

Request for Flexibility 2015-16 Proposal



INSTRUCTIONS: Please write your responses in the boxes below.

SCHOOL NAME: New Prospect Elementary School
 School Calendar Waiver for Four Full-Release Days for Professional Development in Project Based Learning

CONCEPT NAME: Project Based Learning ~ Preparing Our Students for Future Learning Success
 Provide high-quality professional development to achieve our school-wide

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Strategic Initiative: Train our staff in Project-Based Learning

Concept Summary	
<p>1) Describe the need/challenge that your school seeks to address.</p>	<p>Our School Governance Council and School Leadership Team meticulously analyzed data from multiple stakeholder (staff, student, parent, community) surveys, state assessment trend data, and student empathy interviews to develop our SY 2015/16 → SY 2017/18 Strategic Plan. A significant finding was the need for our all of our students to have more opportunities with hands-on, authentic, rigorous learning opportunities with a project/problem-based emphasis with real world application to prepare them for future learning success. All of these data points informed the development of our strategic plan.</p> <p>Our strategic plan identified three long-term outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase student mastery of grade level writing standards for all areas at the highest level ➤ Increase student performance on science standards across all grade levels ➤ Create an environment in which students can achieve personal success through strong academics in a collaborative culture involving all stakeholders <p>To successfully implement our Strategic Plan, our staff needs the opportunity to learn, practice, and reflect on the Professional Development we will provide to support their learning and growth to effect changes in practice.</p> <p>Currently our teachers meet weekly from 2:45 to 4:15 p.m. in Professional Learning Communities. This time is used for analyzing data, looking at student work and collaborative planning. Teachers also meet during their common planning time at least one day per week. We utilize the portions of the four Professional Learning Days during pre-planning that are not used for district training/requirements for school level staff development. We also meet after school (voluntarily) every other Thursday, where teachers have the option to choose from a menu of differentiated, personalized learning opportunities developed based on our staff</p>

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needs self-assessment. While we make the best use of the time we are have, our teachers need quality, uninterrupted professional development time in order to provide an enriched learning environment for **all** of our students.

Our strategic plan clearly identifies professional development to support school-wide initiatives, including: train staff in Project-Based Learning (PBL). **Our PROBLEM is that the current calendar and the proposed 2016-2017 calendar do not provide for adequate time to train staff to support the work or allow sufficient time to plan and reflect on the instructional process and academic learning outcomes.** In order to achieve that goal, to provide our students with enhanced learning opportunities, **we need our staff to be trained during off-contract days in the summer of 2016 and continue their collaborative learning during four full release days in the 2016-17 school year.**

Therefore, for the 2016-17 school year, we are requesting the support of our community to introduce four professional development days for our instructional staff.

These four days were **collaboratively determined with our feeder schools** (Webb Bridge MS and Alpharetta HS) as well as other elementary schools in our community (Creekview ES and Lake Windward ES) to minimize inconvenience to our families. We have also collaborated with our local YMCA to provide an affordable day-camp alternative for our families on our release days.

Our over-arching plan is to focus on developing project-based learning (PBL) teaching strategies in year one, so we can utilize those (PBL) skills/strategies to implement a School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) in year two, and then initiate the process to become a certified STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) school in year three of our Strategic Plan.

On a local school survey, our staff self-rated as **47% with little or no knowledge of project based learning strategies, 50% with some knowledge** and **3%** believe they are *extremely proficient*. **56% self-rated as having little or no knowledge of strategies to implement Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) strategies, 38% believe they have some knowledge**, and **6%** identify themselves as *proficient*.

49% of surveyed students want more project/research opportunities
59% of our surveyed students want more challenge and choice
69% of parents identify rigorous instruction as a school need

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	<p>In the <i>exceeds standards</i> category on recent state assessments, 17 -20 schools (demographically comparable to our school), out-performed New Prospect students in Science, Social Studies and Language Arts</p> <p>Our most recent student surveys (Spring 2015) evaluating teacher practice from a student perspective (GADOE platform) support the identified needs of our strategic plan. Consider the following contrasting data points (mean school score/ highest possible = 2.0):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>My teacher shows me how I can use what I learn at home and in the community</i> 1.34/2.0 ➤ <i>My teacher has me work in class with different groups of students</i> 1.38/2.0 ➤ <i>The work I am assigned in this class challenges me</i> 1.41.2.0 <p>Compared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>My teacher cares about my learning</i> 1.9/2.0 ✓ <i>My teacher encourages me to do the work even when it is hard for me</i> 1.71/2.0 ✓ <i>My teacher doesn't let me give up when the work gets hard</i> 1.7/2.0 ✓ <i>My teacher says it is OK for me to make mistakes, as long as I try my best</i> 1.7/2.0 <p>Clearly, the data supports that our staff has the need, drive, and desire to provide our students with the opportunities they deserve to maximize learning, but currently lack the skill-set to meet those needs. All of the above mentioned data were carefully considered in the development of our Strategic Plan and clearly support the Long-Term Outcomes, Focus Areas, Short-term Goals and Strategic Initiatives articulated in our plan.</p>
<p>2) Describe the proposed concept, and explain how it addresses the need/challenge identified above.</p>	<p>To provide our staff with the expertise needed to provide our students with an engaging and challenging learning environment that will prepare them for 21st century careers, they need high quality, vetted professional development in area of Project Based Learning. This training will provide them with the teaching strategy skill set needed to develop an enhanced, rigorous, real-world connected learning environment with an emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).</p> <p>We will begin training our staff in Project-Based Learning with a three day workshop led by The Buck Institute in June 2016 while staff are off-contract and students are on summer break.</p> <p>We will continue training with the Buck Institute during our four full release days (all dates aligned with our feeder schools), two in each semester, to have the Buck Institute for Education (exemplary source of professional development) deliver in-person training for our staff.</p>

