

STRATEGIC WAIVER SCHOOL SYSTEM CONTRACT FOR RABUN COUNTY

This Strategic Waiver School System contract for Rabun County ("Contract") is entered into by the Rabun County Board of Education ("Local Board") and the State Board of Education ("State Board") (collectively referred to as "the parties").

WHEREAS, the Rabun County local school system is currently a Strategic Waivers School System (SWSS); and

WHEREAS, the Local Board has adopted a five-year strategic plan for improving the performance of its schools; and

WHEREAS, the Local Board desires to continue operating as a SWSS.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, mutual agreements, and covenants contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the Parties agree as follows:

1. **Definitions.** The terms below will be interpreted in accordance with the following definitions, unless and until federal or state law, State Board of Education rules or regulations, or the state accountability system, are amended otherwise.
 - a. **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement ("ATSI") school:** A school in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would identify the school as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school.
 - b. **College and Career Academy ("CCA"):** A specialized school established as a charter school or pursuant to a contract for a strategic waivers school system or charter system, which formalizes a partnership that demonstrates a collaboration between business, industry, and community stakeholders to advance work force development between one or more local boards of education, a private individual, a private organization, or a state or local public entity in cooperation with one or more postsecondary institutions.
 - c. **College and Career Ready Performance Index ("CCRPI"):** A comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will

promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

- d. **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (“CSI”) school:** A school within the lowest performing five percent of Title 1 schools.
 - e. **Georgia Department of Education (“Department”):** The state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K – 12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education.
 - f. **Material term:** An important or substantial aspect in this Contract. A change to a material term may alter the rights, obligations, interests, or relations of the Parties.
 - g. **Non-performing school:** A public school that is part of a Strategic Waiver School System and is identified as not meeting one or more of goals (a) through (e) of Section 7 of this Contract.
 - h. **State Board of Education (“SBOE” or “State Board”):** The constitutional authority that defines education policy for public K – 12 education agencies in Georgia.
 - i. **Strategic Waivers School System (“SWSS”):** A local school system that elects to request increased flexibility pursuant to O.C.G.A §§ 20-2-80 through 20-2-84.6.
 - j. **Targeted Support and Improvement (“TSI”) school:** A school within the lowest performing five percent of schools with one or more consistently underperforming student groups.
2. **Contract Term.** The State Board grants this Contract to the Local Board to operate a SWSS for a 6-year term beginning on July 1, 2024 and expiring on June 30, 2030.
3. **Responsibility.** The Local Board shall ultimately be responsible for all duties to be performed by the SWSS and the schools within the SWSS under this Contract.
- a. In addition to any local charter schools within the local school system, the

following schools are not part of the SWSS Contract:

4. **College and Career Academies.** Any CCA opened by or any existing CCA included in the SWSS must meet the definition of a College and Career Academy as defined in O.C.G.A § 20-4-37(b)(5). The SWSS must notify the Department and the Technical College System of Georgia of the opening, and the CCA must meet the following requirements:
 - a. If an existing CCA is included in the SWSS, then the current CCA's governing board would continue as the governing board of the CCA, using its current by-laws for operation and procedures for electing members.
 - b. Provide a Roles and Responsibilities Chart between the CCA governing board, the SWSS, and the CCA's higher education and business partners that includes the following:
 - Information on the CCA's decision making authority in decisions relating to personnel, finance, curriculum and instruction, school improvement goals, and school operations;
 - Information on how the CCA will be funded by the local school system and other strategic partners; and
 - Information on the services and supports to be provided to the CCA by the local school system.
 - c. The following CCAs are included in this Contract:
5. **Flexibility Allowed by Law.** In exchange for the SWSS's agreement to meet or exceed the goals and measurable objectives set forth in Section 7 of this Contract, to adhere to the interventions set forth in Section 8 of this Contract, and to be subject to the sanctions set forth in Section 9 of this Contract, the State Board grants the SWSS flexibility from the specifically identified state laws, rules, and regulations outlined in Appendix A (Flexibility Component of Contract), which is incorporated in and attached to this Contract. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84, the overarching goal of each waiver request is to improve student performance. Notwithstanding this flexibility, the SWSS and each of its SWSS schools shall comply with the terms of this Contract.
6. **Accreditation.** The SWSS's accreditation shall be maintained for the duration of the Contract term.

