



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

September 16, 2026

Michael Garren, Director of Schools
Loudon County Schools
100 River Rd.
Loudon, TN 37774

Dear Director Garren:

I am in receipt of your request of a waiver of the maximum transit time requirements in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-2105 as a result of a persistent shortage of qualified school bus drives and the geographic challenges associated with serving a rural school district. Your request for a waiver of the maximum transit time is granted for the 2026-27 school year upon the condition that no student is in transit for longer than 110 minutes.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette
Reynolds_CLB

Digitally signed by
Lizzette Reynolds_CLB
Date: 2026.09.17
08:24:57 -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.

Loudon Co. Board of Education

Local Education Agency/Public Charter School

Transportation

School Name, if applicable

100 River Rd. Loudon, TN 37774

School Address, if applicable

garrenm@loudoncounty.org

Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

Michael Garren

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name



2/16/26

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 49-6-2105: Maximum time in transit
2. Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request. Please note that the department will not grant waivers beyond one year.
2026-27 SY
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).

While Loudon County Schools supports the purpose of this requirement and its focus on student well-being, compliance with the statute has become increasingly difficult due to a persistent shortage of qualified school bus drivers and the geographic challenges associated with serving a rural school district.

The district's mission is to provide safe, reliable, and equitable transportation services that ensure all eligible students have access to educational opportunities. Due to ongoing staffing shortages, the district has been required to combine routes and maximize available driver resources in order to continue providing transportation to all eligible students. Strict adherence to the time-in-transit requirements would require additional drivers and buses that are currently unavailable despite continued recruitment and retention efforts.

Without a waiver, the district may be forced to eliminate or significantly alter transportation services for some students in order to remain within the statutory time limits. This would hinder the district's ability to provide equitable access to education, particularly for students residing in remote and rural areas of the county. The waiver would allow the district to continue transporting all eligible students safely and efficiently while long-term solutions are pursued to address staffing shortages and improve routing efficiency.

The district remains committed to reducing ride times whenever possible and will continue its efforts to recruit qualified drivers, evaluate route efficiencies, and return all routes to compliance with T.C.A. § 49-6-2105 as staffing levels improve.