Hartley ISD District of Innovation Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842 was passed during the 84th Legislative Session. This bill provides the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue becoming a District of Innovation, which allows districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code to allow more flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

On April 25, 2017, the petition was presented to the Board of Trustees and a resolution was signed by the Board Members to consider becoming a District of Innovation. A Public Hearing to allow the public to learn more about the designation and provide feedback was held on April 25, 2017. Also on April 25, 2017 the Board members appointed a Local Innovation Committee comprised of community members, parents, teachers, and administration to begin the process of developing a local plan in accordance with TEC 12A.003 to address the needs of the district.

The Local Innovation Committee will meet to develop an initial draft of the Local Innovation plan on April 27, 2017. The District Improvement Committee will meet on May 1, 2017. The plan will be posted online for public viewing and feedback from May 1, 2017 to May 31, 2017. The Board of Trustees will meet on June 1, 2017 and vote to inform the Commissioner of their intent to become a district of innovation. The Superintendent will present the plan to the Board of Trustees on June 20, 2017 for final approval.

II. TERM

The term of the Local Innovation Plan will be in place from June 20, 2017 – June 20, 2022 school year unless amended or terminated by the Board of Hartley Independent School District.

The Local Innovation Committee will revisit the plan annually to ensure that the recommendations still meet the needs of the district. Any recommended changes will be posted on the website for 30 days for feedback and require approval of the Local Innovation Committee, The HISD Site-Based Decision Making Committee, and the Board of Trustees.
III. EXEMPTIONS REQUESTED IN THE TEXAS EDUCATION CODE.

1. §25.0811: First Day of Instruction – A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

**HISD Local Innovation Plan**

i. Flexible Calendar – Hartley ISD will begin instruction no earlier than the 15th of August in an effort to create greater flexibility in the school calendar which will enable the district to be more responsive to students by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, allowing teachers to better pace, deliver instruction, and prepare the students for state assessments.

a. Local Guidelines: The District Site-Based Decision Making Committee will receive staff and community input to build the school calendar. The recommended school calendar is subject to Board approval.
2. §21.003: Certification Required – 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 certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

**HISD Local Innovation Plan**

i. Flexible Scheduling and Course Offerings – Hartley ISD may establish a local certification for a teacher to teach one subject outside of their state certified field and/or a grade level in which the teacher is not state certified and for industry professionals with experience to teach Technical Education and STEM courses. This strategy will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings and industry certifications.

   a. Local Guidelines:

   ▪ Local certification will be issued for teachers only.

   ▪ The district will establish local criteria such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certification to qualify for a local teaching certificate.

   ▪ Campus principals will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials. The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interests of the students to locally certify the individual.

   ▪ The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment.
3. §21.102: Probationary Contract – A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

**HISD Local Innovation Plan**

i. Flexible Evaluation Period of New Employees – Hartley ISD may issue a probationary contract of up to two years for new employees that are experienced teachers, counselors, nurses, or administrators that have been employed in public education for at least five of the last eight previous years. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member’s effectiveness because current timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the end-of-year evaluations.

a. Local Guidelines:

- Campus principals will submit persons for renewal or nonrenewal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will determine if the decision is in the best interests of the district.

- The Board may terminate a probationary contract based on Superintendent Recommendation at the end of the contract period and shall give notice to the employee no later than the tenth day before the last day of instruction required in the contract.
4. §21.401: Teacher Contract Days – (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months’ service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

**HISD Local Innovation Plan**

i. Flexible Teacher Contract Days- Hartley ISD may reduce the number of days in a teacher’s contract up to 7 days with no effect on teacher salaries and will increase the daily rate for teachers, enhance teacher recruitment, and improve teacher morale. This plan will also provide teachers with more opportunities to seek beneficial staff development related to their fields.

a. Local Guidelines:

- This applies to teacher contracts only without affecting stipend contract addendums.