7. **Accountability.** The SWSS shall comply with meeting the accountability component of the Contract. The 2022-2023 school year will serve as the baseline year for accountability data.

a. **Goal 1a:** By June 30, 2026, the SWSS shall decrease the number of schools identified as CSI schools on the 2023-2024 CSI list released by the Department.

b. **Goal 1b:** By June 30, 2030, the SWSS shall decrease the number of schools identified as CSI schools on the 2026-2027 CSI list released by the Department.

c. **Goal 2a:** By June 30, 2026, the SWSS shall decrease the number of schools identified as ATSI schools on the 2023 -2024 ATSI list released by the Department.

d. **Goal 2b:** By June 30, 2030, the SWSS shall decrease the number of schools identified as ATSI schools on the 2026-2027 ATSI list released by the Department.

e. **Goal 3:** Each SWSS school that is in compliance with meeting Goals 1 – 2 of this section for the 2022-2023 baseline year shall maintain its current level of performance.

f. **Goal 4:** Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67, the SWSS shall operate in a fiscally sound manner as measured by not being designated a financial high-risk system as determined by the Department of Audits and Accounts (“DOAA”) and the Department.

8. **Interventions.** Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84, the Department shall impose one or more interventions for SWSS schools that have not made progress towards meeting the goals contained in Section 7 of this Contract. Interventions include the following:

a. Implementation of the intensive school plan developed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-14-46; or

b. Submission to DOAA the Department, or both for approval of a written corrective action plan; implementation of the approved corrective action

plan; and participation in annual trainings offered or required by DOAA, the Department, or both to address the financial risk, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67; or

- c. Any other interventions or requirements deemed appropriate by the Department and the State School Superintendent.

9. **Sanctions.** Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84, by the end of this Contract's term, if a SWSS has not met the goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract, the State Board may impose sanctions on the non-performing schools. Sanctions include one or more of the following:

- a. Removal of school personnel, which may include the principal and personnel whose performance has been determined to be insufficient to produce student achievement gains; or
- b. Complete restructuring of the school's governance arrangement and internal organization; or
- c. Loss of, or modification of, any requested flexibility from state statutes or associated rules outlined in Appendix A of this Contract, as recommended by the State School Superintendent.

10. **Annual Monitoring.** The Local Board shall work cooperatively with the Department in annually monitoring the goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract. Monitoring will include evaluating each school's progress toward meeting its accountability goals.

11. **Annual Report.** The SWSS shall submit an annual report to the Department according to the Department's guidelines and templates. The annual report may include, but is not limited to, an indication of the SWSS's progress towards the goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract and the implementation and impact of the identified waivers outlined in Appendix A of this Contract.

12. **Demographic and Performance Data.** The SWSS attests to the accuracy of the demographic and performance data for each of its schools as recorded in the annual CCRPI report. If the SWSS identifies a discrepancy in the demographic and performance data contained in the CCRPI report, the SWSS must notify the Department within thirty (30) days of identifying the discrepancy.

