BUTLER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
INNOVATION ZONE/FLEXIBILITY APPLICATION

Date Received: December 12, 2013

Synopsis: School Calendar – 180 days to 175 days by lengthening the school day to ensure 1080 instructional hours. Provision of 12 professional development/inservice days for teachers.

Statute Affected: 180-day school year requirement

Status: Approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on March 12, 2014
Dr. Tommy Bice  
Alabama Dept. of Education  
50 N. Ripley Street  
P.O. Box 302101  
Montgomery, AL 36104

Dear Dr. Bice and State Board Members:

The Butler County School System is pursuing an innovation/flexibility contract as proposed in the attached Innovation Zone Application. Our proposal is a simple one: modifying our school calendar for the 2014-2015 school year from 180 student days to 175 slightly longer school days with the twelve professional days thoughtfully planned throughout the year.

Butler County district and school leaders are committed to the Alabama’s college and career ready standards, PLAN 2020, state assessments, and academic rigor. We have publicized this proposal through our website, received 92% or greater supporting votes from each of our six schools, secured school and community commitments, and have conducted a public hearing wherein no concerns were noted.

It is my hope that you grant us permission to operate the proposed school calendar for 2014-15 and I look forward to the benefits it will provide to Butler County teachers and students.

Sincerely,

Darren Douthitt

Darren Douthitt  
Secretary and Chief  
Executive Officer
Section 1- Applicant Information

School System: Butler County Schools
Contact Name & Title: Amy Bryan, Federal Programs Director
Telephone Number: (334) 382-2665 ext. 1213
E-Mail Address: Amy.Bryan@butlerco.k12.al.us

Number of Schools Involved: 6
Number of Students Served/Affected by Plan: approx. 3,200
Number of Teachers Involved/Affected by Plan: 234
Number of Service Personnel Involved/Affected by Plan: 146

Please place a check beside the appropriate entity(ies) applying for Innovation Zone designation:

- School
- Department or Subdivision of School
- Coalition of Schools (fill out multiple listings below)
- Feeder System of Schools
- District

Please complete the chart below for the District’s leadership team that will support plan (add rows as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darren Douthitt</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Bryan</td>
<td>Federal Programs Director</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tera Simmons</td>
<td>Curriculum Director</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Thornton</td>
<td>Special Services Director</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheta McClain</td>
<td>Accountability Specialist</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete the chart below for each school that will be involved/affected by the plan (insert additional rows as needed):

* School Teams are noted on Record of Commitment forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.O. Parmer</td>
<td>Catherine Tanner</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville Elementary</td>
<td>Bryant Marlow</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville Middle</td>
<td>Curtis Black</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville High</td>
<td>Joseph Dean</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgiana School</td>
<td>Ward Thigpen</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie School</td>
<td>Randy Williams</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

The leadership team of the Butler County School System proposes to make a slight adjustment to the 180-day required school calendar for 2014-2015 in order to exercise the innovative and flexibility options provided as a part of PLAN 2020. Our school day will be lengthened by 10 minutes per day in order to ensure that we operate the required 1,080 instructional hours during the year. However, the proposal is for a configuration of 175 student days and 12 professional/inservice days for the teaching staff. The calendar will further be altered to spread the 12 inservice days throughout the school year so that professional training that must occur September through May can take place on scheduled PD days without removing teachers from school day instruction. The result will be frequent breaks for both students and staff to prevent burnout, fewer teacher absences due to professional training necessary during the school year, and a notable savings to the district due to transportation costs ($1392 per day), substitute teacher costs ($2,045 per day), as well as costs for food and utilities. The district is currently on a similar school calendar for 2013-2014 and anticipates no decline in achievement due to the innovative calendar.
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
X  Specific waiver requested of Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) statute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALSDE Policy Waiver Request (Specify memo, etc., outlining policy)</th>
<th>Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) Statute Waiver Request (Specify AAC Rule No., etc.)</th>
<th>Impact of the Waiver (What will the waiver enable the school to do differently, etc.?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 180 school day requirement
  290-3-1-02 (2)
  16-1-1 (1975) |                                                                                   | 1) PD days will be scheduled throughout the school year to minimize teacher absences for PD, 2) frequent short breaks are built into the calendar to minimize teacher burnout and student apathy, 3) class periods are longer (with 10 minutes added to each day) to maximize class time vs. time wasted in transitions between classes, 4) 1080 hours of instructional time is scheduled, and 5) there will be a slight savings in busing, food costs, substitutes, and utilities for the five days cut. |

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 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 Butler County School System has previously used creative scheduling of the school calendar in order to provide several short breaks for both teachers and students during the school year with the benefit of re-energizing teaching, learning, and achievement. This proposal ensures the requirement of 1080 class hours by extending each school day by 10 minutes. In addition, teacher absences due to local professional development (PD) activities will be minimized as this proposal incorporates planned PD days throughout the school year. Finally, a slight savings in transportation, substitute staffing, food, and utilities costs will be the result of five fewer school days.

