



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

March 12, 2026

Mark Florence, Director of Schools
Benton County Schools
197 Briarwood Street
Camden, TN 38320

Dear Director Florence:

I have received your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004 as it pertains to the required 180 days of classroom instruction. Benton County Schools were closed on January 26 and 30, due to the impact of the winter ice storm. You are requesting a waiver for these two days:

Under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004(a)(6), the commissioner has the authority to waive the 180 days for classroom instruction requirement in the event of a natural disaster or serious outbreaks of illness affecting or endangering students or staff. Pursuant to this authority, and because your district has exhausted all stockpile days, the waiver request for January 26 and 30, is hereby granted.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner

General Waiver Request

Local education agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools should review the Local Education Agency and Public Charter School Waiver Guidance posted on the [department's website](#) before submitting this request. The guidance outlines what can and cannot be waived, as well as the information required for commonly requested waivers.

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.

If this is a waiver request for a public charter school, please attach documentation that confirms the public charter school first submitted this waiver to its LEA authorizer and the LEA authorized denied the request.

Benton County Board of Education

Local Education Agency/Public Charter School

School Name, if applicable

School Address, if applicable

mark.florence@bentoncountyschools.org

Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

Mark Florence

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name



3/9/2026

Director of Schools/Head of School Signature & Date



1. Statute(s) or State Board of Education (SBE) rule(s) for which a waiver is being requested.
49-6-300

2. Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request. Please note that the department will not grant waivers beyond one year.
March 10, 2026 - May 15, 2026

3. Explanation of how the statute(s) or SBE rule(s) inhibits or hinders the LEA's/public charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission (attach additional pages if more space is needed).
We are planning on using a Professional Development Stockpile day on May 5, 2026, for the Primary Election. Due to Winter Storm Fern, we have exhausted all our Stockpile days.

Complete numbers 4-10 if requesting a waiver of the 180 instructional day requirement in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004.

4. Dates of the day(s) requesting to be waived.
January 26 & 30, 2026

5. Reason for the request.
 - Natural disaster
 - Serious outbreak of illness affecting or endangering students or staff during a school year

6. Number of stockpile days scheduled for PD for the current school year.
2

7. Number of PD stockpile days that have been utilized at the time the waiver is requested.
2

8. Confirmation that all stockpile days have been exhausted.
 - Yes**, all stockpile days **have** been exhausted.
 - No**, all stockpile days **have not** been exhausted.

9. Number of instructional days that have already been waived by the commissioner during the current school year. 0

10. Explanation of the impact of the event necessitating this request (attach additional pages if more space is needed).
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