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Appendix A – Flexibility Component of Contract

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-80 and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.33, Richmond 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:

The Richmond County School System lies along the banks of the Savannah River which separates Augusta, Georgia from North Augusta, South Carolina. Parts of the county are rural. The downtown area is considered urban and many of the areas surrounding Augusta are suburban. Most schools in Richmond County receive Title 1 funding. The Richmond County School System’s current student population is 29,384. This population has been increasing since the Georgia Cyber Center relocated in the Augusta area and the investment in the White House Workforce Hub. Our strategic planning process involves receiving input from all stakeholders to include parents, students, community agencies and partners, local businesses and industry, and post-secondary institutions. The approved academic programs flexibility waivers that our school system is currently utilizing affords the LEA the opportunity to provide innovative instructional programming and activities based on student need to increase student achievement and achieve the goals of our system’s Strategic Plan. The allowable waivers, specific to state laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to academic programs will allow the Richmond County School System to continue to offer innovative academic programming and offerings that are personalized to the diverse needs of our student population, which will increase student performance in literacy, numeracy, and post high school readiness. Our priority is increasing student achievement and success.

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FLEXIBILITY		Implementation Details
Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning	§20-2-140.1	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in order to increase course offerings and program participation both inside and outside the system and scheduled school day. Utilizing online courses to increase opportunities for students to move on when ready, provide personalized learning, and to supplement and enhance course offerings will increase student achievement.
Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning	§20-2-142	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in order to increase course offerings and program participation both inside and outside the system and scheduled school day. Increasing courses of study prescribed through innovative instructional programming and activities will increase student achievement.
General and career education programs	§20-2-151	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in the requirements related to staffing, class size and program delivery/time requirements and models to offer a variety of delivery models including but not limited to advanced content at the elementary level, and to allow the system an opportunity to provide support to individual students based on need. Increasing general and career education programs flexibility to allow for advisement or career planning will increase student college and career readiness.
Remedial education program	§20-2-154	The Richmond County School System’s student population exceeds the 25% maximum eligible percentage of students qualifying to receive Remedial Education Programs (REP). We are requesting flexibility to increase the percentage of students being served in REP to meet student needs. An example of how this flexibility will be used is scheduling and class size based on student need. One example is providing REP services to students during Homeroom or Advisement. This will allow students to receive services based on need and ensures schools can provide equitable services. Flexibility in staffing is requested if a non-traditional teacher without English/Language Arts or Mathematics certification is used to provide REP services if a certified teacher is not available for hire. Support will be provided via the RCSS Intervention/Acceleration Expectations Tier II and Tier III Guidance Manual, District-level Professional Learning Support and MTSS early identification and data monitoring.

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Alternative education program	§20-2-154.1	The Richmond County School System will award credit to at-risk students offering them an opportunity to complete high school through two Alternative education programs. The Reaching Potential through Manufacturing Program allows students the opportunity to complete high school, learn about automated manufacturing, and develop employability skills all while working for the Textron Corporation and earning an income. This innovative program helps students stay in school, graduate, and become successful productive members of the workforce. Learners earn a variety of different credentials and are exposed to career options. The Performance Learning Center (PLC) is a non-traditional, high school program that offers face-to-face, virtual, and blended learning options for various courses. Students earn credits utilizing Edgenuity online and teachers serve as facilitators of learning. At PLC students master the knowledge and skills to prepare them for success in college or career.
School climate management program	§20-2-155	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in the requirements related to staffing, class size and program delivery/time requirements and models to offer a variety of delivery models including but not limited to advanced content at the elementary level, and to allow the system an opportunity to provide support to individual students based on need. Providing innovation in school climate management programs to address the unique school climates of each school community will result in positive school climates and cultures for all stakeholders.
Limited English proficient program	§20-2-156	The Richmond County School System follows the Georgia Department of Education’s ESOL program guidelines for class size and delivery/time models (push-in, pull-out, and scheduled class period). Flexibility in staffing is requested in the event that a non-traditional or certified teacher without ESOL endorsement is utilized to provide ELL services if an ESOL endorsed teacher is not available for hire. Support will be provided to assist the teacher non-traditional or certified teacher to attain ESOL endorsement. The ESOL Program Specialist and ESOL Instructional Specialist will provide support and professional learning. The guidelines in the RCSS ESOL Handbooks and Documents will be used.
Public School Choice	§20-2-2131	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to allow students greater public-school choice based on the capacity of the school building, available space, programming needs, and conditions of transportation by parents and/or school system. Allowing public school choice for students to attend schools and programs based on

