

Gorman ISD

District of Innovation Plan

2017-2018



Introduction

The 84th legislature passed House Bill 1842 allowing traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas' open enrollment charter schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation." On Monday, September 11, 2017, the Gorman ISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation.

Timeline of Events for DOI

September 11, 2017- public meeting held to discuss Gorman ISD plans to become a District of Innovation
September 11, 2017-Gorman ISD Board of Trustees adopted resolution to pursue District of Innovation distinction
September 19 , 2017 meeting-DOI committee Planning Process
September 26, 2017 meeting-DOI committee Planning Process and review of innovations
October 4, 2017 meeting-DOI committee voted to approve final DOI plan

DOI Committee Member

Mike Winter - Superintendent	Stephanie Greer - Elementary Parent
Susan Walker- Elementary Principal	Daniella Cornwell - Elementary Parent
Vanessa Oakley- Middle/ High School Principal	Michael Hogan - High School Parent
Becky Peterson-Middle School Teacher	Carolyn Matthews- Middle School Parent
Susie Hampton- School Counselor	Shanda Morrison- Community Member
Crystal Snider- Elementary Teacher	Belinda Segura- Elementary Teacher
Debora Sanchez- High School Teacher	Vickie Brown- Special Education teacher all Campuses

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Gorman ISD INNOVATIONS

Uniform School Start Date – Calendar

Current

(EB LEGAL) (TX Ed. Code 25.0811) (TX Ed. Code 25.0812)

Currently Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Texas Education Code §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15th.

Proposed

It is the intent of Gorman ISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community. Relief from the statute will allow GISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minute's requirement, rather than days. Gorman ISD proposes to align the district calendar with local schools, universities, advanced placement exams, dual credit exams, and STAAR timelines. As well as, provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs including but not limited to: the school start date, school end date, the number of days in each semester, 6-week reporting period and the dates of preparation days. The flexibility of a start and end date allows the district to determine locally, and annually, what best meets the needs of the district and community.

Teacher Certification

Current

(DBA LEGAL, LOCAL, DK LEGAL, LOCAL) (TX Ed. Code 21.003)

Currently Texas Education Code Section §21.003 (a) states that 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 of permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

Proposed

Gorman ISD's goal is to hire fully certified, high quality, professionals to instruct our students and who will continue to relentlessly pursue this goal. However, the current certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Math, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEM), Foreign Language, History, and English Language Arts courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefits of such course offerings, the district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the district will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area for full and/or part time course loads. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses on campus. For example, if certified teachers are not available to teach the courses. The principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses which would qualify this individual to teach this subject(s). The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board before beginning the assignment. The current process of hiring those eligible for Chapter 21 contracts will not change. The District will establish local criteria, such as years of experience, qualifications, industry certifications, demonstration of successful working experience with students, and equal or similar out of state certification to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate. In addition, this exemption will afford the district the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations, ie...CTE courses (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.), if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses, or their quality of expertise would benefit the students in that area. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be at-will.

Furthermore,

- Notifications of district teaching permits (local certification) shall not be necessary.
- Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must comply with the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in the GISD School Board policy for Personnel.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit will be assigned a mentor teacher.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies.

The District would also like to honor candidates with bachelor's degrees and certifications from bordering states as fully certified teachers eligible for a Texas Probationary teaching contract in our District and remain eligible for the period of time outlined in District policy DCA (LEGAL) for Probationary Certificate. This provision would mirror the DCA (LEGAL) policy term of one year with the District's option to extend two additional years.

Contract Service Days

Current

(DC LEGAL, DCB LEGAL, LOCAL, DEA LEGAL) (TX Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently TEC §21.401 (b) states that an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service. Proposed With the passage of §25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision, given the district does not reduce the annual pay of the employee's contract.

Proposed

To allow flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel, Gorman ISD will:

- maintain the current salary schedule for all certified employees.
- consider annually the certified salary schedules as part of the regular budgeting process by the board.
- evaluate the number of contract days needed for certified staff in that school year and shall set the number of calendar work days, with the objective of reducing the days from 187 to not less than 182. The administrative staff will also annually determine the number of professional development days required and when or where those days will be fulfilled on the calendar.
- not reduce the annual salary of certified staff, except in accordance with TEC§21.4021 (Furloughs) which the district is not seeking exemption.

90 Percent Attendance Rule

Current

(TEC §25.092) State law mandates a student 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. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75 percent and less than 90 percent, they may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the campus administrator and meets the instructional requirements for the class.

Proposed

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage. Districts should have the option to set their own requirement. Local districts need the flexibility to set attendance requirements which reflect their specific situations and expectations. Abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, accident, illness, or other extenuating circumstances. The flexibility can allow for local boards to set higher expectations for attendance while promoting student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in extracurricular activities.

It must be noted, relief from Section §25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Opting out 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.

Gorman ISD will form committees at each campus to evaluate students who do not meet the 90 percent rule, and will make decisions to grant or deny exemption based on the intentions found within the District of Innovation Plan.

Probationary Contracts

Current

(DCA LEGAL) (TEC §21.102b)

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Proposed

Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses newly hired in GISD. This will allow GISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.

Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

Current

(FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (Ed. Code 37.0012)

Senate Bill 107 amended the Texas Education Code by adding Section 37.0012, which requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed

The requirements in TEC 37.002 are redundant. GISD utilizes a multi-administrator approach when necessary for student discipline. Campus principals assist each other and serve as the "behavior coordinator" and it is unnecessary to designate one of them as such.

Local School Health Advisory Council

Current

TEC 28.004 Relevant Board Policies: BDF (Legal) Section 28.004 of this code requires that the Board of Trustees of each school district shall establish a local Student Health Advisory Council to assist the District in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's health education instruction. This section of the TEC also requires the establishment of a School Health Advisory Council and outlines the duties of the council.

Proposed

The District seeks exemption from the requirement to establish a School Health Advisory Council and the subsequent duties of that council. The District will appoint a District Health Coordinator. The District Health Coordinator will collaborate with the District and campus improvement committees to seek feedback regarding health related curriculum, food service, budget, and other related items.

DAEP Teacher Certification Requirement

Current

[TEC 37.008] States "a DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's' regular classroom that employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21. It may be located on or off a regular school campus.

Proposed

GISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model. It is not necessary to have certified teachers in the DAEP setting.