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

1) Upon a review of attendance data, we found teacher and student absences were higher during the 2012-13 year which had fewer scheduled school holidays (no fall break, less than 2 weeks at Christmas, etc.). Also, in reviewing teacher attendance, one-quarter of teacher absences was due to professional days. This proposal dedicates five inservice days during the school year to decrease the number of days teachers are pulled from classes for professional development. 2) Upon surveying school bell schedules, we found that as much as 38 minutes of each day is spent in transition time at each school. Fewer but slightly longer days will minimize this time waster. 3) The transportation budget shows that each school days costs the district approximately $1392 to transport students. Each school day costs around $2045 in substitute costs. Therefore, in addition to savings on utilities and food, we expect a savings of over $16,000 in substitutes and transportation costs for the five days reduced from the school calendar.

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?

This project affects all four tenets of PLAN 2020. A) Systems are granted flexibility to innovate and create 21st Century learning environments to meet individual and collective needs of students. B) Professionals are well prepared, resourced, supported, and effective. Our planned PD days throughout the year and frequent short breaks will aide in that goal. C) Support Systems. Our district is part of the Learning Supports Initiative and the flexible calendar proposed in no way diminishes the multiple supports framework set in place this year. D) Learners. Rigorous and relevant learning opportunities affect student achievement far greater than the number of days or hours a student spends in a desk. The Butler County School System is currently working on a new strategic plan which is in line with the state’s PLAN 2020.
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?

"Elements that foster student achievement are high expectations for students, data-driven instruction, ongoing PD for teachers, and thoughtful use of school time." K. Chenoweth, "It’s being done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools" Harvard Education Press, 2007. This proposal is an example of thoughtful use of time and provides for ongoing PD for teachers that does not interrupt the daily instruction. Our proposal is also in line with an Arizona State University study "Time for School: Its Duration and Allocation" wherein it noted no appreciable gain or loss in student achievement due to small increases or decreases of time allotted to schooling. It also provided this summary statement: "Productivity of the schools is not a matter of the time allocated to them as much as it is a matter of how they use the time they already have. Butler County Schools will ensure teachers make the most of their allocated time to ensure they promote students who are college- and career-ready.

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

One community partner will support the implementation of the innovative school calendar by assisting with early and frequent communication of school holidays and breaks to its mass audience. Another community partner will ensure care and enriching activities are available for students during the planned inservice days throughout the school year. Internally, the district’s leadership team will stay abreast of achievement data as well as surveying the school climates to ensure all involved are making the most of the allotted school day and school year. Surveys will be given to school staff, students, and parents as well as careful inspection of relative data prior to planning for subsequent school calendars.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 22-23</td>
<td>Teacher Inservice Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20-21</td>
<td>School Day,PP/Inservice Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20-21</td>
<td>Administration of all School holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20-21</td>
<td>Thoughtful Planning by schools and the superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20-21</td>
<td>Sent to all six school day to be started with S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug - 11-15</td>
<td>Summer days start with S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug - 11-15</td>
<td>Summer vacation will begin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposed School Calendar**

- **PP/Inservice Days**: Account for the 1080 institutional hours.
- **School Year**: At 99% of above for the 2014-15 school year.
- **Student Attendance**: Will remain above 2014-15 school year, and 2 after school programs. There are only 175 PDD days with 5 before school and 5 during the school year. Professional development will be proposed school calendar (attached). There are 12 teacher absences due to professional development.

**Goals**

- **SMART Goals**
  - Identify the measurable objectives that will be used to determine success in achieving these goals.
  - Develop activities for each objective that are measurable.
  - Identify the measurable objectives.

**Section 4 - Goals, Objectives, Evaluation, Timeline**

- **Thoughtful scheduling of school days and professional development for the 2014-2015 school calendar**

**Budget**

- **Current Operating Fund**
  - Change the way the school(s)/school system operate.
  - Include the name and identify the measurable activities.

