Floresville ISD Innovation Plan

Introduction
House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On December 19, 2016, the Floresville Independent School District Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and support innovation to improve educational outcomes.

On January 17, 2017, the board of trustees conducted a public hearing and appointed a local Innovation Committee comprised of district administrators, teachers and parents.

Innovation Committee members
Clay Rosenbaum, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Services
Bill Atkins, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations
Jacque Miller, Director of Human Resources
Clint Askins, Director of Special Education
Sara Mann, Director of Secondary Curriculum
David Merten, Teacher
Liana Martinez, Teacher
Dixie Haag, Teacher
Jana Clarke, Teacher
Kristen Wiatrek, Teacher
Daelah Laskowski, Teacher
Pam Davis, Teacher
Johnda Lansdale, Teacher
Jackie Castille, Teacher
Jennifer Hoelscher, Teacher
James Rethaber, Parent
Rebekah Street, Parent

Term
The term of the FISD Innovation Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2017-18 school year and ending at the end of the 2021-22 school year. A local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption of a local innovation plan. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.
Innovations
The district exercises innovations in the following areas under HB 1842:

School Calendar
(TEC §25.0811) (EB Legal)

Under current Texas state law, “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

The school start date should be determined locally by the District, and on an annual basis, by considering what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week.

FISD will begin instruction for students no earlier than the third Monday in August.

Probationary Contracts
(TEC §21.102) (DCA Legal)

Texas Education Code states that experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

In order to support teacher growth and gather performance data, a one year time period is not always sufficient to evaluate a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

Experienced teachers new to Floresville ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of district employment.

Campus Behavior Coordinator
(TEC §37.0012) (FO Legal)

Recent legislation stipulates that a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator and is responsible for maintaining student discipline.

FISD campuses each have a large number of students being served and employ multiple administrators. Having one person responsible for student discipline is not responsible or
practical. Exemption from this requirement will allow the District to promote a more collaborative, restorative discipline approach in which the schools will better support the social and emotional needs of all students.

**School District Depositories**
(TEC §45.206) (BDAE Legal)

Districts are required to bid depository banking services at a minimum of every six years.

There are a limited number of banking entities with the interest in serving and/or the ability to serve the financial needs of the District. In addition, the required bid process uses the time and efforts of district personnel that is better spent on other activities given our limited ability to change banks.

FISD will continue to review banking services every 2 years, monitor the availability of services and pricing that local banks may offer, and bid for services as needed to support the District’s financial needs.

**Class Size Waiver**
(TEC §§25.111, 25.112, §25.113) (EEB Legal)

State law requires that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. If classes are going to exceed this cap, a waiver is required from the Texas Education Agency. If approved, the district must notify parents by specifying the class for which an exception from the limit was granted.

At FISD, we have experienced a situation where there was a decrease in enrollment after the waiver process was initiated but before the actual filing of the waiver. One class added a student and subsequently had 23 students. While within the time frame to file a waiver, a different class had a student withdraw. The District faced a dilemma of moving a student after he had become familiar with his teacher and classroom, just to balance classes. Flexibility with class size will give local control to the District to determine the timing of adding staff while considering what is in the best interest of students.

FISD will continue to staff all Kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms at a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 and cap the ratio at 23:1.

**Summary**
The District of Innovation committee developed the plan to provide an opportunity for the Floresville Independent School District to make local decisions about the most appropriate
way to educate our students. We are thankful to the FISD Board of Trustees for making this process possible.

The FISD Board of Trustees approved this plan on March 20, 2017.