August 2014

Dear Fulton Central Office Staff,

As Georgia’s largest charter system, Fulton County Schools is on an exciting journey to create learning environments where student achievement increases and innovation thrives. This is our opportunity to reimagine education in new and forward-thinking ways.

Developing truly innovative and effective schools depends on increasing local school autonomy. We believe in a system in which schools take more ownership of decision making and assume appropriate levels of accountability for results.

The charter system model is a new framework for school support. It’s one where local school leaders, School Governance Councils, and central office staff work together to positively affect student achievement. It represents a change from “business as usual,” requiring us to think differently about everything – how we operate, how we engage with our communities, and how we make decisions. That’s why it is important to articulate how we envision this model working in practice.

This School Autonomy Guidebook is a tool we’ll use to meet the ambitious goals and commitments of the district’s Strategic Plan 2017: Building Our Future. The guidebook outlines six guiding principles that drive the way we think about local school autonomy. It also clarifies the role of central office staff and reflects learning from our first years of charter system implementation. We hope this tool is a useful resource for you as we work together to empower our school communities.

Thank you for joining us on this journey and for your continued support.

Robert M. Avossa, Ed.D.
Superintendent
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Introduction: The Path to Increased Innovation and Excellence in Our Schools

As Georgia’s largest charter system, Fulton County Schools (FCS) has an unprecedented level of freedom and flexibility to meet the diverse needs of students across the district, educate children to meet their full potential, and increase system-wide efficiency and effectiveness through ongoing operational improvements. Since becoming a charter system in 2012, we have made a deliberate shift in our approach to decision making. Our schools now benefit from greater levels of autonomy and assume appropriate levels of accountability for results. School communities are empowered to determine how to use their resources and design new practices that address school needs. We believe our new model will enable us to guarantee that every FCS student graduates from high school on time, well prepared for college and career.

The aim of this document is to present a path to increased innovation and excellence in our schools and communities. We must think differently about how the district operates to achieve the bold vision outlined in FCS’ charter system contract with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) and the five-year Strategic Plan 2017: Building Our Future. The specific goals of this document are as follows:

1. Explain the guiding principles that drive our approach to school autonomy;
2. Demonstrate how we use the guiding principles to determine what decisions are made at the school level and what decisions are made at the district level; and
3. Describe how central office leaders and staff support schools as they consider new practices and strategies.

The following pages outline our path to achieving these goals as highlighted in Figure 1.

1. Build a Common Understanding that Autonomy is Important
2. Clarify What Schools Can and Cannot Do
3. Guide What Schools Should and Should Not Pursue

Figure 1 - Path to Increased Innovation and Excellence in Our Schools
1. Why Is School Autonomy Important?

Fulton County Schools serves a student population with diverse learning needs. School communities vary by such characteristics as the percentage of low-income students, number of English language learners, and special needs populations, to name a few. Achievement also varies across schools with some schools boasting large percentages of students meeting or exceeding state math and reading standards, while others struggle to get students to meet the minimum bar.

While FCS strategies pursued over the years have generated some positive results, they have not succeeded in eradicating achievement gaps. Moreover, rules and regulations at the state and local level have resulted in an education system that is often rigid and resistant to innovation, effectively stunting our ability to reach our long-term outcome of graduating all students ready for college and career.

We believe that in order to achieve our district goals we need to:

- **Recognize FCS’ Diversity**: We serve 95,000 students who are diverse in their socioeconomic status, academic readiness, home languages, interests, and more. Clearly, one approach will not work across all schools and students.

- **Move Decisions Closer to Kids**: Schools are best positioned to assess the needs and determine solutions for their students. School leaders and local stakeholders play a pivotal role in decision making through School Governance Councils.

- **Empower Schools to Implement Unique Solutions**: Schools need support, through flexibility from stringent policies and rules and, when possible, through start-up funding, in order to pursue unique and sometimes uncharted solutions.

