



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

July 16, 2024

Dr. Bruce Borchers, Director of Schools
Oak Ridge Schools
304 New York Avenue
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Re: Waiver for Average Class Size at Glenwood Elementary, Lindon Elementary, Woodland Elementary, Willow Brook Elementary, Jefferson Middle School, and Robertsville Middle School

Dear Director Borchers,

I am in receipt of your July 15, 2024 waiver request of the class size average found in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-104 for grades K-8 classes at Glenwood Elementary, Lindon Elementary, Woodland Elementary, Willow Brook Elementary, Jefferson Middle School, and Robertsville Middle School in Oak Ridge Schools.

The commissioner's waiver authority under Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-201(d) is limited by Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-104(a), which states that "neither the commissioner nor the state board of education shall grant waivers from the maximum class sizes established in this section."

With the understanding that none of the grades K-8 classes at Glenwood Elementary, Lindon Elementary, Woodland Elementary, Willow Brook Elementary, Jefferson Middle School, and Robertsville Middle School will exceed the maximum number of students per class specified in the above referenced law, your request for a waiver of the class size average is hereby granted for the 2024-25 school year.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner



OAK RIDGE SCHOOLS
304 NEW YORK AVE.
OAK RIDGE, TN 37830

Telephone: 865.425.9001
Fax: 865.425.9070

July 12, 2024

Re: Local Education Agency Waiver Request – Oak Ridge Schools

Dr. Lizette Gonzales Reynolds,

Like other Tennessee cities, Oak Ridge has consistently experienced increased growth over the past three years. This growth has resulted in a steady increase of student enrollment in the Oak Ridge Schools. Approximately two years ago, a Student Enrollment Committee consisting of school and city officials was formed to assess current and future facility needs. Oak Ridge Schools has presented a recommendation to address current and future student growth to the Oak Ridge City Council. Oak Ridge City Council is now starting the process of developing an action plan to assure that we have the facilities necessary to adequately serve all students.

Due to the current pattern of increased student enrollment, the Oak Ridge Schools respectfully request a waiver allowing our elementary and middle school classrooms to adhere to the current maximum class size standard.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce Borchers".

Dr. Bruce T. Borchers, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Oak Ridge Schools



Tennessee Department of Education – Office of The Commissioner

710 James Robertson Parkway - Andrew Johnson Tower, 9th Floor - Nashville, TN 37243

Local Education Agency Waiver Request

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 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 rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the LEA's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission. Please submit completed forms to Commissioner.Education@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.

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.

Local Education Agency:

Oak Ridge Schools

School Information (if applicable):

School Name: Glenwood Elementary, Linden Elementary, Woodland Elementary, Willow Brook Elementary, Jefferson Middle School, Robertsville Middle School.

Street: 304 New York Avenue

City: Oak Ridge Zip Code: 37830

Please list the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) for which waiver is being requested:

TCA 49-1-104

Explanation of how the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) inhibits or hinders the local education agency's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission:

Oak Ridge Schools has experienced consistent growth in student enrollment over the past three years. Our preference is to maintain compliance with the TDOE mandated teacher student ratio but we are concerned due to past enrollment and limited classroom options that this may not be a feasible goal. Oak Ridge schools is requesting that we be permitted to maintain a K-8 average up to the maximum class size standard for the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Expected duration of the condition necessitating this waiver request:

Until the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

Director of Schools (Signature)



Print Name

Bruce Borchers

Date

7.15.24