

## Request for Flexibility 2014-15 Proposal



**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please write your responses in the boxes below.

SCHOOL NAME: Autrey Mill Middle School

CONCEPT NAME: Full Release Days for Professional Learning

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: Increase number of interdisciplinary units by providing modified schedules during portions of the semester; Change schedule to incorporate RTI and enrichment

<b>Concept Summary</b>	
1) Describe the need/challenge that your school seeks to address.	As a learning community, we are committed to providing rigorous and relevant instruction for all of our students to prepare them to be college and career ready. We recognize the need to have our students engage in more interdisciplinary learning and have identified project/problem-based learning as a means for students to learn content through real-world challenges and applications. While our teachers are eager to embrace interdisciplinary teaching, they need professional development in problem-based learning to design appropriate and rigorous instructional experiences for the students.
2) Describe the proposed concept, and explain how it addresses the need/challenge identified above.	Autrey Mill Middle School proposes two full days of student release days, one day each semester. On these days, teachers will receive professional development on problem-based learning as well as time to use what they learned from the training to develop appropriate and rigorous lessons and performance tasks for their students. Through this professional development, classrooms will be student-centered and will provide rigorous and relevant learning opportunities for all students.
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>The Buck Institute for Education is a leader in PBL and has tremendous resources for teachers, as well as research on the effectiveness of PBL.</p> <p>In Margarets Holms' "Project-Based Instruction: A Review of the Literature on Effectiveness in Prekindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms", there is much detail about PBL and its academic outcomes. Some of the highlights are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project-based learning, a teaching methodology that utilizes student-centered projects to facilitate student learning (Mergendoller, 2006), is touted as superior to traditional teaching methods in improving problem solving and thinking skills, and engaging students in their learning (Berends, Boersma &amp; Weggemann, 2003; Scarborough, Bresnen, Edelman, Laurent, Newell &amp; Swann, 2004; Tsang, 1997). Popular in pre-</li> </ul>

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	<p>professional training in medicine, science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers since the 1970's, momentum has more recently developed to extend these practices to elementary and secondary classrooms (Buck Institute, 2005; Knoll, 1997).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers reported that the real-world focus of the projects allowed students who did not generally shine in academic discussions to share their knowledge about subject-matter that was familiar and accessible. Teachers in this study also reported a reduced need for disciplinary actions during project-based study, citing increased student engagement as the chief reason. Additionally, several studies indicated that the beneficial academic effects of project-based instruction were most pronounced for middle- to low-achieving students (Mergendoller &amp; Maxwell, 2006; Tal, Krajcik and Blumenfeld, 2006).</li> <li>Research clearly indicates that project-based learning is beneficial, with positive outcomes including increases in level of student engagement, heightened interest in content, more robust development of problem-solving strategies, and greater depth of learning and transfer of skills to new situations (Hmelo-Silver, 2007; Thomas, 2000; Barron, et al., 1998).</li> </ul> <p>According to Sungur, Tekkaya, and Geban in the <i>Journal of Biological Education</i>, "It is suggested that instructional methods promoting high level cognitive processing such as PBL should be integrated into the curriculum. Since the teacher plays a vital role in the implementation of such instructional methods – as a coordinator of activities, as a model of an expert learner, as a facilitator, and as an evaluator (Cooper, 2002) – they should undergo extensive training."  <a href="http://www.newtechnetwork.org/sites/default/files/dr/science/achievementturkey.pdf">http://www.newtechnetwork.org/sites/default/files/dr/science/achievementturkey.pdf</a></p>		
4) Outline the expected results in the columns to the right.	Project Outcomes	Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Outcomes
	<p>Professional development in the use of problem based learning.</p> <p>Teacher collaboration time to plan units using what was</p>	<p>Increase student achievement.</p> <p>Increase student participation in real-world, interdisciplinary learning.</p>	<p>Develop critical thinkers who excel in rigorous and relevant learning environments.</p> <p>Increase students' preparedness for high</p>

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	learned in training.	Increase teacher effectiveness in rigor and relevance and in the use of differentiation.  Increase teacher's effective use of transformative technology.	school and community.
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.)	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) sets out the number of hours of instructional time for educational programs. O.C.G.A & 20-2-168(c) sets out the number of instructional days per year.		
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.)	We seek to waive Fulton County Board Policy: 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" for the next school year (2015- 2016).		
Impact on Students and Families, Personnel, Departments, Processes, and Schools			
7) List any impact of the concept on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students and families;</li> <li>▪ Personnel;</li> <li>▪ The school schedule;</li> <li>▪ Transportation;</li> <li>▪ School nutrition;</li> <li>▪ Teaching, learning, and assessment;</li> <li>▪ Other schools; and</li> <li>▪ Any other area not addressed above.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students and family:</b> Families will have to coordinate childcare on the professional development days. Autrey Mill will make every effort to plan the days alongside an additional student holiday or on Mondays or Fridays as to try to help parents with potential childcare needs. In doing so, parents can potentially enjoy a longer weekend and/or travel with their children that would otherwise result in unexcused absences.</p> <p><b>Transportation:</b> Professional development whole days will have a positive impact on transportation as it will save the county money on gas. The bus routes for our middle school will not have to run on these days.</p> <p><b>Personnel:</b> Paraprofessional's schedules would be adjusted so that they would work two days during the preplanning or on a professional learning day.</p>		

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	<p>This schedule would allow them to assist with school responsibilities and wouldn't impact their pay. School Nutrition would have to decide if they want to provide a similar plan for their workers.</p> <p><b>Other Schools:</b> In an effort to help parents with childcare and transportation, we will strive to schedule our professional development days in conjunction with Dolvin, State Bridge Elementary School and Medlock Bridge Elementary School.</p> <p><b>School Schedule:</b> While the school schedule will be impacted with two less days the year that we are receiving the professional development, the students will benefit more throughout the year and following years as teachers apply the knowledge and skills they develop through the course.</p>
<b>Budget</b>	
<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>Funding for the training will depend on which source we choose which will be determined once we receive approval. This funding may come from seed fund, PTA or cost center. All items listed on the budget are estimates.</p>

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**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:**

Budget Item	Item Description (Include quantities if applicable)	<2015-16>		<2016-17>		<2017-18>		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		1000		1000		1000		
Professional Development		25000		25000		15000		
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		
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>		<b>\$26000</b>		<b>\$26000</b>		<b>\$16000</b>		

\*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).