

Request for Flexibility 2015-16 Proposal



INSTRUCTIONS: Please write your responses in the boxes below.

SCHOOL NAME: Barnwell Elementary

CONCEPT NAME: Full Release Days for Staff Professional Development

Focus Area 1: Instructional Rigor and Engagement

- Expand STEM Lab Integration into instruction across subject areas
- Greater integration of interdisciplinary units

Focus Area 2: Teacher and Staff Development

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: • Project-based learning professional development and coaching

Concept Summary	
<p>1) Describe the need/challenge that your school seeks to address.</p>	<p>Barnwell Elementary is a “high achieving” school and we are committed to continuing this strong tradition. Our goal is to develop our students’ critical thinking skills across grade levels and subject areas. Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional model that allows students to develop those proficiencies.</p> <p>Students involved in project-based learning experiences typically have greater opportunities (as compared to more traditional classroom activities) to develop complex skills, such as higher-order thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and communication, and are generally more engaged in the learning process.</p> <p>The PBL teaching method can be used to deliver instruction in multiple disciplines and allows for the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) materials as part of the curriculum. The deployment of project-based learning at Barnwell Elementary will provide students with real world abilities that can assist in personal and academic development. These skills provide a foundation for high achievement beyond standardized test scores.</p> <p>Dedicated professional learning time of up to an additional three full release days will allow teachers to engage in professional development which will increase their knowledge of STEM best practices and strengthen their abilities to teach the content using the PBL model.</p> <p>Professional development days (a/k/a “teacher work days”) are an existing part of the Fulton County school calendar. However, in past years, and likely in future years, those days are reserved for district-wide professional development as opposed to school specific professional development. It would be challenging to incorporate meaningful project-based learning or STEM training as part of the existing teacher work days and, piecemeal training is not likely to be as</p>

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	<p>effective as dedicated professional development time. Moreover, piecemeal training could necessitate teachers being pulled from their classrooms, which can disrupt the learning routine of students.</p> <p>We are requesting the support of our community to institute up to three additional student release days per year for staff professional development. We are confident that structured professional development time will help to ensure that our teachers achieve maximum understanding of the PBL instructional model and allow the integration of STEM instruction into the curriculum.</p>
<p>2) Describe the proposed concept, and explain how it addresses the need/challenge identified above.</p>	<p>Barnwell Elementary is requesting flexibility to implement a modified school calendar in order to allow teachers at all grade levels (including special areas, ESOL and special education) the time needed to engage in effective STEM and PBL professional development opportunities during the instructional year.</p> <p>We are requesting a total of up to three additional student release days per school year for staff professional development. We intend to coordinate the student release days with any release days planned at the middle schools and high schools into which Barnwell’s students matriculate so as to minimize any inconvenience to parents with students at multiple grade levels. If no such days exist, then we intend to select days that fall on either the Friday before or Tuesday after an existing holiday weekend. This will allow parents additional time to plan for childcare or family activities. Potential days for the 2016-2017 school year (assuming that all three days are used) are October 7, January 17 and February 12.</p> <p>The professional days for staff will consist of an eight hour workday (7:30am-3:30pm).</p> <p>The modified calendar will reduce the total number of days that the students attend school; however, teachers will benefit by increasing their knowledge of effective STEM resources and project-based learning models. We expect that the professional learning gained through uninterrupted training will allow teachers to integrate these methods more quickly and will have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning within the classrooms.</p>
<p>3) Include any research or evidence that the concept will positively affect your school’s student population. If no research exists, please</p>	<p>Continued teacher professional learning benefits students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), prepared as part of the most comprehensive analysis of professional learning conducted in the United States, finds that

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articulate the rationale for the likelihood of success of the concept, and describe your plans for risk mitigation.

“sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains.” The NSDC Report also concludes that professional development, when it includes applications of knowledge to teacher’s planning and instruction has a greater chance of influencing teaching practices and leading to student learning gains.

- In a 2010 paper titled “Why Professional Development Matters,” Hayes Mizell, the senior distinguished fellow of Learning Forward (the current name of the NSDC), writes that student learning and achievement increase “when educators engage in effective professional development focused on the skills educators need in order to address students’ major learning challenges.” Mizell also notes that policymakers, community leaders, and parents have a responsibility to ensure that teachers engage in continuous professional learning and that the learning is applied to increase student achievement.

