

TOMBALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan



Thinking and planning “outside of the box” for the future.

TOMBALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan

2016-2017

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 in the spring of 2015, providing public school districts the opportunity to become Districts of Innovation. To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Tomball ISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from state statutes to:

- take greater local control in decision-making about the educational and instructional model for students
- have increased autonomy from state mandates that govern educational programming
- be empowered to innovate and plan differently – to think outside of the box

This plan will be in effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TEAM MEMBERS

Huey Kinchen	Superintendent
Martha Salazar-Zamora	Chief Academic Officer
Jim Ross	Chief Financial Officer
Chris Trotter	Chief Administrative Officer
Valerie Petrzelka	Executive Director of Elementary Schools
Amy Schindewolf	Executive Director of Secondary Schools
Jessica Ozuna	CTE Director
Xochitl Salazar	Federal Programs/Grants Coordinator
David Surdovel	Math Director
Dianne Tidwell	Instructional Technology Director
Mark White	Research & Accountability Director
Crystal Romero-Mueller	Secondary Principal
Teresa Sullivan	Elementary Principal
Kimberle McKinney	Secondary Associate Principal
Kevin Williams	Secondary Assistant Principal
Amie Antignolo	Elementary Assistant Principal
Jessica Reeves	Teacher
Melinda Wandling	Teacher
Amanda Bass	Parent/Community Member
Robin Darensbourg	Parent/Community Member
Shannon Marino	Parent/Community Member
Mark Stoll	Parent/Community Member

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE

DATE	ACTION
August 8, 2016	Board Presentation
September 12, 2016	Board approves Resolution
October 11, 2016	Public Hearing (Board Meeting)
October 11, 2016	Board appoints LIP Committee
October 13, 2016	LIP Committee Meeting
October 27, 2016	LIP Committee Meeting
November 3, 2016	District Improvement Planning Committee Meeting
November 8, 2016	Day 1 of posting proposed plan
December 7, 2016	District Improvement Planning Committee Meeting
December 8, 2016	Board notifies Texas Commissioner of Education of intention to vote on plan
December 9, 2016	Post proposed plan with agenda for December 13 th Board of Trustees meeting
December 13, 2016	Board Meeting (Vote)
December 14, 2016	Board of Trustees formally notifies Texas Commissioner of Education of approved plan

I. OPERATION OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule, however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday.

The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider moving the mandatory start date back one week which would better benefit our students.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August.
- b. Teachers will begin no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August.
- c. This will allow the first and second semesters to be closer in the number of days of instruction.
- d. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.
- e. Flexible start dates and times will accommodate Early College High School schedule.

II. SUBMITTING WAIVERS FOR KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 4 CLASS SIZE

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

Currently

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. TISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a K-4th core classroom reaches 24:1, the campus will notify the parents of the number of students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives TISD flexibility without having to apply for waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

III. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

(DK LEGAL) (DK LOCAL) (DK EXHIBIT)(Ed. Code 21.003a)(Ed Code 21.057a-e)

Currently

Texas Education Codes state a person may not be employed as an educator by a school district unless the individual holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a school district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is teaching a subject outside her or his certification, the district must request emergency certification for the Texas Education Agency and/or the State Board of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district, especially for innovative classes where certification may not exist or educators with those credentials may not be readily available.

Proposed

In order to best serve TISD students and allow more flexibility in our scheduling and class offerings, certification issues will be handled locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. Flexibility with Early College High School Dual Credit staffing.
- c. Flexibility with personnel on Title I campuses per ESSA guidelines.
- d. In exceptional circumstances, when a certified educator is not found for a unique or innovative class, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a non-certified yet highly qualified professional to teach OR a certified educator to teach a subject in a related field for which she or he is not credentialed by the state.
- e. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

IV. ADJUST INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES AND SCHOOL DAY LENGTH

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081) (Ed. Code 25.082)

Currently

The Texas Education Codes define the length of the instructional day as “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses”. The intent of this code is to standardize across all districts the amount of time students engage in classroom learning. The school code also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment or another calamity.

Tomball ISD believes flexibility in use of minutes as well as the length of the school day will support teachers and staff who participate in Professional Learning Communities, perfecting their craft, deepening their content knowledge and analyzing student data. In addition, particularly at the elementary level, flexibility in both instructional minutes and the length of the school day will protect all important parent-teacher conferences especially in the event of inclement weather days, which may impact cumulative instructional minutes allocated over the course of a school year.

Proposed

a. Tomball ISD will make an effort to maintain the total of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year, but seeks an exemption from these statutes as necessary so it may approach the 75,600 minute goal in a more creative manner without being confined to either 420 minutes or seven hours of instruction every day.

b. The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction can reinforce personalized learning through the increasing use of advanced instructional technology, and will better meet individual student needs.

V. IMPLEMENT A LOCAL TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR APPRAISAL SYSTEM

(DNA Legal) (Ed. Code 21.203) (Ed. Code 21.352)

Currently

New state-wide teacher appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are being introduced for the first time since 1997. While those systems are designed to meet the needs of the entire state, they do not adequately align with the standards and expectations in Tomball ISD. These systems also require state standardized test scores be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators.

Proposed

a. Tomball ISD will develop a new localized Teacher Appraisal System and an Administrator Appraisal System, which are better aligned with the Tomball ISD strategic goals and student assessments. This exemption would allow flexibility to evaluate various performance measures, including classroom observations, goal setting and tracking, and collective student growth progress toward identified learning objectives.