

Request for Flexibility Proposal

DIRECTIONS: Please write your responses in the boxes below. Pages 1-3 constitute the school’s draft Request for Flexibility proposal; schools must complete these pages in advance of the school’s Public Comment period. Schools must complete Page 4 before the final submission of the proposal to the school’s Area Superintendent.

SCHOOL NAME:	Mountain Park Elementary
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:	Schoolwide Enrichment Model - Release from Local Resource Model for Talented and Gifted Instruction
SPECIFIC ACTION STEP, IF APPLICABLE:	

Concept Summary	
<p>1) Describe the proposed concept and the target population (grade, subgroup, etc.). Explain the need that the concept addresses, and describe how your concept meets this need.</p>	<p>Mountain Park Elementary continuously strives to set and maintain high expectations for student achievement through student-centered, results driven instruction. In order to meet our Long Term Objectives of increasing student achievement at the highest levels in reading, language arts and mathematics, we have designed a plan for engaging all students in critical thinking strategies and high-level instruction every day.</p> <p>During the Strategic Planning process, a need for improvement was identified. While our pass-rate on standardized tests is high for all students, there is a discrepancy between our students’ aptitude, reflected by performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and their level of achievement, as reflected by performance on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Mountain Park students’ performance on the ITBS is consistently among the highest in the district. High achievement on the ITBS should correlate to high achievement on the CRCT. When we compare Mountain Park Elementary’s percentage of students scoring in the Level 3 (Exceeds) category on the CRCT with the Level 3 percentage at similar schools, other schools have more students scoring in the exceeds category. We believe we must do something differently to increase student achievement at the highest levels.</p>

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Our plan will provide a daily 50-minute enrichment period for all Mountain Park Elementary students. All students will participate in Project Based Learning (PBL) based on science and social studies units planned collaboratively by Talented and Gifted (TAG) and general education teachers. PBL incorporates higher level thinking strategies, engages students in collaborative problem solving, and facilitates the construction of knowledge and deeper understanding of skills and concepts.

Each unit will include Type III learning activities (student-centered, higher level and interest-driven) and incorporate TAG strategies that promote student-centered curriculum design and elevated teacher instruction. In our PBL model for grades 2-5, each general education teacher becomes an “expert” in one unit. Throughout the school year, each class will rotate through the units ensuring that all students have the opportunity to fully explore unit topics and deepen their learning. TAG teachers become experts in two units and TAG students rotate between TAG teachers. In light of developmentally appropriate practice, teachers in grades K and 1 will become experts in more than one area to minimize transitions.

Currently TAG students are pulled out for one day of instruction with a TAG teacher. On the day students are pulled out for TAG, the general education students participate in Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) units. Teachers have identified a need to raise the level of rigor for these units in order for students to get the most out of these days, when new material cannot be introduced, due to the absence of the TAG students. Through implementing the collaborative, project-based units, we plan to give all of our students the best possible and most intellectually appropriate learning experience.

This plan will benefit:

- Talented and Gifted students
- general education students
- teachers

Talented and Gifted students benefit by:

- Receiving differentiated science and social studies instruction
- Being able to work at their own pace, while continuing to develop increased depth of

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knowledge

- The elimination of missed class time from daily math, reading and English/Language Arts (ELA)
- Integration of TAG strategies and critical thinking tasks every day across subject areas
- The highest quality of instruction

General education students will benefit from:

- The increased rigor of the PBL units
- The opportunity to participate in more critical thinking and higher level performance tasks
- Increased teacher knowledge of PBL and TAG strategies
- The highest quality of instruction

Teachers benefit from:

- Focus on planning and implementing one or two science and/or social studies units for the year
- Opportunity to become an “expert” on those topics/units
- Increased time for the general education teachers to focus on planning for reading, ELA and math
- Opportunity for peer-modeling and coaching by the TAG teachers on TAG strategies
- Collaborative planning for TAG and general education teachers to share differentiation and enrichment strategies – learning from each other to best meet student needs

This plan meets our Long Term Objectives of increasing student achievement at the highest levels in reading, language arts and math by engaging all students in critical thinking strategies and higher level performance tasks every day.

