

**DRAFT CONTRACT – NOT FINAL.**

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**Appendix A – Flexibility Component of Contract**

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-80 and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.33, DeKalb County is seeking flexibility for all schools included in this Contract from the following state laws, rules, and regulations in exchange for greater accountability.

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-82 mandates that the goal for each waiver and variance shall be the improvement of student performance. This Appendix delineates the specifically identified state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures for which a waiver is requested and the expected impact of such waivers on student performance.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84, the SWSS must request a waiver or variance of at least one of the following areas:

- Class size requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-182;
- Expenditure controls in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-171 and categorical allotment requirements in Article 6 of Title 20;
- Certification requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; or
- Salary schedule requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-212.

**Waiver areas selected:**

Class size requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-182
Expenditure controls in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-171 and categorical allotment requirements in Article 6 of Title 20

**Academic Programs Flexibility Rationale:**

At the heart of the district's continuous improvement framework is a focus on the instructional core. By leveraging access to grade-level, State Standards-aligned tasks for Tier 1 instruction, the district can ensure that all students receive rigorous instruction designed to improve their learning outcomes. One of the key components of this framework is a focus on cognitively rigorous and culturally responsive instructional practices. By providing system-wide professional learning and implementation support, the district can ensure that teachers have the tools and knowledge they need to help all students engage with challenging academic content. The culture and climate pillar of the district's comprehensive continuous improvement framework represents the idea that school culture plays a significant role in shaping students' academic and social outcomes. The culture of a school influences everything from student behavior to teacher job satisfaction. Educators in DeKalb County School District recognize that developing a supportive and inclusive culture is vital to creating a pathway towards equity. By leveraging system-wide professional learning and implementation support of restorative practices, the district is working to create intellectually and socially safe environments for learning. Flexibility in this area aligns with the following strategic priorities: student success with equity and access, stakeholder engagement and communications, and culture and climate.

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<b>ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FLEXIBILITY</b>		<b>Implementation Details</b>
Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning	§20-2-140.1	Implement courses that focus on content mastery in lieu of seat time.
Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning	§20-2-142	Implement courses that focus on content mastery in lieu of seat time.
General and career education programs	§20-2-151	Implement courses that focus on content mastery in lieu of seat time.
Instruction in social graces and etiquette may be waived	§20-2-187(b)	Flexibility allows the district to waive the requirement to offer instruction in social graces and etiquette.
Organization of Schools; School Administrative Managers	§20-2-290	DeKalb County School District does not employ School Administrative Managers. The District follows PSC guidelines and locally determines the highly qualified administrative staff required to ensure high quality instruction.
School Councils	§20-2-85	The District has developed a comprehensive compliance monitoring system to assess implementation of governance teams (Principal Advisory Councils). Increased opportunities for inter-school collaboration and cross-council structures result in higher levels of community engagement in targeted and district-wide initiatives. Flexibility in this area allows for community and local business partners' participation on governance teams.
School Councils	§20-2-86	The District has developed a comprehensive compliance monitoring system to assess implementation of governance teams (Principal Advisory Councils). Increased opportunities for inter-school collaboration and cross-council structures result in higher levels of community engagement in targeted and district-wide initiatives. Flexibility in this area allows for community and local business partners' participation on governance teams.
Health & Physical Education Program	160-4-2-.12	Flexibility allows the district to adjust minimum contact hours for PE.
Graduation Requirements	160-4-2-.48	Flexibility in this area allows for the substitution of equivalent or higher-level graduation requirements. DeKalb County School District requires 24 credits for graduation.

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Awarding Credit	160-5-1-.15	Flexibility allows the district to award credit for course completion upon mastery of course standards at any time during the semester and waive the clock hour requirements for students to earn a Carnegie Unit of credit during the regular school year and summer school.
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**Human Resources Flexibility Rationale:**

The District's comprehensive approach to continuous improvement is changing the teaching and learning landscape in DeKalb County School District. One of the key components of this framework is a focus on attracting and retaining high-quality staff. By putting structures and processes in place to support communication with staff about district level decisions and actions, the district can ensure that its teachers, leaders, and staff are engaged, empowered, and motivated to provide high-quality instruction to all students. Flexibility in this area aligns with the district's strategic priority to increase staff effectiveness by recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective staff.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY</b>		<b>Implementation Details</b>
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-151	Biannually, the District engages various stakeholder groups in the development of school calendars to tailor instruction to students' diverse learning needs. This waiver allows the District the flexibility to implement school days and calendars designed for increased collaborative planning time, professional development, and instructional enrichment.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-160(a)	Biannually, the District engages various stakeholder groups in the development of school calendars to tailor instruction to students' diverse learning needs. This waiver allows the District the flexibility to implement school days and calendars designed for increased collaborative planning time, professional development, and instructional enrichment.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-168(c)	Biannually, the District engages various stakeholder groups in the development of school calendars to tailor instruction to students' diverse learning needs. This waiver allows the District the flexibility to implement school days and calendars designed for increased collaborative planning time, professional development, and instructional enrichment.