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	<p>As a result of Buck Institute training, our staff will learn, create, implement and receive feedback on project-based learning units in all grade levels, across content areas.</p> <p>We believe these newly acquired skills, along with the collaboration of our school community, will enable us to implement a School-Wide Enrichment Model in year two of our Strategic Plan. Finally, in year three, we believe we will have developed the skills necessary to initiate and successfully embrace our school’s journey toward STEM certification.</p>
<p>3) Include any research or evidence that the concept will positively affect your school’s student population. If no research exists, please articulate the rationale for the likelihood of success of the concept, and describe your plans for risk mitigation.</p>	<p>The Buck Institute staff are well respected leaders with solid research results to support the need for a project based approach to learning. http://bie.org/objects/cat/research Additional research supporting the effectiveness of Project Based Learning conducted by the Southeast Comprehensive Center, can be found at http://secc.sedl.org/</p> <p>The Buck Institute defines project-based learning as “a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning essential knowledge and life-enhancing skills through an extended, student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.” The Institute’s model for project-based learning focuses on teaching students content as well as the 21st century skills that have been identified as essential for college and career readiness. Harada, Kirio, & Yamamoto (2008) cited Project Based Learning as a powerful means for producing relevant and rigorous learning.</p> <p>Project Based Learning allows students to balance academic rigor with making age-appropriate real-world connections. Because we believe that all of these efforts work in concert to positively affect our students, we are confident that protected professional development time will help to ensure that our teachers achieve maximum understanding of appropriate high quality instructional strategies. Teachers need focused time to learn, process the information, work collaboratively on these techniques and reflect on their new learning. Planning and Reflection are key components of the Project Based Approach and as such are best done in real time. “With the current focus on college and career readiness and the performance-based emphases of Common Core State Standards, only high-quality project based learning can deliver the beneficial outcomes that we need for our students. It is not enough to just do projects. Today’s projects need to be rigorous, engaging, and in-depth, and they need to have</p>

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student voice and choice built in. Such projects require careful planning and pedagogical skill.” (Buck Institute)

In the article, “Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers’ Impact on Student Achievement” published by Rand Education, there is cited research demonstrating that teachers are the most important factor in a student’s academic success. Teachers are estimated to have two to three times the impact of any other school factor. Hayes-Mizell also supports these findings in the article, “Why Professional Development Matters.” **The most effective professional development engages teams of teachers to focus on the needs of their students. They learn and problem-solve together in order to ensure that all students achieve success.** Effective professional development affects students. 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.

According to Joseph Renzulli; *School-Wide Enrichment Model* (Schools for Talent Development, p. 40, 1994), "Schools should not be places where young people merely learn what is already known. Rather, they should aspire to a higher calling that includes creating a learning environment in which present knowledge is viewed as stepping stones to the creation of new knowledge, to the solutions of unsolved problems, and to invention, artistic production, and examination of ways to improve life on Earth."

Advocates of 21st century skills favor student-centered methods—for example, problem-based learning and project-based learning—that allow students to collaborate, work on authentic problems, and engage with the community. These approaches are widely acclaimed and can be found in any pedagogical methods textbook; teachers know about them and believe they're effective. And yet, teachers don't use them. Recent data show that most instructional time is composed of seatwork and whole-class instruction led by the teacher (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2005).

Why STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)? Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are an important part of education in a competitive global marketplace. In 2009, the United States educational system received some sobering news. The Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked 15-year-old U.S. high-school students 18th in mathematics and 13th in science.

