

**Burnet Consolidated ISD District of Innovation Plan**

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 14, 2017



**BURNET**  
**Consolidated ISD**

**INTRODUCTION**

House Bill 1842 passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become a District of Innovation, and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 16, 2017, the Burnet Consolidated Independent School District’s Board of Trustees (‘Board”) approved action to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over school district operations. This process will support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefits of students and the community.

On January 16, 2017 the Board appointed a twenty-four member Local Innovation Committee (“Committee”) comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District’s various stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, community members and administrators. The Committee met on January 10, and February 14, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan (“Plan”). The Committee sought input on the Plan from teachers, principals, administrators, other District employees, parents, students and community members. Based on the direction provided by the Board and input from various District stakeholders, the Committee proposes this plan.

**THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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| Keith McBurnett                   | Superintendent                    |
| Jim Connor                        | Director of Secondary Curriculum  |
| Shelley Reavis                    | Director of Elementary Curriculum |
| Teresa Smith                      | Director of Special Programs      |
| Craig Barefoot                    | School Board Member               |
| Casey Burkhart                    | Burnet High School Principal      |
| Salye Coles and Chris Murrell     | Burnet High School Teachers       |
| Patty Neiman                      | Quest High School Teacher         |
| Sara Te and Valerie Ullmann       | Burnet Middle School Teachers     |
| Natalie Lyle and Teresa Mather    | Shady Grove Elementary Teachers   |
| Buffy Taylor and Kim Shipp        | Bertram Elementary Teachers       |
| Mary Kneese and Lindsey Ringstaff | RJ Richey Elementary Teachers     |
| Lori Wilson and Jackie Jackson    | Support Staff                     |
| BJ Gates, Jessica Morris          | Campus Level Administration       |
| Suzanne Brown                     | Parent Representative             |
| Craig Lindholm                    | Community Representative          |
| Nita Milliorn                     | Business Representative           |

## **TERM**

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning at the time of Texas Education Approval and ending at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Priorities.

## **BURNET CONSOLIDATED ISD VISION STATEMENT**

Our vision is to provide a positive and stimulating learning environment for our students to strive for excellence and achieve their fullest potential, channeling their efforts toward the greater good of the community and society. These values are instilled and reinforced through collaborative partnerships between the home, school and community. This environment for success is furthered by a quality curriculum delivered by exceptional educators. Our school district and the communities it serves are committed to high expectations and high standards.

## **BURNET CONSOLIDATED ISD MISSION STATEMENT**

The Burnet Consolidated Independent School District's mission is to provide all students with the opportunity to develop academically, vocationally, and socially by providing quality educational programs that allow our students to succeed.

## **BURNET CONSOLIDATED ISD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The Board recognizes that for students to succeed in today's world, schools must go beyond what has historically been limited to a set of credits. The Board believes that in addition to supporting students as they meet core credit requirements, there is a need to focus on college and career readiness, social and emotional learning, character development, students taking ownership of their learning, and employability. Accordingly, the Board developed Strategic Priorities that point toward a broader set of outcomes that focus on powerful learning experiences and continual forward-looking growth for every student.

These Priorities help to transition from test preparation as the primary focus to meaningful, student-centered learning as a core principle. The Priorities focus on student learning, but also offering quality options for every family and providing developmental opportunities to staff so they can best support students.

The Strategic Priorities are as follows:

- **Board Priority 1: The District will increase student academic achievement through the effective implementation and monitoring of innovative academic programs, while providing students a relevant education.**
- **Board Priority 2: The District will support all students, staff and parents in utilizing technology to support student academic achievement and efficient operations.**
- **Board Priority 3: The District will develop systems to support a positive climate, strong customer service and accountability for all students and employees.**
- **Board Priority 4: The District will continue to improve communication and engagement of students, staff, parents and community members while promoting Burnet CISD through effective, transparent public relations.**
- **Board Priority 5: The District will support student achievement by increasing student attendance.**
- **Board Priority 6: The District will recruit, employ, and retain a quality teaching, administrative, and support staff to attain excellence in student performance.**

#### **INNOVATION PLAN BASED ON NEEDS**

Burnet Consolidated ISD serves 11 rural communities with a total population around 8,000. The school district enrolls approximately 3,100 students grade PK-12. The demographics in Burnet CISD comprise a district that hosts 59% Economically Disadvantaged, 66.4% White, 29.7% Hispanic, 1.3% African American, 2.6% other races, 28% English Language Learners and 13% Special Education students. Resources to provide a multilingual learning environment and bridge any learning barriers for students, is a high priority in the district. Priorities center around providing opportunities for students to compete for global postsecondary opportunities, to be able to compete with students in urban districts that have access to greater opportunities, and for all students to be productive members of a community. To achieve the District's Vision and Mission, to align the District's practices and operations with the Strategic Priorities developed by the Board, the District needs the flexibility to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels, to:

- Promote innovative curriculum
- Promote innovative instructional methods
- Promote innovative ideas regarding community participation
- Promote innovative ideas regarding campus governance
- Promote innovative ideas regarding parental involvement
- Modify the school year
- Modify Teacher contracts

The District needs local flexibility in the areas listed above to improve student outcomes by focusing on college and career readiness, entrepreneurial mindsets, character development, students taking ownership of their learning, social and emotional learning, and employability; to explore new ways of offering quality enrichment and engagement options for every family; and to expand the potential for providing more high-quality, meaningful professional development opportunities for staff so they can build their professional capacity and collaborative regarding best practices so they can best support students.

