



Alpharetta High School Governance Council



Summary of 2016 Requests for Flexibility (RFFs)

(Full RFF Proposals are posted on AHS Website Homepage and Governance Council Page)

1. Virtual Learning Lab Study Skills

Currently, our virtual credit recovery students are assigned to a virtual lab for one period of their semester in order to earn credit for a course required for graduation. If students finish their virtual credit early, they must remain in the virtual lab without another academic opportunity. When our virtual credit recovery students complete their assigned virtual course(s), we want to offer them the ability to move into a 1 credit study skills course [35.0610001]. This will give them a better understanding of what it takes to be successful in traditional core classes and is in greater alignment with personalized learning. Ideally, this study skills course would target skill deficit areas like advanced planning, goal setting, organization, and reading comprehension.

2. Expand Options for Additional Pay

Currently, FCS Operating Guideline DA, "Additional Pay," allows 1) exempt employees to be compensated for 2) work performed outside the standard work day that 3) fits within the scope of 10 approved Categories. The challenge comes when there is valuable work that needs to be performed at the local school level; yet, the work does not fit within the additional pay categories. Category A1 – Currently, teachers can be paid \$28.00/hour to provide instructional, enrichment, remedial support for staff "outside the normal work day." This request is seeking the ability to provide AHS RtI ELA and Math teachers with \$28.00 per hour additional pay to provide support for students during Anchor Time. Anchor Time is our AHS built in time for remediation during the school day. Anchor Time occurs two days a week for 45 minutes. While most of the AHS staff supervises students in a quiet study hall or teaches a fun enrichment course during this time, ELA and Math teachers work to support our struggling students with. This is work above and beyond the expectations of other teachers and additional pay seems appropriate.

3. Withdrawal from an On-Level 9th Grade Course Without Penalty

District Policy IHA reads "Courses will not be removed from a student's transcript unless an error is discovered. No course substitutions will be made on student transcripts. A student may retake a course in which he or she was not successful, but grades for both course attempts will appear on a student's transcript." Additional board policies concerning grades do not specifically address students who are failing between the 10-day count up to 6 weeks into a semester. Adlai E. Stevenson High School, a premiere high school in the nation doing "Whatever it Takes," offers this to its students in all courses. Based on communication with counselors at Adlai Stevenson High School as well as students here at Alpharetta, we feel strongly that this initiative will positively impact student achievement at Alpharetta High School. It will also help decrease any achievement gaps that may currently exist. Individual student stress management would also be positively affected with students realizing that their GPA is not permanently impacted if they feel themselves not being successful in a course. They can exercise this policy and retake the course later. Students will also be more prepared to retake the course after withdrawing because of the options that would be in place for continued academic support. In the best interests of students this concept would reduce pressure on the student and give an alternative to failing a course as well as provide a viable option to help improve study skills which would help when students retake a course. We currently have RISE (help session), Anchor Time (twice a week extra period), and Recovery (make up policy) to assist students. This concept is to be piloted in the first year with freshmen in on-level courses and then extend to upperclassmen in the subsequent years. This is a practice in most colleges and universities (including Georgia's colleges that our students currently are dual enrolled) and is designed to allow students the opportunity to withdraw from a class prior to failing the course and without permanently damaging a transcript. If their students drop within this deadline as described, the class disappears from the transcript.

It does not impact the GPA. If it is past the deadline, the class will become a WF unless the student has a medical issue. We want to offer a similar option for our students.

4. Flexible Course Schedule-Yearlong Health Course (25 min, 3x per week)

Many of our students are choosing to take online courses. A popular course for online learning is health. Often, our parents even choose to pay to take health over the summer. Many of our students and parents have expressed the need to pay for health during the summer in order for students to be able to fit other elective courses or AP courses that they desire into their schedule at AHS. Health is a graduation requirement important for our students. Often, students who transfer into AHS as upperclassmen come to us without health on their transcript. These students struggle to fit health into their 6 period day. We want to offer creative options for our students during our school day. We are working to create an environment that students will choose to attend. AHS currently has 451 Virtual Enrollments for fall semester 2016-2017. Health is a semester only courses and a graduation requirements. Currently, the course is offered as a semester only class meeting every day, 5 days per week during each semester. We would like to offer a creative solution for offering this course in a Blended Learning environment. We need a seat time waiver as well as flexibility to offer an additional period in our bell schedule. We would like for this course to be offered in a year-long, blended learning environment. The teacher would meet face to face with students on Mondays, Wednesdays and every other Friday for 25 minutes during our 45 minute lunch period for the entire year. Additional lessons would be offered as necessary virtually in order to ensure students learn required standards. Students completing the year long course successfully would earn .5 credit in health.

5. Accelerated Performing Arts Classes

We currently have performing arts students who sometimes choose not to enroll in or continuously enroll in the performing arts course in which they have significant potential for success at a high level. Some of the reason for this stems from the fact that performing arts classes are not weighted the same as AP and Honors courses. These students are our most advanced students who are in the Governor's Honors Program; Georgia's All State Orchestra, Band, & Chorus; One Act Play; Currently we do not have a performing arts course that carries the same academic weight as similarly rigorous AP and Honors courses. This initiative would involve creating Accelerated Orchestra, Accelerated Band, Accelerated Chorus, and Accelerated Theater classes. Each of these classes would be the most advanced and rigorous in the respective discipline based on standards commensurate to collegiate performance. Similar to an Advanced Placement and Honors course, these Accelerated courses would have suggested prerequisites along with other highly rigorous audition requirements and co-curricular requirements. These four new courses would carry the same academic weight that other Advanced Placement and Honors courses carry. Creating these accelerated performing arts classes allows our most advanced performing arts students to maintain an academic balance without an adverse effect to their GPA. This is also a measure to "increase opportunities for individualized academic support" since these classes would be for students who desire a more collegiate level instruction in performing arts.