



**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**

January 22, 2025

Mark Briscoe, Director of Schools  
Grainger County Schools  
7850 Rutledge Pike  
Rutledge, TN 37861

Dear Director Briscoe:

I have received your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004 as it pertains to the required 180 days of classroom instruction. Grainger County Schools were closed on September 27, 2024, due to the impact of Hurricane Helene. You are requesting a waiver for this day.

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, the waiver request for September 27, 2024, is hereby granted.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds  
Commissioner

# Department of Education Grainger County

P.O. Box 38  
7850 Rutledge Pike  
Rutledge, Tennessee 37861  
Phone 865/828-3611 Fax 865/828-4357  
Mark Briscoe, Director of Schools

January 22, 2025

Lizzette Reynolds, Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Education  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243-0375

Commissioner Reynolds,

During late September, Hurricane Helene negatively impacted the Grainger County School System. The hurricane caused damage to our county causing us to miss one instructional day. The system had to be closed September 27, 2024, due to high winds, heavy rains, and widespread power outages. Although we do stockpile days, we have exhausted those days due to the disaster and are now dealing with missing days due to the snow and ice. We have used all ten stockpiled days for these two events. The other three stockpiled days are for staff development.

Governor Lee issued Executive Order No. 105 on Friday, September 27, 2024, declaring a major disaster and state of emergency. President Biden approved an Emergency Declaration for Tennessee on Saturday, September 28, 2024. During a state of emergency, certain state laws can be suspended to expediate relief efforts in the affected areas.

I am requesting a waiver of the instructional day requirement under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49 -6 - 3004(a) (6) which authorizes the Commissioner of Education to grant a waiver requirement in the event of a natural disaster or a serious outbreak of illness affecting or endangering students or staff during the school year. This waiver request is for the one day used for Hurricane Helene.

Grainger County Schools looks forward to your response to our request. If you need any other information, please contact me at 865-828-3611 or [mbriscoe@gcs123.net](mailto:mbriscoe@gcs123.net). Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,



Mark Briscoe  
Director of Schools