



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
NINTH FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER  
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

**CANDICE MCQUEEN**  
COMMISSIONER

Thomas Beazley  
Executive Director  
Promise Academy Charter School  
Via email: [tbeazley@promiseacademy.com](mailto:tbeazley@promiseacademy.com)

February 6, 2015

RE: Request to waive T.C.A. 49-1-617

Dear Mr. Beazley:

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-105, I hereby waive the application of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-617 to Promise Academy Charter School. Waiving this statute allows Promise Academy to award final semester grades in grades 3 through 8 that are calculated without students' TCAP scores in mathematics, reading/language arts, science and social studies.

This waiver is granted with the understanding—verified by your request (attached)—that Promise Academy continues to administer the TCAP to students and provide results and other relevant information to parents in a timely manner. T.C.A. § 49-13-105 specifically does not allow me to waive statutory or regulatory requirements related to “federal and state student assessment and accountability.”

This waiver is, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 0520-14-02-.04, applicable for just one year. Please resubmit this waiver request during the 2015-16 school year, if you wish to have the statute waived again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candice McQueen".

Candice McQueen  
Commissioner

Attachment



**Promise Academy respectfully requests a waiver for state statute T.C.A. 49-1-617 requires “each local board of education [to] develop a policy” making TCAP scores count for something between 15 and 25% of a student’s spring semester final grade in math, RLA, science & SS.**

### **Promise Academy Mission and Goals from Charter Renewal Application**

- Our central and only work is to teach and inspire the mind, body, and spirit of our children so that they can succeed in any academic or cultural setting.
- Promise Academy is committed to preparing children to excel in the nation’s most rigorous schools. This is our commitment to the MIND. We believe that physical well-being contributes to academic success and is essential to children’s development and happiness throughout life. This is our commitment to the BODY. We accept the responsibility to nurture our children’s will to succeed, to give them a sense of purpose and boundless possibilities and to instill in them the confidence and drive to participate fully in our commerce and culture. This is our commitment to the SPIRIT.

### **Background**

Promise Academy administers the state required TCAP each spring to third, fourth and fifth graders. The scores are counted towards the school’s AMO goals and parents are notified the following fall when results are finalized and published.

### **Documentation on Request**

Promise Academy has been in existence since 2005 and has a proven track record of success. The school continues its initiatives to raise student achievement scores. The most notable is a \$25,000 investment in Achievement Network that assesses students in grades second through fifth four times a year with rigorous tests that are aligned to the Tennessee Common Core Standards and is a predictor of student success on TCAP. While the students know their ANet scores, their target goals, and meet with their teachers to discuss their progress, the faculty and administration do not average these scores into their classroom grades. We believe standardized tests are an important tool in assessing progress but it is a snapshot of a student’s performance and including it in the student’s report card creates undue emphasis

and the possibility of skewing student performance. We understand the need to have students and parents understand the importance of TCAP and will continue to share the results with our families when the results are published.

Therefore, Promise Academy requests a waiver from applying TCAP scores to the final report card averages for our third, fourth and fifth grade students.

We have made a similar request which was approved for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Respectfully submitted.

Thomas A. Beazley  
Executive Director  
January 26, 2015