

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



We are INSTRUCTIONS: Please write your responses in the boxes below.

SCHOOL NAME: Ocee Elementary School

CONCEPT NAME: Full Release Days for Professional Development

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Teachers will participate in staff development to increase their understanding of HOTS and rigor; provide training and coaching to teacher teams on how to utilize data effectively; and incorporate additional behavioral support strategies in order to become a PBIS school.

Concept Summary

<p>1) Describe the need/challenge that your school seeks to address.</p>	<p>With the addition of CCGPS, the level of rigor needed for instruction has increased. Historically our students have demonstrated a mastery of standards as evidenced by our high CRCT results. With the increased level of rigor, teachers have needed to plan instruction that includes higher order thinking strategies as well as technology. Professional development focusing on the use of higher order thinking skills as well as technology will provide the teachers with the necessary strategies to increase the level of rigor in the classroom.</p> <p>Data is used to plan and differentiate instruction as well as to monitor student progress. Specific training, along with coaching, will increase the effective use of data analysis as well as assist in communicating students' progress with parents.</p> <p>Providing students with the tools needed to become respectful, responsible, and resilient is important. It provides a foundation allowing students to effectively collaborate, make decisions independently, solve problems, and deal with disappointment. Incorporating additional behavioral support strategies through professional development will support teachers.</p>
<p>2) Describe the proposed concept, and explain how it addresses the need/challenge identified above.</p>	<p>We are requesting the support of our community to add three full release days – Mondays or Fridays where feasible - for staff professional development to the Ocee ES calendar.</p> <p>Fulton County Schools promises to be a district “Where Students Come First.” With that promise comes a plethora of programs and innovations, each of which requires in-depth professional learning for successful implementation that leads to increased student achievement. Within the past three semesters, we’ve</p>

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



	<p>added or altered Professional Learning Communities, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Response to Intervention, the FultonConnect resource for data and teacher planning, instructional technology upgrades and integration, as well as a district-wide charter plan and a local school strategic plan. Additionally, teachers are required to collaborate across departments, grade levels and in 5th grade, to collaborate with feeder schools. In our current professional development model, teachers' learning opportunities take place on days when there are numerous other tasks to complete: setting up their classrooms, preparing materials, grading, parent communication and conferences, completing report cards, and numerous regular teacher responsibilities. This creates an environment where the "availability for and attentiveness to learning" is not ideal.</p> <p>Currently our teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities. This time is used for analyzing data, looking at student work and collaborative planning. We utilize the portions of the three Professional Learning Days during pre-planning that are not used for district training for school level staff development. We also meet for ½ days on the two provided teacher workdays that are not designated as a conference day. While we make the best use of the time we are given, our teachers need quality, uninterrupted professional development time in order to provide the best and most cutting-edge curricular offerings to our students. Students would not attend school on three release days - Monday or Fridays during the school year - to provide time for strategically aligned professional learning for school staff from 7:30 to 3:30. 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 and that ultimately, our students receive maximum benefits.</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>Research shows the importance of professional learning for teachers & the benefits it has for students.</p> <p>In a 2010 paper titled "Why professional development matters," Hayes Mizell of Learning Forward discusses the research supporting professional learning for teachers: "When asked what they want for their children, parents, and community members overwhelmingly agree that they want the best teacher possible in every classroom. Research confirms that the most important factor contributing to a student's success in school is the quality of teaching. While parents may not be familiar with the research, they are united in their desire to ensure great teaching for every child. Professional development is the most effective strategy schools and school districts have to meet this expectation." All effective teaching is the result of study, reflection, practice, and hard work. A teacher can never know enough about how a student learns, what impedes the student's learning, and how the teacher's instruction can increase the student's learning. Professional development is the only means for teachers to gain such knowledge. Mizell also stresses that "Policymakers, community leaders, and parents have a responsibility to ensure that educators within their schools engage in continuous professional learning and apply that learning to increase student</p>

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



achievement.”

Research supports the implementation of professional learning with an entire school team & during the school year.

When educators engage in professional development at their schools with their colleagues, they can learn from each other, support one another, and hold each other accountable for applying what they learn. Learning during the school year makes it easier for educators to apply what they learn immediately within their work places so that students benefit immediately.