13. **Compliance with Other Laws, Rules, and Regulations.** The SWSS and each of its SWSS schools shall operate in accordance with the United States Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws that may not be waived pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-82(e), including the following, which are listed by way of example and not by way of limitation.
- a. **Civil Rights, Insurance, Health and Safety and Conflicting Interests.** The SWSS shall operate in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions; and the prevention of unlawful conduct.
 - b. **Asbestos Remediation.** The SWSS shall comply with the terms of any applicable asbestos remediation plan.
 - c. **Unlawful Conduct.** The SWSS shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school.
 - d. **Student Conduct and Discipline.** The SWSS shall maintain and implement a written policy regarding student discipline policy shall be consistent with due process.
 - e. **State Board Rules.** The SWSS comply with all State Board Rules promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240 during the term herein that are not subject to any waiver granted in Section 5 of this Contract.
 - f. **Prohibition on Discrimination.** The SWSS shall not discriminate against students on the basis of any characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.
 - g. **Reporting Requirements.** The SWSS shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-160, 20-2-161(e), 20-2-320 and 20-2-740.
 - h. **Tuition.** The SWSS shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized for local boards pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133.

- i. **Brief Period of Quiet Reflection.** The SWSS shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050, which requires a brief period of quiet reflection.
- j. **Individual Graduation Plans.** The SWSS shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 regarding Individual Graduation Plans.
- k. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.** The SWSS is subject to all provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.
- l. **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.** The SWSS is subject to all provisions of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-191, § 264, 110 Stat. 1936.
- m. **QBE Formula Earnings.** The SWSS acknowledges that criteria used to calculate Quality Basic Education (“QBE”) funding cannot be waived.
- n. **Funding.** The SWSS acknowledges that, although becoming a strategic waiver system provides a local school system with some flexibility, waivers cannot be used to generate additional funding.
- o. **Early Intervention Programs.** The SWSS shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-153 related to early intervention programs.
- p. **Divisive Concepts.** The SWSS shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-1-11 related to divisive concepts.

Failure to operate in accordance with the provisions of this Section may result in loss of flexibility for the SWSS.

14. **Contract Extension**

- a. **Automatic Extension.** This Contract may be automatically extended upon the expiration of the Contract term if the SWSS or SWSS schools meet the goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract by the end of the Contract term and adheres to all requirements of Section 13 of this Contract. If these conditions are met and the Local Board wishes to continue as a SWSS, it

must complete the Department's requirements for an automatic extension.

- b. **Extension to Meet Performance Goals.** During the final year of the Contract term, the Local Board may request to extend the Contract term by three years to provide additional time to meet the goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract. If the extension is granted and the SWSS meets its goals outlined in Section 7 of this Contract during the extension period, then the three-year extension will count as the first three years of the next SWSS contract term, if granted. No more than two three-year extensions will be granted. If the Local Board wishes to extend the Contract term by three years, it shall seek an amendment to the Contract in accordance with Section 15 of this Contract.

15. **Amendments.** Any material term of this Contract, as determined by the Department, must be amended in writing upon the approval of the Local Board and the State Board. If the Local Board wishes to amend this Contract, it must complete the Department's amendment requirements.

- a. For amendment requests that originate with the State Board, the Department shall provide the Local Board with sixty (60) days' written notice prior to amending the Contract. The notice shall include a copy of the proposed changes. If the proposed changes to the Contract are not material, as determined by the Department, then the Department does not have to send a copy of the proposed changes to the Local Board prior to amending the Contract.

16. **Probation.** The State Board may place the SWSS on probation upon ninety (90) days written notice to the Local Board for reasonable cause. Reasonable cause includes the following:

- a. The SWSS's failure to adhere to any material term of this Contract, including the accountability requirements outlined in Section 7 herein;
- b. The SWSS's failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or
- c. The SWSS's violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws, rules, regulations, or court orders; or
- d. The existence of conditions that place the health, safety, or welfare of

students or staff of the SWSS in danger.

17. **Termination.** The State Board may terminate this Contract for reasonable cause upon ninety (90) days written notice to the Local Board for reasonable cause. Reasonable cause includes the following:
 - a. The SWSS's failure to adhere to any material term of this Contract, including the accountability requirements outlined in Section 7 herein;
 - b. The SWSS's failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or
 - c. The SWSS's violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws or court orders; or
 - d. The existence of conditions that place the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff of the SWSS in danger.

