

# Request for Flexibility Renewal Application: 2013-2016 SSP 2016-2017 Cycle (Due: December 9, 2016 by 12:00 pm)

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

SCHOOL NAME: Shakerag Elementary School

CONCEPT NAME: Class Size Waiver in Art, Music and PE

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE(S)  
(from new strategic plan): Project/Problem Based Learning & 7 Habits

Data Analysis & Program Impact															
<p>1) Describe the impact of the RFF. To what extent were students exposed to the initiative associated with the RFF? To what extent was there a measurable increase in student outcomes, teacher instructional practices, and/or school climate and culture as a result of the RFF-supported initiative? Be sure to include supporting quantitative data in your analysis.</p> <p><i>Contact Kimberly Richards, with Department of Strategic Planning &amp; Program Evaluation, at richardsk@fultonschools.org, for additional support with evaluating your RFF.</i></p>	<p>This class size waiver has allowed us to slightly increase the class sizes in art, music and PE so we could design and implement an Advanced Strategies Lab (ASL). All students in grades K-5 attend the ASL lab one time per week for forty-five minutes as part of our “specials” rotations (Art, Music, PE, and ASL). Our ASL lab is a student-centered learning environment that was designed to challenge and increase student engagement through the use of LEGO® Education products, robotics, and various hands-on and interactive activities while making connections to standards across multiple content areas. Each activity fosters the student’s critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities and encourages student collaboration in order to increase student engagement and achievement.</p> <p>We sampled 258 students in grades 1-5 to gain their perspective on the benefits of the ASL lab. Their results are below.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Question</th> <th style="width: 30%;">% Strongly Agree or Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ASL allows me to be a problem-solver.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">74.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I enjoy being creative and building new things in ASL.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">84.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I enjoy using technology to learn new things in ASL.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">77.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I enjoy the projects and activities we complete in ASL.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I learn something new every year in ASL.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">77.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I like working with others on different projects in ASL.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">75.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Question	% Strongly Agree or Agree	ASL allows me to be a problem-solver.	74.4%	I enjoy being creative and building new things in ASL.	84.9%	I enjoy using technology to learn new things in ASL.	77.1%	I enjoy the projects and activities we complete in ASL.	72%	I learn something new every year in ASL.	77.1%	I like working with others on different projects in ASL.	75.6%
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	<p>In addition to building student engagement, we have also seen an increase in the percent of students scoring at the Distinguished Learner level on the GA Milestones End of Grade assessment for students in grades 3-5.</p> <p>With the slight increase in class size numbers for art, music and PE, we have not seen a decline in the performance of our students in these areas, and we have been able to provide them with an additional enrichment opportunity that may not be possible to maintain without the funding support from reducing our itinerant staff.</p>
<p><b>Rationale for Continuing RFF</b></p>	
<p>2) Describe the progress your school has made toward the project outcomes and go also outlined in your original proposal. What challenges have you encountered? Detail any changes or adjustments that must be made to the original proposal for implementation during the 2016-2020 strategic plan cycle.</p>	<p>In order to prepare the lab for teachers and students, effective STEM activities in elementary classrooms were researched. It was determined that LEGO® robotics and strategic games would expose the students to an environment that fosters their critical thinking and problem solving skills. All LEGO® Education activities are aligned with key standards and objectives. In our original strategic plan, Focus Area 2 placed emphasis on a challenging learning environment that promoted student engagement and the use of technology as a learning tool. LEGO® Education and other forms of robotics provides students with this opportunity. Students are more engaged and have become more accountable for their learning. Students have also become accustomed to using the Engineering Design Process as a guide when creating a solution to problems presented.</p> <p>As we transition to our new strategic plan, we continue to focus on increasing student collaboration and supporting students in applying their learning to solve real world problems. We have found that these skill sets will not only equip them with the tools needed to be successful along their learning journey, however it will also support them in many facets of their lives.</p> <p>In addition to the successes we have seen with our students, the addition of the ASL lab as a fifth special has allowed us to provide our classroom teachers</p>

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with a forty-five minute common planning period five days a week. This extra time allows them to strengthen their Professional Learning Community and increases their ability to collaborate.

