



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 5, 2026

Dr. Roderick F. Richmond
Memphis-Shelby County Schools
160 Glenn Rogers Sr. Street
Memphis, TN 38112

Dear Dr. Richmond:

I have received your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-121(d)'s requirement that LEAs approve or deny charter school renewal applications on or before February 1. Memphis-Shelby County Schools were closed from January 26, 2026, to February 3 due to the impact of the winter ice storm. Due to this closure, your January 27th SCBE business meeting was postponed, leaving Memphis-Shelby County Schools unable to approve charter school renewal applications.

Pursuant to the commissioner's waiver authority, upon the condition that SCBE takes action on the applications no later than February 11, 2026, your request for a waiver of the statutory timeline for taking action on the following charter school renewal applications is granted: Freedom Preparatory Academy-Millbranch, Journey East Academy, Memphis STEM Academy, and Power Center Academy Middle-Southeast.

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

Sincerely,

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.

Local Education Agency/Public Charter School

School Name, if applicable

School Address, if applicable

Director of Schools/Head of School Email Address

Director of Schools/Head of School Printed Name

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.
2. Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request. Please note that the department will not grant waivers beyond one year.
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).

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).