

# JACKSBORO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



## District of Innovation Plan

District Improvement Committee Approved: February 27, 2017

District Improvement Committee Amended: January 24, 2018

School Board Approved: April 10, 2017

School Board Approved, Amendments: TBD

### Nondiscrimination

*Jacksboro ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, economic status, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.*

## **I. Introduction:**

House Bill 1842 was passed in the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative Session. HB 1842 amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code to create Districts of Innovation. This bill provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to obtain exemptions from certain state provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan.". The bill allows each school district to reevaluate, free from bureaucratic obstacles, educator certifications, operational procedures, human resource policies, and calendar requirements in order to meet the needs of their unique student populations and communities. On January 8, 2017, the Jacksboro Independent School District's (JISD) Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation. As a District of Innovation, Jacksboro ISD seeks to exercise this opportunity to develop a plan to make use of our local control for educational decisions. JISD's Innovation Plan will support the District's mission and goals to improve the educational opportunities and achievements of students, staff, and the Jacksboro community.

## **II. Comprehensive Educational Program**

The Jacksboro Innovation plan is guided by and aligned with the District's mission, beliefs, values, and goals established in the District Improvement Plan.

### **A. Mission**

In partnership with the community, parents, teachers, and students, the mission of the Jacksboro Independent School District is to ensure a safe, positive, supportive, nurturing environment in which to educate all students through a commitment to highly reliable standards to develop knowledgeable thinkers integrated in technology in order to be prepared to succeed in any forum they may choose.

### **B. Values:**

#### **We Believe:**

- Learning can take place anywhere by anyone
- Students learn best when a variety of learning methods are provided
- Students need to be lifelong learners in order to be productive members of society
- The community and parents are a fundamental part of a child's education
- Every child should be physically and emotionally safe at school
- All students should be given the tools to excel to their greatest potential
- Students must have core knowledge of classical curriculum including math, reading, writing, social studies, and science
- Students should be prepared for their future.

### **Parameters for Jacksboro ISD:**

- All staff will do everything possible to help a student succeed.
- Nothing takes precedence over the safety, well-being and education of students.
- Students must learn to be good citizens of both the physical and digital world.
- Students must learn citizenship, history, and lessons that instill pride, patriotism, and love of community, state, and country.
- Students must learn responsibility and be responsible for their own actions.
- Students will leave ready to succeed after graduation.

### **Desired Graduate Characteristics for Jacksboro ISD:**

- Person of High Moral Character
- Sound Academic Foundation
- Skills to Work Collaboratively
- Critical Thinker/Learner
- Hungers for Learning

### **C. Board Goals**

**Goal: Student Performance** - Jacksboro ISD will provide a high quality educational experience for all students by providing a framework of support and resources for teaching and learning that is focused on preparing all students for postsecondary success.

**Goal: Personnel** - Jacksboro ISD will employ, support, and retain high-quality, effective administrators, faculty, and staff to support the educational goals of the district.

**Goal: Community and Parent Involvement** - Jacksboro ISD will encourage and promote school pride through active participation in all school activities by parents, community members, and alumni.

**Goal: Learning Environment** - Jacksboro ISD will provide a safe, disciplined, and positive educational environment that facilitates a culture of success.

**Goal: District Finances** - Jacksboro ISD will leverage and manage resources to provide a high quality educational experience for all students while exercising fiscal efficiency.

### **III. District Improvement Committee Members**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Dwain Milam        | Superintendent                                    |
| Tim Cassel         | Business Representative                           |
| Brenda Tarpley     | Business Representative                           |
| Dale Thomas        | Community Representative                          |
| Yecenia DeSantiago | Parent  |
| Libby Gonzales     | Parent  |
| Melissa Harmonson  | Parent  |
| Dr. Tina Alvarado  | Elementary Principal                              |
| Leslie Pierce      | Elementary Teacher                                |
| Teresa Howard      | Elementary Teacher                                |
| Sara Mathis        | Middle School Principal                           |
| Brian Davenport    | Middle School Teacher                             |
| Bettie German      | Middle School Teacher                             |
| Brad Burnett       | High School Principal                             |
| Hillary Deffebach  | High School Teacher                               |
| Randi Fry          | High School Teacher                               |
| Janay Hull         | Elementary Special Ed Teacher                     |
| Liz Spears         | District Testing Coordinator, High School Teacher |

