



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

May 9, 2024

Bonnie Patterson, Director of Schools
Cannon County Schools
301 West Main Street
Woodbury, TN 37190

Dear Director Patterson:

I am in receipt of your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004(a)(6) as it pertains to the required 180 days of instruction. Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004(a)(6) only authorizes waivers of the instructional day requirement to be granted in the event of a natural disaster or a serious outbreak of illness affecting or endangering students or staff during a school year.

This provision was added to the law after the catastrophic flooding that occurred across Tennessee in May of 2010. The flooding created a situation where at the very end of the school year local education agencies (LEAs) were unable to address the lost instructional time due to the flooding through the use of stockpile days or by adhering to the Tennessee Department of Education's [Attendance Manual](#) on making up instructional days missed.

The waiver authority granted to the commissioner of education in the law is narrow. Merriam-Webster defines "natural disaster" as a sudden and terrible event in nature (such as a hurricane, tornado, or flood) that usually results in serious damage and many deaths. The waiver authority is only available for events of nature that cause substantial damage or disruption to property or critical infrastructure impacting the community and school operations that are beyond regular inclement weather.

Your request includes information confirming your community suffered substantial damage or disruption to property or critical infrastructure that impacted the community and school operations beyond regular inclement weather. Pursuant to the commissioner's authority under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004(a)(6)(A) to waive instructional days in the event a district experiences a natural disaster, your request is hereby granted.

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner

Cannon County Schools

301 West Main Street

Woodbury, TN 37190

Phone: (629) 201-4801 Fax: (629) 201-4830



From: Bonnie Patterson <bonnie.patterson@ccstn.net>

Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024

To: Commissioner of Education Commissioner.Education@tn.gov

CC: Christy Ballard Christy.Ballard@tn.gov

Subject: Emergency Cannon County Flood and Storm Damage and Water Boil Advisory

Cannon County suffered significant storm and flood damage from the weather event last night and in the early morning of May 9th. Several roads and bridges have been damaged across the county due to road closures. Multiple structures have been damaged in the southern portion of our county. We also suffered damage at Cannon South Elementary School with a tree down on power lines that will require loss of power to the school to clear debris, and several campus sports fields have suffered damage. The Town of Woodbury Water Treatment Facility, which affects city and county water lines, has issued a water boil advisory set to expire at 7 a.m. May 11, 2024. We cannot cook food or have water for our buildings in these areas. Also, we have no water in the northern region of our county due to a water main break. Due to extremely unsafe conditions, we are out of inclement weather days and request a waiver for May 9 and May 10, 2024. TEMA is involved with our situation, and local EMA has conducted water rescues with the assistance of Rutherford County EMS. I have included pictures in this request.

My cell number is 615-904-4053 if further information is needed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Patterson".

Bonnie Patterson

Director Cannon County Schools