

Section 2- Abstract and Waiver Requests

Provide a project summary that briefly describes the project's vision, goals, activities, and key features for student success that will be addressed. Please include how the proposal reflects Alabama's PLAN 2020. Please limit the length of the abstract to the text box found on this page only.

Our proposal has the benefit of already being in place for one full and one partial year. This proposal seeks permission for Oxford City Schools to retain the ability each year to develop a flexible school calendar based on 1080 instructional hours as we have had for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. This calendar, which has greater built-in group independent professional learning time for certified staff, has been successful by all measures (academic, financial, and community support) applied.

The key feature of our calendar we have enjoyed for the past two years has been the individual professional development days allowed to teachers. Twenty-four clock hours of differentiated professional development of each teacher's choosing has allowed district level, In-Service Center, and school based learning for all teachers. Examples of these activities have included standards training, vertical teaming, grade level and departmental level strategy sessions, and eLearning courses.

One of the core tenets of PLAN 2020 is every student being prepared for life after exiting from school. In the time we have operated under our flexible calendar, we have seen a rise in achievement levels in grades 3-8 in reading and math. It is the opinion of the leadership staff of our district that our flexible calendar has been a great contributor to this success. It has also allowed greater discussion vertically with teachers from pre-K through senior high levels.

Our flexible calendar, by virtue of greater professional development opportunities for teachers, has been instrumental in raising achievement levels in our schools. Our observations and data gathered during the past year and a half have shown an increase in rigor and relevance in the classroom. Plan 2020 also lists as an objective: "Every child is taught by a well prepared, resourced, supported and effective teacher." This proposal allows the Oxford City School District to do this in a powerful way through differentiated, system and self-directed professional development for teachers. This professional development impacts counselors as well as we seek to strengthen our individual and group counseling services, another PLAN 2020 objective, by providing more professional development and planning time for counselors.

Finally, Plan 2020 states that: "Schools and Systems will be granted flexibility to innovate and create 21st Century learning environments to meet the individual and collective needs of their students." It is the consensus of our community, parents, staff, and students that this proposal is the epitome of this statement. During our Public Hearing regarding our current flexible calendar and our intent to pursue continued flexibility, several parents expressed positive comments on our current calendar and its effect on their student(s) in our district. It is a first step in an area our local district looks forward to exploring further.

Waiver Requests

Indicate the specific type(s) of policy or code that prohibit or constrain the project that you wish to request a waiver from:

☐ Specific waiver requested of ALSDE policy

☒ Specific waiver requested of *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) statute

ALSDE Policy Waiver Request (Specify memo, etc., outlining policy)	Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) Statute Waiver Request (Specify AAC Rule No., etc.)	Impact of the Waiver (What will the waiver enable the school to do differently, etc.?)
	Ala. Code 16-13-231(b)(1)(c) Admin. Code 290-3-1-02	Offer greater opportunities for professional development for teachers.

REQUIREMENTS THAT CANNOT BE WAIVED

- Those imposed by federal law
- Those related to the health and safety of students or employees
- Those imposed by ethics laws
- Those imposed by the *Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999*, Title 16, Chapter 22A, *Code of Alabama 1975*
- Those imposed by open records or open meetings laws
- Those related to financial or academic reporting or transparency
- Those designed to protect the civil rights of students or employees
- Those related to the state retirement system or state health insurance plan

NOT ALLOWABLE FOR WAIVER

- May not compensate an employee at an annual amount that is less than the amount the employee would otherwise be afforded through the State Minimum Salary Schedule
- May not involuntarily remove any rights or privileges acquired by any employee under the *Students First Act of 2011*, Title 16, Chapter 24C, *Code of Alabama 1975*
- May not deny any right or privilege granted to a new employee pursuant to the *Students First Act of 2011*
- May not authorize the formation of a charter school

Section 3- Vision and Needs Assessment

Creative Vision for the Project

1. What is the purpose and expected outcome of this project (include expected outcomes for students)?

The outcomes have already been observed. Great networking/training opportunities for teachers – higher achievement levels for students. We expect to continue to see positive growth. The benefits have not been confined to specific grade levels or schools rather they have been ubiquitous across the district.

