

May

2016



**HCISD**

**BECOMING A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION**

**Prepared by**

**M. Veronica Kortan**

**Email:** [maria.kortan@hcisd.org](mailto:maria.kortan@hcisd.org)

## Strategic Planning Committee Membership

| Member Name             | Role in Strategic Planning Committee               |
|-------------------------|--|
| Dr. Arturo Cavazos      | Superintendent of Schools                          |
| Dr. Nolan Perez         | Board of Trustee                                   |
| George McShan           | Board of Trustee                                   |
| Dr. Alicia Noyola       | Chief Academic Officer                             |
| Julio Cavazos           | Chief Financial Officer                            |
| Veronica Kortan         | Administrator for Organizational Development       |
| Dr. Jose Rodriguez      | Administrator for Secondary Education              |
| Lori Romero             | Administrator for Elementary Education             |
| Shane Strubhart         | Director, Public Relations & Community Engagement  |
| Dalia Garcia            | Director, Assessment & Accountability              |
| Santiago Villanueva     | Director, Advanced Academics                       |
| Daniel Garza            | Director, Special Education                        |
| Kenneth Lee             | Administrator for District Operations              |
| Imelda Munivez          | Principal, Harlingen High School                   |
| Tony Gonzalez           | Principal, Vela Middle School                      |
| Graciela Gutierrez      | Principal, Vernon Middle School                    |
| Susan Salinas           | Principal, Bowie Elementary                        |
| Keith DiSantis          | Teacher, Vernon Middle School                      |
| Roxanne Shimotsu        | Teacher, Sam Houston Elementary                    |
| Dr. Gina Cano-Monreal   | Parent Representative                              |
| Amanda Banda            | Parent Representative                              |
| Manny Vela              | Community Partner, Valley Baptist Medical Center   |
| Dr. Leonel Vela         | Community Partner, Regional Academic Health Center |
| Dr. Adela Valdez        | Community Partner, Regional Academic Health Center |
| Norma Salazar           | Community Partner, Texas State Technical College   |
| Joe Perez               | Community Clergy, Valley Baptist Medical Center    |
| Honorable David Sanchez | Community Representative                           |
| John Guevara            | Community Representative                           |
| Missy Hays              | Community Representative                           |
| Rick Ledesma            | Community Representative                           |
| Katherine Uhlhorn       | Community Representative                           |



## **Timeline of Events**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| May 3   | Discuss process for becoming a District of Innovation during the Transforming Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting                            |
| May 10  | Board of Trustees initiates District of Innovation process with the adoption of the Board Resolution   |
| May 18  | Board of Trustees hold Public Hearing to consider developing a plan for District of Innovation   |
| May 27  | Draft of District of Innovation Plan included in weekly Board Packet for Board review & feedback   |
| June 3  | Feedback on District of Innovation Plan due to Mrs. Kortan   |
| June 7  | Strategic Plan convenes to review year two of the strategic plan and a draft of the District of Innovation Plan                                |
| June 13 | District-wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) convenes to review & finalize plan<br><br>Day 1 of timeline for posting of finalized plan |
| June 14 | Board of Trustees notifies Commissioner of Education of intent to approve plan   |
| July 13 | Day 30 of plan posting   |
| July 14 | District of Innovation Plan presented to Board of Trustees for approval  |



## **I. Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation.

On June 7, 2016, the HCISD Strategic Planning Committee comprised of District stakeholders, including educators, administrators, parents and community members convened to review year two of strategic activities and to review a draft of the District of Innovation Plan. Opportunities to review and revise the plan occurred prior to and during the meeting. The Committee obtained input from various stakeholders by posting the information on the District website, social media sites, Additionally, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was posted on the district website and updated regularly to address common questions from the community. Based on direction provide by the Board and input from various District stakeholders, the Committee proposes the following plan for designation as a District of Innovation.

## **II. Term**

The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as outlined by the Texas Education Agency, is five years; therefore, the plan shall commence with the 2016-2017 academic year and conclude 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 Strategic Plan Committee (SPC) will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications as needed to address innovative disruptions.

## **III. A School System Invested in Post-Secondary Preparation**

The District of Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the Board's Goals and Mission as outlined by the Strategic Plan adopted in February 2014. The Strategic Plan was adopted after a lengthy process during which the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) engaged over 800 stakeholders. As delineated in the goals and specific results, the Strategic Plan addresses students' needs and allows for academic experiences rich in opportunities for creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication. SPC membership was assigned based on a framework provided by our Strategic Plan consultants, Engage! Learning. The framework called for a cross-section of the community and encompassed stakeholders from within the district as well as external stakeholders.



