ELMORE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
INNOVATION ZONE/FLEXIBILITY APPLICATION

Date Received: February 10, 2014

Synopsis: Program designed to help students get back on track academically while providing them with training in at least one technical field to equip them to market themselves to colleges and/or employers.

Statute Affected: Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 290-3-1-.02(10)

Status: Approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on March 12, 2014
February 7, 2014

Dr. Thomas R. Bice, Superintendent
Alabama Department of Education
50 North Ripley Street
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36104

Dear Dr. Bice:

Our Innovation Zone/Flexibility Application is attached for your review. We are very excited to submit this plan because we feel that it embodies the primary focus of helping students achieve the goal of every child a graduate – every graduate prepared.

Our application involves the enhancement of our existing, previously-approved credit recovery program, Recovering Academics Maximizing Possibilities (RAMP), which incorporates a very strong career-technical education component. However, the most significant element of our application is our request to waive the requirement for public input, hearings, and community support. Because our program has been in operation for five years, we are requesting approval of our enhancements without these external pieces in order to continue services to students with minimal disruption.

The attached request seeks approval to add the following features:

- Expand the software programs used in the program to include both E2020 and A+nywhere Learning System (A+LS). Most students will be placed on E2020 but the credit recovery teacher would have the ability to move struggling students to the A+LS program on an as-needed basis.
- Allowance for students to take a course in the credit recovery/graduation assistance program for initial credit.
  - Students who meet admission criteria (which includes being 10 or more credits behind their on-target peers) typically enter the credit recovery program at the beginning of their 4th year of high school.
  - Therefore, they have failed several 9th, 10th, and/or 11th grade courses and have yet to attempt their 12th grade courses.
  - Students taking first-attempt courses would be required to complete the entire course rather than only the standards not mastered.
  - We have had a certified teacher to facilitate the program since its inception and feel that this teacher will be able to provide the necessary support to students who take courses for initial credit.
Students in the credit recovery program are already extremely at-risk of becoming dropouts. The ability to allow students to complete courses for initial credit under the supervision of a certified teacher greatly increases their probability of earning a diploma and graduating with their class.

Finally, our RAMP students are closely monitored by the facilitating teacher who keeps extensive and immaculate records of student work. All work completed by students is well documented and can be reported in detail at any time. Specific guidelines are followed by the program and the base schools regarding student grades.

Based on our application and the explanations provided herein, I respectfully request your approval of the enhancements to our RAMP program. If I may provide additional information, please call or email me at (334) 567-1200 or jeff.langham@elmoreco.com.

Sincerely,

Jeffery E. Langham, Ed.D.
Superintendent

c Dr. Andre’ L. Harrison, Deputy Superintendent
    Steve McKenzie, Director of Secondary Education

Enclosure
Section 1 - Applicant Information

School System: Elmore County
Contact Name & Title: Steve McKenzie, Director of Secondary Education
Telephone Number: 334-567-1290
E-Mail Address: steve.mckenzie@elmoreco.com
Number of Schools Involved: 4
Number of Students Served/Affected by Plan: approximately 50 per school year
Number of Teachers Involved/Affected by Plan: 10
Number of Service Personnel Involved/Affected by Plan: 0

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
X 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>Jeff Langham</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve McKenzie</td>
<td>Director of Secondary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Thomas</td>
<td>Director, Elmore County Technical Center</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Wes Rogers</td>
<td>Principal, Elmore County High School</td>
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<td>Jimmy Hull</td>
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<td>Jamey McGowin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Veazey</td>
<td>Principal, Wetumpka High School</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>School Name</th>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
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Section 2- Abstract and Waiver Requests

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.

Recovering Academics Maximizing Possibilities (RAMP) is a program designed to help students get back on track academically while providing them with training in at least one technical field to equip them to market themselves to colleges and/or employers. The program has several key characteristics that separate it from a regular credit recovery program.

1. RAMP is selective and acceptance is competitive. Students and their parents must interview with the Elmore County Technical Center Director. Students must agree to the conditions of the program, particularly those related to attendance and genuine effort. Students not willing to accept the stipulations of the program may not be accepted.

2. RAMP will use a state-approved software program, E2020, as the primary vehicle for curriculum delivery. RAMP will be staffed with a teacher certified in one of the high school core areas to more effectively serve the students. The RAMP teacher will develop a collaborative relationship with teachers of various core subjects throughout the district and call on them for assistance as needed. As an additional resource, A+nywhere Learning System is an alternative software program that may be used for struggling students. The RAMP teacher determines student placement on the A+nywhere Learning System program on an as-needed basis.

3. RAMP will target students with unique circumstances. Many of the students accepted in the program have complicated issues, many of which are outside their control, that have caused them to lag behind academically. Such issues include pregnancy, legal trouble for the student or their parent(s), illness, frequent moves, poor attendance caused by instability in the home, and many others. Most students accepted in RAMP typically have the necessary academic ability but circumstances and/or poor decisions will have set them on a downward spiral of negative academic experiences from which they have not been able to recover.

4. RAMP will incorporate nine career technical programs along with the core academic recovery. Students will be enrolled in at least one of the following programs of their choice: Cabinetmaking, Cosmetology, Drafting and Design Technology, Education and Training, Electrical Technology, Healthcare Technology, Computer Electronics, Power Equipment, and Welding Technology. These programs will allow students to develop marketable skills as well as earn their high school diploma.