2. Explain how the school's or school district's current data influenced the need for the project described in Question 1 above?

Our district has always sought maximum opportunities for teachers to be exposed to the latest research on student engagement and learning strategies. Dozens of teachers have taken advantage of multiple professional development activities offered by our district. Anecdotally, teachers have always desired greater differentiation in regards to professional development.

3. How is this project linked to Alabama's PLAN 2020? How is this project linked to the school's or district's strategic plan?

The increase in achievement we have observed based on test results indicates a positive trajectory towards every student being prepared for college, and careers beyond high school. This plan also assists our teachers in becoming more effective. Our District Strategic Plan lists as a Strategy: "Develop engaging and challenging curricula that allow for the maximization of intellectual growth for each student."

4. How is the school's or district's project connected to best practice and current research in reference to raising student achievement and preparing students to be college- and career-ready?

Better trained teachers are more effective in the classroom. Effective teachers will better prepare our graduates to be College- & Career-Ready upon exiting our district. Current research indicates the quality of professional development received by teachers has a direct correlation to the classroom learning environment and student achievement levels.

5. How will this project be supported and monitored for implementation by the district?

- Instructional Rounds
- Continuous Improvement Planning
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) visits
- Data Disaggregation
- LEADAlabama
- EDUCATEAlabama



Section 4- Goals, Objectives, Evaluation, Timeline

GOALS:

- Continue to raise student achievement levels by giving teachers, administrators, and schools greater and more robust professional development through individual, school, and district level based professional development opportunities.

Objectives	Activities	Personnel	Timeline	Budget
<p>Identify the measurable objectives that will be used to determine success in achieving these goals</p> <p>(Must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals (SMART)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community satisfaction surveys - Student achievement results - Teacher feedback on independent professional learning days 	<p>Develop activities for each objective that are: creative and innovative; impact student success; allow for greater flexibility; change the way the school(s)/school system currently operates</p> <p>Summer, holiday, weekend based differentiated professional development to include: book studies, eLearning courses, curriculum and instruction meetings, College- and Career-Ready Standards training, vertical teaming, career counseling</p>	<p>Indicate the name and title of personnel that will be responsible for the activities</p> <p>Jeff Goodwin, Superintendent Debbie Nothdurft, Human Resources Dir. Eric Burrage, Director of Operations</p>	<p>Identify the timeline for the activities (include month/year)</p> <p>_____ Begins 2014-2015 School Year Continues Yearly Thereafter</p>	<p>Indicate budget requirements and funding source (include formulas used to derive totals in budget sections, e.g., 3 subs @\$143/day=total)</p> <p>-0- Cost</p> <p>We have actually done preliminary calculations that it saves money by virtue of utility and diesel fuel savings.</p>

Section 5- Project Evaluation and Sustainability

1. How will you evaluate and report the impact this innovation project has on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives?	<p>This is already underway. Parent responses have been overwhelmingly positive, student achievement in grades 3-8 increased in reading and math. Teachers in all schools have reported greater preparation and opportunities to develop effective engagement strategies. Each year student achievement data, community satisfaction, teacher satisfaction, etc., will be monitored for evaluation purposes.</p>
2. How will this innovation project be sustained?	<p>Each year a committee consisting of representatives from each school will revisit the prior year's calendar in light of disaggregated student achievement data. Any changes deemed necessary will be proposed at this time.</p> <p>Should the State Superintendent and Board of Education grant the type of flexibility discussed in this application in terms of calendar construction as an option for all districts outside of the Innovation Zone/Flexibility Application process, the Oxford City School System requests withdrawal of this application as to take advantage of unrestricted calendar flexibility without the need for formal request. Should the flexibility granted have stipulations outside of those currently existing with the 2013-2014 calendar, the district requests the option of choosing between the application or the flexibility granted to all districts.</p>