



September 20, 2021

Dear Ms. Lewis,

Thank you for your waiver submission on September 20, 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 Gestalt Community Schools for 4 classrooms is **approved**.

The rationale for this approval is:

- The high percentage of teaching staff that are out (83%) would not allow for school to reasonably continue for this grade level.
- You sufficiently addressed the lack of alternatives from a central office and administrator perspective, reflecting that there is not capacity to provide in other areas.

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

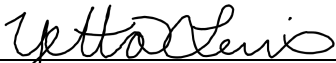
Upon application by the local education agency (LEA) for one (1) or more of its classrooms or schools, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-209 (d), the commissioner of education will consider waivers of the provisions of Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. Chapters 0520-01-03 and 0520-01-13 related to remote instruction 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. 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.

Shelby County Schools-

Local Education Agency
 Gestalt Community Schools 2650 Thousand Oaks, Blvd, Suite 1400
 Memphis, TN 38118

| | | |
|--|------|--------------------|
| Street | City | Zip |
|  | | September 20, 2021 |
| Director of Schools (Signature) | | Date |

1. Number of **classrooms** for which you are requesting a waiver: We _____
 are requesting a waiver for 4 classrooms in grade 3.

| Grade of Classroom | Name of School | In Quarantine or Isolation | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | # of Teachers | % of Teachers | # of Staff | % of Staff | # of Students | % of Students |
| 3 | Power Center Academy Elementary_HH | 5 | 83% | 2 | 18% | 114 | 16% |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

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

There was a positive case amongst the teaching staff for this grade level. 3 of her grade level peers and one administrator was exposed to this positive case at a dinner on Friday evening. The case tested positive on Friday as well. The positive teacher will be in quarantine for 10 days and due to the incubation period required for testing after exposure, the other 3 staff members will be in quarantine until Thursday or Friday pending test results. We are requesting a waiver for this grade level due to the staffing shortage and limited access to substitute teacher resources. The school would also be experiencing a reduction of 2 administrators due to one additional administrator already in quarantine and the administrator from this event also needing to quarantine.

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 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

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