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		individual needs and interests will increase student academic achievement and success.
Organization of Schools; School Administrative Managers	§20-2-290	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in the requirement of five hours of instructional time. An example of how The Richmond County School System could use this waiver would be to allow Middle Schools to offer a focused advisement time for all students grades 6-8 during the day based on best practices. Expanding flexibility in instructional time and middle school programming will increase student achievement.
School Councils	§20-2-85	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in how school councils are developed and implemented. Increasing flexibility in the management and operation of School Councils will increase parent, family, and community engagement.
School Councils	§20-2-86	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in how school councils are developed and implemented. Increasing flexibility in the management and operation of School Councils will increase parent, family, and community engagement.
Health & Physical Education Program	160-4-2-.12	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from the requirement to provide flexible pathways for students to meet the required physical education courses. Richmond County School System students participating in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) for three consecutive years with a passing grade may use the courses and activities in lieu of the Georgia Department of Education's Comprehensive Health and Physical Education requirement of Personal Fitness as outlined by SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05. Students participating junior varsity or varsity sports, marching band, or dance for two years may use the courses and/or activities in lieu of the Georgia Department of Education's Comprehensive Health and Physical Education requirement of Personal Fitness. A committee will be formed to develop guidelines for awarding the .5 Personal Fitness credit in lieu of taking the course.
Graduation Requirements	160-4-2-.48	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility with regards to graduation requirements. Increasing innovation in programming and support services provided to individual students will remove barriers to matriculation through high school and increase students meeting high school graduation and state assessment requirements. The Richmond County System will expand virtual learning opportunities and increase credit recovery options allowing students the opportunity to accelerate by awarding credit when standards are mastered rather than based on seat time.

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Awarding Credit	160-5-1-.15	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility with regards to awarding credit. An example is allowing the closest equivalent in credits to students transferring from other school systems. Increasing the flexibility of awarding units of credit and transfer of credit and/or grades for courses based on the totality of information for each student will allow students to move on when ready, earn credit for academic core courses by completing CTAE courses that embed standards from academic course subject areas, and awards credit based on data, thus increasing student academic achievement and success as students continue their education at the postsecondary level and/or enter the workforce.
Middle School Program Criteria	160-4-2-.05	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in the requirement of five hours of instructional time. An example of how The Richmond County School System could use this waiver would be to allow Middle Schools to offer a focused advisement time for all students grades 6-8 during the day based on best practices. Expanding flexibility in instructional time and middle school programming will increase student achievement.
Promotion & Retention	§20-2-283	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility with regards to Promotion and Retention notification. The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to utilize multiple forms of communication to notify the parent or guardian of the student's performance. Multiple forms of communication may include first-class mail, email, phone calls, etc.

Human Resources Flexibility Rationale:

The Richmond County School System is one of the largest employers in the Central Savannah River Area. The Human Resources Department's mission is to attract, retain, and develop a highly qualified and highly effective workforce that will enable the Richmond County School System to fulfill its mission of being a globally competitive school system, educating the whole child through teaching, learning, collaboration, and innovation. Teacher recruitment and retention remain a national issue. The approved human resources programs flexibility waivers that our school system is currently utilizing affords the LEA the opportunity to provide innovative instructional programming, staffing, competitive compensation, and activities based on student need to increase student achievement and achieve the goals of our system's Strategic Plan. Our school system's strategic plan has a focus on improving the efficiency of recruitment strategies, enhancing professional learning for all employees, and improving employee retention. The allowable waivers, specific to state laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to human resources will allow the Richmond County School System to

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continue to provide innovative academic programming and offerings that are personalized to the diverse needs of our student population and adequate staffing, which will increase student performance.

HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY		Implementation Details
Certification Requirements	§20-2-108	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from state certification requirements to allow for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge. Increasing flexibility in certification requirements will allow the hiring and retention of professional practitioners resulting in a high performing workforce to meet staffing and student needs.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-151	The Richmond County School System seeks to waive allotted requirements of instruction time at each level to allow schools to focus time on areas that are a priority for improving student achievement including but not limited to flexibility in the structure of providing 180 school days for students. The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to notify parents of student absences through digital tools. Allowing flexibility with instructional time requirements to prioritize instructional needs by adjusting length of school day, year, and/or summer programs to ensure that logistics drive academic achievement will increase student achievement and success.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-160(a)	The Richmond County School System to waive allotted requirements of instruction time at each level to allow schools to focus time on areas that are a priority for improving student achievement including but not limited to flexibility in the structure of providing 180 school days for students. Allowing flexibility with counts of enrollment in instructional programs will improve student achievement outcomes.
Professional Learning	§20-2-167	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility with expenditure controls to increase professional learning opportunities relevant to the specific needs of staff. Allowing flexibility with expenditures for relevant professional learning opportunities based on staff needs will improve our high performing workforce.
School Day and Year for Students and Employees	§20-2-168(c)	The Richmond County School System seeks to waive allotted requirements of instructional time at each level to allow schools to focus time on areas that are a priority for improving student achievement including but not limited to flexibility in the structure of providing 180 school days for students. Allowing flexibility in the required

