

District of Innovation Plan

April 2017 – April 2022



INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

PROCESS

On December 12, 2016 Hooks Independent School District's Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On December 12, 2016, the Hooks ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District Quality Improvement Council (DQIC) to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration and local business owners. The committee met initially on January 10, 2017, to discuss and develop the plan. A follow up meeting to finalize the plan was held on January 31, 2017.

The plan was posted on the District website for 30 days before being presented to the DQIC on March 23, 2017. Hooks ISD notified the Texas Commissioner of Education of the District's final District of Innovation Plan and the plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval on March 27, 2017.

TERM

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in April 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through April 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DQIC will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

TIMELINE

Timeline	Activity/Task
December 12, 2016	Board of Trustees passed Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan
December 12, 2016	Board of Trustees held public hearing and appointed DQIC to draft Plan
January 10, 2017	Initial meeting of DQIC to discuss District of Innovation Plan
January 31, 2017	Meeting to finalize District of Innovation Plan
February 1, 2017	Post District of Innovation Plan on HISD website
March 23, 2017	DQIC vote on District of Innovation Plan
March 24, 2017	District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
March 27, 2017	Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan
Mach 28, 2017	Approved District of Innovation Plan submitted to Commissioner of Education

PLANNING COMMITTEE

First Name	Last Name	Member Category
Myra	Jenkins	Business Member
Patti	Whitehead	Business Member
Janet	Stoker	Business Member
Joyce	Brown	Community Member
Pat	Harkey	Community Member
Mike	Smith	Community Member
Kim	Lee	District Professional
Keith	Minter	District Professional
Sheila	Mahar	Elementary Teacher
Kim	Ford	Elementary Teacher
Helenna	Sipes	Elementary Non-Teacher
Shannon	Diamond	Non Teacher/Counselor
Ramrio	Rangel	High School Teacher
Ron	Howard	High School Teacher
Tracy	Bunch	Junior High Teacher
Donna	Pessel	Junior High Teacher
Debbie	Ritchie	Non Teacher/Counselor
Beverly	Shannon	Non Teacher/Counselor
Jean	Trout	Non Teacher/Elementary Administrator
Craig	Mahar	Non Teacher /Secondary Administrator
Danny	Garrett	Non Teacher/Secondary Administrator
Connie	Hickman	Parent 1
Greg	Ford	Parent 2
Elvis	Hodge	Parent 3
Sheila	English	Parent 4
Terri	Sciara	Parent 5

EXEMPTIONS

§25.0811 Uniform School Start Date

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the below opportunities:

- An improved balanced instructional calendar because currently we have 77 days in the fall and 94 days in the spring for the 2016-17 school year. With starting school 5 days earlier, our instructional calendar would be approximately 83 days in the fall and 90 days in the spring.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges.
- An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well.
- Creates Flexibility for District to pursue other calendar options for identified populations.

Local Guidelines

The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

§25.112 Class Size and Notice of Class Size

Texas Education Code 25.112 limits the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade to 22. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, the waivers must be applied for annually. Texas Education Code 25.113 requires districts to notify each parent in the class section that exceeds the 22:1 ration, and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed

By seeking an exception from TEC 25.112, the District would have flexibility for all campuses and classrooms for the duration of the District of Innovation Designation and would not be required to seek waivers annually. While the District intends to remain within the guidelines of the current education code as much as possible, the District seeks flexibility to provide the best learning environment for our K-4 students, including more flexibility when teaching, creative ways of delivering instruction, and ability to manage increases in class sizes. Research shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning and not the absolute class size. Small class sizes may have a positive effect in the classroom, but must also be balanced with the timing of adding staff, the qualifications of staff available, the makeup and chemistry of the classroom and other classroom influences.

Local Guidelines

In the event a classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio in grades K – 4, the class sizes will be reviewed by appropriate district and campus administration. The Board of Trustees will be informed of K- 4 classes that exceed 22:1. TEA waivers for class sizes exceeding 22 will not be required. An exemption from TEC 25.113 is also requested.

§21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts

Currently states a school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under: (1) a probationary contract, as provided by Subchapter C. TEC 21.102. Probationary Contract (B) states a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Proposed

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Exemption from current guidelines will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Hooks ISD.

Local Guidelines

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

§21.003 Certification Required - *TEC 21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. TEC21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.*

Proposed

In order to best serve Hooks ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology and also assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Often there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines

a) The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or

grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

b) An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for Core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/ industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area. The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

c) The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

COMMENTS

If you have any comments or concerns regarding the Hooks District of Innovation Plan, we want to hear from you. Please email us your thoughts to: kruegers@hooksisd.net

Thank you.