



September 29, 2021

Dear Director Atkins,

Thank you for your waiver submission on September 29, 2021.

The commissioner of education may consider waivers related to of the provisions of Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. Chapters 0520-01-03 and 0520-01-13 related to remote instruction to the extent necessary to allow students affected at the classroom or school level by COVID-19 isolation or quarantine to participate in remote instruction. As stated, your district still has the authority to quarantine students and staff on an individual case-by-case basis (not in the aggregate). Waivers will only be considered when a LEA can document and demonstrate a significant impact of COVID-19 quarantine or isolation on school operations, impacting students, teachers, and/or staff. Please note, if a waiver request is granted to a school, all extracurricular activities for that school must also be cancelled for the duration of the waiver period.

The waiver submitted by Grainger County Schools for 1 school is **approved**.

The rationale for this approval is:

- While operationally there are not a large number of teachers and staff absent, the escalation in the number of students testing positive and being quarantined is such that the capacity lift on the district is not sustainable.
- The rate of identification for quarantine and isolation was trending to include a significant number of students and staff.

If not already in place, the department also continues to encourage all districts to implement as many mitigation strategies as possible to contain the spread of COVID-19, limit quarantines, and remain in-person, such as utilizing:

- The same or enhanced mitigation strategies used last school year such as temperature checks, physical distancing, frequent handwashing, etc.
- Seating charts in all settings, including classrooms, cafeteria/meals, bus routes, etc.
- Proactively stocking non-perishable items for breakfasts/lunches to account for meal staff absences
- Cohorting students to limit close contacts
- The consideration of masking

I continue to be incredibly grateful for the work of your district, educators, students and families as we collectively address and respond to COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Schwinn'.

Penny Schwinn, PhD, MAT

Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Education

### Local Education Agency Waiver Request Application: COVID-19 Relief

Upon application by the local education agency (LEA) for one (1) or more of its classrooms or schools, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-209 (d), the commissioner of education will consider waivers of the provisions of Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. Chapters 0520-01-03 and 0520-01-13 related to remote instruction to the extent necessary to allow students affected at the classroom or school level by COVID-19 isolation or quarantine to participate in remote instruction. This waiver process is not required for individual students on quarantine.

Waivers will only be considered when a LEA can document and demonstrate a significant impact of COVID-19 quarantine or isolation on school operations, impacting students, teachers, and/or staff. Please note, if a waiver request is granted to a school, all extracurricular activities for that school must also be cancelled.

Please submit completed applications to [Commissioner.Schwinn@tn.gov](mailto:Commissioner.Schwinn@tn.gov). Following review by the commissioner or designee, the local education agency will be notified in writing if the waiver request application is approved or denied. If approved, the waiver will only be valid for seven (7) calendar days. If conditions warranting a waiver persist, then the LEA may submit additional waivers.

## Grainger County Schools

Local Education Agency

7850 Rutledge Pike

Rutledge

37861

Street

City

Zip

*James Atkins*

Director of Schools (Signature)

Date

1. Number of **classrooms** for which you are requesting a waiver: \_\_\_\_\_

| Grade of Classroom | Name of School | In Quarantine or Isolation |               |            |            |               |               |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
|                    |                | # of Teachers              | % of Teachers | # of Staff | % of Staff | # of Students | % of Students |
|                    |                |                            |               |            |            |               |               |
|                    |                |                            |               |            |            |               |               |
|                    |                |                            |               |            |            |               |               |

Please explain why this waiver is necessary and in-person instruction is not feasible at this time:

2. Number of **schools** for which you are requesting a waiver: 1

| Name of School  | In Quarantine or Isolation |               |            |            |               |               |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
|                 | # of Teachers              | % of Teachers | # of Staff | % of Staff | # of Students | % of Students |
| Washburn School | 1                          | 3             | 1          | 6          | 80            | 17.4          |
|                 |                            |               |            |            |               |               |
|                 |                            |               |            |            |               |               |

Please explain why this waiver is necessary and in-person instruction is not feasible at this time:

We don't have many faculty/staff absent. However, students are testing positive on an hourly basis. In fact, I have 8 more students that were quarantined over the past 5 hours. We have more students quarantined at Washburn School than all of our other schools combined. We would like to have Washburn School virtual for 5 days.