We, as a school district, believe in local school autonomy – that is, empowering schools to take more ownership of decision making and assume appropriate levels of accountability. By embracing school autonomy, we move closer to achieving our district’s goals and enable local schools to create customized educational experiences for their students.
2. What Are the Boundaries of School Autonomy?

Increasing school autonomy is a key tenet of our theory of action. At the same time, as a charter system, FCS is a system of schools working together, not a collection of individual schools. In a charter system, the Board of Education and Superintendent retain ultimate accountability for student achievement and district operations. Among other things, the Board of Education and Superintendent are responsible for achieving the goals stated in the charter system contract; minimizing district and personal legal and financial risk; protecting student safety; and preserving equity and federal compliance standards. Additionally, as a system of schools, we have the opportunity to minimize non-value add work and additional management responsibilities for our school leaders. Given these realities, some decisions in this new environment continue to be made by the Board of Education and Superintendent.

This document provides a blueprint for local school autonomy in FCS by outlining the six guiding principles, which help us determine what decisions are made at the school level and what decisions are made at the district level. In addition, the guiding principles allow us to ensure that all ideas are considered through a consistent lens as school leaders and School Governance Councils generate them.

Before we discuss the guiding principles in more detail, let’s consider some basic definitions:

Holding a service “tight” means the district would determine how a service is provided and the intention is for it to be provided in the same way across schools.

Letting something “loose” means the school could determine how a service is provided, and hence variation is expected across FCS.

It is the guiding principles that determine whether a decision is tight or loose within FCS. The tables on the subsequent page describe the guiding principles, explain why the principle leads to a decision being either tight or loose, and offer a few examples.
**Part 1. The Guiding Principles**

**Tight Guiding Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Tight/ Loose</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Key District Strategy** | Tight        | Because this practice or service is critical to district strategy, it is important to ensure consistency across all schools. | • Continuous Achievement  
• TKEs, PKEs  
• Compensation Reform |
| **Compliance**       | Tight        | The district has accountability for the service or activity (i.e., to state or federal government), and transferring the accountability to the school would not provide schools with more flexibility and instead may introduce risk and workload to schools. | • Special Education Maintenance of Effort  
• Contracting and Records Management  
• Title I |
| **Economies of Scale** | Tight        | District-wide economies of scale are such that the savings for centralizing outweigh the benefits of school control. | • eSchool+ |

**Loose Guiding Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Tight/ Loose</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Centrality to School Strategic Plan** | Loose        | School’s control over this area is central to the implementation of the School Strategic Plan and its ability to improve student achievement. | • Class Size  
• Seat Time  
• New Courses |
| **Innovative Practice** | Loose        | To meet the needs of its unique student population, a school may need the flexibility to implement a creative or groundbreaking strategy. This strategy, which likely will be new to FCS, must have the potential to produce dramatic gains in student achievement. | • Personalized Learning Initiatives |
| **Close to Students** | Loose        | Principal’s proximity to the service or resource use makes it likely that s/he could manage it more effectively than could the central office. | • Instructional Resources |
Part II. Application of the Guiding Principles

In the previous section, we described the guiding principles, which help us determine which decisions should be made at the school level and which decisions should be made at the district level. Now we turn our attention to the application of the guiding principles. As discussed earlier in this document, FCS is encouraging its schools to think differently, and this requires central office staff to change the way we approach our work and support our schools. All central office staff must not only understand the guiding principles, but also must know how to apply them. In the next few pages, we provide three real-world examples and demonstrate how the guiding principles clarify what falls within the boundaries of autonomy and what does not.

It is important to note that the guiding principles provide a framework, not a formula, for determining whether a decision can be made at the school or district level. In some instances, multiple guiding principles may be applicable, and it would not be uncommon for both tight and loose principles to apply. In these situations, FCS staff must weigh the implications for the school and district and consult with their peers in order to determine the appropriate next steps for the proposed concept.

