

September 14, 2021

Dear Director Hall,

Thank you for your waiver submission on September 14, 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 Scott County Schools for Scott High School is **approved**.

The rationale for this approval is:

- While the percentage of staff and teachers in quarantine or isolated is under 8% and 15%, respectively, there are not substitutes available and all other potential fill-staff are keeping your other campuses and classrooms open.
- The class sizes in high school and the nature of transition between classes would make it difficult to maintain a safe environment and you adequately explained such in your application and in follow-up.

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,



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. 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.

Scott County Schools

Local Education Agency

208 Court Street Huntsville, TN 37756

Street

City

Zip

Beck Hall

09/14/2021

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
Scott High School	7	14.5%	2	7.6%	127	16.4%

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

Requesting digital instruction for Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday (9/15-17); Re-evaluate on Friday for the next week

There are no substitutes available. We have spent weeks covering classes with teaching assistants and other teachers during their planning periods. At this point, the only way we can continue to supervise student is in large groups, which is counterproductive to COVID prevention. Our two staff members are custodial and are throughout the building on a daily basis. Between these two members and the other positive teachers from this week, we are concerned that a greater number of people may have been exposed than we are able to trace. We have been contact tracing diligently inside the building, but numbers continue to climb.