#### *Non-Voting Members*

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Wade Wesley     | Assistant Superintendent |
| Terri Stretcher | Middle School Counselor  |

## **IV. Timeline for Amended Plan**

January 8, 2018

- Jacksboro ISD Board of Trustees discussed rules and procedures for process to amend the District of Innovation plan
- JISD Board takes action to approve resolution to initiate process for amending the District of Innovation plan, and
- Appoints District of Innovation Planning Committee to determine inhibitors and recommendations to place in the amended District of Innovation plan

January 22, 2018

- Planning Committee met to discuss preliminary draft before meeting with District Improvement Team

January 24, 2018

- District Improvement Committee Meets to discuss, revise, and consider amendments to the Innovation Plan for approval
- District Improvement Committee approve JISD Amended Innovation Plan

January 25, 2018

- Amended District of Innovation Plan placed on District website for public consideration
- Letter to notify parents of the amended District of Innovation plan was available for viewing on the District's website.

February 12, 2018

- Board to take action to approve notifying the Texas Commissioner of Education of their intent to vote on adopting amended JISD Innovation Plan

March 12, 2018

- District Improvement Team conducts a public meeting for consideration of the amended District of Innovation Plan
- JISD Board of Trustees meets for deliberation, consideration, and approval of Jacksboro's District of Innovation Plan

March 13, 2018

- Update all policy changes with TASB if necessary
- Notify the Commissioner of Education of Board decision of Innovation Plan

## **V. Term of Plan:**

The term of the District of Innovation plan, as constituted by statute, may not exceed five years. The term of the Jacksboro District of Innovation plan upon Board approval will begin with the 2018-2019 school year and conclude at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The plan will stay in effect for the time period listed unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by Board action in accordance with state law, or the plan is terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan must be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Improvement Team, and must have two thirds majority vote of the Board to take effect. The school district must notify TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date, not to be later than start of the following school year, to become in compliance with all sections of the Texas Education Code.

The District Improvement Team will annually review the Innovation plan to monitor the effectiveness of the plan, and make recommendations of amendments, modifications, renewals, or rescission to the Board. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed, and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commission of Education of any action to amend or renew the plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and the dates of approval of such amendments and renewals.

## **VI. Innovation Plan:**

It has been determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the goals of the Jacksboro School District in meeting the needs of the students at this time. In each section, the district will establish the Education Code requirements and district policies to be exempted with brief explanation of and parameters the district will follow in replacement of the requirements.

### **A. Probationary Contracts**

Exemption sought from TEC§ 21.102  
Related Board Policies: (DCA Legal)

#### **Current Law:**

Under TEC §21.102, 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.

#### **Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from the current probationary contract limit of one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher or administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district, will allow JISD extended time for

the evaluation and training of new personnel. One year, in some cases, is a limited and insufficient amount of time to fully determine a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. A campus principal would need to make a quick decision that would not be beneficial to the teacher or to the school district. The principal would need to decide to recommend termination of the contract or make a hasty decision to recommend moving the employee to a term contract. Local control could provide an additional year to evaluate, mentor, and/or develop necessary strategies.

**Strategies:**

1. *Consideration of contracts for newly hired teachers, counselors, or nurses with at least five of the eight years preceding employment in education.* The campus principal will have the option to submit a recommendation to superintendent for the Board's consideration for the issuance of a term contract, another one year probationary contract, or to terminate the contract for teachers, counselors, or nurses that were hired with at least five of the last eight years employed in education.

a) *This is no way exempts the district of notifying requirement set in TEC.*

JISD is committed to effectively managing teacher contracts.