We believe that in order to sustain and improve student achievement, Barnwell should provide its teachers and staff the ability to engage in meaningful professional development.

Professional learning is most effective when conducted with the school team and during the school year.

- Research supports the finding that training as a “team” reaps the greatest benefits. The Mizell paper notes that professional development is most effective when it occurs during the school day and in the setting where teachers can immediately apply the newly-acquired skills. Mizell also states that when done as part of a team approach, less experienced educators interact with more experienced educators. This causes all teachers to gain while also reducing variations in performance. The NSDC Report supports this conclusion.
- “Teaching Students and Teaching Each Other,” a research study conducted in public elementary schools in North Carolina, concluded that teachers’ performance improved when the quality of their peers improved within the same school over time. According to the study, “the effect of teacher peer quality is persistent over time. Most peer effects that operate either through the education production function or through peer monitoring/pressure will have a contemporaneous effect.” The study further noted that “for both math and reading, the quality of a teacher’s peers the year before, and even two years before, affect her current students’ achievement.”

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We believe that Barnwell students will benefit if training occurs among teachers and administrators collectively. Teachers will be able to coordinate their planning following their training and more uniformly implement PBL and STEM practices across grade levels and subject areas.

Teachers reap the most benefit from professional learning that is over the course of several full days.

- According to the NSDC Report, “intensive professional development, especially when it includes applications of knowledge to teachers’ planning and instruction, has a greater chance of influencing teaching practices and, in turn, leading to gains in student learning.” Results suggest that increased long-term professional development results in higher achievement gains by their students during the following year.
- The Report also notes that, despite this finding, most professional development for teachers comes in the form of occasional workshops, typically lasting less than a day, each one focusing on discrete topics, with the application to the classroom experience “left to teachers’ imaginations.”

The implementation of PBL practices and integration of STEM across the curriculum is a big undertaking. We believe that in order to successfully employ these initiatives, Barnwell’s professional learning should be intensive (full day programs) and ongoing (over the course of multiple days).

Professional learning works best when aligned with the vision and goals of the school.

- The NSDC Report concludes that the most effective professional development is that which is aligned with school improvement priorities and goals.
- A research study conducted on non-U.S. public schools concluded that classroom teaching techniques that provided students with analytical and critical thinking skills (a.k.a. higher order thinking) had a “very large positive payoff,” especially among students from middle and upper-middle class families.

Barnwell’s strategic plan includes the implementation of PBL teaching methods and the integration of STEM across subject areas as a manner in which to sustain and improve student achievement. We believe that the use of the release days for training is consistent with the plan, is appropriate given the need to coordinate across subject areas, and will

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	<p>benefit Barnwell students with skills to serve them during their elementary school learning and beyond.</p> <p>For more discussion of the research and best practices in professional learning, see the following resources: Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf Why Professional Learning Matters: http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/why_pd_matters_web.pdf What Makes an Effective Teacher? Quasi-Experimental Evidence: http://www.nber.org/papers/w16885 Teaching Students and Teaching Each Other: The Importance of Peer Learning for Teachers: http://www.nber.org/papers/w15202</p>		
<p>4) Outline the expected results in the columns to the right. Add additional rows as necessary.</p>	Project Outcomes	Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase teacher knowledge of project-based learning to include STEM best practices • Teachers will incorporate project-based learning across the core content curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase student achievement across all content areas • Increase problem-solving and project-based learning experiences • Increase teacher knowledge and proficiency of problem solving and project-based learning • Increase teacher proficiency in STEM-based learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual curiosity. • Students will apply critical thinking skills across the curriculum and in real world experiences.
Waiver(s) Requested			
<p>5) List any waivers from state law, regulation, and/or rule required to implement the concept. (Facilitators will identify the specific laws, regulations, and/or rules requiring exemption.)</p>	<p>Fulton County has already waived the number of instructional days and minutes required by the state of Georgia. However, the specific laws being waived are as follows:</p> <p>State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.02 SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES.</p> <p>Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 20-2-151(b) which sets the number of hours of instructional time for educational programs.</p>		