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Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	Creatively group students in ways that serve larger groups of students in innovative instructional models. Increased class size is offset with additional support services provided to students.
Professional Learning	§20-2-182(h)	Flexibility allows the district to allocate categorical funding earned though the QBE formula to areas that support our strategic plan.
Instructional Extension	§20-2-184.1	Flexibility allows the district to allocate categorical funding earned though the QBE formula to areas that support our strategic plan.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	Due to the nationwide teacher shortage, situations may dictate having teachers to provide class coverage during lunch periods. As best as possible the district will provide duty free lunch. However in times of staff shortages, students must be properly supervised. Administration will employ other incentives to teachers who are requested to cover classes during their duty free lunch time.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY</b>		<b>Student Improvement Outcomes</b>
Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	The District's "plus 2 waiver" provides schools a built-in, maximum class size buffer. This flexibility helps protect against the risk of exceeding maximum class sizes when enrolling new students into classes and/or courses. The waiver also provides additional flexibility during the master scheduling process. While school leaders are not encouraged to routinely use the maximum class size when creating the master schedule, they may utilize the flexibility to maximize the efficiency of their allotted staff. Without this waiver, the district would either allot more staff at an additional cost, reschedule and redistribute students, or limit the classes and/or courses which students can enroll. Flexibility in this area aligns to the following district academic performance objectives: increase the 4-year graduation rate to meet the state average; and increase content mastery achievement rates to meet the state average for all tested areas.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	The provision of class coverage increases students' access to high-quality, certified instructional staff and aligns to the following district academic performance objectives: increase the 4-year graduation rate to meet the state average; and increase content mastery achievement rates to meet the state average for all tested areas.

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**Financial Flexibility Rationale:**

DeKalb County School District's comprehensive approach to improving the school district's education quality and student achievement is outlined in its locally designed continuous improvement framework. In DeKalb County School District, the framework has had a successful impact on multiple target areas, including the area of sound fiscal stewardship. The district requires flexibility in this area to leverage long-term financial planning to ensure it has the necessary funding for its instructional core and operational priorities, resulting in a significant overall improvement in academic performance. Flexibility in this area aligns with the district's strategic priority to increase organizational effectiveness by ensuring excellent financial management and efficient use of resources.

<b>FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY</b>		<b>Implementation Details</b>
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-167	Increase the financial transparency at the district, regional and school levels through the use of the district allocation formula (RAMP). Decentralize Business Services; and create more efficient purchasing processes. Allocate a higher degree of resources towards social emotional learning; safety, security, and other wrap around services; and support for the whole child.
Direct Classroom Expenditure Control	§20-2-171	Increase the financial transparency at the district, regional and school levels through the use of the district allocation formula (RAMP). Decentralize Business Services; and create more efficient purchasing processes. Allocate a higher degree of resources towards social emotional learning, safety and security and other wrap around services and support the whole child.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-183	Allocate additional local funding to support the maintenance and operational needs that have been historically deferred in excess of what is provided through the QBE program weight.

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**Acknowledgments**

As the authorized representative of DeKalb County, I hereby certify and provide legal assurance that DeKalb County understands that it is requesting increased flexibility from identified state laws, rules, and regulations in exchange for increased accountability and defined consequences. DeKalb County further understands that the purpose of seeking a waiver or variance from identified state laws, rules, and regulations is to increase student performance. I also certify that DeKalb County:

- Ensures that all information submitted to the Georgia Department of Education in connection with this strategic waiver application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge;
- Adopted a district strategic plan within the last five years, linked below, for improving the performance of its schools; and
- For each waiver or variance request included in Appendix A of the Strategic Waiver School System Contract, a waiver explanation is provided. Where there is not an explanation provided for a requested waiver or variance, I understand that the waiver or variance request will not be granted.

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(Printed Name) Superintendent

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(Signature) Superintendent

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Date