In the charts on the next few pages, we include the heading “Currently Available/Requires Request for Flexibility.” Note that this heading only applies to ideas that are determined to be loose. Loose ideas fall within one of two categories: 1) those that schools can pursue with support from FCS central office staff, just as they have done in the past (Currently Available) or 2) those that require a waiver of district policy and/or state law or policy (Requires Request for Flexibility). We include a non-exhaustive list of ideas that schools can pursue without a waiver in the appendix. Ideas that require a waiver must be approved through the Request for Flexibility process, which is described in Section 3.

Implementation of loose ideas often requires a significant investment of financial and human capital resources at both the school and district level. Given this, we recommend that schools evaluate their capacity to launch and sustain such efforts and contact district staff for support and guidance as early as possible when exploring new concepts.
### Example 1. Creating a New Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Idea:</th>
<th>An elementary school’s strategic planning process reveals a need to focus on increasing math and science achievement at all grade levels, while also providing students with more opportunities to use technology to enhance their learning. As a result, after carefully considering a variety of options, the school decides that it could best achieve its goals by building a comprehensive STEM program. Offering an integrated STEM curriculum is a key feature of a STEM program. After speaking with district staff, the school learns that the state offers a middle school engineering course, but not an elementary engineering course. Thus, the school seeks to create a new engineering course for its elementary students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicable Guiding Principle(s):</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan  Innovative Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tight/Loose:</td>
<td>Loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why It’s Loose:</td>
<td>The School Governance Council identified two major academic needs as well as a creative way to address those needs. By submitting a new course proposal, the school will be able to design curriculum that is responsive to its students and aligned with its strategic vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Available/Requires Request for Flexibility:</td>
<td>Currently Available. Creating a new course takes approximately 18 to 24 months. Interested schools must work with the Learning &amp; Teaching and Assessment &amp; Evaluation departments to develop the new course proposal and submit it to the GADOE by June 1st of each year for review and submission to the State Board of Education (SBOE). During the review process, the new course proposal will be reviewed by the GADOE appropriate content area advisory committee, the University System of Georgia and/or the Technical College System of Georgia before being presented to the SBOE for final review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example for illustration purposes only*
Example 2. Creating a Seminar-Style Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Idea:</th>
<th>During the strategic planning process, a high school identifies two major student needs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Student and parent surveys indicate that students feel overwhelmed by and underprepared for the transition to college; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Many students have been unable to enroll in AP courses in which they are interested due to a lack of available seats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To address these needs, the school requests a waiver of class size in order to offer several college lecture-style AP courses for its students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicable Guiding Principle(s):</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tight/Loose:</td>
<td>Loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why It's Loose:</td>
<td>One of the school’s three long-term outcomes is to increase students’ college and career readiness. The school seeks to achieve this long-term outcome by providing college-like experiences and increasing students’ access to rigorous learning opportunities. These strategies are an essential part of the school’s instructional vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available/Requires Request for Flexibility:</td>
<td>Requires Request for Flexibility. This idea requires a waiver of FCS and state class size policies. Consequently, the school must request a waiver by submitting a Request for Flexibility proposal, which is explained in Section 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example for illustration purposes only
### Example 3: Compensation Reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Idea:</th>
<th>Results from a teacher survey led a middle school to ask to use new budget flexibilities in order to build a differentiated compensation plan for its teachers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Applicable Guiding Principle(s): | Key District Strategy  
Compliance |
| Tight/Loose: | Tight |
| Why It's Tight: | Inconsistent compensation levels at the school level destabilize the district’s management of its talent and human capital. Bidding for talent between schools can create significant legal risk for the district, has severe implications for employee morale, and affects the sustainability of the school-staffing budget. |
| Available/Requires Request for Flexibility: | Not Applicable. |

