

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



INSTRUCTIONS: Please write your responses in the boxes below.

SCHOOL NAME: Wilson Creek Elementary

CONCEPT NAME: Full Release Days for Staff Professional Learning

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Focus Area 1: Provide professional development for teachers in the areas of critical thinking

Concept Summary

<p>1) Describe the need/challenge that your school seeks to address.</p>	<p>At Wilson Creek, our primary purpose is to create an environment “Where Children Experience Success.” As a high-achieving school, we need to continue to challenge our students and increase the number of students who score “Commendable” or score significantly above average on standardized assessments. At the same time we aim to cultivate students’ critical thinking skills, improve their ability to think globally, and expand their use of technology in the classroom. In order to achieve this goal, Wilson Creek will focus on developing the capacity of our instructional staff by providing the time for them to attend professional development on higher order/critical thinking (HOCT). Implementing these strategies will help students to think critically and globally, solve problems and develop their communication and research skills.</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, reviewing student work and collaborative planning. Teachers also meet during their common planning or “specials” time at least one day per week to further discuss student performance, and develop solutions to address students’ needs. In our current professional development model, the Fulton County Work Days are used for district and school-wide trainings, parent conferences, completing report cards, and collaborative planning. 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 cutting-edge curricular offerings to our students.</p> <p>In order to increase student engagement in rigorous and applicable learning tasks, we are requesting three full student release days during the 2015-16 school year. Instructional staff will use this time to engage in collaborative and in-depth professional development. Students will not attend school on two days during first semester and one day during second semester. We are confident that structured professional development time will help to ensure that our teachers achieve maximum understanding of integrating HOCT into their lessons. Ultimately, our students will receive maximum benefits in critical thinking skills.</p>
<p>2) Describe the proposed concept, and explain how it addresses the need/challenge identified above.</p>	<p>Wilson Creek 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 HOCT professional development opportunities during the instructional year.</p>

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



We are finding it increasingly challenging to secure substitutes for training during the school day. This makes scheduling time for teachers to work in Professional Learning Communities very difficult and not inclusive of all teachers.

We are requesting a total of three student release days per year for staff professional development. The release days will be strategically planned around weekends (Mondays and Fridays) to allow parents to plan for childcare and/or family activities. We will make every effort to strategically plan the release days with feeder schools.

The professional days for staff will consist of an eight hour workday (7:30 a.m.- 3:30p.m.). The modified calendar will reduce the total number of days that the students attend school; however, as a staff, we will benefit by increasing our knowledge of integrating HOCT into lessons. We will learn a myriad of higher thinking strategies and how to best implement critical thinking skills in kindergarten through 5th grade in all content areas. We expect that the professional development gained will have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning within the classrooms. We believe professional development effects students' achievement through three steps. First, professional development enhances teacher knowledge and skills. Second, better knowledge and skills improve classroom teaching. Third, improved teaching raises student achievement.

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.

When teachers have dedicated time for professional learning in addition to time for regular tasks, they are available to learn and have the opportunity to think, work collaboratively, and process what they are learning. When educators engage in professional development with their colleagues, they can learn from one another, support one another, and hold each other accountable for applying what they have learned. Feedback from our staff overwhelmingly supports full release days in order to give them more intensive training with their full attention. It has been challenging to designate the needed professional learning time in our current calendar.

Factors for Success:

Students will benefit from teachers being well-prepared to implement instructional best practices.

Students will benefit from an increase in HOCT.

Administration will diligently work with parents, daycares, and afterschool providers to ensure that students have appropriate care accommodations.

Families can take advantage of this time to reconnect.

Students will have the opportunity to schedule appointments during non-instructional hours.

4) Outline the expected results in the columns to the right.

Project Outcomes

Short-Term Goals

Long-Term Outcomes

Provide professional development for teachers in the areas of HOCT

Teachers will learn HOCT strategies from TAG certified teachers and district experts

Students will demonstrate an increased use of critical thinking skills across all content areas

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



	<p>Increase teacher knowledge of HOCT strategies</p> <p>Teachers will incorporate HOCT strategies across the core content curriculum</p>	<p>Teachers will have time to develop higher level units of study</p>	<p>Increase student mastery of standards and their ability to collaborate effectively</p> <p>Increase student engagement in rigorous and applicable learning tasks</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>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>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.</p>
<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>Wilson Creek Elementary is seeking a waiver from Fulton County School Board Policy AE (Applicable School Year) which states “The school year shall consist of 180 teaching days or the equivalent, except in the event of emergency school closures.”</p>

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 	<p>Students and families: With the schedule change of three additional professional learning days during the school year, families will be required to coordinate childcare on these days.</p> <p>Personnel: Teachers will have three days of dedicated, uninterrupted professional learning time from 7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Personnel: Professional Learning activities will occur for paraprofessionals from 7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. on the same days.</p> <p>School schedule – Revised calendar</p> <p>Transportation – Fulton County Schools (FCS) will directly handle transportation staff implications. Transportation will be positively impacted by saving fuel costs through the reduction of the elementary route on the Full Release Days.</p>
--	--

Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



addressed above.

School Nutrition – FCS will directly handle nutrition staff implications

Teaching, learning, and assessment – The impact on teaching, learning and assessment will be the loss of instructional days for students. However, the positive impact is that our teachers will engage in training in HOCT best practices that will equip them to provide more meaningful instruction to the students during all other instructional days.

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.

During the 2015-16 school year, the money for the workshop presenter and resources will be requested via the Seed Fund. For the subsequent years, the money will be allocated via the Seed Fund within the professional development line item of the school's general operational budget.

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: Wilson Creek Elementary

Budget Item	Item Description (Include quantities if applicable)	<2015-2016>		<2016-2017>		<2017-2018>		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	HOCT books/resources	500	Seed Fund	500	Seed Fund	500	Seed Fund	
Professional Development		0		0		0		
Independent Contractor(s)	Workshop Presenters	6000	Seed Fund	6000	Seed Fund	6000	Seed Fund	
Transportation		0		0		0		
Supplements		0		0		0		
Other Professional Services		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
GRAND TOTALS		\$ 6500.00		\$ 6500.00		\$ 6500.00		

*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).