



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 11, 2015

Via Electronic Mail

Sandra Crouch, Director of Schools
White County Schools
136 Baker Street
Sparta, TN 38583-1700

sandra.crouch@whitecoschools.net

Dear Ms. Crouch:

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 White County Schools. Pursuant to my above referenced authority, I hereby grant a waiver to White 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 cursive script that reads "Candice McQueen".

Dr. Candice McQueen

White County Board of Education

SANDRA CROUCH
Director

136 Baker Street
Sparta, TN 38583
Phone: 931.836.2229
Fax: 931.836.8128

March 10, 2015

Commissioner McQueen,

On March 6, 2015, after thirteen days, a Level 2 state of emergency was FINALLY lifted for White County.

The White 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 as follows:

- **On Saturday, February 21, 2015, Governor Haslam declared White County a Level 2 state of emergency. This emergency was declared as the result of what has been the most devastating ice storm in this region in over twenty years. At the time of the declaration, over 2,000 White County, TN residents were without power. Many residents were unable to leave their homes due to debris and downed power lines, as well as icy roadways, causing travel to be impossible.**
- **As of Monday, February 23, many roads remained closed and impassable. The Bon Air, Derosset, and Ravenscroft areas, of White County, including BonDeCroft School, remained without power. There was considerable property damage at BonDeCroft School with roof damage to two other schools in our system. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Operation Center consistently stated that many residents in the mountainous area of White County could remain without power for up to two weeks. Five days later power was restored to the school, but many roads in the community remained impassable due to power lines**

that were completely down or too low for travel. Over 800 families were still without power.

- An additional two to four inches of snow blanketed White County on Wednesday, February 25. This again created unsafe travel conditions on roadways, created additional power outages and further complicated TEMA efforts.
- On Thursday, March 5, 2015, White County was once again hit with snow and ice. The layer of ice under the snow caused some of the most hazardous road conditions of the season.

The White 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 2014-15 school year, the White County School System has utilized all 13 additional schools days in eight (8) schools and 15 days at one school. The transportation supervisor and I have spent many long and early hours surveying roads in an effort to get students back in school as quickly as possible. We consider closing schools a hardship and do everything possible to keep schools open. Yet, we will never compromise the safety of our students.

As of today, some White County families are without power. Many are faced with costly repairs to the electrical systems of their homes prior to power restoration. The amount of debris is overwhelming. Our community is hurting!

Please consider granting our request for relief from the 180-day calendar requirement by a waiver of three (3) instructional days.

Sincerely,



Sandra Crouch

Director, White County Schools

Paul Rainwater

From: Commissioner McQueen
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2015 3:07 PM
To: Christy Ballard; Paul Rainwater
Subject: FW: waiver request
Attachments: Commissioner waiver letter March 10, 2015.pdf

From: Linda Alley [<mailto:linda.alley@whitecoschools.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2015 1:12 PM
To: Commissioner McQueen
Subject: waiver request

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

Commissioner McQueen,

Attached is a letter from Mrs. Sandra Crouch, Director of White County Schools.

Linda Alley
Administrative Assistant
White County School System
931-836-2229