



BILL LEE
GOVERNOR

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

LIZZETTE REYNOLDS
COMMISSIONER

Via Electronic Mail

September 29, 2026

Joe Barnett, Director of Schools
Athens City Schools
943 Crestway Drive
Athens, TN 37303

Dear Director Barnett:

I am in receipt of your waiver request for Summer Learning Camp Funds Carryover for High-Dosage, Low-Ratio Tutoring pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(2). The request seeks approval to use remaining 2026 Summer Programming funds to provide high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring services in literacy and/or mathematics to additional students identified as at risk of performing below grade level, after ensuring all students required to be served under T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 have been served.

After review of the information submitted, and with the understanding that Athens City Schools will continue to prioritize all students required to receive tutoring services under T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, your request for a waiver of the limitation contained in T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(2) is hereby granted for the 2026-27 school year.

If applicable and specifically requested in the waiver application, approval also extends to the waiver of the required number of weeks (12) for the fall semester as outlined in the assurances for the 2026 Summer Programming Extension Grant Application.

Please do not hesitate to contact the department if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lizzette Reynolds" followed by a stylized "CR" monogram.

Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner



Summer Learning Camp Funds Carryover for High-Dosage, Low-Ratio Tutoring Waiver Request Application

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(2), funding for after-school learning mini-camps, learning loss bridge camps, and summer learning camps must first be used for the purposes outlined in T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(1). Any remaining funds may be used by LEAs or public charter schools to provide tutoring required by T.C.A. § 49-6-3115. T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 requires tutoring services for students that were retained in grades K-3 and students required to be tutored as part of a promotion pathway in grades 4-5.

This specialized waiver application is to be used by local education agencies (LEAs) to request a waiver of the provision in T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(2) limiting the use of the remaining funds from 2026 Summer Programming to students that were retained in grades K-3 and students required to be tutored as part of a promotion pathway in grades 4-5.

This specialized waiver request is designed to allow the remaining funds from 2026 Summer Programming to be spent on tutoring services for students to provide high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring services in literacy and/or math to additional students at-risk of performing below grade level upon the condition that the LEA has ensured that any students required to be served by T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 have been served first.

In addition, the LEA may request to waive the required number of weeks (12) for the fall semester as outlined in the assurances for the 2026 Summer Programming Extension Grant Application.

To apply for a waiver, email the completed form to Education.Waivers@tn.gov. Following review by the commissioner, the requestor will be notified in writing if the waiver request is approved or denied. Unless otherwise stated, all waivers granted by the commissioner shall be granted for one-year terms.

District Name

Athens City Schools

School Name, if applicable

School Address, if applicable



Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

jbarnett@athensk8.net

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name

Joe Barnett

Director of Schools/Head of School Signature & Date

 9/28/2026

1. ☒ The LEA is requesting a waiver of the provision in T.C.A. § 49-6-1503(c)(2) limiting the use of the remaining funds from 2026 Summer Programming to students that were retained in grades K-3 and students required to be tutored as part of a promotion pathway in grades 4-5.

2. ☒ The LEA is requesting a waiver of the required number of weeks (12) for the fall semester as outlined in the assurances for the 2026 Summer Programming Extension Grant Application.

3. Explanation of how the statutory requirement limits the LEA's ability to meet student needs:
Provide an explanation of why the waiver is needed and how approval of the waiver would support improving academic outcomes for eligible students. Please include a description of how the LEA will prioritize students for high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring including data sources, grade levels, and content areas.

Fall 12-week requirement: The 12-week requirement for fall semester high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring impacts our flexibility in targeting the students and content areas where need is greatest at any given point in the semester. This requirement may force us to either begin tutoring before current data identifies the students who most need it or continue tutoring cycles past the point where they remain the most effective use of staff time and funds, rather than adjusting the length and timing of tutoring blocks to match when students are identified as at-risk and what support they specifically need in reading or math.

A waiver would allow our district to design a tutoring schedule that responds directly to current benchmark results and Mastery View data as they become available, ensuring services are delivered when and where they will have the greatest impact on student outcomes, rather than adhering to a fixed calendar that does not account for when student need is actually identified.

Waiver of the provision in T.C.A. 49-6-1503(c)(2): Limiting remaining 2026 Summer Programming funds to only students retained in K-3 or on a grades 4-5 promotion pathway excludes other students district data identifies as at-risk. Benchmark results from AimsWeb, EL Benchmark, and Mastery View Predictive Assessments across our K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 grade regularly show students below grade level in literacy and/or math who are ineligible for this funding despite comparable need.

This restricts our district's ability to assign resources based on current data rather than eligibility requirements. A waiver would allow remaining funds to serve any student identified as at-risk of performing below grade level once all students required under T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 have already been served.
