



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
9th FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR

CANDICE MCQUEEN
COMMISSIONER

March 17, 2015

Via Electronic Mail

Dr. Terry Webb, Director of Schools
Overton County Schools
302 Zachary St.
Livingston, TN 38570

twebb@overtoncountyschools.net

Dear Dr. Webb:

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004(a) (6), in the event of a natural disaster or serious outbreaks of illness affecting or endangering students or staff, the commissioner of education may waive the requirement for school district calendars to include one hundred eighty (180) days of classroom instruction for the current school year.

On February 21, Governor Haslam declared a Level 2 State of Emergency – Major Disaster – due to the extreme weather conditions throughout the state. This State of Emergency extended through March 2, representing six school days. Because of the unique and rare circumstances of our recent weather and the impact on school districts throughout the state, and because of the Level 2 State of Emergency declaration, the department is accepting requests to waive a maximum number of three instructional days during the period of February 21-March 2, 2015.

You have submitted a request to waive instructional days for Overton County Schools. Pursuant to my above referenced authority, I hereby grant a waiver to Overton County Schools of three instructional days during the period of February 21-March 2, 2015. Please revise the calendar in EIS to indicate the three days that are waived. Thank you for continuing to notify the Department of revisions to your school calendar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candice McQueen" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Candice McQueen

Commissioner McQueen:

The Overton County School System formally requests relief from the 180-day calendar requirement by a waiver of three (3) instructional days. The basis of this request is based on the following:

- On Saturday, February 21, 2015, Governor Haslam declared Overton County, TN and the area surrounding the county a Level 2 state of emergency. The emergency was declared as a result of an ice storm that devastated the region. The ice storm left the entire southeastern portion of Overton County without power. Residents were left trapped in their homes without power due to debris, downed power lines, and icy roadways. Rescue efforts were hindered to the area due to these conditions. Many families had to wait for days for crews to clear a path so rescue efforts could begin to help those victims.
- On Sunday, February 22, 2015, I was contacted by the Director of Emergency Management asking access to Wilson Elementary School in the Hanging Limb Community of Overton County to open a shelter for the victims of the storm. Emergency generators were brought in to establish partial power to the school to establish an emergency shelter for the people of that community. The school was established as an emergency shelter which in turn ended up housing families, feeding the community and emergency workers, and acting as a supply center for distribution of food, water, and essential supplies. The American Red Cross set up an area in the school to handle those needing medical assistance. Classrooms were converted to sleeping areas for families. The cafeteria served as the center for feeding those in need. All communication was centered at the school to inform residents of the situation and current efforts. The community was still without power and only the main road into the community was passable.
- On Monday, February 23, 2015, there was 40 families sleeping at the school and over 350 meals were served. The community was still without power. The school was feeding three meals per day including those who were involved in the rescue efforts. The school also opened the athletic dressing rooms to allow area residents to shower daily.
- On Tuesday, February 24, 2015, concerns arose concerning the water supply to the area. Since power had not been restored to the area, the pumps that supplied the water to this area were only able to supply a portion of the normal volume to area since those pumps were having to be powered by generators brought in by TEMA. Road conditions had not improved due the temperatures in the area. Over 3 inches of ice still remained on the roads making it impossible to navigate throughout the region. The shelter continued its operation with the principal and faculty of Wilson Elementary who could make it to the school overseeing the building 24 hours per day.
- On Wednesday, February 25, 2015, the area was hit with an addition two to four inches of snow blanketed the area on top of the ice. This caused complications to the relief effort. With the shelter still operating, the decision to close school for the remainder of the week for February 26 through February 27 was made.
- The shelter remained in place until March 1, 2015. At that time the number of residents was down to three people. The American Red Cross found residence for these remaining people and the school was vacated by 2:00 p.m. on that day. At that time the decision was made to start our students back to school on Monday, March 2, 2012.

- Overton County Board of Education, in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, utilizes additional hours to the required 6 ½ hours school day for a credit of an additional 13 instructional days per year. For the 2014-2015 school year, the Overton County School System has utilized all 13 additional school days due to winter weather related events. School cancellations have only occurred when roadways throughout our county have deemed it necessary for the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. Determination of unsafe conditions are determine through a group effort of the county road superintendent, local law enforcement, the emergency management center, and Overton County Schools' supervisor of transportation.
- As I write this letter, though weeks have passed, relief efforts are still ongoing. We are still in contact with TEMA in regards to loss the county suffered. Clean up efforts are still underway. It will be months before this region is back to a somewhat normal routine. As we are entering our Spring Break, many families are taxed with the clean-up effort of their property and for many reaching settlements for their losses. It is with the utmost respect I ask you to grant this waiver for three (3) instructional days on behalf of Overton County Schools. I appreciate your heartfelt concerns for the people of Overton County and especially our students who have suffered due to this disaster.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Terry Webb, Director
Overton County Schools

Paul Rainwater

From: Terry Webb <twebb@overtoncountyschools.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 10:46 AM
To: Paul Rainwater
Cc: Candice McQueen
Subject: Waiver of Instructional Days for Overton County
Attachments: Overton County Waiver.docx

***** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email - OIR-Security. *****

Dear Commissioner McQueen and Mr. Rainwater,
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Please find attached our letter requesting a waiver for 3 instructional days due to the ice storm that struck our county on February 21, 2015.?? Overton County suffered a tremendous loss due to this disaster and was among the hardest hit on the Cumberland Plateau.?? Please consider our request based on the circumstances outlined in the attached letter.?? I appreciate your concern for our students, faculty and staff.?? I will be glad to answer any questions you have after you review our request.?? Please call on me any time I can be of assistance to our office.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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Dr. Terry Webb, Director
Overton County Schools