18. **Temporary Extension.** At the discretion of the Department and the Local Board, the Contract term may be extended for a grace period not exceeding sixty (60) days. The request for a temporary extension must be in writing and will be attached to this Contract.

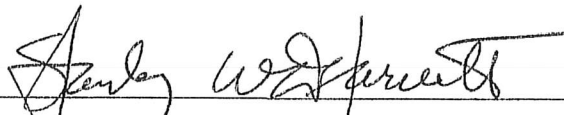
19. **Non-Agency.** The Parties expressly acknowledge and agree that the SWSS is not acting as the agent of the State Board or the Department, except as required by law or this Contract. The SWSS acknowledges that it is without authority to, and will not, extend the faith and credit of the State Board or the Department to any third party.

20. **Delegation.** The Parties agree and acknowledge that the functions and powers of each party may be exercised only by each party and may not be delegated to a third party without written agreement by the Parties.

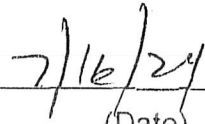
21. **Application of Amended Law.** This Contract is subject to applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and state accountability requirements. Any amendments to laws, rules, regulations, or state accountability requirements cited herein will result in the correlative and immediate modification of this Contract without the necessity for executing a written amendment.

22. **Headings.** Section headings are for convenient reference only and are not part of the Contract. Section headings do not enlarge or limit any Section's contents.
23. **Non-Waiver.** No waiver of any breach of this Contract shall be held as a waiver of any other or subsequent breach.
24. **Severability.** If any provision of the Contract is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the Contract shall remain in full force and effect.
25. **Contradicting or Conflicting Provisions.** If any provision of the Contract is determined to contradict or conflict with any other provision of the Contract, the contradiction or conflict shall be resolved in favor of the flexibility granted pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-82.
26. **Governing Law and Venue.** This Contract shall be governed by, subject to, and construed under the laws of the State of Georgia. Any action brought against the State Board shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County.
27. **Counterparts.** The Parties agree that this Contract may be executed in one or more counterparts which, when taken together, shall constitute one agreement. The Parties further acknowledge and agree that electronic signatures, as well as faxed or scanned and emailed counterpart signature copies of this Contract, shall be as effective and binding as original signatures.
28. **Entire Agreement.** This Contract sets forth the entire agreement between the Local Board and the State Board with respect to the subject matter of this Contract. All prior contracts, representations, statements, negotiations, understandings, and undertakings between the Local Board and the State Board are superseded by this Contract.

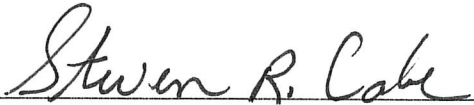
SWSS CONTRACT FOR RABUN COUNTY



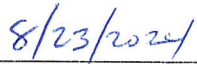
Chairperson, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION




(Date)



Chairperson, Steven Cabe BOARD OF EDUCATION



(Date)



Superintendent, April Childers

8/12/2024

(Date)

Appendix A – Flexibility Component of Contract

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-80 and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.33, Rabun 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
Certification requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200
Salary schedule requirements in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-212

Academic Programs Flexibility Rationale:

A small, rural school district in the northeast area of the state, Rabun County School System has seen continual growth in student enrollment over the past three years. Economic opportunities in our geographic area have led to growth in the number and demographic diversity of families living within our school system boundaries. To ensure that our educational system was equipped to best serve the needs of our growing population, Rabun County School System embarked on a strategic planning process in collaboration with our local business, and civic leaders. Our resulting vision is, "We will educate every child for success in life." Not only are we focused on increasing literacy and numeracy levels beginning with our youngest learners, but we are committed to providing our students with access to real-world experiences that blur the lines between the classroom and the community. The waivers of specified rules and laws pertaining to academic programs will allow Rabun County School System to make unique adjustments to our teaching and learning that will increase student achievement and position our schools to be centers of innovation.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FLEXIBILITY	Implementation Details
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<p>Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning</p>	<p>§20-2-140.1</p>	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. Rural challenges vary, requiring adaptable course structures to meet diverse student needs effectively. A waiver allows us to design programs that foster well-rounded education, aligning with local realities. A waiver empowers us to customize the curriculum, addressing local priorities, cultural contexts, and workforce demands, ensuring relevance and effectiveness including online learning opportunities. For example, all teachers are expected to create, prepare, utilize, and implement online learning opportunities in their classrooms on a regular basis. However, a waiver of this law will allow Rabun County Schools to waive the providers and entities written in the law.</p>
<p>Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning</p>	<p>§20-2-142</p>	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. Waiving this law will allow Rabun County Schools to prevent withholding high school diplomas from students for not completing a course of study dedicated to the history of Georgia. In addition, Rabun County School waives the requirement within the drug and alcohol course of mandating a voluntary parent/guardian participation course and would replace the requirement with an individual course with parents/guardians as requested.</p>
<p>General and career education programs</p>	<p>§20-2-151</p>	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows us to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities, and to develop promotion and retention procedures to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools uses this flexibility to reduce the number of instructional days in the calendar.</p>
<p>Remedial education program</p>	<p>§20-2-154</p>	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows flexibility to meet the academic needs of each student through the use of a variety of models and materials. In Rabun County Schools, remedial education is a fluid process where grades and data are continually assessed to best meet the needs of our</p>

		students, and we request to waive specific reporting requirements beyond the annual reporting submitted to the GADOE.
Alternative education program	§20-2-154.1	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows flexibility to meet the academic needs of each student through the use of a variety of models and materials. We are requesting to waive any limits on the number of students we are able to serve in an Alternative School setting based on the varying needs of our system from year to year.
Limited English proficient program	§20-2-156	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. Our diverse linguistic landscape poses challenges to standard ESOL implementation. A waiver would facilitate the creation of tailored ESOL programs, promoting linguistic proficiency and cultural inclusivity within our student population. For example, Rabun County Schools currently incorporates an innovative model utilizing creative grouping and scheduling which is not listed in the State prescribed ESOL provisions. We believe this is in the best interest of our ESOL Program students and is reflected in their success on their annual ACCESS assessments.
Instruction in social graces and etiquette may be waived	§20-2-187(b)	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Safety and Culture of Well-Being. A waiver allows the spirit of this law to be met through the incorporation of these skills within individual classroom environments which eliminates the need for a standalone course.
Promotion & Retention	§20-2-283	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver for this law would assist our school system in balancing the need for academic progress with considerations for the holistic development of each student to ensure alignment with standards and best practices. For example, in Rabun County Schools, we focus on the whole child and make all promotion/retention decisions in collaboration with the parents based on the totality of data and individual needs of each student; therefore, requiring the need to waive this law.

Promotion & Retention	§20-2-284	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver for this law would assist our school system in balancing the need for academic progress with considerations for the holistic development of each student to ensure alignment with standards and best practices. For example, in Rabun County Schools, we focus on the whole child and make all promotion/retention decisions in collaboration with the parents based on the totality of data and individual needs of each student; therefore, requiring the need to waive this law.</p>
School Attendance, Compulsory Attendance	§20-2-690.2	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Safety and Culture of Well-Being. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to create, maintain, implement, and facilitate student attendance and climate committees.</p>
School Councils	§20-2-86	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Family and Community Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to create, maintain, implement, and facilitate school councils.</p>
Health & Physical Education Program	160-4-2-.12	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. Two such areas are to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement and also in Safety and Culture of Well-Being. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to develop locally defined health and physical education programs and assessments. Rabun County Schools meets the instructional components tied to Health & Physical Education. We are requesting a waiver of the time constraints within the law in order to provide greater opportunities for our students to engage with Physical Education in a more meaningful way.</p>
Statewide Passing Score	160-4-2-.13(2)(a)	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to establish locally defined criteria for the awarding of credits. For example, Rabun County Schools assesses students on a standards</p>