To ensure successful implementation of our PBL model, including daily 50 minute periods of TAG instruction, we will require additional TAG teacher(s) for 4th and 5th grades. One teacher would teach two periods daily and then push into general classrooms to support and model the use of project-based and TAG strategies. Our model also requires a PBL coach to support the development of project-based units, design and facilitate project-based training for teachers, engage in collaborative planning with grade level teams, and ensure effective implementation of units.

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<p>2) 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>Dr. Michael Rettig, expert on effective scheduling recommends support services, such as talented and gifted, be integrated with the regular school program. The proposed model reduces the separation of TAG and general education students, provides a more equitable curriculum while preserving the time TAG students spend with TAG teachers.</p> <p>Sally Reis and Joyce VanTassel-Baska, renowned gifted education experts, in a description of program delivery models for the gifted, identify the strengths of this type of model as a highly focused course syllabus. Gifted students will have the opportunity to work through the unit at their own pace and TAG teachers can move beyond the content if students finish at a faster pace.</p> <p>Likewise, general education students will benefit from participating in a more "TAG-like" curriculum that includes additional rigor and incorporates higher order thinking strategies. In the Spring 2001 National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented newsletter, researcher E. Jean Gubbins cited studies that show using gifted strategies with all students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raised their expectations for student work ● Recognized that students were ready for challenging work ● Changed classroom practice <p>Yvette Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban Alliance, stated in a January 27, 2012 blog: "Providing for the academically least and most among us is not an either/or proposition for schools. We can and must succeed on both accounts. To do this we must see all students as gifted and talented...the sooner we share the gifted and talented strategies that embrace student experience, elicit strengths and interests, and engage challenging investigations of real-life issues, the sooner we will cultivate and see the accelerated learning that is both needed and possible."</p> <p>In order to "embrace student experience, elicit strengths and interests, and engage challenging investigations of real-life issues" we propose the Project-Based Learning model (PBL). PBL has been shown to support student achievement as measured by standardized tests and students' ability to think critically.</p>

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	<p>Dr. Barbara Swicord states in a 2013 National Society for the Gifted and Talented journal article “While PBL can motivate and engage students of all ability levels, it is an elegant way to facilitate the characteristics of gifted education that can be difficult for teachers to infuse in their classrooms using more traditional methods.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Waivers/Flexibility Requested</p>	
<p>3) Explain any waivers from state law, regulation, or rule required to implement the concept. <i>(Facilitators will take the lead on the development of this portion of the proposal.)</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4) Explain any flexibility from Fulton County Schools policy required to implement the concept. <i>(Facilitators will identify the specific Fulton County Schools policies requiring exemptions.)</i></p>	<p>FCS Board Policy IDDD governs the instruction of intellectually gifted students and states that, “The enriched curriculum will be delivered through appropriate delivery models implemented consistently throughout the School System.” Currently FCS requires that all schools implement the full day resource (pull-out) delivery model for gifted instruction. We are requesting flexibility from the Local Resource Model such that students attend TAG for a 50 minute period each day as opposed to one full-day. Students will still be served the full 5 gifted segments per school week which will not impact FTE funding.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Impact on Students and Families, Personnel, Departments, Processes, and Schools</p>	
<p>5) List any impact of the concept on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students and families; ▪ Personnel; ▪ The school schedule; ▪ Transportation; 	<p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gifted students – daily schedule change, eliminating missing regular class time and allowing students to attend the entire math period each day. ● General education students – opportunity to engage in more high level learning experiences and gain exposure to TAG strategies.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School nutrition; ▪ Teaching, learning, and assessment; ▪ School or district departments or processes not already listed; ▪ Other schools; and ▪ Any other area not addressed above. <p><i>(Facilitators will help gather information from relevant Fulton County Schools departments for this portion of the proposal.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personnel – we will need to hire additional TAG teacher(s) in order to have three TAG teachers each day. This will require 3 additional days of TAG, the equivalent cost of a 60% teacher. One teacher would teach 4th & 5th grade TAG classes (two 50 minute periods) and then work with teachers on unit development and modeling TAG strategies in classrooms. We will also need a PBL coach – equivalent cost of a teacher. ● School schedule – we will re-organize the school schedule to provide the enrichment block for each grade level at times when TAG teachers can also provide the science/social studies curriculum. ● Transportation & School nutrition – none ● Teaching, learning, and assessment – TAG teachers will be assigning grades for students in science and social studies, teachers will receive training in PBL
Budget	
<p>6) Please use the budget template on the next page to provide the estimated costs of the concept. In the space to the right, please identify, to the extent possible, how you plan to modify your school budget to support any additional funding required and/or identify external funding source(s).</p>	<p>We will request funding for a PBL coach and additional TAG teachers through the Seed Fund. After the three year plan implementation, we don't anticipate needing the continued full-time support of the coach. We could support the additional TAG teacher(s) with cost-center funds.</p>