Ocee believes that our teachers will reap the most benefit from professional learning that occurs over the course of several full-days.

While teachers typically need substantial professional development in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and their students’ learning, most professional development opportunities in the U.S. are much shorter. Thus, implementing a sustained, continuous professional learning model for our teachers over the course of the school year will allow for the best outcomes for Ocee’s students and teachers.

Research from the National Staff Development Council suggests that professional development should be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice. Yet most professional development for teachers comes in the form of occasional workshops, typically lasting less than a day, each one focusing on discrete topics (such as classroom management, computer-based instruction, student motivation, assessment, the teaching of phonics, and so on), with their connection to the classroom left to teachers’ imaginations (Professional Learning in the Learning Profession, 2009). However, as experts point out, “such episodic workshops disconnected from practice do not allow teachers the time for serious, cumulative study of the given subject matter or for trying out ideas in the classroom and reflecting on the results.”

Ocee’s professional learning plan – and the request for full days of release time to implement the plan – is supported by research showing that the duration of professional development appears to be associated with stronger impact on teachers and student learning. The more intense, long-term professional development teachers have, the greater the achievement gains posted by their students during the following year.

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

Finally, experts contend that professional development should align with school improvement priorities and goals. Research suggests that professional development tends to be more effective when it is an integral part of a larger school reform effort, rather than when activities are isolated, having little to do with other initiatives or changes underway at the school. Ocee’s intention is to use the requested days of release time to conduct professional learning for teachers that truly aligns with the strategic direction of the school and connects every classroom teacher with the goals of improving student achievement.

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



	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		
4) Outline the expected results in the columns to the right.	Project Outcomes	Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Outcomes
	Improve students' critical thinking skills	Teachers will learn and implement instructional practices focusing on critical thinking skills.	Increase the level of rigor and student engagement in academic tasks
	Further develop the ability of teacher teams to analyze and use data to drive instruction and promote student achievement	Teachers will receive additional coaching on data utilization as a way to increase student achievement.	Expand data utilization and communication of student progress to parents.
	Enhance the development of strong character and good citizenship	Teachers will work collaboratively to meet PBIS standards.	Implement a consistent school-wide behavior plan that focuses on positive behavior
Waiver(s) Requested			
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.)	Fulton County has already waived the number of instructional days and minutes required by the state of Georgia. However, should Fulton County cease its waiver, Ocee Elementary is requesting the following waiver from the State. SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES. GA State Law – Code sections: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151(b) which sets the number of hours of instructional time for educational programs. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-168(c) which sets the number of instructional days per year.		
6) List any flexibility from Fulton County Schools' policy	Ocee Elementary is seeking a waiver from Fulton County School Board Policy AE (Applicable School Year) which says "The school year shall consist of 178 teaching days or the equivalent, except in the event of		

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



<p>required to implement the concept. (Facilitators will identify the specific Fulton County Schools policies requiring exemptions.)</p>	<p>emergency school closures.”</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. 	<p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students & families – Schedule change with 3 additional teacher workdays/ student release days (tentatively planned for late September, late October, and early February). Students benefit from teachers’ increased skills and knowledge • Personnel – Professional Learning activities from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on the designated days. • Transportation – will not be needed on these 3 days. FCS will directly handle Transportation staffing on release days. School Nutrition – will not be needed on these 3 days. FCS will directly handle Nutrition staffing on release days. Teaching, learning, and assessment – Teachers will receive training in Instructional best practices that target higher order thinking skills, strategies specific to data utilization and positive character development.
<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>Ocee ES will use money from the school budget – General Fund - to support the cost of trainer(s) and materials for these Professional Development days.</p>

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



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: Ocee Elementary School

Budget Item	Item Description (Include quantities if applicable)	<Insert School Year>		<Insert School Year>		<Insert School Year>		Notes
		Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	Amount Budgeted*	Proposed Funding Source(s)**	
Teacher(s)		0		0		0		
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		0		0		0		
Professional Development		\$5000.00	School Budget – General Fund	0		0		
Independent Contractor(s)		0		0		0		
Transportation		0		0		0		
Supplements		0		0		0		
Other Professional Services		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
GRAND TOTALS		\$ 5000.00		\$ 0.00		\$ 0.00		

*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).