



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

January 29, 2025

John English, Director of Schools
Unicoi County Schools
100 Nolichucky Avenue
Erwin, TN 37650
englishj@unicoischools.com

Dear Director English:

I have received your waiver request of Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004 as it pertains to the required 180 days of classroom instruction. Unicoi County Schools were closed on September 26-27, 2024, October 7-11, 2024, and October 14-15, 2024, due to the impact of Hurricane Helene. You are requesting a waiver for these nine days.

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, the waiver request for September 26-27, 2024, October 7-11, 2024, and October 14-15, 2024, is hereby granted.

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

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner



Unicoi County Schools
100 Nolichucky Avenue
Erwin, TN 37650
Phone: (423) 743-1600
Fax: (423) 743-1615

Dear Commissioner Lizette Reynolds,

On behalf of Mr. John English, Director of Unicoi County Schools, I am contacting you in hopes of receiving a waiver for the recent inclement weather days on **Tuesday, January 07, 2025 – Wednesday, January 22, 2025.**

Due to the flooding our county experienced during Hurricane Helene, all our stockpile days were originally used to cover the dates our district was closed, and we were granted a waiver for the additional dates missed during that time. We were advised for any future inclement weather days to submit a request for one of our stockpile days to be changed to a waived day.

On the evening January 06th through the early morning hours of January 07th, our county received widespread snowfall and ice accumulation, making our bus routes too treacherous for travel. The decision was reached to close schools on **January 7th.**

On the morning of January 8th, our area received an unpredicted round of “river effect snow”. This system quickly caused layers of ice and snow, which caused dangerous conditions and led to interstate closures. The decision was made to close schools on **January 8th.** Snow continued to fall the remainder of the day on January 8th, which continued to impact our roadways and led to the decision to close schools on **January 9th.**

On January 9th, the entire state was placed under a Winter Weather Warning for Friday, January 10th. Due to the forecasted snowfall, the decision was made to close schools on **January 10th.**

Due to the snowfall received on January 10th – January 11th and the below freezing temperatures, our area did not see an improvement in road conditions until the evening of January 15th. Upon daily evaluation, due to the dangerous road conditions on our mountain bus routes, we had to make the difficult decision to also close our schools on **January 13th, 14th and 15th.**

On January 19th, our area was placed under another Winter Storm Warning where we received additional snow and ice accumulation on January 19th and January 20th. Due to the extremely cold temperatures and below negative wind chills, the ice and snow did not melt, and we experienced icy road conditions on **January 21st and January 22nd** and were forced to close school on those dates.

As previously discussed, when requesting the original waiver, we would like these nine days to be covered by our original stockpile days and **September 26th, 27th and October 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th and 15th** to be changed to days covered by our waiver.



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Change To Waiver Dates	Use Stockpile Inclement Weather Days
September 26, 2024	January 07, 2025
September 27, 2025	January 08, 2025
October 07, 2025	January 09, 2025
October 08, 2025	January 10, 2025
October 09, 2025	January 13, 2025
October 10, 2025	January 14, 2025
October 11, 2025	January 15, 2025
October 14, 2025	January 21, 2025
October 15, 2025	January 22, 2025

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John English", is written over the printed name.

John English
Director of Schools
Unicoi County Schools