The promotion of innovative curriculum and instructional methods will help the District provide more engaging and challenging learning to meet the student learning goals of developing critical, knowledgeable, and creative thinkers; informed problem solvers; effective communicators; responsible leaders and productive citizens; and socially and emotionally intelligent individuals. Promoting innovative ideas regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement will help build strong supports for students, schools, and the community by increasing community partnerships which bring together education, business, and civic agencies so that every school, family and student will feel supported and the community will support the District. Finally, modifications in the scheduling of the school year will allow for more time for innovative student enrichment opportunities as well as more time for professional development of staff.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF THE EDUCATION CODE THAT INHIBIT THE GOALS OF THE PLAN FROM WHICH THE DISTRICT WILL BE EXEMPT UPON ADOPTION OF THE PLAN**

### **Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade**

In order to provide engaging and challenging learning to all students, the District needs relief from Texas Education Code Section 25.092, which inhibits the goals of the Plan by not allowing the District to issue class credit or a final grade for a class if a student is not in attendance an arbitrary percentage of the time a class is offered. The law requires the District to award class credit based upon attendance rather than the student's mastery of course content. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting active learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates.

One of the overarching goals of the District within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning is to implement tools, resources, and training that support blended and personalized learning for both students and teachers. Blended learning, where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time learning online, is an example where the exemption from Section 25.092 will likely foster greater innovation to promote active learning and improve student outcomes. In addition, exemption from this requirement will allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities and will promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities.

The exemption from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. The exemption of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

### **First Day of Instruction**

The Strategic Priorities developed by the Board emphasizes the importance of active learning, college and career readiness, and social and emotional learning. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after winter break. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, begin summer internships earlier, increasing college and career readiness. Finally, starting the school year earlier for students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school will promote social and emotional learning by giving those students additional time and support to enable them to adjust socially and emotionally to their new campus environments.

## **Teacher Certification for Dual Credit, Hard to Staff and Career and Technical Education Instructors.**

Within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning, the Strategic Priorities emphasize college and career readiness options. The development of post high school plans, improvement of workforce skills, the development of a second language to improve communication in the workplace, elementary teachers requiring specific grade level certification, and the expansion of dual credit programs, are inhibited by Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.053 and 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231 to the extent these laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit and career and technical/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) and Languages Other Than English courses when high quality certified teachers are not available. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of these course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification that will allow the certified teacher to teach in a related field, or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the course.

The current certification rules limit the Districts options to hire professionals with work related experience. A rural community can benefit from many qualified professionals within its community. There is a variety of STEAM and CATE related courses that professionals can provide valuable work information and experience. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements in TEC 21.003 (a).

By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit teachers, the District will have the flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors or university professors in specific content areas in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Elementary school class sizes determine the number of teachers needed at a specific grade level. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for specific grade level certification, the District for example, would have the flexibility to hire credentialed EC – 4 teachers to instruct in Grade 5 if enrollment dictates the need.

## **Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator**

One of the tenets of the Mission of Burnet CISD is to assist the development of students to become socially and emotionally intelligent individuals. Social and emotional learning is inhibited by the Texas Education Code Section 37.0012, which constrains campus governance by requiring one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the

District's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program in which community schools provide social and emotional supports to students. By obtaining exemption from Section 37.0012, the District will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibility toward the community.

### **Teacher and Administrator Appraisals**

Innovative curriculum focuses on active, project-based, blended, and collaborative learning that includes encouraging instructors to take approaches to increase student-led learning experiences. The development of a comprehensive District staff development plan that focuses on individual growth of teachers in all areas, providing teachers with researched-based, high-yield instructional strategies, guiding the instruction to a student-led collaborative model is part of the Vision of the District. These goals are impeded by the laws governing educator appraisals set forth in the Texas Education Code Section 21.352, 21.354, 21.3541 and 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 150 to the extent these laws require that the state standardized test scores be used as one of the evaluation measures for teachers and administrators. In order to promote professional development that focuses on individual growth, the District needs to maintain local flexibility to continue its current practice of using various measures, including multiple observations, goal setting and tracking, and student growth progress toward learning objectives as evaluation measures on teacher and administrator appraisals.

### **Extension of Teacher Probationary Contracts**

Finally, the Strategic Priority to promote a positive learning culture for all campus stakeholders including above mentioned development of a comprehensive District staff development plan that focuses on individual growth of teachers in all areas is impeded by the laws governing Teacher Contracts. These goals are impeded by the laws governing Teacher probationary contracts set forth in the Texas Education Code 21.102 in the extent that these laws require that a 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. This provides that teachers with over five years of experience must be given term contracts their second year in the District. The plan would be to provide probationary contracts for any teacher new to District for up to three years.

Local Innovation Committee Members:

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Keith McBurnett

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Jim Connor

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Shelley Reavis

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Teresa Smith

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Craig Barefoot

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Casey Burkhart

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Salye Coles

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Chris Murrell

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Patty Neiman

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Sara Te

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Valerie Ullmann

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Natalie Lyle

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Teresa Mather

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Buffy Taylor

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Kim Shipp

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Mary Kneese

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Lindsey Ringstaff

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Lori Wilson

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Jackie Jackson

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Jessica Morris

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