Example for illustration purposes only
**Example 4: Early Release Days**

| **The Idea:** | During its strategic planning process, a School Governance Council identifies student engagement as an area of growth. To increase engagement, the School Governance Council decides to introduce a Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) initiative. Providing high-quality professional development to teachers is a key part of the school’s implementation plan. Currently, the school’s teachers meet during the school day in Professional Learning Communities. This time is used for analyzing data, looking at student work, and collaborative planning. Teachers also meet before or after school. The entire staff meets for half days on the FCS-provided teacher workdays. While teachers make the best use of the time given, they need quality, uninterrupted professional development time in order to plan, launch, and refine the BYOT initiative. Thus, the school requests four early release days for professional development during the upcoming school year. |
| **Applicable Guiding Principle(s):** | Centrality to School Strategic Plan  
Economies of Scale |
| **Tight/Loose:** | Loose |
| **Why It's Loose:** | After reviewing the implications for systems, staff, and finances in this instance, FCS leaders determine that the potential benefits for the teachers and students of this school surpass the potential drawbacks. |
| **Available/Requires Request for Flexibility:** | Requires Request for Flexibility. This idea requires a waiver of FCS and state school day policies. Consequently, the school must request a waiver by submitting a Request for Flexibility proposal, which is explained in Section 3. |
3. How Do Schools Determine What Flexibilities to Pursue?

The primary rationale for pursuing charter system status was to improve student performance through greater flexibility with appropriate levels of accountability. Given this purpose, school leaders and School Governance Councils must be prepared to describe how a particular concept will meet the school’s identified need, and more importantly, how the idea will drive sustainable improvements in student achievement.

School leaders and School Governance Councils build their case by developing strong School Strategic Plans and as necessary, Request for Flexibility proposals.

Part I. School Strategic Plans

All FCS schools develop a School Strategic Plan (SSP) when they transition to the charter system. Developed with guidance and input from multiple stakeholders, the SSP is a comprehensive document that establishes the long-term direction for the school.

Charter system schools engage in a strategic planning process that includes the following steps:

1. **Conduct a Needs Assessment:** During this step, school leaders and School Governance Councils collect information about the performance of their schools and the factors that impact performance. This includes academic and operational trends, stakeholder perceptions, and community, socio-economic and other demographic trends.

2. **Identify the Priority Issues:** School leaders and School Governance Councils review all the data collected through the needs assessment and determine those issues so significant to the overall well-being of the school that they require the full and immediate attention of the entire school team.

3. **Establish Long-Term Outcomes, Focus Areas, and Short-Term Goals:** Short-term goals and long-term outcomes describe the results that the school hopes to achieve through the implementation of the SSP. Focus areas are the major areas of work within the school that need to be addressed to achieve the long-term outcomes.

4. **Formulate Strategic Initiatives:** Strategic initiatives are the major programs, policies, or projects that schools plan to implement in order to achieve their goals and outcomes.
5. **Adopt the SSP and Develop a Monitoring Process**: The final steps include the adoption of the SSP by the School Governance Council, approval of the SSP by the Area Superintendent, and creation of a plan for monitoring the SSP.

As part of the strategic planning process, schools may develop and propose innovative strategic initiatives, which may change the way the school and/or district operate. School and district leaders work together to determine whether the practices or strategies fall within the boundaries of school autonomy. Concepts that are deemed loose fall within one of two categories: 1) ideas that schools can pursue with support from FCS central office staff or 2) ideas that require waivers of district policy and/or state law or policy. To pursue the latter, a school must submit an RFF proposal to the district.

**Part II. Requests for Flexibility**

Requests for Flexibility (RFFs) give schools, their stakeholders, and, where applicable, central office leaders and staff the opportunity to assess the feasibility and merit of new concepts. The RFF proposal builds on the SSP and seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure the proposed intervention is aligned to the school’s needs.
- Ensure school community support for the proposal:
  - Proposal demonstrates likelihood of increased student achievement.
  - School community understands the proposal and its rationale.
  - School community has an opportunity for input on the proposal.
- Ensure district support for the proposal:
  - Proposal demonstrates likelihood of increased student achievement.
  - Proposal is legally acceptable within charter system law and regulations.
  - Implications of the proposal are explored by the school and are reviewed by the district.
  - District departments understand which processes and/or policies will need to change in order to implement the proposal.

Currently, School Governance Councils can submit RFFs once per year. The entire RFF process, which takes approximately five to six months, includes five distinct phases:
1. **Explore a Concept:** School Governance Councils, with support from FCS staff, identify strategic initiatives that may necessitate a waiver of district policy and/or state law or policy.

