

SABINE PASS ISD

District of Innovation Plan

(Proposed 02/07/2022)

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique populations and to help prepare them for success. As a district of Innovation, Sabine Pass ISD will be able to facilitate the overall goal and mission of the district with flexibility and to personalize student experiences for a successful learning environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Sabine Pass School is to guarantee our students are empowered with the skills necessary to make transitions from one grade level to the next and ultimately become productive members of society. This will be accomplished by providing our students with enthusiastic, supportive and competent facilitators teaching relevant and flexible curricula in a positive, technologically-advanced environment.

VISION STATEMENT

Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect
Every individual deserves to learn
Every action has a consequence
Learning is a lifetime experience

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kristi Heid, Superintendent
Andrew Bates, High School Principal
Troy Gragg III, Elementary/Middle School
Principal
Kathleen Finn, Administration
Randa Hurtado, Special Education
Ashleigh Deslatte, Counselor

Isabel Harvey, Counselor
Jason Thibodeaux, Athletic Director
Anne Singleton, Elementary Teacher
Scott Hagedorn, Middle School Teacher
Kelsey Bates, High School Teacher
Alicia Rodriguez, Parent Representative
Tammie Blood, Business Representative
Scottie Ray, Community Representative

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE

Date	Activity
February 2022	Meet with DOIC/DAC to update plan Notify TEA of intent to vote Post plan to SPISD website for 30 days Hold public hearing to review renewal of plan DOIC approves plan by a majority vote
March 2022	SPISD Board of Trustees will vote to approve the Renewal of the District of Innovation Plan SPISD Board of Trustees must approve the District of Innovation Plan by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority If approved: The Commissioner of Education will be notified of the Board of Trustees' approval of the renewal of the SPISD District of Innovation Plan. Plan will be implemented upon adoption by the Board of Trustees

A. First and Last Day of Instruction

Requirement: Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Rationale: The flexibility of start date and end date will allow the district to determine on an annual basis what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Having the flexible start date and end date will allow the district to balance the amount of instructional time in each semester. A flexible start will also allow the district to go back to the tradition of starting the school year with a short week, which has previously proven to foster a smoother, less tiring transition back to the school year.

B. Class Size

Requirement: Texas Education Code Section 25.112 states that districts must maintain a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 or less for pre-kindergarten through fourth grade classes, and districts must complete and file a waiver with the agency if a class exceeds this limit. Section 25.111 requires districts to employ a sufficient number of certified teachers to maintain an average ratio of not less than 1 teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. TEC 25.113 requires districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

Rationale: Sabine Pass ISD supports the class size ratio and makes every effort to comply with the state's mandate. However, the flexibility to add a student or two in extenuating circumstances will provide ease in changing each student. If this situation were to occur in grades Pre-K-4, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees. This exemption only allows the district local control of class size ratios in special circumstances and does not disregard the intent of the state's ratio requirements.

C. Certification Required

Requirement: Texas Education Code Section 21.003 mandates that districts that wish to hire an uncertified staff member must submit a request to TEA and wait on approval or denial. Section 21.0031 provides that an employee's probationary, continuing, or term Chapter 21 contract is void for failure to maintain certification in certain circumstances. Section 21.051 provides that before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities. TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the district before their employment contract will be binding and prohibits the district from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time. TEC 21.057 requires that the district provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days. TEC

37.008(a)(7) requires teachers assigned to the District's Alternative Education Program be certified in accordance with Chapter 21 of the education code.

Rationale: To adequately supply programs with qualified candidates, the district requires the flexibility to hire staff members who would qualify for placement in assignments outside of their traditional certification areas and to retain them. The district will establish local qualification and training requirements for professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of state requirements. The district will make decisions on certification needs for the various special programs. These exemptions are of particular importance for hard-to-fill and high-demand courses. The district will ensure that professional development plans are in place to train non-certified personnel in pedagogy and to provide needed support. In addition, students assigned to DAEP are provided instruction in conjunction with the students' regular education teachers or utilizing an online teaching platform; therefore, the students receive support from qualified employees/resources without the necessity of a certified teacher present for the small student population assigned to DAEP. The flexibility allows the District to maximize the efficiency of its resources. Employees without certification will be at-will employees.

D. Probationary Contracts

Requirement: Texas Education Code Section 21.102 mandates that experienced teachers new to the district, have a probationary period that 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.

Rationale: The current review period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the end of the school year. For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to Sabine Pass ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract will be issued for each of the first two years of employment with the district.

E. School Health Advisory Council

Requirement: TEC 28.004(d-1) states the Board of Trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring local community values reflected in the district's health education instruction. The council shall meet at least four times each year. The committee consists of parents, community members, and a district liaison.

Rationale: The District SHAC will meet a minimum of two times annually, once each semester. The council may convene for additional meetings if necessary. This will allow the council to meet, review, and respond to data regarding the district's goals without creating a hardship on the membership.

F. Transfer Students

Requirement: TEC 25.036 states that students attending a district through a district transfer may apply for a transfer annually. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative plan, or expulsion or the student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard.

Rationale: Non-residents accepted as transfer students may have their transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year for any lawful reason including:

- If a student has been absent without an excuse acceptable to the district for 10% or more of the number of days of school.
- If a student's behavior has resulted in a placement in the DAEP or JJAEP programs.
- If a student is charged with, convicted of, or deferred adjudication for a misdemeanor offense that contains any element of assault or is drug or gang related or is a felony offense
- If a student has consistently and/or repeatedly disrupted the learning environment, placed other(s) in harm, and/or negatively impacted the orderly operations or climate of the school and/or its programs.

TERM

The School of Innovation Plan has a term of up to five years beginning in March 2022. The plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Advisory Committee, and the board of trustees in the same manner required for initial adoption.