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<p>6) List any flexibility from Fulton County Schools’ policy required to implement the concept. (Facilitators will identify the specific Fulton County Schools policies requiring exemptions.)</p>	<p>Barnwell Elementary is seeking a waiver from Fulton County School Board Policy AE (Applicable School Year) which says “The school year shall consist of 180 teaching days or the equivalent, except in the event of emergency school closures.”</p>
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Impact on Students and Families, Personnel, Departments, Processes, and Schools

<p>7) List any impact of the concept on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students and families; ▪ Personnel; ▪ The school schedule; ▪ Transportation; ▪ School nutrition; ▪ Teaching, learning, and assessment; ▪ Other schools; and ▪ Any other area not addressed above. 	<p>The following impacts are anticipated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Students and Families</u>: The school will coordinate chosen professional development days with adjacent schools to minimize confusion for childcare providers and families. The school will select days that will create longer weekends for families and will provide several months’ notice of chosen days. • <u>Personnel</u>: There will be up to three fewer instructional days for teachers; however, they have become accustomed to delivering instruction in fewer than 180 days. In order to account for the three fewer instructional days for paraprofessionals, they will have the option to choose their additional three days to work during pre or post planning. • <u>School Schedule</u>: Three fewer instructional days, but no impact to daily schedule as we are seeking full release days. • <u>Transportation</u>: Transportation will not be needed on the full release days. Anticipated costs to the County have been included in the proposed budget, to be paid out of Barnwell’s general fund. • <u>School Nutrition</u>: Anticipated costs to the County due to lost revenues have been included in the proposed budget, to be paid out of Barnwell’s general fund. • <u>Students with Individualized Education Programs</u>: Barnwell administrators will assess whether the loss of three instructional days will impact any students that have individualized education programs. Adjustments to those programs will be made (if necessary) to ensure that the program requirements for such students are fulfilled.
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Budget

8) Please use the budget template on the next page to provide the estimated costs of the proposed concept. In the space to the right, please identify, to the extent possible, how you plan to modify your school budget to cover additional costs. If applicable, identify external funding sources.

The costs for the additional professional development days have been carefully reviewed by school administrators. Expenses will be paid through a current SEED fund grant application, schools fund or other potential sources.

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SCHOOL NAME:

		<i>Fiscal Year 2017</i>		<i>Fiscal Year 2018</i>		<i>Fiscal Year 2018</i>		
Budget Item	Item Description (Include quantities if applicable)	Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	Notes
Teacher(s)	PBL Coach	\$37,132	FCS Seed Fund	\$25,000	FCS Seed Fund	\$10,000	FCS Seed Fund	
Paraprofessional(s)		0		0		0		
Support Staff		0		0		0		
Additional Pay (certified)/Overtime (non-certified)		0		0		0		
Equipment		0		0		0		
Supplies/Materials	PBL books and resources	\$5,000	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	\$3,000	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	\$1,000	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	
Professional Development	Conference/Travel	\$18,264	FCS Seed Fund	\$15,000	FCS Seed Fund	\$10,000	FCS Seed Fund	
Independent Contractor(s)	The Buck Institute	\$40,000	FCS Seed Fund	\$20,000	FCS Seed Fund	\$10,000	FCS Seed Fund	
Transportation		TBD	General Fund	TBD		TBD	General Fund	
Supplements		0		0		0		
Other Professional Services	Food and Nutrition	\$1,500	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	\$1,500	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	\$1,500	FCS Seed Fund/ General Fund	
Other		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
GRAND TOTALS		\$ 101,896		\$ 64,500		\$ 32,500		

*When determining the *Amount Budgeted* for personnel costs, the principal should consult with the Learning Community Human Resources Director.

For the *Proposed Funding Source(s)*, please indicate which of the following funding sources you intend to use: **General Fund, Student Activities Fund, School Foundation/PTA, FCS Seed Fund, Grants, or Other (please specify the source).

***Local teacher training and institute training will assist in "phasing out" the need for coaching. But it will be a three year phase-out.