.

Students receive the same attention needed

If they get smaller I have no concerns because my child will get more attention and if they get larger I'm concerned about covid

N/A

Classroom having too many students. During and possibly after the pandemic.

Fair education.

Better education

That our school receive what's needed to improve our school in order to help our children receive a better education!

I don't have a concern

I don't have any concerns at the moment

To keep the school open

Teacher shortage

My concern would be that teachers will become overwhelmed with the larger class size.

needs being met --COVID is mentally draining and has caused social isolation (being as close as possible to the normal people were accustomed to)

Not learning enough

Not going to school on time

due to covid we should want bigger classroom and everyone would be more comfortable during this pandemic



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**Resolution of Approval to Apply for Act 1240 District Waiver Request
Affecting the Class Size & Teaching Load in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-105, 6-17-812, and 25-15-201 et seq.**

WHEREAS, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load Effective: January 1, 2020 state

3.00 CLASS SIZE

3.01 Subject to any exceptions in Section 3.02, each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall comply with the following class sizes:

3.01.1 For Kindergarten (K), there shall be no more than twenty (20) students per teacher in any classroom. However, the kindergarten class maximum may be no more than twenty-two (22) with a one half-time instructional aide being employed for those classes.

3.01.2 For Grades One through Three (1-3), the average student/teacher ratio in a school district shall be no more than twenty-three (23) students per teacher in a classroom. There shall be no more than twenty-five (25) students per teacher in any classroom.

WHEREAS, a teacher shall not exceed the maximum class size permitted under the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts.

WHEREAS, the current enrollment in Kindergarten is twenty-three (23) students and in Grade Three (3) is twenty-six (26) students.

Now, Therefore, Let It Be Resolved By the District Board of Directors, That:

1. The District wishes to petition the Arkansas State Board of Education to grant an Act 1240 Waiver for Class Size in Kindergarten and Grade Three (3).
2. The Marvell-Elaine Board of Directors voted to approve this Resolution on September 28, 2021, during an open, specially called meeting and further authorized the Interim Superintendent to take such actions necessary to submit a copy of this Resolution with an Act 1240 Waiver Request to increase the class in Marvell-Elaine Elementary's Kindergarten and Grade (3) classrooms.

Board President Clyde Williams

Board Secretary Pamela Holder

Member Justin Cox

Member Mark English

Member Larry Prowell

Clyde Williams
Pamela Holder
Justin Cox
Mark English