			based grading model in 4th grade, therefore waives the requirement of a grade of 70 or higher as a passing score.
Statewide Passing Score	160-4-2-.13(2)(c)		The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to establish locally defined criteria for the awarding of credits. For example, when students enter from other states, countries, and private institutions where 65 is passing, we award credit for the course. This also can occur with college courses if the grading scale differs from the requirements in the code.
Educational Program for Gifted Students	160-4-2-.38		The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver would facilitate the creation of tailored gifted education programs within our student population. For example, Rabun County Schools evaluates and updates services for gifted education students as needed to provide instruction that is challenging and relevant to our ever changing world. The waiver provides flexibility with the curriculum and service models utilized with this population of students and to evaluate the program as needed.
Graduation Requirements	160-4-2-.48		The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. To ensure our graduates are prepared for success in college, the workforce, and in every endeavor in their future lives and communities, the Rabun County School System will require a minimum of 25 units of credit for graduation. Beyond the state's required 23 units of credit, Rabun County will require students to complete a Georgia approved pathway (CTAE Pathway, Fine Arts, Pathway, Foreign Language) from category (V), an Advanced Content Pathway from category (I, II, III, or IV), OR a locally approved pathway and 1.5 unities in category (VII). In addition, our students will be required to take an additional ½ unit in Economics/Personal Finance.
Awarding Credit	160-5-1-.15		The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to establish locally defined criteria for the awarding of credits. For example, when students enter from other states, countries, and private

	institutions where 65 is passing, we award credit for the course. This also can occur with college courses if the grading scale differs from the requirements in the code.
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Human Resources Flexibility Rationale:

A small, rural school district in the northeast area of the state, Rabun County School System has seen continual growth in student enrollment over the past three years. Economic opportunities in our geographic area have led to growth in the number and demographic diversity of families living within our school system boundaries. To ensure that our educational system was equipped to best serve the needs of our growing population, Rabun County School System embarked on a strategic planning process in collaboration with our local business, and civic leaders. Our resulting vision is, "We will educate every child for success in life." The waivers of specified rules and laws pertaining to human resources will allow the Rabun County School System to make unique adjustments to our staffing for teaching and learning that will increase student achievement and position our schools to be centers of innovation.

HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY		Implementation Details
Certification Requirements	§20-2-200	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Professionalism and Leadership. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the ability to foster a diverse and community-oriented workforce. This flexibility ensures that our team is attuned to the specific needs of our students and can contribute meaningfully to their development. Rabun County Schools acknowledges the need and expectation of the Professional Standards Commission to hire highly qualified teachers as indicated in this law. Rabun County requests to retain this waiver to assist when it is needed to hire the best candidates who may need to seek certification. The teacher shortage continues to grow across our country and Rabun County Schools is dedicated to hiring the best candidates and assisting them in becoming highly qualified highly effective teachers.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-151	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows us to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local

		<p>priorities and to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools uses this flexibility to reduce the number of instructional days in the calendar.</p> <p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows us to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools request the flexibility to extend work based learning opportunities beyond the established criteria to develop soft skills in the industries available in our community.</p> <p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities and to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools uses this flexibility to reduce the number of instructional days in the calendar.</p>
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-160(a)	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities and to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools uses this flexibility to reduce the number of instructional days in the calendar.</p>
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-168(c)	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities and to meet the needs of our population. For example, Rabun County Schools uses this flexibility to reduce the number of instructional days in the calendar.</p>
Professional Learning	§20-2-86	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Family and Community Engagement. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility to create, maintain, implement, and facilitate school councils.</p>
Professional Learning	§20-2-167	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system. Rabun County requests a waiver from direct expenditure controls to allow for flexibility needed to provide for the most urgent and for long term planning for professional development and growth.</p>
Professional Learning	§20-2-182(h)	<p>The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet</p>