2. **Submit an RFF Interest Form:** School Governance Councils complete and then submit one-page forms that summarize their concepts. Cabinet members, who are the first to review these forms, use the forms to consider the concepts in light of the guiding principles, determine which FCS leaders and staff need to provide feedback on the concepts, and provide initial feedback to the Councils.

3. **Draft the RFF Proposal:** School Governance Councils use the feedback from FCS leaders and staff to draft full RFF proposals, which include a concept summary, a description of the waiver(s) requested, a description of the anticipated impact, and a budget.

4. **Gather and Respond to Public Comment:** School Governance Councils publicize the RFF proposals and gather input about the proposed concept from the school community. School Governance Councils may modify the RFF proposals to incorporate the feedback gathered during the Public Comment period.

5. **Submit the RFF:** In order to be submitted, finalized RFF proposals must receive a 2/3 vote of the School Governance Council. The RFF proposal must receive the recommendation of the school’s Area Superintendent before being submitted to the Superintendent for approval.

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**Part III. The Role of Central Office Staff**

At the beginning of this document, we stated that we must think differently about how we operate in order to achieve the vision described in our charter system contract and in our district strategic plan. This statement is particularly true of the RFF process, during which schools look to central office staff for content expertise and support as they develop their new practices and strategies.

For the 2014-15 RFF cycle, FCS leaders decided to assemble a team of content experts, representing a variety of FCS departments, to review and provide feedback on RFFs being considered by School Governance Councils. This team, called the Charter System Advisory Team, will review initial ideas, make recommendations, assist in the identification of potential implications of the proposed ideas, and help determine the next steps for approved RFFs. Charter System Advisory Team members are asked to keep an open mind when presented with schools’ ideas; generate creative solutions to help schools reach their goals; and attend, or send
a designee, to all Charter System Advisory Team meetings. Other internal and external experts may be engaged during the RFF process to review and refine schools’ ideas. The Charter System Advisory Team will play a pivotal role in this year’s RFF process, and more broadly, in helping FCS to realize the key tenets of the theory of action.
4. Conclusion

The Fulton County Schools Board of Education fully believes that giving our schools more autonomy will drive tremendous gains in student achievement and allow us to become a model for reform across the nation.

This document is just one example of the support and guidance the district will continue to provide to encourage new thinking about how we operate and prioritize actions that improve student outcomes system-wide.

Additional resources and information will be frequently updated at the following websites.

Charter System Website  
www.fultonschools.org/CharterSystem

Strategic Plan 2017: Building Our Future Website  
www.fultonschools.org/StrategicPlan2017
5. Appendix