We faced a few challenges as we prepared the lab for initial implementation. Finding the appropriate time to prepare materials for all grade levels and determining which activities were developmentally appropriate for students was a hurdle we had to overcome. As needed, the ASL teacher worked collaboratively with grade levels during common planning times to establish lesson needs and opportunities for cross curricular connections. The ASL teacher was also given a planning period each day which allowed her to prepare materials, research STEM products in the lab and plan accordingly.

Initially, the students faced a few challenges. They struggled with completing activities in a timely manner, and learning the expectations and procedures required of the “lab” type environment. This resulted in projects lasting over a longer span of time than anticipated. The ASL teacher learned from her students and customized and altered lessons to accommodate their needs.

The concept of students keeping a yearly STEM journal in the ASL lab was also introduced during the first year. Students were not receptive of the idea of keeping a journal to track their progress. Therefore, students were introduced to the Engineering Design Process to serve as a guide for each project. The students were able to track their progress and receive feedback from the teacher and their peers.

As time has progressed, other forms of robotics and STEM activities have been introduced to the students. These include K’nex, Cubelets, Dash and Dot Robots, and LittleBits. In addition, more advanced LEGO® Education software was introduced to the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and more Math and ELA LEGO® Education software were introduced to the 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

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	<p>Currently, the ASL teacher collaborates and meets with STEM Lab/ASL lab teachers within the Northeast Learning Community (NELC). This has exposed the teacher to new ideas that she can incorporate in the lab. The ASL teacher has also attended STEM conferences and workshops to learn more about the benefits of STEM in the elementary classroom and how to incorporate the new concepts in the lab.</p> <p>At this time, the lab has become a well-established part of our "specials" rotation. Clear lessons, expectations, and procedures have been put in place to support students with their lab experience, and classroom teachers now have increased opportunities to collaborate with their team through five days of common planning. At this time, we do not see any additional changes or adjustments needed to continue to see success in the implementation of this Request for Flexibility.</p>
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Principal Signature: 

Council Chair Signature: 

**REQUEST FOR FLEXIBILITY**  
**2016-17 POST PUBLIC COMMENT FORM**



**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use this document to summarize how the Council managed the 30-day Public Comment period, responded to any significant concerns raised by your school community, and voted on the final RFF. Attachments are optional.

Public Comment	
1) List the date that the Council posted the RFF proposal to the front of the school's main and SGC webpages as well as where it was placed within the school building.	SGC Website (landing page) - Wednesday November 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2016. School's main webpage - Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2016. Hard copies were placed together with comment forms and a comment collection box next to the sign-in station in the school's front Office – Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
2) List the date(s) and location(s) of public meetings during which the School Governance Council solicited oral comments.	Meeting to solicit oral comments was held at Shakerag Elementary School, at 07:15 a.m. on Tuesday December 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2016. No member of the public chose to attend, and no oral comments were received.
3) Describe the process used to solicit written comments on the RFF proposal.	A request for comments, along with an explanation of the RFF, the actual proposed RFF application, and a link to the FCS RFF webpage were posted to the SGC Webpage. A request for comments together with the link to the SGC website was posted on the school's main webpage. On November 4 <sup>th</sup> 2016, an email was sent out to each faculty member and parent containing the request for comment along with the explanation of the RFF, a link to the actual proposed RFF application and the link to the FCS RFF webpage. On November 4 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> , and December 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2016, a request for comments containing a link to the SGC website and School main webpage were published in the school newsletter which goes out to parents and staff.
4) Describe any significant concerns raised during the Public Comment period. Explain how the Council has addressed these concerns.	No comments were received and no concerns were raised.
Council Vote	
5) List the date that the Council voted on the RFF and the number of affirmative votes from all voting members.	<b>Tuesday 6 December 2016. Six council members and the school principal attended the meeting. All six members voted in the affirmative.</b>
Attachments	

**REQUEST FOR FLEXIBILITY**  
**2016-17 Post PUBLIC COMMENT FORM**



6) Please list any supporting documents and provide them as attachments.	Attached please find document with the wording used for: School Main Webpage Posting School Newsletter Posting Email to Faculty and Parents SGC Website Posting
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SCHOOL GOVERNANCE  
COUNCIL CHAIR'S  
SIGNATURE:

