

**Riverwood International Charter School  
Request for Flexibility Waiver 2021-2022  
Specific Science Courses Required for Graduation**

**1. What is the title of your school?**

Riverwood International Charter School

**2. What is the title of the concept you are proposing? \***

Specific Science Courses Required for Graduation

**3. Please indicate which policy or policies you are requesting to waive. Click to access [FCS Board Policies](#). (Please note code and title. Example: JBD Attendance and Absences). \***

FCS Policy IHF (5) Graduation Requirements: Students Entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in 2016 and Beyond.

**4. What need or challenge is your school facing? *Describe the problem and how you became aware that it needed to be addressed.* \***

Riverwood International Charter School offers an extensive IB programme to its students that allows them to pursue an advanced academic curriculum. We currently serve approximately 150 IB diploma candidates. Should these students decide to pursue advanced science courses, they will not have an opportunity to take Physics or Physical Science due to the fact that they will be taking two additional years of IB Chemistry, IB Biology, or AP/IB Physics. Due to the demands of the IB curriculum, students do not have the ability of taking an additional science course to fulfill the Physics/Physical Science requirement.

**5. What is your proposed solution to the need or challenge described above? *Describe how a waiver to FCS policy would allow you to successfully address the identified need/challenges(s).* \***

Because of their rigorous International Baccalaureate curriculum, many IB Diploma Candidates are unable to satisfy the physics/physical science graduation requirement set forth by the Georgia Department of Education. Therefore, Riverwood seeks to allow IB candidates to waive the Physics/Physical Science requirement, allowing our students to take the two required years of science at the IB level. These advanced science academic courses will allow our students to receive college credit for successful completion of the course curriculum and requirements as well as meet the requirements for the rigorous standards of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program.

**6. Why do you believe your value-added flexibility proposal will work? *Include any research/evidence that leads you to believe that the flexibility will accomplish the school's need.* \***

Since 2018, The International Baccalaureate Programme at Riverwood International Charter School has increased the number of candidates in the program. In addition, the number of students completing the 2 year science program has also been increasing. In addition, 37% of the IB Diploma candidates would be unable to complete the two-year science coursework in addition to the Georgia Department of Education graduation requirements.

|   | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> | <b>2020</b> | <b>2021</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>DP Candidates (year 2)</b>                 | 40          | 44          | 56          | 56          |
| <b>DP Candidates (combined years 1 and 2)</b> | 84          | 100         | 110         | 127         |
| <b>Candidates completing 2-year Science</b>   | 24          | 39          | 20          | 47          |

Riverwood International Charter School’s Diploma Programme award rate is competitive with the global averages.

*Diploma pass rates*

|               | <b>2020</b>      |                | <b>2021</b>      |                |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
|               | <b>Pass Rate</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Pass Rate</b> | <b>Average</b> |
| <b>RICS</b>   | 86%              | 4.77           | 86%              | 5.05           |
| <b>Global</b> | 85.16%           | 5.08           | 88.93%           | 5.33           |

**7. How does your proposal align with your school's strategic direction? *Draw connections between the proposed solution and the needs of your school and/or community.* \***

Riverwood’s strategic direction is to create 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global learners through interdisciplinary coursework and service work. This interdisciplinary global focus develops the IB Learner Profile attributes and creates a collaborative framework through this global lens.

This proposal permits Riverwood to provide a more rigorous curriculum for our student body, allowing more students to access advanced academic curriculum and pursue these courses of study.

**8. What are the intended outcomes of this proposal? *Discuss the improvements you expect by implementing this value-added flexibility.* \***

- Students have increased flexibility in course selection to meet dual needs of GADOE and International Baccalaureate.
- Students have a different set of IB science course options to meet GADOE requirements that eliminates logistical challenges for students
- Students have increased opportunity to pursue International Baccalaureate while meeting the educational needs required for graduation, resulting in increased numbers of students with access to IB curriculum.

**9. What steps will you take to implement your initiative? *Include any resources, required training/professional development and/or additional implications associated with the proposal.* \***

- Continued training for IB staff (required by IB)

- Continued work with parent/student community to ensure understanding of scheduling and course opportunities
- Continued work developing scheduling pathway to ensure access for students in all disciplines

**10. What data will you collect and analyze to measure the success of your initiative? Describe the qualitative (e.g. focus groups, observations, open responses, interviews, etc.) and/or quantitative (e.g. academic achievement, survey data, participation data, etc.) data you will collect to assess the effectiveness of your initiative? \***

Qualitative- The advanced academic level of the student population will allow the students at Riverwood to display a deeper understanding of the global society in which they live. This will be evident through their Internal Assessments, Extended Essay projects, and service projects.

Quantitative- Our students will be participating in a more rigorous course than the state requirement courses. The efficacy of the courses will be evident in the students' improved achievement data and improved participation in advanced academic courses.

Additionally, as noted in Question 6, continued collection and review of student participation and score data compared against prior years and IB Globally to ensure effective implementation of IB programme requirements. Regular meetings with IB students to ensure the stated goal/outcome of balance is being furthered by this logistical arrangement.

**11. What are the costs associated with your proposal? Describe any impact(s) to your budget. \***

District cost-centers currently provide additional teacher allocations in support of the IB Diploma Programme. There is no significant budgetary requirement for this particular waiver outside of the International Baccalaureate program fees and trainings that Fulton County and Alpharetta High School already assume in offering the entire program. Additionally, text books and course materials may be needed in the future, but those again are costs traditionally associated with offering any course.

**12. What impact will your proposal have on day-to-day operations? Address any changes to human or capital resources (e.g. scheduling, employee responsibilities, existing processes, etc.). \***

There are no additional impacts for the school's day-to-day operations for the implementation of this proposal. These courses are an integral part of the IB programme at Riverwood and as such are already in place and being implemented. The staffing, scheduling, and processes are already a part of the IB Program at Riverwood.

**13. What impact will your proposal have on district operations? Include any possible effects to human resources, academics, nutrition, scheduling, transportation, technology, facilities, budget services, etc. \***

This proposal will not have a new known impact on district operations due to the fact that the allocations of budget and human resources have already been assessed. District cost-centers currently

provide additional teacher allocations in support of the IB Diploma Programme. However, the structure of this flexibility program for the International Baccalaureate Program has been at Riverwood since 2013-2014, and as such all of the processes for district implementation are already in place and operational. There is no additional need as a result of the continuation of this proposal.