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		instructional time that is equivalent to a school year for students provides opportunities for schools to focus on improving student academic achievement based on student need.
Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	The Richmond County School System seeks to waive the requirements related to class size, staffing allotments, student caseload, and utilization to increase learning opportunities for all students. Allowing flexibility in class sizes to meet student needs and aligning personalized programming and resources will improve student achievement and success.
Professional Learning	§20-2-182(h)	The Richmond County School System seeks to waive the requirements relative to the allotment of funding utilized and activities for professional learning. Allowing flexibility in prioritizing funding used for professional and staff development will enhance the skills of all employees and directly impact student achievement.
Instructional Extension	§20-2-184.1	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to waive the requirement relative to funding for additional days of instruction. Allowing flexibility in the funding of additional days of instruction and programs for low performing students will provide schools with a focus on improving student achievement and success by prioritizing students' individual needs.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-200	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from state certification requirements to allow for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge. Enabling the hiring the best-qualified staff for the roles needed will improve our high-performing workforce and improve student achievement.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-201	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from state certification requirements to allow for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge. Enabling the hiring the best-qualified staff for the roles needed will improve our high-performing workforce and improve student achievement.
Professional Learning	§20-2-204	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from state certification and permitted requirements to allow for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge. Enabling the hiring the best-qualified staff for the roles needed will improve our high-performing workforce and improve student achievement.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-204	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility from state certification requirements to allow for the selection of qualified applicants based on content

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		expertise and knowledge. Enabling the hiring the best-qualified staff for the roles needed will improve our high-performing workforce and improve student achievement. The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in state certification requirements for teachers in specialized areas and positions to include CTAE teachers with industry experience commensurate with course and certification requirements. Some examples include engineering, biotechnology, and cybersecurity. Support for attaining certification and endorsement(s) through Richmond County School System partnerships with CSRA RESA, GA TAPP, etc.
Multi-year Contracts	§20-2-211	The Richmond County School System flexibility in issuing multi-year contracts. Allowing flexibility in issuing multi-year contracts will give the executive officer the ability to retain high-quality employees, which will improve the high performing workforce. This waiver will be used to attract high-quality employees for specialized areas and positions to include CTAE teachers with industry experience commensurate with course and certification requirements. Some examples include engineering, biotechnology, and cybersecurity. Another example of how this waiver will be used is to retain teachers who attain certification and endorsement(s) through Richmond County School System partnerships with CSRA RESA, GA TAPP, etc.
Salary Schedule Requirements	§20-2-212	The Richmond County School System would like flexibility from the required use of the current state salary schedule to provide compensation based on teacher skills and system needs. Allowing Human Resources to recognize experience outside of the terms listed in this rule--examples would be practitioners working as teachers which will enable our system to improve our high performing workforce. and improve student achievement.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to allow the system to provide additional opportunities for meeting time and work requirements of each individual school site. Allowing flexibility in Duty Free Lunch and teacher planning periods will increase opportunities for meeting time and work requirements at school sites, enhancing our high performing workforce.
Professional Learning	§20-2-86	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility in the operation of School Councils. Allowing flexibility in the required operation of school councils, training programs, membership, management; roles and responsibilities will increase parent, family, and community engagement.

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Use of Guidance Counselor	160-4-8-.05	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to ensure that school counselors have 90% direct/indirect contact with students by providing academic, personal/social, and post-secondary guidance to aid students in becoming responsible and globally competitive citizens. The revision of the role of school counselors in student support to meet student needs more effectively will increase student achievement and success.
Personnel Required	160-5-1-.22	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility for assigning personnel based on system needs rather than State requirements. Utilizing funds to hire necessary personnel based on the unique needs of schools will improve school culture and climate and increase our high performing workforce.

