



February 1, 2026

The Honorable Representative Destin Hall, NC Speaker of the House
16 West Jones Street, Room 2304
Raleigh, NC 27601
Destin.Hall@ncleg.gov

Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger
16 West Jones Street, Room 2007
Raleigh, NC 27601
Phil.Berger@ncleg.gov

Dear Speaker of the House Hall and Senate President Pro Tempore Berger,

I am writing on behalf of Guilford County Schools and our regional partners to request legislative support for increased remote learning flexibility during severe winter weather conditions.

The immediate situation: Multiple Piedmont districts have exhausted allocated remote learning days due to early December weather and this week's prolonged ice conditions. Following this weekend's winter storm, we have no options to ensure student and staff safety while maintaining instructional continuity.

The critical issues we face include:

- **Salt shortage:** GCS has already purchased and used over 120,000 pounds of ice melt this winter, and NC DOT has provided emergency supplies to GCS, but commercial salt and ice melt remain severely limited statewide
- **Persistent ice conditions:** Pavement temperatures below 20°F render salt brine ineffective; we've averaged only 5 hours daily above freezing
- **Compounded risk:** Additional snow accumulation before temperatures rise sufficiently to clear existing ice
- **Geographic disparity:** While main urban corridors may be passable, suburban and rural areas including significant portions of Guilford County and our regional partners remain unsafe

714 Green Valley Road | Greensboro, NC 27408 | P 336.370.8100

Our facilities teams have worked around the clock since Monday using both district personnel and contractors, but physics and material availability limit our progress. Student and staff safety must remain our priority, and instruction must be able to continue.

Under § 115C 84.2, the State Board of Education has authority to provide flexibility during emergency conditions. However, a legislative solution would provide districts with the certainty needed for long-term planning.

We respectfully request legislative action to:

1. Expand remote learning day allocations for districts facing prolonged weather emergencies
2. Provide emergency funding for critical materials like road salt and ice melt

Our regional superintendent colleagues from Alamance-Burlington, Asheboro, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Mt. Airy, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Thomasville City, Winston Salem-Forsyth, and Yadkin and other districts across the state stand ready to support this effort and provide additional documentation as needed.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support of North Carolina public schools. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at your convenience.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Whitney Oakley".

Whitney Oakley, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Guilford County Schools
oakleyw@gcsnc.com