## **A. Established Vision Guiding the Strategic Plan**

### **1. Our Beliefs**

*We believe that it is the right of each student to have all their learning needs met.*

- *We believe that it is the entire community's responsibility to meet the needs of all types of learners.*
- *We believe that inspired students become lifelong learners.*
- *We believe that a safe and secure environment optimizes learning.*
- *We believe early childhood education promotes the growth of student learning.*
- *We believe that engaging parents is critical to their children's success.*
- *We believe that student success requires the skills of problem solving and collaboration.*

### **2. Our Vision**

*Harlingen CISD will become a system of world-class schools, where students develop the knowledge, skills, and learning habits that prepare them for college and career success in the 21st century.*

### **3. Our Mission**

*Harlingen CISD will provide educational excellence for all students, cultivating college, career and workforce readiness, while providing students with choices for a meaningful and successful life.*



## **B. 2016-2017 Board Goals**

Goal 1: We will create a transformed school district that ensures high quality instruction and individualized learning, resulting in maximum achievement for all students.

Goal 2: We will attract, develop, and retain highly effective educators and provide the tools they need to maximize all students' success.

Goal 3: We will improve the learning experiences by using data that measures all students' weaknesses and strengths in order to address their curricular needs.

Goal 4: We will develop an individualized learning plan for all students that will assess results at specific intervals to ensure post-secondary and career readiness is achieved.

Goal 5: We will increase the efficiency of communication between teachers, parents, and students to achieve the district's goal of meeting all students' educational needs.

## **C. Innovations**

To achieve the District's Mission and Board Goals, to align the District's practices and operations and to meet the expectations of the Strategic Plan, flexibility is required to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels to create the following benefits:

- An academic calendar to address the needs of students
- An adjust class size ratio requirement to meet the needs of elementary campuses
- An innovative practice for addressing teacher certification so as to enhance any area of the curriculum

The District requires local flexibility in the areas listed above to support each student in attaining the skills needed to succeed in the college/career pathway of their choice through personalized learning and to ensure a system aligned to the needs of our graduates as they enter the post-secondary world.



## IV. Inhibiting Statues for Implementation of the Strategic plan

### A. Flexibility with Calendars and Attendance

As outlined in the goals and specific results statements of the Strategic Plan, HCISD will develop curriculum with an emphasis on preparation for post-secondary endorsements and certifications. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan calls for district practices focused on meeting the needs of all students. As such, relaxing the requirements of Texas Education Codes listed below will create a system that nurtures a calendar conducive for supporting students in dual enrollment programs by allowing a flexible start and end date. Additionally, the flexibility will address the difference between the calendar of the school district and partnering colleges and universities. As HCISD continues to expand learning opportunities aligned with House Bill 5 and the Next Generation Accountability System, flexibility with attendance will be critical to ensure student internships are a viable means of accruing credit for relevant course credits. HCISD will look to exercise this flexibility with Harlingen Early College High School for the 2016-17 school year and explore this opportunity for other campuses in the 2017-18 school year.

Sec. 25.0811. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Sec. 25.0812. LAST DAY OF SCHOOL. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Sec. 25.092. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.



## B. Class Size Ratio

According to Section 25.112 grades K-4 may not have a class size ratio of greater than 22:1 without requesting a Class Size exemption. The District is requesting relief from the requirement of a Class Size exemption and notification to parents (TEC 25.112 and 25.113). Based on historical data the District applies annually for Class Size Exemptions expending valuable time and resources in this process. As part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, obtaining this flexibility will expedite the planning and implementation process, as well as save resources. An established district cap of 25:1 for K-4 will be in place, always considerations for the subject to be taught, the teaching methodology to be used, and any need for individual instruction [25.112(c)]. The goal of the district is continue to maintain the 22:1 ratio and exercise this flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

## C. Teacher Certifications

House Bill 5 has added significant support for the need to expand college and career opportunities for students. However, this call for increased opportunities does not adequately accommodate the special challenges faced by school districts as they seek to find individuals with the education or work-related experience needed to adequately educate students in specialized areas of instruction. Districts must often compete with industries that pay substantially more than education. In addition, industry professionals interested in education, often face increased costs from participation in alternative certification programs.

An exemption from TEC Code 21.055 would allow our district to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate but who the district deems qualified to teach based on a determined set of criteria.

At the present time, HCISD would focus on academic and non-academic CTE courses. However, in the future, the district may choose to exercise this option in other courses. Our local board of trustees would be able to issue the school district teaching permit for an individual teaching these courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as

- Professional work experience
- Formal training and education
- Relevant industry license, certification, or registration
- Any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credential related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching.



All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught.

A bachelor's degree would not be a requirement for CTE courses.

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the district would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. This would require the superintendent to certify to the board of trustees that the individual has undergone a criminal history background check and is capable of proper classroom management. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain a set number of hours in classroom management training.

Any school district permit would only be valid in the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District.