		the unique needs of our small rural system. Rabun County requests a waiver from direct expenditure controls to allow for flexibility needed to provide for the most urgent and for long term planning for professional development and growth.
Professional Learning	§20-2-217	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to create, maintain, implement, and facilitate stipend procedures.
Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to use our staff and resources to best serve our student population. For example, Rabun County Schools waives class-size requirements to provide for additional supervision at the primary grade levels (first grade class size might exceed the maximum number in this code while also having a full-time para to reduce the student to staff ratio and providing additional staff to provide for a consistent and safe learning environment).
Multi-year Contracts	§20-2-211	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. The waiver allows us to utilize modern technology for digital signatures.
Salary Schedule Requirements	§20-2-212	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system. For example, Rabun County Schools utilizes a locally approved salary schedule instead of the state approved salary schedule.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. Two such areas are to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness and to achieve Excellence in Safety and Culture of Well-Being. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative

		staffing and safety practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system. For example, teachers may be asked to be present in the cafeteria and/or other locations to assist in student supervision to ensure the safety of the student population.
Media Programs	160-4-4-.01	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets current innovative needs and the vast technology changes including the development of AI and its impact on student learning. Rabun County Schools request this waiver to serve our students best and provide equitable access for all students. For example, Rabun County Schools may employ a technology specialist for the new media center at the high school in lieu of a media specialist to meet the needs of 21st-century learners.
Personnel Required	160-5-1-.22	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system. Rabun County Schools requests this waiver to determine our staffing needs locally and to fill those positions with the best-qualified applicants.

HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY		Student Improvement Outcomes
Certification Requirements	§20-2-200	Teacher certification waivers in specific fields is crucial for providing opportunities to tap into industry professionals' expertise, enriching students' learning with practical insights. This allows us to enhance relevance, bridging the gap between academics and real-world applications, and student performance on End of Pathway Assessments as well as End of Course Assessments will see an increase. By prioritizing proficiency over traditional credentials, we ensure a dynamic, student-centered approach that better prepares our learners for success.
Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	Class size waivers allow Rabun County Schools to provide more course opportunities at all levels. The waiver will also allow Rabun County Schools to create a safer and more engaging learning environment with additional staff in many classrooms that enhance

		learning, lower the pupil to adult ratio, and lead to greater learning outcomes for all students.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	The waiver will allow Rabun County Schools to create a safer environment for students throughout the school day having a positive impact on student outcomes.

Financial Flexibility Rationale:

A small, rural school district in the northeast area of the state, Rabun County School System has seen continual growth in student enrollment over the past three years. Economic opportunities in our geographic area have led to growth in the number and demographic diversity of families living within our school system boundaries. To ensure that our educational system was equipped to best serve the needs of our growing population, Rabun County School System embarked on a strategic planning process in collaboration with our local business, and civic leaders. Our resulting vision is, "We will educate every child for success in life." The waivers of specified rules and laws pertaining to financial flexibility will allow the Rabun County School System to make unique adjustments that will increase student achievement and position our schools to be centers of innovation.

FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY		Implementation Details
Direct Classroom Expenditure Control	§20-2-171	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows us to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities to meet the needs of our population.
Scheduling for Instruction/Program Enrollment & Appropriations	§20-2-160	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Student Achievement, Readiness, and Engagement. A waiver allows us to design programs and schedules that foster well-rounded education, aligned with local priorities to meet the needs of our population.
QBE Financing	§20-2-161	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners

		through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-167	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through innovative hiring and staff practices along with sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-183	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-184	The Rabun County School System launched a new strategic plan during the 2022-2023 school year with a focus in five strategic goal areas. One such area is to achieve Excellence in Operational Effectiveness. A waiver allows Rabun County Schools the flexibility needed to provide a quality education that meets the needs of all learners through sound fiscal practices to meet the unique needs of our small rural system.