5. Students accepted into RAMP are generally fourth-year students who cannot graduate on time within the confines of the traditional high school schedule. Because many students admitted to the RAMP program will be classified as 11th graders, they will not have attempted and failed all courses required for graduation. Therefore, some courses needed to graduate will be first attempts. In order to preserve the rigor and integrity of the core academic courses, the full CCRS-based course in E2020 would be used to meet these requirements. Unlike credit recovery courses in E2020, students would be required to complete all lessons and activities for each first-attempt course, not just those covering standards not previously mastered. The requirements for the new diploma, including any score requirement for ACT and/or end of course assessments, will be included in the criteria for acceptance in the future.

6. Students will maintain their home school identity by participating in special school events, activities, and the school's graduation ceremony.

RAMP will be much more than a credit recovery program. It will be an opportunity for students to not only regain their credits but to also allow them to develop the marketable technical skills that will help them become productive citizens in society.
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
___ 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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Choice Implementation Guide</td>
<td>Alabama Administrative Code, r. 290-3-1-.02(10)</td>
<td>It will allow students to earn credit through the credit recovery program for courses they had not previously attempted. (see Item 5, page 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Administrative Code</td>
<td></td>
<td>The waiver will allow students with final course grades below 40 to take courses through the credit recovery program.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>The waiver will allow students to earn more than 10 credits per academic year.</td>
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**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 the *Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999, Title 16, Chapter 22A, Code of Alabama 1975*
- 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)?**

   We expect the RAMP program to accomplish goals for our school district. First, it will increase the number of students who earn a high school diploma in Elmore County. Second, it will increase the number of students who complete courses in Career Technical Education and develop marketable skills for post high school education, training, or employment.

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

   Elmore County’s graduation rate of 72% is below the state’s graduation rate of 80%. The individual school’s rates are as follows: Elmore County High School – 83%, Holtville High School – 75%, Stanhope Elmore High School – 68%, Wetumpka High School – 68%. The greatest factors for dropouts in the district are lack of academic progress and lack of interest in school. The RAMP Program provides students an opportunity to gain a relevant and “real world” skill in career technical courses while making tangible academic progress in a more customized and focused academic setting.

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?**

   The RAMP Program’s objectives of increasing the graduation rate as well as increasing participation in career technical programs are clearly aligned with both Alabama’s PLAN 2020 and the district’s strategic plan and vision/mission statements. The RAMP Program provides relevant education and skill development for students who struggle to find a connection between school and the “real world.” Both PLAN 2020 and Elmore County’s strategic plan place a greater emphasis on incorporating career technical courses into the high school experience. In addition, Elmore County is making a focused effort to develop a strong connection with business and industry in the county through our Workforce Development Committee which includes leaders in the school district as well as representatives from business and industry from within the county. The RAMP Program reflects this effort because it allows the school district to supply the workforce with more high school graduates that have completed a career technical program.

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?**

   The RAMP Program is founded on the research which states that a lack of student motivation caused by their inability to see the relevance of school is one of the primary reasons for poor student achievement and dropouts. RAMP is designed to give students a chance to close the gap in their academic achievement while having an opportunity to learn at least one career technical skill set they can use to seek employment immediately after high school. Ultimately, the RAMP Program will attempt to improve student motivation by making education more relevant for students.

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

   The district supports RAMP by providing the space and technology needed to operate the software used in the credit recovery component of the program. RAMP is monitored by the Elmore County Technical Center Director and appropriate central office personnel. Areas monitored include student progress in the credit recovery component, student performance in the career technical courses, graduation rates of each high school and the system as a whole, and the success of students that complete the program as the move into post-high school education, training, or employment.
### GOALS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the measurable objectives that will be used to determine success in achieving these goals</td>
<td>Develop activities for each objective that are: creative and innovative; impact student success; allow for greater flexibility; change the way the school(s)/school system currently operates</td>
<td>Indicate the name and title of personnel that will be responsible for the activities</td>
<td>Identify the timeline for the activities (include month/year)</td>
<td>Indicate budget requirements and funding source (include formulas used to derive totals in budget sections, e.g., 3 subs @$143/day=total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals (SMART))</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Identify and select students at the end of their 3rd year of high school that lack the credits needed to be on track to graduate with their cohort group. Screen and interview students for RAMP.</td>
<td>Each student will utilize the E2020 (or A+nywhere Learning System) program in the RAMP classroom. The student will be given the opportunity to self-pace their assignments and select the order in which they complete their course work. The student will be allowed to accommodate their learning styles through a variety of methods (listing to background music w/headphones, drowning out all class noise w/headphones, or taking short breaks between lessons.)</td>
<td>1 certified educator</td>
<td>Dec 2013 or May 2014</td>
<td>Salary of 1 certified educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify and select 1 or 2 career tech programs within the student’s career interest</td>
<td>Each of the 9 career tech classes have their own individual activities. Students in RAMP do the same activities as all other students on campus.</td>
<td>9 Career Tech Instructors</td>
<td>Dec 2013 or May 2014</td>
<td>Already in plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. How will you evaluate and report the impact this innovation project has on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives?

For each of the four high schools in the district, the number of students on course to graduate with their cohort group is determined. The number of students successfully recovering credits through RAMP is then added to the total. A percentage increase in the graduation rate is calculated to determine student success in meeting the goals and objectives.

2. How will this innovation project be sustained?

This innovative project has been sustained since the fall semester of 2008. We are beginning the fifth year of the program. Every year, our district has students in need of the RAMP program. As long as there is an educator, a classroom, approximately 20 computer stations, a rigorous independent learners’ software program (such as E2020 and/or A+nywhere Learning System), and students with insufficient credits, the program will be sustainable.