HUMAN RESOURCES FLEXIBILITY		Student Improvement Outcomes
Certification Requirements	§20-2-108	Increased flexibility for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge will increase student content mastery.
Class-size and Reporting requirements	§20-2-182	Increased flexibility in class-size to meet student needs will increase student academic achievement and improve content mastery.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-200	Increased flexibility for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge will increase student content mastery.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-201	Increased flexibility for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge will increase student content mastery.
Professional Learning	§20-2-204	Increased flexibility for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge will increase student content mastery.
Certification Requirements	§20-2-204	Increased flexibility for the selection of qualified applicants based on content expertise and knowledge will increase student content mastery.
Employment, Conditions of Employment	§20-2-218	Increased flexibility for opportunities to support student needs will increase achievement and success.

Financial Flexibility Rationale:

The Richmond County School System seeks financial flexibility allowing the LEA the opportunity to provide operational and organizational effectiveness based on student need and the Richmond County School System’s Strategic Plan. Ensuring the financial

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stability of the school system despite the unstable and unpredictable revenue growth is a system priority. The system will leverage the reduction in spending constraints to support the core business of teaching and learning. The allowable waivers, specific to state laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to finances will allow the Richmond County School System to continue to align spending priorities with the school system's Strategic Plan to increase student performance.

FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY		Implementation Details
Scheduling for Instruction/Program Enrollment & Appropriations	§20-2-160	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility regarding scheduling. Increasing flexibility in scheduling will provide increased opportunities to meet student individual needs and increase student achievement and success.
QBE Financing	§20-2-161	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan and the needs of our students, rather than basing the system's budget on current categorical allotments and maintain the system's earnings while providing flexibility in its application for services as provided through SWSS. Increasing flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan and the needs of our students will increase student achievement and success, and operational and organizational effectiveness.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-167	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system strategic plan and the needs of our students, rather than basing the system's budget on current categorical allotments and maintain the system's earnings while providing flexibility in its application for services as provided through SWSS. Increasing flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan and the needs of our students will increase student achievement and success, and operational and organizational effectiveness.
Direct Classroom Expenditure Control	§20-2-171	The Richmond County School System would like flexibility to spend allotted dollars to support the system's strategic plan rather than be confined to categories required by expenditure controls. Increasing flexibility in the utilization of direct classroom expenditure controls aligned with the system's strategic plan will improve student achievement.

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Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-183	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan and the needs of our students, rather than basing the system's budget on current categorical allotments and maintain the system's earnings while providing flexibility in its application for services as provided through SWSS. Increased flexibility to spend allotted funds to support the system's strategic plan and individual needs of students will increase student achievement and success, and operational and organizational effectiveness.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-184	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan to fund the pay the beginning salary for at least one media specialist for an appropriate base size school and to provide media center materials and equipment, including computer hardware and software, as essential to support instructional programs author. Increased flexibility to spend allotted funds to support the system's strategic plan and individual needs of students will increase student achievement and success, and operational and organizational effectiveness.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-185	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan to fund the to pay for the beginning salaries of assistant principals as well as the salaries of secretaries essential for the efficient and effective management of the instructional and supportive educational programs of an appropriate base size school. Increased flexibility to spend allotted funds to support the system's strategic plan and individual needs of students will increase student achievement and success, and operational and organizational effectiveness.
Categorical Allotment requirements	§20-2-186	The Richmond County School System seeks flexibility to develop a system budget based on the system's strategic plan and the needs of our students, rather than basing the system's budget on current categorical allotments and maintain the system's earnings while providing flexibility in its application for services as provided through SWSS. Allowing the develop a system budget based on the system strategic plan and the needs of our students, rather than basing the system budget on current categorical allotments and maintain the system's earnings will increase academic achievement and operational and organizational effectiveness.

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Acknowledgments

As the authorized representative of Richmond County, I hereby certify and provide legal assurance that Richmond County understands that it is requesting increased flexibility from identified state laws, rules, and regulations in exchange for increased accountability and defined consequences. Richmond County further understands that the purpose of seeking a waiver or variance from identified state laws, rules, and regulations is to increase student performance. I also certify that Richmond County:

- Ensures that all information submitted to the Georgia Department of Education in connection with this strategic waiver application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge;
- Adopted a district strategic plan within the last five years, linked below, for improving the performance of its schools; and
- For each waiver or variance request included in Appendix A of the Strategic Waiver School System Contract, a waiver explanation is provided. Where there is not an explanation provided for a requested waiver or variance, I understand that the waiver or variance request will not be granted.

(Printed Name) Superintendent

(Signature) Superintendent

Date