

BROWNSBORO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



2017 – 2018

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION
PLAN

District of Innovation

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 giving traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. Any district with an academic performance rating of at least Academically Acceptable is eligible.

The idea behind Districts of Innovation is that a local school district may want to pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other areas. An innovation plan allows a district to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements, thus gaining more local control. Each innovation plan is expected to be unique to each school district, allowing for local values and goals to be incorporated into the plan.

Brownsboro ISD took the first step in exploring this opportunity when the Board approved a resolution initiating the process in December. The Board then held a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop an innovation plan, at which time the Board decided to move forward in the process appointing a committee to develop an innovation plan. The plan then will be posted on-line for at least 30 days. Following the 30 days on-line, the District's Plan of Innovation will go back to the Board for approval.

Some areas where Districts of Innovation can gain flexibility are: school start date, minimum minutes of instruction, class size ratio, 90-percent attendance rule, teacher certification and contracts, teacher appraisal system and student discipline provision. Each district may identify different areas where their plans would take advantage of the flexibility that is available.

Requirements that Districts of Innovation cannot be exempted from are: elected Boards of Trustees, PEIMS reporting, criminal history checks, curriculum and graduation requirements, bilingual education, special education, pre-K programs, academic accountability including student assessments, financial accountability, open meetings and public records rules, and purchasing regulations.

The term of the Local Innovation Plan will begin at the start of the 2017-2018 school year and end with the 2021-2022 School Year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will revisit the plan annually to ensure that the recommendations are still in line with the needs and wishes of the district. Any changes recommended would be on the website for 30 days and require approval of the Innovation Committee and the School Board.

District Innovation Committee Members

1. Tommy Hunter Superintendent
2. Dr. Keri Hampton Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction
3. Jon Lundmark Executive Director of Finance
4. Leann Loyless Director of Special Programs
5. Perry Eaton Parent and Community Liaison
6. Sandra Duke Director of Special Education
7. Brandon Jones Brownsboro High School Principal
8. Brad Robertson Brownsboro Junior High Principal
9. Laura Ballard Brownsboro Intermediate Principal
10. Lisa Brown Chandler Intermediate Principal
11. Robbi McCarter Brownsboro Elementary Principal
12. Susan Limmer Chandler Elementary Principal
13. Marianne Jones ACES Principal
14. Russell Goodwin Brownsboro High School Teacher
15. James Hatchell Brownsboro Junior High Teacher
16. Jamey Jackson Brownsboro Intermediate Teacher
17. Angie Williams Chandler Intermediate Teacher
18. Michelle Wood Brownsboro Elementary Teacher
19. Briana Drake Chandler Elementary Teacher
20. Brian Bersano Brownsboro ISD School Board President

AREAS OF INNOVATION

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

1. School Start Date

(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. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

2. Certification Required

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.003)

Currently

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed

BISD is committed to placing a life changer in every classroom. In order to best serve BISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit, and career and technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit 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. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. 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 (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

3. Operation of Schools

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081)

Currently

TEC 25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.

Proposed

The district seeks relief from this section in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development. The district seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and district needs.

Pre-Kindergarten Exemption:

Benefits for BISD Pre-K Program:

Currently

The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. For half-day programs such as Pre-K the required minute requirement would be 37,800 minutes. There is not enough time in the day to be able to accommodate 37,800 minutes in a half-day program at BISD.

Proposed

We would like to propose a 200-minute school day for half-day programs. This 200-minute exemption will result in the students receiving 34,800 minutes of instruction during their half-day program.

4. Minimum Service Required

(DCB LEGAL)(Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently

Education Code Chapter 21 Teacher Contracts define a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

BISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract day to better align teacher contracts with the number of days' students are in attendance.

5. Probationary Contracts

(DCA LEGAL) (Ed. Code 21.102)

Currently

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Proposed

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers, new to the profession or with less than five years of experience, hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).