



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 4, 2015

Via Electronic Mail

Billy M. Hall, Director of Schools
Scott County Schools
208 Court Street
Huntsville, TN 37756

bill.hall@scottcounty.net

Dear Mr. Hall:

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 Scott County Schools. Pursuant to my above referenced authority, I hereby grant a waiver to Scott 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".

Dr. Candice McQueen

Paul Rainwater

From: Christy Ballard
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 11:29 AM
To: Paul Rainwater
Subject: FW: Level 2 state of emergency forgiveness of days

Please process this one as approved.

Christy Ballard

General Counsel

Christy.Ballard@tn.gov

(615) 741-2921

Twitter: @TNedu

Facebook.com/TennesseeEducation



From: Candice McQueen
Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 8:59 AM
To: Hanseul Kang; Christy Ballard
Subject: Fwd: Level 2 state of emergency forgiveness of days

Any thoughts on this?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bill Hall <bill.hall@scottcounty.net>
Date: March 4, 2015 at 7:57:43 AM CST
To: "Candice.McQueen@tn.gov" <Candice.McQueen@tn.gov>
Subject: Level 2 state of emergency forgiveness of days

At current standing, Scott County School System has missed 17 weather-related days within the instructional calendar. The days missed occurred as follows: November (1 day - ice/snow); December (0); January (5 days - ice/snow); February (11 days - ice/snow). Each year, our district schedule allows 13 days to be stockpiled for weather-related closures. Most years this stockpile is sufficient, and more often than not, some stockpiled days remain unused at the end of the school year. However with the intense winter weather that crossed Tennessee in February, our 13 stockpiled days quickly dwindled away this year.

Scott County is situated at the edge of the Cumberland Plateau and bordered by both the Cumberland and Appalachian Mountains. Within those 536 square miles, Scott County holds a combination of mountain areas, riverbeds, shadowed valleys, and plateau. Because of our unique geographical composition, bus transportation can be very challenging during winter weather. Our system runs 41 bus routes each day, which are responsible for transporting 70% of all students. Many of the secondary and tertiary roads each bus travels daily are simply

impassable with even small amounts of snow or ice. Melting times on these roads are expanded again because of geography as well as limited or inaccessibility from county road services.

With 4 full instructional days to makeup and Spring on the horizon, there are very few options in which to add on this time. Our remaining calendar has the following dates available: April 3, Good Friday; April 6-10, Spring Break; May 25, Memorial Day; May 27, Service Day. Two of the above dates are state holidays. May 27 has been changed to a full instructional day, bringing the total overage to 3 days. While if necessary our system will utilize days within the designated Spring Break, we do have serious concerns about student and teacher attendance, thereby seriously affecting the quality and effectiveness of instruction during this time. Given the late date, many families have already made plans for Spring Break. Parents have already contacted both the schools and district office inquiring about absences and missed instruction that will occur if school is in session over Spring Break. In addition, several teachers have also declared absences during this time. This only compounds the problem when joined with widespread student absences. Substitute availability will be limited because of personal plans and the high number of positions to fill. Once these issues are combined - notable decrease in student attendance, high teacher absence, large number of substitutes - it brings into question the quality and effectiveness of instruction during this time.

Thanks

Billy M. Hall Director,
Scott County Schools