

Q & A

Dolvin Elementary School Governance Council

2015-2016 Request For Flexibility (RFF)

As a Cohort 2 school, Dolvin's School Governance Council (SGC) has been integral in creating our 3-year strategic plan and is able to request waivers from state law or school system policy to help achieve our long-term objectives (Foster critical and global thinkers, Develop a supportive community, Develop an engaging student-centered environment). Our SGC's Request for Flexibility (RFF) includes three full student release days in the 2015-2016 school calendar for teacher training.

1. **What are we asking for?** Three additional training days to increase teacher strategies for student-centered learning and developing an engaging student-centered environment that is differentiated to meet the unique needs and interests of all students.

2. **What does this mean for students participating in the TAG program?** Tag students will be exposed to additional TAG strategies and activities everyday instead of just once per week. They will continue to also be pulled out once a week.

3. **What does this mean for the overall student population?** After our teachers complete the training they will be able to expose ALL students to numerous TAG instructional strategies and activities on a daily basis and across all classes.

4. **What does this mean for Dolvin Teachers?** Over the course of several full-day sessions, teachers will participate in a TAG strategies class with 50 hours of instruction. This training is directly related to our schoolwide Strategic Plan and our goal to enhance teacher instruction that will provide all students with an academically challenging environment. This new knowledge will also enable teachers to implement part of the School Enrichment Model (SEM). In an article titled "What is Schoolwide Enrichment? And How Do Gifted Programs Relate to Total School Improvement?" (www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/whatisem.html) it states that this model "applies the know-how of gifted education to a systematic plan for total school improvement." The goal of this model is to "escalate the level and quality of learning experiences for any and all students...the model provides guidance for the development of challenging and appropriate educational opportunities for all young people, regardless of differences in demographic and economic backgrounds or differences in rates, styles and levels at which they learn." Those already certified can go and observe other schools who have already implemented the strategy.

5. **What does this mean for Dolvin Parents?** Our RFF proposal is asking for additional time to train our teachers in strategies that will engage ALL students. The training will require three additional professional development days in the 2015-2016 school calendar. The days will provide students with more time to travel with their families or spend time together. We have aligned our requested days off with the middle school in an effort to alleviate potential childcare and transportation issues. The proposed dates are 9/4/15, 10/13/15 and 2/16/16.

6. What are the expected results from this RFF?

Short term:

- Increase student achievement using project –based learning
- Increase the use of interdisciplinary connections
- Increase critical thinking across all content areas
- Increase teacher strategies for student-centered learning

Long term:

- Foster critical and global thinkers through rigorous and relevant learning
- Develop an engaging student-centered environment that is differentiated to meet the unique needs and interests of each learner

7. How will this training be paid for? As a Cohort 2 school, we have access to Fulton County's Seed Fund. We will apply and request funding through the seed fund to pay for the TAG Strategies Class with 50 hours of instruction for the implementation for the 2015-2016 school year. The Seed Fund (<http://portal.fultonschools.org/CharterSystem/Pages/SeedFund.aspx>) was created specifically to help schools move forward with ideas that will improve school performance and positively impact students.

8. How will 3 fewer instructional days impact student learning? The students will benefit more throughout the year and in following years as teachers apply the knowledge and skills they develop through the course while still ensuring all standards are met.