

Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD

District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)

2017-2018

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2017-2022).

Committee Members

Pam Lee-Community Member
Doug Reeder-Parent/Business
Denise Smith-Parent/Business
Suzanne Jordan-Teacher
Ben Ramirez-Teacher
Lesia Lewis-West Principal
Martha Clifton-South Principal
Linda Rhymes-Junior High Principal
Ryan Carroll-High School Principal
Vicki Lilley-Director of Special Education
Susan Thompson-Parent
Martha Campbell-Curriculum Director
Sandra Quarles-Superintendent

1. School Start Date

TEC §25.0811 Uniform School Start Date

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the following opportunities:

- An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer professional development classes as well.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges.

Local Guidelines:

Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD will determine, annually, when each school year will begin.

2. Employment Contracts

TEC § 21.102 Employment Contracts

Currently, 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.

Proposed

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Relief from TEC 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 and counselors hired in Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD.

Local Guidelines

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, **may** receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

3. Teacher Certification Requirements

TEC §21.003(a), TEC§21.053, TEC §21.057

TEC §21.003(a)

A person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless that person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and /or instructional needs of the district. However, all special education and bilingual teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

TEC §21.053

This requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057

This requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriate or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more that 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. DLSISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE and languages other than English. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Often there are experienced teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and /or experience. DLSISD will continue to notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications. If possible, DLSISD would like for the teacher to work on a certification and complete within a two year period.

Local Guidelines

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/ or grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for Core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area. The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

4. Inter-district Transfers

TEC §25.036 Inter-district transfers

Under Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one year.

Proposed

Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD maintains a transfer policy requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application yearly. In approving transfer request, the student's grades, disciplinary history records, and attendance are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District.

DLSISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfers. Occasionally, a student's behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in an alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these cases, Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD is seeking exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

5. Class Size and Notice of Class Size

TEC §25.112 Class Size and Notice of Class Size

TEC §25.112 limits the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade to 22. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, the waivers must be applied annually. TEC §25.113 requires districts to notify each parent in the class section that exceed the 22:1 ratio, and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed

While we 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. DLSISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22-1 ratio. However, should it become necessary for the class size to exceed this ratio, the class size will be reviewed by the appropriate district and campus staff and the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. This will give the DLSISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.