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	<p>These results were based on data from 34 participating nations. Some of the nations with higher student scores included much smaller and far less wealthy nations like Estonia, Slovenia and Finland. It was apparent that the U.S. educational system needed significant improvement in these areas if the students who would be the workforce of tomorrow were to have a competitive edge in a globalized, high-tech marketplace. <i>Stemschool.com; December 2012</i></p> <p>Our strategic plan supports both system and state goals to prepare all students to be both college and career ready!</p>								
<p>4) Outline the expected results in the columns to the right. Add additional rows as necessary.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Project Outcomes</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Short-Term Goals</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Long-Term Outcomes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Provide professional development for 100% of instructional staff in Project Based Learning Build instructional staff capacity to increase knowledge of project based learning best practices Create and implement project based units – a minimum of 2 units developed and implemented each semester Teachers will acquire the skills necessary to effectively incorporate problem/project based learning </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Increase student choice/performance task options to demonstrate learning Increase collaborative learning among students Increase student engagement in the learning process through inquiry-based learning Increase student achievement through hands-on learning Increase interdisciplinary performance tasks that facilitate connections between real-world application and content standards Increase student growth in all academic areas through purposeful differentiation </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Create an environment in which students can achieve personal success through strong academics in a collaborative culture involving all stakeholders Increase student performance on science standards across all grade levels Increase student mastery of grade level writing standards for all content areas at the highest level Increased mastery of best practice strategies developed through project-based learning will provide staff with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for School-Wide-Enrichment Model (SEM) implementation in </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project Outcomes	Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Outcomes	Provide professional development for 100% of instructional staff in Project Based Learning Build instructional staff capacity to increase knowledge of project based learning best practices Create and implement project based units – a minimum of 2 units developed and implemented each semester Teachers will acquire the skills necessary to effectively incorporate problem/project based learning	Increase student choice/performance task options to demonstrate learning Increase collaborative learning among students Increase student engagement in the learning process through inquiry-based learning Increase student achievement through hands-on learning Increase interdisciplinary performance tasks that facilitate connections between real-world application and content standards Increase student growth in all academic areas through purposeful differentiation	Create an environment in which students can achieve personal success through strong academics in a collaborative culture involving all stakeholders Increase student performance on science standards across all grade levels Increase student mastery of grade level writing standards for all content areas at the highest level Increased mastery of best practice strategies developed through project-based learning will provide staff with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for School-Wide-Enrichment Model (SEM) implementation in		
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	<p>across all content areas</p>		<p>year 2 of our strategic plan.</p> <p>In year 3, our School-Wide Enrichment Model (SEM) implementation will have provided our staff and students with the requisite skills and knowledge to begin New Prospect Elementary School's journey toward STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) certification process.</p> <p>Engaging learning opportunities with a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) focus based on real world experiences will ensure our students are acquiring the 21st century skills needed for future life-long success</p>
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>School Attendance waiver:</p> <p>State Law: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151(b); O.C.G.A. § 20-2-168©</p> <p>State Rule: SBOE 160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees</p>		
<p>6) List any flexibility from Fulton County Schools' policy required to implement the concept. (Facilitators will</p>	<p>District Policy: AE - School Year</p>		



<p>identify the specific Fulton County Schools policies requiring exemptions.)</p>	
<p>Impact on Students and Families, Personnel, Departments, Processes, and Schools</p>	
<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our students will miss two days each semester/total four days, however, staff will compact curriculum standards to ensure all content standards are taught to our students ➤ Our 4 full-release days align with our feeder schools (Webb Bridge MS and Alpharetta HS) as well as other local community schools (Creekview ES and Lake Windward ES) ➤ Our local YMCA will provide an optional day camp opportunity at a reasonable cost to our families; we will aggressively publicize our dates to ensure our families have adequate time to plan accordingly ➤ 100% of our instructional staff will be trained in project-based learning ➤ Our school “schedule” impact is the reduction of each semester by 2 days ➤ FCS transportation will not be impacted ➤ School Nutrition has been accounted for in our budget; our café staff will support other schools during our release days ➤ Compacted teaching curriculum will prevent learning impact; assessment schedules will be proactively managed at the local school level ➤ Since we have determined dates through consensus with our feeder and local community schools, we are potentially providing our families with extended weekend family/travel opportunities and will not impact other schools
<p>Budget</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>We believe that by providing our staff with the training and resources needed to build their capacity we will increase student achievement. As such, in our budget, we identify instructional funds for materials/supplies, professional development, and additional stipends to support our school-wide initiatives to provide our students with a personalized learning environment that will engage and prepare them for future success. Additionally, our school budget will be used to fund all instructional material/supply costs associated with this strategic initiative, including any identified professional development needs. Finally, our local school PTA is tremendously supportive of our school-wide initiatives and wholeheartedly shares our vision for their children’s learning success.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nurture - Personalize – Engage - Succeed</p>

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INSTRUCTIONS: Please enter the expected costs of your concept for the applicable school year(s). To calculate the totals for the Amount Budgeted columns, highlight the entire table, and press F9. You may customize the budget items.

SCHOOL NAME:

New Prospect ES

		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		
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)		0		0		0		
Paraprofessional(s)		0		0		0		
Support Staff		0		0		0		
Additional Pay (certified)/Overtime (non-certified)	Off contract work days	\$10, 500	FCS Seed Fund	0		0		
Equipment		0		0		0		
Supplies/Materials	Project Based material needs	\$5, 000	General Fund	\$5, 000	General Fund	\$6, 000	General Fund	
Professional Development		0		0		0		
Independent Contractor(s)	Buck Institute Project-Based Learning	\$33, 800	FCS Seed Fund	0		0		
Transportation		0		0		0		
Supplements		0		0		0		
Other Professional Services		0		0		0		
Other	Nutrition Costs	\$1,891.84	FCS Seed Fund	0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
GRAND TOTALS		\$51,191.84		\$5,000		\$6,000		

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

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****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).**