

The Rock Academy
Approved Waivers
1/23/2026

State Statute/Rule/Policy	Description of Statute/Rule/Policy	Replacement Policy/Practice	How will waiver of this statute/rule/policy help student achievement?	Date of Approval	Length of approved waiver	Conditions on Waiver	Notes
T.C.A. §§ 49-5-501-513	Tenure	All employees of the Rock Academy are "at-will" employees.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility from statutory requirements governing educator licensure and staffing assignments to recruit, hire, and retain highly effective instructional staff aligned to its career and technical education (CTE)-focused high school model. This flexibility will allow the school to employ educators and industry professionals with relevant content expertise and workforce experience across multiple CTE pathways. All instructional staff will demonstrate effectiveness through performance, student outcomes, and alignment to Tennessee Academic Standards.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-5-401	Teacher Assignment	The Rock Academy's Board of Directors approves annual calendar and school schedules.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility to implement an alternative instructional schedule that includes varied instructional blocks, late start days, and embedded professional development. This structure supports mastery-based instruction, applied learning, and collaboration across academic and CTE courses. The school also seeks flexibility to align compensation with its instructional model and professional expectations rather than traditional seat-time structures. The Rock Academy is committed to maintaining the state required instructional times. The Rock Academy will utilize an alternative schedule that includes late start day, classroom instructional times, as well as professional development hours. We aim for salaries to align to teacher expectations.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 and T.C.A § 49-1-201(d)	Use of Unapproved Textbooks	Allow the TRA's Board of Directors to approve or deny curricular materials.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility for its Board of Directors to approve curricular materials, including proprietary curricula implemented by CTE partners. While the school may utilize TDOE-approved curricula, it will also implement partner-developed instructional materials aligned to CTE Programs of Study. All curricula will meet Tennessee Academic Standards and ensure students are prepared for postsecondary education, certifications, and workforce pathways.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-3-311	Capital Outlay	Rock Academy Free non-health and safety regulations and maintain autonomy over its school premises, with the control over its facility being retained by its governing board, independent of the board of education.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility to maintain control over facility selection, design, and use. As an independently operated charter school, TRA must deploy facilities and resources strategically to support hands-on instruction, CTE lab spaces, and student achievement aligned to its mission and model.		Full length of the contract agreement		

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T.C.A. §§ 49-5-408-409	Contracts and Termination of Contracts	All employees of the Rock Academy are "at-will" employees.	Attracting and retaining highly effective staff is critical to realizing our mission and ensuring that our students reach their highest academic potential. We will provide ample job-embedded professional learning opportunities to our staff, including robust professional development, coaching, observation and feedback cycles, and evaluation. Accordingly, teachers' effectiveness will be determined by performance and student outcomes. To this end, we must be afforded the autonomy to make determinations around hiring, compensation and benefits to ensure that we employ highly-effective staff and provide our students with high-quality instruction.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-1-302(e)	Duty Free Lunch	Teachers utilize their lunch as needed, including using lunch time to complete work tasks and build relationships with and provide support to students.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility in daily scheduling, including the use of lunch periods, to support instructional planning, student support, and applied learning.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-3-359(a)	Instructional Materials/Supplies	High-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials provided to all teachers Flexible use of state-approved and research-backed resources to support a CTE-focused model Consistent, equitable access to vetted materials aligned to Tennessee State Standards	Rock Academy is committed to providing top-tier instructional materials, supplies, and textbooks aligned to TDOE guidelines and the school's mission. The school retains flexibility to utilize both state-approved and research-backed unapproved materials in support of its CTE-focused design model, provided all resources align to Tennessee State Standards. By providing high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials to every teacher prior to the start of the school year—rather than allocating discretionary funds for individual purchases—Rock Academy ensures consistency, equity, and fidelity to its academic model, enabling rigorous, high-quality instruction across classrooms.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-5-702-716 T.C.A. § 49-5-801-816	Leave	Rock Academy establishes its own board-approved leave policies in compliance with all federal and state laws.	The school will establish Board-approved leave policies that balance staff needs while minimizing disruptions to teaching and learning.		Full length of the contract agreement		
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.07	Library Information Center Personnel	Rock Academy will provide library access via classroom libraries.	The Rock Academy requests flexibility to provide students access to diverse, rigorous texts and instructional resources through classroom libraries and digital platforms. These materials will support literacy, content mastery, and engagement across academic and CTE courses.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.02; SBE Policy 5.600	Licensed Personnel Salaries	The Rock Academy Board of Directors approves all salaries and pay scales.	Rock Academy establishes its own board-approved leave policies, designed to support educators working with Opportunity Youth and delivering CTE-focused instruction, in compliance with all federal and state laws.		Full length of the contract agreement		
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule: 0520-02-03-.10	Licensed School Leaders	The Rock Academy recruits and hires highly-qualified leaders.	The Rock Academy requests autonomy to employ school leaders with the skills, expertise, and experience necessary to implement its innovative, career-focused high school model and support student success.		Full length of the contract agreement	Applicable to school leaders and/or principals only	

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T.C.A. § 49-6-303(a)(1) SBE Policy 5.103	School Counseling	The Rock Academy exercises the flexibility to hire qualified personnel to execute the responsibilities of a school counselor, which may include utilizing multiple roles to fulfill such responsibilities.	The Rock Academy seeks flexibility in school counseling roles and staffing structures to allocate personnel based on student need. This approach ensures students receive academic, career, and postsecondary planning supports aligned to the school's mission and CTE pathways.		Full length of the contract agreement		
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