- **Personnel**
  - Develop activities for each objective that are:

- **Objectives**
  - Measurable, relevant, and timely.
  - SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
2. How will the alternate calendar be implemented? Success will be achieved with the alternate calendar.

hours of instructional time, then an alternate innovation zone. The proposal will be submitted alongside with appropriate evidence of

Should it be determined that the district wishes to adhere to a 175-day schedule with slightly longer days to ensure the 1080

Whether this innovative school calendar is sustained beyond the 2014-2015 school year will be determined by the above evaluation.

1. How will you evaluate and report the impact this innovation project has on increasing student success and/or other stated

goals and objectives?

The district will evaluate the success of failure of this slightly altered calendar continuation by examining data related to achievement,

annually on this innovative/alternative plan as requested.

student and teacher attendance, school climate, and expenses. The Federal Programs director will be responsible for reporting semi-

Section 5 - Project Evaluation and Sustainability
Community Partner Support

Use this form to document community organization/agency support and partnership for the innovation plan/project. Use a separate form for each community partner.

School/Schools: W.O. Parmer, Greenville Elementary, Greenville Middle, & Greenville High

School District: Butler County Schools

Date(s) of School/School District/Community Partner Dialogues: Nov. 4 and Nov. 19, 2013

Name of Community Organization/Agency: Greenville Newspapers, LLC

Contact Person: Tracy Salter, Publisher

Contact Person E-mail Address: Tracy.Salter@greenvilleadvocate.com

Contact Person Telephone Number: 334-382-3111

Contact Person Address: 103 N. Hickory Street, Greenville, AL 36037

Explain the community organization's/agency's commitment to the Plan/Project:

The Greenville Advocate reach an audience of over 6,000 weekly. We are committing to use these two publications as outlets for advertising the school calendar, school holidays, and teacher inservices for the families in Butler County.

List the resources and contributions (not monetary) that the organization/agency is making to this Plan/Project:

The resources used by Greenville Newspapers, LLC will be the Butler Bulletins section of The Greenville Advocate.

Agency Representative (Name) Tracy Salter

Title: Publisher

Signature: Tracy Salter
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School: W.O. Parmer Elementary School
School District: Butler County

Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.): Nov. 4, 2013
*Meeting Date(s): Nov. 19, 2013

Parent Representatives:
Name: Robin Courtney
Name: Christy Owens
Name: Lois Newbold

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school’s PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:
Name: Sonya Bogan
Name: April Beatwright
Name: Regina Bennett

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:
Name: Catherine Tanner, Principal
Name: Derron Dehk, Superintendent
Name: Amy Bryan, Federal Programs

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School: Greenville Elementary School

School District: Butler County

Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.): Nov. 4, 2013

*Meeting Date(s): Nov. 19, 2013

Parent Representatives:
Name: Gabrielle Blackmon
Name: Cheryl Gates
Name: Stacey Veazey

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school’s PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:
Name: Stephanie Thornton
Name: Tiffany Thomas
Name: Pat McNaughton

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:
Name: Bryant Marlow, Principal
Name: Darron Douthitt, Superintendent
Name: Amy Bryant, Federal Programs

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School:  Greenville Middle School
School District:  Butler County

Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.):  Nov. 4, 2013

*Meeting Date(s):  Nov. 19, 2013

Parent Representatives:
Name:  Kimberly B. Sims
Name:  Sally B. Carlyon
Name:  Arleen Steele

We certify that this application(plan) is supported by the school’s PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:
Name:  Lizzie Marlow
Name:  Deedra Benson
Name:  Marcus North

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:
Name:  Curtis Black, Principal
Name:  Darrel Douthit, Superintendent
Name:  Amy Bryan, Federal Program

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School: Greenville High School
School District: Butler County
Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.): Nov. 4, 2013
*Meeting Date(s): Nov. 19, 2013

Parent Representatives:
Name: Demetrius Scott Signature: Demetrius Scott
Name: April Hamilton Signature: April Hamilton
Name: Tina Powell Signature: Tina Powell

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school’s PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:
Name: Malcolm R. Owens Signature: Malcolm R. Owens
Name: Matt Gill Signature: Matt Gill
Name: Greta Whiddon Signature: Greta Whiddon

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:
Name: Joseph Dean, Principal Signature: Joseph Dean
Name: Darren Douthit, Superintendent Signature: Darren Douthit
Name: Amy Bryan, Federal Programs Signature: Amy Bryan

