



**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**

August 3, 2026

Dr. Heidi Jordan, Director of Schools  
Tennessee Schools for the Deaf  
2725 Island Home Blvd  
Knoxville, TN 37820

Dear Director Jordan:

I have received your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31 as they pertain to the required minimum six and one half hour (6 and ½) hours of daily classroom instruction. Tennessee Schools for the Deaf have requested this waiver due to their unique educational and transportation needs. The Tennessee School for the Deaf Knoxville serves students in a statewide residential program, while the Tennessee School for the Deaf Nashville shares facilities and transportation resources with Tennessee School for the Blind, who also serves students in a statewide residential program. Compliance with the daily instructional time and stockpile day accumulation requirements creates significant transportation challenges for students and families. The requested waiver would allow both schools to maintain the required weekly instructional minutes while supporting student well-being and preserving the ability to accumulate stockpile days for weather-related closures.

Under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-201(d), the commissioner has the authority to waive the requirement of six and one half (6 and ½) hours of minimum daily instruction. Pursuant to this authority and given that Tennessee Schools for the Deaf have requested a waiver of the minimum daily six and one half (6 and ½) hours of instruction in order to maintain required instructional time within constrained transportation needs, with the condition they will follow the below schedules that will provide students with 2,100 minutes of instruction per week, which is the minimum required for instruction and accumulation of stockpile days, the commissioner hereby grants the Tennessee School for the Deaf's request to waive the requirement of six and one half hour (6 and ½) hours of daily instruction.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds  
Commissioner

## Local Education Agency Waiver Request

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-1-201(d), upon application by the local education agency (LEA) for one or more of its schools, the commissioner of education may waive any State Board of Education (SBE) rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the LEA's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission. Waivers may not be granted by the commissioner for regulatory or statutory requirements related to:

- (A) Federal and state civil rights;
- (B) Federal, state and local health and safety;
- (C) Federal and state public records;
- (D) Immunizations;
- (E) Possession of weapons on school grounds;
- (F) Background checks and fingerprinting of personnel;
- (G) Federal and state special education services;
- (H) Student due process;
- (I) Parental rights;
- (J) Federal and state student assessment and accountability;
- (K) Open meetings;
- (L) Educators' due process rights;
- (M) Reductions in teachers' salaries;
- (N) Employee rights, salaries and benefits; and
- (O) Licensure of employees.

LEAs applying for waivers must email this completed form to [LEA.Waivers@tn.gov](mailto:LEA.Waivers@tn.gov). Following review by the commissioner, the LEA 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.

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Local Education Agency

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School Name, if applicable

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School Address, if applicable

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Director of Schools Signature & Date

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Director of Schools Printed Name

List the statute or SBE rule for which a waiver is being requested.

Explanation of how the statute or SBE rule inhibits or hinders the LEA's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission.

Expected duration of the condition necessitating this request.