**B. Uniform School Start Date**

Exemption sought from TEC §25.0811

Related Board Policies: (EB Legal)

**Current Law:**

Under TEC §25.0811, a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Prior to this requirement, a waiver was allowed for districts to begin earlier, but was taken away with this mandate. When considering calendars that could begin as late as August 28<sup>th</sup>, the school district's calendar has no additional time for local activities, professional development, extended holidays, and the ability to end before June. A calendar that extends into June negatively impacts additional opportunities for students as it conflicts with summer school, college courses beginning in June, and other camps/enrichment summer programs for kids.

**Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from the current uniform school start date of the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, would provide the district with the flexibility to create a calendar that meets the needs of the community, allows for staff development days, extended holiday time for students/families, and the ability to end in May.

Strategies:

1. *Innovative thinking for a calendar that is not mandated to begin the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August.* The calendar committee will propose a calendar that meets the needs of the community, allows for staff development days, extends holiday time for families, allows for a midweek start date, and has the ability to end in May. The calendar committee also must consider the time of each grading period to evaluate students, the number of days in each semester for a balanced learning approach, and the consideration of a midweek start date. This would allow students that have transitioned to another campus to become familiar with routines, schedules, and surroundings with a quick end to the week. This also eases the transition to schooling for PreK and Kindergarten students new to the system.

a) *Students will start no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in August.*

**C. Length of School Day**

Exemption sought from TEC §25.081, TEC §25.082(a)

Related Board Policies: (EC Legal)

**Current Law:**

In TEC §25.081, the school day is to be 420 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students., and rephrased another way in TEC §25.082(a) as the school day is to be 7 hours of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students. Jacksboro ISD will achieve the 75,600 minutes of instruction per year, but seeks an exemption to allow the district to reach this total through a creative use of time management to maximize student achievement and accommodate local interests.

**Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from setting a time requirement on the length of the school day would provide the district with greater flexibility to utilize more than the maximum 6 waiver days that are currently allowed to reduce the length of certain school days. With this flexibility, the district could create a schedule that allows for staff development, early release, late arrival, and/or alter the schedule when it would be beneficial for students, parents, or local stakeholders without the fear of diminishing state funding or becoming out of compliance.

Strategies:

1. *Staff Development.* The school district will utilize half days or partial days on occasions for opportunities to conduct staff development.
2. *Alter schedule for students, parents, or local events.* On occasion, the district may have early release or late arrivals for events that are scheduled on



the school calendar. Early releases would be used for Semester exam schedules, hosting large events / competitions, homecoming parade, county stock show, and/or additional travel time before major holidays.

3. *Early Release / Late Arrival.* There are on occasion situations that arise that the district would need to utilize an early release or late arrival that are not placed on the school calendar. Late arrivals would be utilized for bad weather events, or as research may indicate, innovative ways to allow students additional time to sleep after late nights. Early releases for additional travel time for students and parents for playoff games, or when other unexpected circumstances or tragedies occur.

a) *In all situations, communication with parents will be a priority, and accommodations will be made for all students.*

#### **D. Student Growth Measure in T-TESS**

Exemption sought from: TEC Sec. §21.351(a)(2), §21.352(a)(2)(B), TAC§150.1001(f)(2).  
Related Board Policies: (DNA LEGAL)

##### **Current Law:**

Currently there are legal requirements in Education Code and Administrative Code concerning the evaluation of teachers in relation to student growth measures. In TEC Sec. §21.351(a)(2), TEC §21.352(a)(2)(B), containing the items described by Section 21.351(a)(2), and in TAC§150.1001(f)(2), the performance of teachers' students is used as a criteria in the evaluation of teachers in the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) model.

##### **Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from or flexibility within the Commissioner's recommended appraisal process and performance criteria of teachers would provide the district with greater flexibility to accurately and equitably appraise teachers across the curriculum and district.

