



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

July 30, 2026

Kristy Walker, Director of Schools
Bledsoe County Schools
857 Main Street
Pikeville, TN 37368

Dear Director Walker:

I am in receipt of your waiver request of the maximum size average found in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-104 for grades 6-8 CTE/Encore Courses classes in Bledsoe County Schools.

The commissioner's waiver authority under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-201(d) is limited by Tenn. Code Ann. § 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 grades 6-8 CTE/Encore Courses classes in Bledsoe County Schools will exceed the maximum number of students per class specified in the above referenced law, your request for a waiver of the maximum size average is hereby granted the 2026-27 school year.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette
Reynolds_CLB

Digitally signed by
Lizzette Reynolds_CLB
Date: 2026.07.30
12:08:06 -05'00'

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.

Bledsoe County Schools

Local Education Agency/Public Charter School

Bledsoe County Middle School

School Name, if applicable

857 Main St Pikeville, TN 37368

School Address, if applicable

kristywalker@bledsoecountyschools.org

Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

Kristy Walker

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name

Kristy Walker 6-10-26

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.
TCA § 49-1-104(g)(3)
2. Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request. Please note that the department will not grant waivers beyond one year.
For the 2026-2027 School Year
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).

Bledsoe County requests approval or written confirmation of allowable flexibility under TCA § 49-1-104(g)(3) to extend class sizes and averages for grades 6–8 CTE/encore courses (C25600, C25701, C25801, C250707, C250808). The district is experiencing a shortage of certified staff available to teach encore offerings. Without this flexibility, students would have to be assigned during one encore period to supervision by an assistant rather than receiving instruction from a certified teacher.

The district believes the requested flexibility better serves students because it preserves access to certified-teacher-led instruction, maintains a full encore rotation, and avoids creating non-instructional placements for students. The district will not exceed the class size maximum and average applicable to general education classes in grades 7–12, which are average 30 and maximum 35, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the Department.

The district will monitor safety, instructional quality, classroom space, equipment availability, and student needs. For any lab-based, equipment-based, or safety-sensitive CTE course, the district will apply additional local safeguards and will not increase enrollment where doing so would impair student safety or the effectiveness of instruction.

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.
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.
7. Number of PD stockpile days that have been utilized at the time the waiver is requested.
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.
10. Explanation of the impact of the event necessitating this request (attach additional pages if more space is needed).

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