ATTACH THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ACTION PLAN RELATED TO THIS REQUEST FOR FLEXIBILITY.

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

SCHOOL NAME: Mountain Park Elementary

	<i>2013-14</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2015-16</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)	Additional TAG teacher(s)	43,000	Seed Fund	36,000	Seed Fund	36,000	FCS Seed Fund	Less time should be required for modeling in classrooms and unit development after the first year.
Paraprofessional(s)		0		0		0		
Support Staff		0		0		0		
Additional Pay (certified)/Overtime (non-certified)	Stipends for teachers to write units during the summer	15,000		0		0	FCS Seed Fund	
Equipment		0		0		0		
Supplies/Materials	Cogat materials for all students not currently in	7,000		3,500		3,500		

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	the TAG program							
Professional Development		0		0		0		
Independent Contractor(s)		0		0		0		
Transportation		0		0		0		
Supplements		0		0		0		
Other Professional Services	Project Based-Learning Coach	82,683.95		82,683.95		82,683.95	FCS Seed Fund	This will no longer be needed as a full time position after the 3 years. The need could be met on a consulting basis.
Other		0		0		0		
Other		0		0		0		
GRAND TOTALS		\$147683.95		\$122783.95		\$122783.95		

DIRECTIONS: The *Evidence of Public Notification and Comment* section will not be included in the draft proposal provided for Public Comment, but it must be included in the final RFF proposal that your school submits to Fulton County Schools. The *Attachments* section may or may not be included in the draft proposal provided for Public Comment.

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Evidence of Public Notification and Comment	
7) List the date that your school posted the draft proposal to the school's webpage and where it was posted in the school building.	Draft proposal published 11.11.13 to school website and posted in the front office. Proposal was also emailed via School Messenger to all parents and staff on 11.11.13
8) List the date(s) and location(s) of public meetings during which the School Governance Council solicited oral comments.	Public Comment meetings were held on 11.14.13 at 6:00 p.m. and 11.15.13 at 7:30 a.m.
9) Describe the process used to solicit written comments on the draft proposal.	Written comments were solicited and received via School Governance Council members' email addresses. A comment box was available in the front office but was not utilized.
10) Explain how you have addressed any significant concerns raised through the Public Comment process in the final proposal.	The principal met individually with four parents who had specific questions and concerns. The School Governance Council combined the feedback into similar commentary and wrote a written response, posted in the front office and set via School Messenger on 1.14.14.
Attachments	
11) Please list any supporting documents and provide them as attachments. Must attach Strategic Initiative Action Plan.	Strategic Initiative Action Plan

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:	
DATE:	

