

# 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="text-align: center;">Question</th> <th style="text-align: center;">% 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>
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**Rationale for Continuing RFF**

<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: \_\_\_\_\_