



**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

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

**CANDICE MCQUEEN**  
COMMISSIONER

**Via Electronic Mail and USPS**

August 22, 2018

Mike Looney, Director of Schools  
Williamson County Schools  
1320 West Main Street, Suite 202  
Franklin, TN 37064-3700

Re: Waiver for a Portion of PC 920 Pursuant to High Performing School Districts Flexibility Act

Dear Director Looney:

I am in receipt of your August 21, 2018 letter requesting a waiver of the local grading system requirement found in T.C.A. §49-6-407(c)(2). This statute requires one quality point to be added to an LEA's local grading system for early postsecondary courses recognized by the state board of education and the department of education. According to your letter, this requirement would increase the local GPAs for industry certification courses in Williamson County Schools, inhibiting the district from complying with its mission statement.

The commissioner is granted authority under T.C.A. §49-1-201(d) to "waive any state board rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the LEA's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission."

With the understanding that the Williamson County Schools will comply with all requirements of the uniform grading policy found in T.C.A. §49-6-407, your waiver request is hereby granted.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candice McQueen" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Candice McQueen  
Commissioner

Mike Looney, Ed.D., Superintendent  
1320 West Main Street, Suite 202  
Franklin, Tennessee 37064-3700  
Phone (615) 472-4000  
Fax (615) 472-5683



August 21, 2018

Hon. Candice McQueen, Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Education  
9th Floor Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Pkwy  
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Request for waiver of a portion of PC 920, being TCA §49-6-407(c)(2), pursuant to the High Performing School Districts Flexibility Act

Dear Commissioner McQueen:


WCS is designated a High Performing School District per TCA §49-2-701 et seq. Through this designation, the Williamson County Board of Education is requesting a waiver of TCA §49-6-407(c)(2), part of PC 920, signed into law to take effect July 1, 2018, that requires one (1) quality point to be added to an LEA's local grading system for early postsecondary courses that include national industry certification, statewide dual credit and dual enrollment. Currently and for a number of years, WCS Board Policy 4.600, Grading Systems and Report Cards, has already provided the following quality point increase to its local GPAs:

**Honors and Industry Certification courses: 0.5 quality point increase**  
**Statewide/Local Dual Credit courses: 0.75 quality point increase**  
**AP & IB courses: 1.0 quality point increase**

The new law would increase local WCS GPAs for industry certification courses from 0.5 to 1.0 quality points and Statewide/Local Dual Credit Courses from 0.75 to 1.0. We have concluded that this required GPA increase will inhibit WCS' ability to meet its goals and to comply with its mission statement.

WCS' Vision Statement is to "provide a supportive environment where students are challenged to pursue excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts." WCS' current differentiation of quality points in local GPAs encourages that excellence in academics, and we have concluded that an increase of Industry Certification and Dual Credit courses to equal AP and IB will discourage some WCS students from challenging themselves in AP courses. In our community where many students are capable of growing with AP courses and where many students push themselves for the highest possible GPA, there must be more value placed on AP and IB courses to challenge our students to take those courses.

Sincerely,



Mike Looney, Ed.D.

Superintendent  
Williamson County Schools