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School:  _Georgiana School_
School District:  _Butler County_
Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.):  _Nov. 4, 2013_
*Meeting Date(s):  _Nov. 19, 2013_

Parent Representatives:

Name:  _Abigail Turner_  
Signature:  _Abigail Turner 11/13_
Name:  _Joyce F. Herring_  
Signature:  _Joyce F. Herring_
Name:  _Mitzy O'Connor_  
Signature:  _Mitzy O'Connor_

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school's PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:

Name:  _Jessica Jaden Morgan_  
Signature:  _Jessica J. Morgan_
Name:  _Stephanie Cartwright_  
Signature:  _Stephanie Cartwright_
Name:  _Traci D. Moore_  
Signature:  _Traci D. Moore_

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:

Name:  _Ward Thigpen, Principal_  
Signature:  _Ward Thigpen_
Name:  _Darsean Dowdell, Superintendent_  
Signature:  _Darsean Dowdell_
Name:  _Amy Bryan, Federal Programs_  
Signature:  _Amy Bryan_

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School: McKenzie School
School District: Butler County
Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.): Nov. 4, 2013
*Meeting Date(s): Nov. 19, 2013

Parent Representatives:
Name: Sherri Lee Signature: Sherri Lee
Name: Kelly Hatch Signature: Kelly Hatch
Name: Darlene Odom

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school's PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:
Name: Haden W. Horton Signature: Haden W. Horton
Name: Beth Burnett Signature: Beth Burnett
Name: Mike Brown

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:
Name: Mike Gunter, Principal Signature: Mike Gunter
Name: Darren Douthitt, Superintendent
Name: Amy Bryan, Federal Programs

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level.
Local Education Agency Report of Support or Concerns

Use this form to report the school or district and superintendent support or concerns, or both, about the innovation to the principal and faculty. Use a separate form for each school.

School: All 6 Butler County Schools

School District: Butler County

Date of School/Department/Subdivision Receipt of Application: October 21, 2013

Date of Regularly Scheduled Board of Education Meeting: November 21, 2013

Local School Board of Education Members:

Name of President: Mickey Jones

Name Vice President: Terry Williams

Name of Member: Linda Hamilton

Name of Member: Billy Jones

Name of Member: Joe Lisenby

Support:

The Superintendent, School Board, and faculty from all six Butler County Schools are unanimous in their support of this proposal for a 175-school day calendar for the reasons detailed within this proposal. Butler County Schools is appreciative of the opportunity to apply for flexibility in our 2014-15 school calendar.

Concerns:

No concerns have been voiced at the public hearing as this proposed calendar is actually a continuation of the 2013-14 school calendar already being implemented in Butler County Schools. In fact, each school’s vote was 92% or greater in favor of the proposal. The Superintendent’s Advisory Council also expressed no concerns over this proposal.

(Report of the Local Education Agency must be forwarded to school/school district for submission to Alabama State Board of Education with the application/plan).
BUTLER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION
Supporting the Intent to Pursue an Innovation/Flexibility Contract for the School System Calendar

WHEREAS, the Butler County Board of Education hereby acknowledges and embraces the objectives of the State of Alabama Department of Education’s Plan 2020 that includes the following.

- All students perform at or above proficiency and show continuous improvement (achievement/growth)
- All students succeed (gap closure).
- Every student graduates from high school (grad rate).
- Every student graduates high school prepared (college and career readiness); and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Board of Education is committed to providing elements that foster student achievement including high expectations for students, data driven instruction, ongoing professional development for teachers and thoughtful use of school time; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Board of Education ensures that every child is taught by a well-prepared, resourced, supported, and effective teacher noting that professional development conducted periodically during the school year during non-instructional days has been determined to provide teachers with resources required to provide students with quality instruction; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Board of Education proposes an innovative school calendar that provides for 175 student days with 1,080 instructional hours that has been voted upon by all staff members of the Butler County School System and approved by 92% of the staff; and

WHEREAS, in addition a public hearing was conducted on November 19, 2013 for ascertaining public input on the proposed 175 day school calendar. Furthermore, the proposed calendar was posted on the school system website for public viewing and comments; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Board of Education will continue efforts toward its mission, vision and goals for the school system; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Butler County Board of Education unanimously approves the proposed 175 day innovative school calendar for 2014-2015.

Done this the 21st day of November, 2013

Mickey Jones
Board Chairman

Darren Douthitt
Superintendent