

Introduction

This application aims to identify strategic initiatives at the school level, including both requests for flexibility in adhering to district policy and local programming requests.

This form allows schools to:

Request flexibility: Outline a situation where adhering to a specific district policy or state law might hinder a school's ability to effectively serve its students.

Propose a new program: Request a program your school would like to implement from the district program inventory or that is not currently offered in FCS.

In either case, schools will be asked to clearly articulate:

- The specific challenge or opportunity they are addressing.
- Your proposed solution, including details of the requested flexibility or the new program.
- The expected outcomes and positive impacts of their proposal.

Report on an active program: Provide an update on a program that is currently being implemented at your school to ensure Board approval for the program offering.

Discontinue an existing program: Share rationale for sunsetting a program that has traditionally been active at the school.

Please complete this form thoroughly and in consultation with your principal and fellow council members.

Note, all programs offered at Fulton County Schools must be board approved and require board certification every three years.

Value Added Flexibility Form

Select one of the following:

Submit a Programming Request or Update

Grade Level:

Elementary

School *

River Eves Elementary

Programming Requests/Updates

Active Programs

Select the programs offered at your school from the following list:

- 3DE Magnet CTAE Magnet Visual & Performing Arts Magnet
- International Baccalaureate (DP) Magnet International Baccalaureate (MYP) Magnet
- International Baccalaureate (PYP) Magnet STEM Magnet STEAM Magnet

1) Describe the specific goals and objectives of the program(s). How do the program(s) align with the school's Strategic Action Plan?

Sunsetting Programs

Select the programs being discontinued at your school from the following list:

- 3DE Magnet CTAE Magnet Visual & Performing Arts Magnet
- International Baccalaureate (DP) Magnet International Baccalaureate (MYP) Magnet
- International Baccalaureate (PYP) Magnet STEM Magnet STEAM Magnet

1) Describe the specific factors that led to the decision to discontinue the program(s). What is the anticipated impact of discontinuing the program(s) on current students?

New Programs

What new program are you requesting to implement at your school. The following programs are not eligible for individual school requests (AVID, College and Career Academy, Dual Language Immersion, In-School Academies, Safe Centers, School-Based Health Center, Pre-K, JROTC, Middle College).

- 3DE Magnet CTAE Magnet Visual & Performing Arts Magnet
 International Baccalaureate (DP) Magnet International Baccalaureate (MYP) Magnet
 International Baccalaureate (PYP) Magnet STEM Magnet STEAM Magnet Other

1) What need or challenge would this program address at your school? Describe the problem and how you became aware that it needed to be addressed.

Becoming a state recertified STEM school would address the critical need for enhanced engagement and achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math among our students. While we have made significant strides in academic performance, particularly in math and ELA, there remains a gap in student interest and participation in STEM-related activities, which is critical to prepare our students for success beyond elementary school.

We became aware of this challenge through a combination of parent feedback, teacher observations, and performance data. Students and parents expressed a desire for more hands-on, real-world learning experiences that connect classroom concepts to their lives and that connect content in one subject to another. Additionally, teachers noted a lack of structure to effectively integrate STEM education into the current curricula.

This awareness prompted us to explore opportunities for certification, which would not only provide us with the framework and support to strengthen our STEM initiatives but also help cultivate a culture of innovation and collaboration among students and teachers. By addressing this need, we can better prepare our students for future careers in a rapidly evolving world.

2) Why do you think this program would be successful at your school? Include any research/evidence that leads you to believe that the program will accomplish the school's need.

We believe this program would be successful at our school due to our already established commitment to STEM education, which has proven effective in enhancing student outcomes. Since River Eves became the first Fulton County State STEM certified school in 2015, we have prioritized STEM practices in our teaching and learning. This focus has resulted in continuous increases in GA Milestones scores in math, ELA, and reading over the past several years.

Research supports the effectiveness of STEM programs in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Implementing hands-on, project-based learning has shown to engage students more deeply and connect their learning to real-world applications. Studies indicate that students who participate in high-quality STEM programs exhibit increased interest in STEM fields, greater career knowledge, and essential 21st-century skills, such as perseverance and collaboration. Given our track record and the evidence supporting STEM education, I am confident that this program will meet our school's needs and foster further academic success.

3) How does this program align with your School Action Plan? Draw connections between the proposed solution and the needs of your school and/or community.

This program aligns closely with our Strategic Action Plan by addressing several key goals, particularly enhancing performance in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math. While the focus on math may not be explicitly stated in our strategic action plan, it is a critical component of our overall academic success. By integrating a STEM focus, we can create engaging, project-based learning experiences that deepen students' understanding of ELA and math concepts while also promoting critical thinking and collaboration.

The proposed solution directly addresses our need for more engaging and purposeful learning, which enhances student satisfaction. Research shows that when students are actively involved in hands-on projects, their enthusiasm and investment in their education increase, leading to improved outcomes in both ELA and math. This alignment is crucial, as students will develop stronger communication skills and a solid grasp of mathematical concepts through collaborative STEM activities that require them to articulate their ideas and findings clearly.

Additionally, becoming a state certified STEM school aligns with our desire to create an attractive work environment for teachers. Many educators at River Eves have expressed an interest in working in a STEM-

focused setting. By fostering this environment, we can increase employee retention rates, ensuring that we retain our talented staff who are committed to our students' current and future success.

4) What steps will you take to implement this program? Include any resources, required training/professional development and/or additional implications associated with the proposal.

To implement this program effectively, we will begin by setting up a meeting with Angela Parham, our zone superintendent, and Nicole Ford, the current CTAE coordinator. This meeting will help us gain essential support to proceed with our initiative and learn more about the necessary steps to become a recertified STEM school. We will also continue to assess our existing STEM practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in aligning our curriculum and enhancing our project-based learning initiatives.

In addition, we will plan visits to other recently state certified schools to gain insight and knowledge about their successful strategies and practices. This firsthand experience will provide valuable ideas and approaches we can adapt for our own school. We will continue to focus on aligning our curriculum to incorporate STEM principles and make meaningful connections across disciplines, identifying real-world problems for students to solve.

We will also provide targeted professional development opportunities for our teachers, focusing on effective STEM instruction, project-based learning strategies, and integrating all content areas within STEM contexts. This will involve workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and peer observations to share best practices.

Throughout the school year, we will ensure that students participate in ongoing project-based learning experiences that engage them and foster essential skills such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. Finally, we will establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the program, collecting data on student performance in ELA, math, and science as well as feedback from students and teachers about their experiences with STEM activities.

Zone Superintendent Review

Zone Superintendent Decision

Comments