A. 2013-14 Approved Requests for Flexibility
B. Currently Available Flexibilities
A. 2013-14 Approved Requests for Flexibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>Approved Waivers</th>
<th>Pertinent Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Ultimate Goals and Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverwood High School</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Waiver of specific science courses required for graduation</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to continue to offer four specific courses for IB Diploma Program candidates. These courses are Chemistry, Environmental Systems, Design Technology, or Physics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spalding Drive Charter School</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for early release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>School seeks to provide professional development aligned to TKES and STEM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland Charter Elementary</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for full release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>School seeks to become STEM certified. Professional development will be provided to support this initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial High School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Waiver of pre-requisite requirements for the Work-Based Learning Business Internship</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School aims to provide customized learning opportunities and to allow any interested student to benefit from a Work-Based Learning opportunity. To do this, school will waive the current prerequisite requirements for the Work-based Learning Business Internship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial High School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Waiver of specific physical education courses required for graduation</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to support students with personalized learning solutions that ensure credit completion and grade level academic success seeks. To do this, school will waive the personal fitness credit for students who successfully participate in GHSA sanctioned sports, select non-GHSA Clubs, and marching band.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Approved Waivers</td>
<td>Pertinent Guiding Principles</td>
<td>Ultimate Goals and Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shakerag Elementary School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Waiver of Talented and Gifted education delivery model</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School desires to increase focus on instructional rigor and relevance and on delivering engaging instruction in all classrooms. Gifted students will receive four segments of instruction in the resource classroom and one segment in an advanced math class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northview High School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Class size waiver</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School desires to enhance instructional delivery in support of career connections and authentic learning experiences. To do this, school will offer greater access to AP classes by increasing these class sizes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northview High School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Waiver of requirements for hiring non-certified employees</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>School aims to expand foreign language course offerings. To do this, school will expand teacher recruitment through the hiring of content-experts in the fields of foreign languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakerag Elementary School</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for full release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>School aims to improve classroom instruction and provide an appropriately challenging environment for all students. To achieve this goal, teachers will participate in a Gifted Endorsement program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbotts Hill Elementary School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Class size waiver</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to extend learning and increase student engagement by introducing enrichment classes. To ensure students are in classes that match their interests and learning modalities, school may need to exceed the state limit of class size for the enrichment classes only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Approved Waivers</td>
<td>Pertinent Guiding Principles</td>
<td>Ultimate Goals and Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbotts Hill Elementary School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for early release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to improve students’ critical thinking and higher order thinking skills. To achieve this goal, teachers will participate in a Gifted Endorsement program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hembree Springs Elementary</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for full release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to address the needs of its changing population in an effort to continue the promotion of high academic achievement among all students. Specific professional development will include writing, close reading, and performance tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton High School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for early release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale Centrality to School Strategic Plan</td>
<td>School seeks to promote customized learning for all students. To achieve this goal, professional development is required in the following areas: formative assessment, instructional technology, and engaged learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton High School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Waiver of seat time requirement for blended peer leadership course</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan Close to Students</td>
<td>School seeks to introduce a blended Peer Leadership course for 11th graders. Students who successfully complete this course will be eligible to become peer leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Park Elementary School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Waiver of Talented and Gifted education delivery model</td>
<td>Centrality to School Strategic Plan Close to Students</td>
<td>School aims to increase rigorous instruction for all students by fully implementing the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. This necessitates a change to the TAG delivery model in two material ways: 1. Advanced Content vs. Direct Services 2. Five segments of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Approved Waivers</td>
<td>Pertinent Guiding Principles</td>
<td>Ultimate Goals and Objectives</td>
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<tr>
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<td>School calendar waiver for full release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>School seeks to implement the Schoolwide Enrichment Model by providing inquiry-based learning in Science and Social Studies. This involves curriculum writing for both general education and gifted education. Professional development will involve both curriculum development and program implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roswell North Elementary School</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>School calendar waiver for full release days</td>
<td>Economies of Scale</td>
<td>School aims to implement a project-based learning model that incorporates academic achievement, civic engagement and the acquisition of 21st century skills. Professional development will be aligned to this model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonewall Tell Elementary School</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Waiver of requirements for hiring non-certified employees and Fine Arts</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>School seeks to offer a digital media arts and design course to students K-5th taught by content or industry expert.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Available Flexibilities

There are many practices and strategies that schools can pursue without a waiver by collaborating with FCS central office staff. We’ve listed a few of these flexibilities below:

- Creating new courses\(^1\)
- Determining staffing priorities (e.g., TAG)
- Selecting custodial or other building support services
- Bringing in non-certified volunteers to augment the school’s instructional staff
- Launching BYOT initiatives\(^2\)
- Implementing the Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- Offering foreign language instruction in elementary schools
- Converting funds within a school's cost center budget

As mentioned earlier, implementation of these concepts may require a significant investment of financial and human capital resources at both the school and district level. Given this, we recommend that schools evaluate their capacity to launch and sustain such efforts and contact district staff for support and guidance as early as possible when exploring new concepts.

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\(^1\) New course additions must be submitted to and approved by the State Board of Education. These proposals are due by June 1 each year.

\(^2\) Visit the following link for guidelines and general information regarding BYOT initiatives in FCS: employees.fultonschools.org/academics/landt/InstructinalTechnology/Documents/2014_approved_BYOT_Guidelines_.pdf