



*Local Innovation Plan*  
2017-2018

## INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

## TERM

The term of the plan will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and terminate at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the District website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees.

## INNOVATION COMMITTEE

The Innovation Committee developed this Plan and includes the following members:

Tammy Austin	Instructional Technology Coordinator
Eric Beam	Deputy of Schools
Larry Beam	Butterfield Elementary Principal
Rhonda Bilbrey	Assistant Superintendent
Kent Crutsinger	Superintendent of Schools
Melissa Dorum	Assistant Director – DCSEC

Leon Elsbecker	Director of Technology
Alice Ford	Chisholm Trail Elementary
Ashley Gage	Elementary/Intermediate Parent
Dr. Chris Granger	Sanger High School Principal
Connie Havis	Secondary Parent
Sally Herrell	Sanger Middle School Principal
Stephanie Lance	Clear Creek Intermediate Principal
Erin Luke	Elementary Parent
Jennifer Mulkey	Director of Special Programs
Evan Murrell	Secondary Teacher
Mindy Schumacher	Elementary Teacher
Larry Shuman	Sixth Grade Principal

## TIMELINE

### December 12, 2016 - 6:00pm Board Meeting

Board approved Resolution for district to consider designation as a District of Innovation.

### January 9, 2017 - 6:00pm Board Meeting

Public Hearing held at Board Meeting

Board appointed Innovation Committee

### January 19, 2017 & January 24, 2017 - SISD Administration Annex

Innovation Committee meetings held January 19 & January 24

## DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the District Improvement Plan.

### **Mission**

The mission of Sanger Independent School District is to create a learning community that engages, challenges, and inspires all students. We will educate our diverse population in an atmosphere that encourages academic, physical and creative achievement and promotes strong character.

### **Vision**

Our Students develop into responsible, productive citizens, and life-long learners.

Our Schools attract and retain the most qualified and dedicated personnel, and have facilities that are safe, clean, pleasant and equipped.

Our Schools hold high learning standards for learning in all subject areas and challenge all students to achieve at the highest possible level.

Our Community provides an environment of trust, respect, and pride. The Community supports our educators and provide resources and support for students to achieve.

## INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTIONS

### **Class Size in Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Texas Education Code:** § 25.112. CLASS SIZE. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

§ 25.113 NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE. (a) A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

**Rationale for the Exemption:**

Based on current state law, classes in grades Kindergarten through 4th may not exceed a ratio of 22 students to 1 teacher. When an individual class exceeds this ratio, the District must either add a new teacher, reassign teachers from other schools with lower student enrollment, or submit a waiver request to the Texas Education Agency. These waivers requests have not been rejected by TEA. In addition to the waiver request, it is required that a letter be sent to each parent in the class that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted and the class exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

**Local Guidelines:**

SISD remains committed to meeting the needs of each student. Because of the nature of student enrollment growth, it is necessary to apply for class size waivers despite the fact that new staff is assigned to campuses with highest projected growth. SISD believes that class size plays a positive role in the classroom, but this must be balanced with the timing of adding the best, qualified teaching candidates.

As part of the SISD Local Innovation Plan, the District will maintain the 22:1 student to teacher ratio in Kindergarten through 4th grades and will continue to follow the process of thoughtful planning, assignment of teachers to the schools with growing student enrollment, reviewing staffing ratios, and making decisions in the best interests of students while taking into consideration the financial capacity of the District. In the event that class sizes exceeds the 22:1 ratio, in Kindergarten – 4th grade, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the Superintendent will submit a request to the Board of Trustees for approval. Additionally, parents will be informed of all efforts relative to class size. This exemption provides SISD local control over class

**First Day of Instruction (School Start Date)**

**Texas Education Code:** Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance - §25.0811 First Day of Instruction (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

**Rationale for the Exemption:**

Restricting school start date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August operationally challenges Sanger ISD because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August and generally the first week of June. Flexibility to the start date would allow the district to address issues caused by the current calendar constraints:

- Lack of flexibility to schedule student breaks or other options during the school year.
- Condensed employee work schedules limiting flexibility to schedule holidays, personal days and professional development days impacting employee work / life balance.
- Increased teacher absences and related substitute teacher expense.
- A lack of true choice for the District Leadership Team in development of the school calendar.

**Local Guidelines:**

The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers, which will remain the same.

**Teacher Certification - CTE**

**Texas Education Code: Sec. 21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.**

(a) 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 certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

**Rationale for the Exemption:**

The exemption is to specifically allow the district to issue local teaching permits to teachers of non-core and core CTE courses without intervention by the Commissioner to review the issued permits. The exemption is to allow the district to establish local requirements including the current requirements in Sec 21.055 for teacher preparation (including all background checks, training and classroom management preparation) to enhance our ability to compete for teaching resources with industry expertise. Additionally, exemption to 21.044 allows for further flexibility to

not be limited to only those industry certifications where an industry group has written specific curriculum.

**Local Guidelines:**

The district will establish local guidelines to have the option to issue local teaching permits for any CTE core and non-core class teacher. The district's local guidelines will maintain the requirements for criminal background checks and classroom management training and preparation, including optional support at the district discretion for a mentor teacher. Refer to Policy DBA.

**Site-Based Decision-Making**

**Texas Education Code:** Sec. 11.251. PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. (a) The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The board shall annually approve district and campus performance objectives and shall ensure that the district and campus plans:

- (1) are mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives; and
  - (2) at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives under Chapter 4.
- (b) The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. The board shall establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, including, if practicable, at least one representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The committees shall include a business representative without regard to whether the representative resides in the district or whether the business the person represents is located in the district. The board, or the board's designee,

shall periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations.

(c) For purposes of establishing the composition of committees under this section:

(1) a person who stands in parental relation to a student is considered a parent;

(2) a parent who is an employee of the school district is not considered a parent representative on the committee;

(3) a parent is not considered a representative of community members on the committee; and

(4) community members must reside in the district and must be at least 18 years of age.

(d) The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board shall ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee will be actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision-making at the district and campus levels.

(e) The board shall adopt a procedure, consistent with Section 21.407(a), for the professional staff in the district to nominate and elect the professional staff representatives who shall meet with the board or the board designee as required under this section. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. The remaining staff representatives shall include both campus- and district-level professional staff members. If practicable, the committee membership shall include at least one professional staff representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities. Board policy must provide procedures for:

(1) the selection of parents to the district-level and campus-level committees; and

(2) the selection of community members and business representatives to serve on the district-level committee in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity.

(f) The district policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district- and campus-level planning process.

**Rationale for the Exemption:**

The district would like flexibility in TEC 11.252 as the committee membership limits the degree in which the most effective decisions are made by those individuals who will actually implement the decisions. While all stakeholders are represented, it is often a difficult task for parent, community and business representative to voice their ideas or vision due to their feeling of limited contribution to the overall conversation regarding educational matters. Over time, these individuals no longer attend meetings or participate in the site-based decisions.

**Local Guidelines:**

SISD remains committed to valuing all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community and business) in the design of the educational programming. Therefore, SISD will continue to remain transparent with all campus and district matters; however, each SISD campus will now have the flexibility to determine the membership of their site-based decision-making team as appropriate for their unique campus needs. SISD will continue to develop district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY EXPECTATIONS**

This Local Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which Sanger ISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which SISD seeks relief so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses, departments and committees in order to fully realize the work of the Innovation Committee.

Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed and presented to the Board of Trustees where appropriate. It is the expectation of the innovation Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan.

The Board of Trustee will annually convene the Local Innovation Plan Committee to review the Local Innovation Plan to ensure the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the SISD District Improvement Plan, Mission and Vision.