##### **Strategies:**

1. *HRS Model.* The district is utilizing the High Reliability Schools model that have strategies in place that require the monitoring of student learning as well as students monitoring their own learning. This is a researched based strategy of effective teaching. There is evidence of this being utilized throughout the school district. Requiring more paperwork in the evaluation of teachers in the documentation of this strategy is another administrative duty that would encumber more time and energy from an already overwhelmed faculty.

2. *Growth Plan.* Although the school district is seeking exemption from student growth measure for all teachers, the district will utilize the growth measure for teachers in need of assistance. The T-TESS model provides opportunities for every teacher to grow. Principals will identify areas of refinement for teachers that are “in need of assistance” and will provide one or more of the student growth measures to be accomplished.

## **E. Transfer Students**

Exemption sought from TEC §25.001, TEC §25.036  
Related Board Policies: FDA (Local)

### **Current Law:**

Currently in TEC §25.001, a school 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 school year. FDA (Local) states, “Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time.”

### **Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from the one school year requirement for accepting a transfer application would allow the district to accept high risk transfer students. Students that are seeking a school change in hopes of starting fresh to help with their school grades, attendance, and discipline could potentially not be accepted because of the one year requirement. Jacksboro ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student’s disciplinary history records, the student’s grades, and attendance records are taken into consideration for approval. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, policies, and regulations of the District.

### **Strategies:**

1. *Student Behavior.* When the student’s behavior warrants an In-School suspension, the Superintendent or designee may revoke the transfer application. Each case will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to discipline history and circumstances. If a student’s behavior results in a DAEP placement or expulsion, the transfer application will immediately be revoked.
2. *Attendance.* If a student’s attendance falls below 90% or the TEA truancy standard of four unexcused absences in a four week period or ten unexcused absences in a 6 month period of time, the transfer application will immediately be revoked.
  - a) *In all situations, communication with parents will be a priority.*

## **F. School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings**

Exemption sought from TEC §28.004(d-1)  
Related Board Policies: (BDF Legal)

### **Current Law:**

Currently there are legal requirements concerning the required number of meeting for the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC). In TEC §28.004(d-1), the SHAC is required to meet at least four times each year.

### **Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from the required number of days would allow local control by the board of trustees and the committee members to determine. The district's size and the stability of the membership of the SHAC committee ensures that committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are often able to review, discuss, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings.

Strategies:

1. *Number of Meetings.* Jacksboro ISD will reduce the number of meetings to two(2) meetings per year. A meeting to determine goals and objectives at the beginning of the year, and another meeting to evaluate the program goals and report to the school board will continue to be of priority.

## **G. DAEP, Teacher**

Exemption sought from TEC §37.008(a)(7)  
Related Board Policies: FOCA (Legal), FOB (Legal)

### **Current Law:**

In TEC §37.008(a), Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21

### **Innovative Plan:**

An exemption from this requirement would give the district flexibility in scheduling teacher and aides as needed. There are very few students that are assigned to a DAEP setting that would require the district to hire a full time certified teacher. In times that the DAEP setting is utilized, the time assigned could potentially be very minimal. Computer based instruction is often utilized if a student is assigned a large amount of days.

Strategies:

1. *Student Support.* The campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed

## **VII. Summary**

The goal to become a District of Innovation is to reduce inhibiting factors of current law set by Texas Education Code in an effort to better serve and support our students, parents, staff, and community in new ways. Through HB 1842, Jacksboro ISD will be able to grow in our ability to utilize innovative approaches in making decisions for our children that move the district to establish a more locally customized environment.

The implementation of the exemptions from the TEC will require revision of Jacksboro ISD policies and procedures. Jacksboro ISD will utilize a local policy development process that includes input from various stakeholders. The superintendent will promulgate regulations, policies, and procedures to govern the areas for which local exemptions were sought.

The Jacksboro ISD community is grateful to the legislators who developed and passed the District of Innovation legislation for HB 1842 giving the school district more local decision making ability. Jacksboro ISD is committed to the challenges that lies ahead to bring this ideology to full benefit for the best interests of our students and community.