



**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**

February 21, 2025

Mark Briscoe, Director of Schools  
Grainger County Schools  
P.O. Box 38  
Rutledge, TN 37861  
[mbriscoe@gcs123.net](mailto:mbriscoe@gcs123.net)

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 January 10-23, 2025, due to the Level 3-State of Emergency. You are requesting a waiver for January 10, 2025, and January 13-17, 2025.

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 given Grainger County Schools have exhausted all stockpile days, the waiver request for January 10, 2025, and January 13-17, 2025, 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

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 early January, the entire State of Tennessee experienced a severe winter storm negatively impacting the Grainger County School System. Grainger County Schools were closed from January 10<sup>th</sup> through January 23<sup>rd</sup>. When classes resumed on January 24<sup>th</sup>, our school system couldn't even run all our bus routes. Although we do stockpile days, we have exhausted those 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.

At the direction of Governor Bill Lee, TEMA Director Patrick C. Sheehan issued a State of Emergency to provide regulatory relief due to winter weather in Tennessee on Thursday, January 9, 2025. 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 following six days:

**Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>; Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>; Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>;  
Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>; Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>; and Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.**

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@gs123.net](mailto:mbriscoe@gs123.net). Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,



Mark Briscoe  
Director of Schools