*T. Serfont*

DATE:

12-06-2016

## School Main Webpage Posting

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### School Governance Update

As a Cohort 1 school, Shakerag's School Council (SGC) has recently revised our strategic plan. We therefore need to update our **Requests For Flexibility (RFFs)**, which request waivers from state law or school system policy to help achieve our long-term objectives (Improve Student Achievement in Literacy, Improve Student Communication Skills, Increase Quality of Student Leadership). Our SGC is planning on submitting two RFFs for renewal this year. The 30-day public comment period for our SGC's proposed RFF submissions is open until December 5 at 12:00 p.m. After consideration of public comments received, our SGC will vote on how they wish to proceed. Further information is available at the school's front office or by visiting our SGC website which can be accessed by clicking [here](#), or via our [school website](#) .

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## School Newsletter Postings

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### School Governance

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## Email to Faculty and Parents

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### 2016-2017 Requests for Flexibility (RFF)

### Shakerag School Governance Council

As a Cohort 1 school, Shakerag's School Council (SGC) has recently revised our strategic plan. We therefore need to update our requests for flexibility (RFFs), which request waivers from state law or school system policy, to help achieve our long-term objectives (Improve Student Achievement in Literacy, Improve Student Communication Skills, Increase Quality of Student Leadership).

Our SGC is planning on submitting two RFFs for renewal this year:

#### *What are we asking for?*

#### RFF1 – Class size in Art Music and P.E. in order to provide our students with an Advanced Strategies Lab

We desire to continue our waiver of class size for Art Music and P.E. classes. By keeping the raised classroom size in these classes, we can continue to use the funding earned for our itinerant teachers to provide an Advanced Strategies Lab teacher for our students.

#### RFF2 – Four Full Release Days for Teacher Training

We wish to continue our waiver of attendance requirements, to provide four (4) days in our school calendar on which students do not report for school, so that we can provide teachers with training on those days.

#### *How will this differ from what we do now?*

Since both these waivers were previously approved and are currently implemented, we are simply seeking to have them continue, and no change to our existing method of operation is envisaged.

#### *Where do I get more information about this?*

To access more information concerning the proposed RFF submissions as well as previous submissions and approvals visit our SGC website at <http://shakeragschoolgovcouncil.weebly.com/>



or via the school website under the 'About' and 'School Governance Council' dropdown menus.

Further information regarding RFF's can also be found on the Fulton County Schools website at

<http://www.fultonschools.org/en/about/charter/Pages/Request-for-Flexibility.aspx> .

***All Requests for Flexibility are required to have a 30-day Public Comment Period. After consideration of public comments received, our SGC will vote how they wish to proceed.***

***How do I submit my comment?***

Comments may be submitted by placing a written copy in the comment box located at the front office of the school, or by emailing them to our SGC Chair Mrs. Seani Serfontein at [Serfontein@fultonschools.org](mailto:Serfontein@fultonschools.org) by 12.00 p.m. on December 5, 2016 . A limited amount of time will also be available for public comments to be made in person at the beginning of the SGC meeting to be held at the school at 07:15 a.m. on December 6, 2016. Please contact our Parliamentarian Mrs. Karen James at [JamesK@fultonschools.org](mailto:JamesK@fultonschools.org) or via the school's front office, if you wish to be placed on the sign-up sheet to address the Council at the Dec 6th SGC meeting

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## SGC Website posting

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(Improve Student Achievement in Literacy, Improve Student Communication Skills, Increase Quality of Student Leadership).

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[RFF1 Full Document](#) < Button link to document

### RFF2 – Four Full Release Days for Teacher Training

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[RFF2 Full Document](#) <Button link to document

*How will this differ from what we do now?*

Since both these waivers were previously approved and are currently implemented, we are simply seeking to have them continue, and no change to our existing method of operation is envisaged.

*Where do I get more information about this?*

[Information on our previous RFF's can be found by clicking the RFF's tab above or by clicking here.](#)

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**[Comment Form](#)** < Button link to document

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