Ralls Independent School District

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

2018-2023
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.

Ralls ISD is utilizing HB 1842 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 a plan based on the needs of our students and community.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from state statutes to:

- Take greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increase freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Increase empowerment and encourage innovative thinking.

This plan will be in effect for the 2018-2019 school year through the 2022-2023 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with the approval of the Board of Trustees.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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| November 30, 2017   | - Board of Trustees adopted resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan.  
                          - Board of Trustees held a public hearing regarding DOI.  
                          - Board of Trustees approved members of the DOI Committee. |
| January 22, 2018    | - Initial meeting with district leadership team to discuss District of Innovation advantages. |
| January 24, 2018    | - First meeting of DOI Committee to Discuss District of Innovation Plan. |
| January 30, 2018    | - Plan shared with entire district staff to allow for input.            |
| February 2, 2018    | - 2\(^{nd}\) meeting of DOI Committee to finalize the District of Innovation Plan (Virtual). |
| February 15, 2018   | - District Advisory Committee held public meeting to discuss and voted unanimously in favor of the proposed plan. |
| February 19, 2018   | - Plan posted on the Ralls ISD website.                                 |
| February 21, 2018   | - Notified the Commissioner of Education on Board’s intention to vote on the DOI plan. |
| March 22, 2018      | - School Board unanimously approved the DOI plan.                       |
# District of Innovation Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Wade</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miguel Salazar</td>
<td>HS Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy Griffith</td>
<td>MS Principal</td>
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<td>Chelsey Campbell</td>
<td>Elem. Principal</td>
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<td>Macy Cavazos</td>
<td>Special Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirsten Bell</td>
<td>HS Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaime Martinez</td>
<td>HS Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tia Porter</td>
<td>HS English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estevan Flores</td>
<td>MS Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tisha Norman</td>
<td>MS ELA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Martin</td>
<td>MS History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holly Rogers</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Sue</td>
<td>Elementary PE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angie Cervantes</td>
<td>School Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Brown</td>
<td>Parent/Business</td>
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Areas of Focus

First Day of Instruction *(EB legal, TEC 25.0811)*

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposal:
The flexibility of a locally approved start date allows the district to determine, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and community. This would also offer the following:

- Allow for more balanced grading periods.
- Allow for more instructional time prior to state assessments in December.
- Students participating in dual credit will have more balanced semesters, which will align more with our local colleges.

Guidelines:
The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.


State law states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the 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. Special education and bilingual teachers must be SBEC certified.

Proposal:
The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District’s ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, as well as career and technical courses. In order to best serve Ralls ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. Based on local need, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. This would allow for the following:

- Provide more flexibility in scheduling
- Provide more options for students in class offerings
- Allow experienced teachers to teach a course in an area they have qualified knowledge.
- Allow industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses

Guidelines:

- The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified area. The request must state the reason and document the current certifications that the teacher holds that would qualify them to teach the subject.
Individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The campus principal would submit the request to the superintendent with all the documents that the person holds that would qualify them to teach the course.

The Superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

Teacher Contract Days *(TEC 21.401, DCB Legal and Local)*

Texas Education Code states an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service.

**Proposal:**
Ralls ISD will reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. Flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel will:

- Provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development
- Improve teacher morale
- Enhance Teacher recruitment
- Increase the daily rate the district pays teachers

**Guidelines:**
To allow flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel, Ralls ISD will:

- 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. The administrative staff will also annually determine the number of professional development days are required and when and where they will be fulfilled on the calendar.
- Maintain at minimum the current salary schedule for all certified employees.

Class Size in Grades K through 4 *(TEC 25.112, EEB Legal)*

Kindergarten-4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22:1 student; teacher ratio.

**Proposal:**
While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, this must be balanced with the logistics of the timing of adding staff. Often it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

**Guidelines:**
- Ralls ISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classes to a 22:1 ratio.
- If the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will notify the Board of Trustees.
• If the class size exceeds a 24:1 ratio, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.

Inter-District Transfers *(TEC 25.036, FDA Local)*
Requires districts transfers to be for a period of one school year.

**Proposal:**
The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants.

**Guidelines:**
• Ralls ISD will follow FDA Local in approving all transfers.
• On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the state’s 90% attendance standard. In these rare cases, after other corrective measures have been attempted, a student’s transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent at anytime during the school year.

Probationary Contracts *(TEC 21.102, DCA Legal)*
Requires teachers who have been employed in Texas school districts for 5 of the previous 8 years to be placed on a probationary contract not to exceed one year.

**Proposal:**
This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit Ralls ISD the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to three years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Ralls ISD.

**Guidelines:**
• Campus principals will inform the teacher when recommending a probationary contract to the superintendent.