



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 29, 2026

Tess Stovall, Director of Schools
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway 8th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Director Stovall:

I am in receipt of your waiver request of T.C.A. § 49-6-104(d)(5) as it relates to voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs that serve at-risk children. You have requested to implement a Montessori curriculum at Libertas School of Memphis within the VPK classrooms.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-201(d) grants the commissioner the authority to “waive any state board rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the LEA’s ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission.” Pursuant to my authority under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-201(d), your waiver request is hereby granted for the 2026-27 school year.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette
Reynolds_CLB

Digitally signed by
Lizzette Reynolds_CLB
Date: 2026.08.05
12:03:29 -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.

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Local Education Agency/Public Charter School

Libertas School of Memphis

School Name, if applicable

School Address, if applicable

Tess.Stovall@tn.gov

Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

Tess Stovall

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tess Stovall'.

5/18/2026

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.
49-6-104(d)(5)
2. Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request. Please note that the department will not grant waivers beyond one year.
One year; if approved and a VPK classroom is allocated, the waiver will be required for the use of the Montessori program
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).

Libertas School of Memphis is an approved Montessori charter school that operates a Pre-K-8 charter school in Memphis. Libertas also has a State Board of Education-approved educator prep program in Montessori. The entire school is built on Montessori, and it would be outside of the school's mission to implement a curriculum outside of the Montessori model. The school's equipment and classrooms are based on the Montessori mode, and all staff receive professional development in the Montessori model.

Currently the TDOE does not allow a Montessori curriculum within VPK classrooms. Earlier in 2026, the TDOE communicated to the Commission that they would consider a waiver to use Montessori in a VPK classroom.

Attached is a cross walk between the Montessori program and the ELD standards.

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).

Libertas School of Memphis is an approved Montessori charter school that operates a Pre-K-8 charter school in Memphis. Libertas also has a State Board of Education-approved educator prep program in Montessori. The entire school is built on Montessori, and it would be outside of the school's mission to implement a curriculum outside of the Montessori model. The school's equipment and classrooms are based on the Montessori mode, and all staff receive professional development in the Montessori model.

Currently the TDOE does not allow a Montessori curriculum within VPK classrooms. Earlier in 2026, the TDOE communicated to the Commission that they would consider a waiver to use Montessori in a VPK classroom.

Attached is a cross walk between the Montessori program and the ELD standards.