



BILL LEE
GOVERNOR

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

PENNY SCHWINN
COMMISSIONER

Via Electronic Mail & USPS

August 21, 2019

Bob Thomas, Director of Schools
Knox County Schools
912 South Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37901

Re: Waiver for Career and Technical Education Class Size

Dear Director Thomas:

I am in receipt of your July 22, 2019 letter requesting a waiver of the class size average for Career and Technical Education classes found in T.C.A. §49-1-104 for Knox County Schools for the 2019-2020 school year.

The commissioner's waiver authority under T.C.A. §49-1-201(d) is limited by T.C.A. §49-1-104(a), which states that "neither the commissioner nor the state board of education shall grant waivers from the maximum class sizes established in this section."

With the understanding that none of the Career and Technical Education classes in Knox County Schools will exceed 25, the maximum number of students per class specified in the above referenced law, your request for a waiver of the class size average is granted for the 2019-2020 school year.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Schwinn", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr. Penny Schwinn
Commissioner

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
ANDREW JOHNSON BUILDING

Bob Thomas, Superintendent



July 22, 2019

Commissioner Penny Schwinn
Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Commissioner Schwinn,

I am writing to request a waiver related to the average class size for CTE courses. According to State Board of Education policy (Chapter 0520-01-03-.03), the average class size in CTE courses should not exceed 20 students with a maximum of 25 students per class. The Knox County Schools are asking to increase the average class size from 20 to 25, with no individual CTE classes exceeding the stated maximum of 25 students. We requested and received this waiver for the past two consecutive school years as a critical support to several of our existing CTE programs.

Allowing our CTE classes to make even small increases in the number of students served strengthens individual schools' commitments to these programs. This is especially true in lean economic times when the district and principals are faced with difficult decisions related to staffing and programming. These programs are also becoming more crucial to ensuring that all students are afforded opportunities to bank early postsecondary credits during their high school years and to demonstrate readiness for learning or working at the next level.

As we make this request, we also remain cognizant that class enrollments and class size averages in CTE must reflect the need for safety in classrooms. Maintaining a safe learning environment will be a primary factor in making decisions to increase or decrease class enrollment, especially in classes that require the use of tools and other equipment in a lab setting.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Thomas".

Bob Thomas
Superintendent
Knox County Schools

