

Spur Independent School District

Proposed Local Innovation Plan

2022-2027

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842, which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code by becoming a designated District of Innovation to better serve the students at Spur ISD

Spur ISD Site-based and Local Innovation Committee

Craig Hamilton, Superintendent
Jose Molina, Elementary principal
Michael Norman, Secondary Principal
Leslee Hindman, Counselor
Danci Fulmer, Elementary Teacher
Pat Hightower, Elementary Teacher
Makenzie Hale, Secondary Teacher
Myles Hammack, Secondary Teacher /LEP Coordinator

David Castellon, Secondary Teacher
Brandee Hamilton, Special Education Teacher/ Parent
Kassi Beshirs, CTE Teacher/ Parent
Laura Adams, Parent
Cindy Adams, Community
Kayla Bateman, Parent/ Business Community

Spur ISD Board of Trustees

Barry Ferguson, President
Roy Sanchez, Vice-President
Casey Smith, Secretary
Pat Ortiz, Member

Terri Wyatt, Member
Matt Humphreys, Member
Rick Paschall, Member
Andrew Adams, Member Elect

District of Innovation Timeline-

January 23, 2017 – Public hearing to explain and discuss possibility of becoming District of Innovation.

January 23, 2017- Board of Trustees unanimously approved resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation. Public Hearing to explain and discuss possibility of becoming District of Innovation.

January 31, 2017 - Spur ISD Innovation Plan Posted

May 22, 2017 – Public hearing to discuss the District of Innovation

May 22, 2017 - the Spur ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the Spur ISD Innovation Plan.

May 21, 2021 – Site Base Committee met to review Spur ISD Innovation Plan

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December 20, 2021- Spur ISD Board of Trustees discussed and reviewed possible changes to Spur ISD District of Innovation Plan

April 19, 2022- Placed on Website for

Term and Implementation

The term for the Local Innovation Plan would be for five years (August 2022-August 2027) unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event Spur ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the committee will follow all procedures for amending the plan and presenting it for approval of the Board of Trustees.

This innovation plan and specific implementation of the plan will be followed by the appropriate campuses and principals. Adjustments to Board Policy and other district policies will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees as needed.

Texas Education Code Exemptions

In conjunction with the Local Innovation Committee district leadership staff reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determine which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the educational opportunities of the students who attend Spur ISD. They are identified and detailed below:

1. Uniform Start Date (EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Current Statute:

Prohibits a school district from beginning instruction for Students before the 4th Monday of August.

Proposed flexibility:

The flexibility of the start date will allow the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Flexibility to start earlier in August would help our district plan balanced grading periods and plan semesters instructional time that would not hinder students possibility for success.

In addition, removing the uniform start date could allow flexibility to begin the first week of classes with a shortened week, easing the transition for students.

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Innovative Strategy:

To meet local and community needs, the plan would allow for the creation of balanced semesters in regard to instructional time.

- a. Students will start school no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August.
- b. Teachers will report for duty no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August.

2. Length of School Day (TEC §25.081)

Current Statute:

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Proposed flexibility:

Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Spur ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. **While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year.

As long as the total minutes accumulated equals 75,600 minutes for the year, this exemption would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling (above and beyond the 6-day maximum as needed) without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements. This would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted and relevant professional development.

No intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar approved by the Board of Trustees and published and continuously published using school media.

Innovative Strategy:

The approved school calendar with limited earlier release days will be followed unless there is a locally justifiable reason for a change. If it is decided that an additional day is needed the following steps will be taken.

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- a. The dates of additional needed early release days not posted on the original school calendar will be publicized to all stakeholders as soon as the decision is made that the early release is locally necessary.
- b. Information will be posted on school website, calendar, and on all school social media.

3. Teacher Certification

Exemption from: Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.053, §21.055, §21.057

Board Policies Affected: (DK Legal) (DK Exhibit) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local)

TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician or school counselor 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. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

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 21.055 states that if a teacher is not certified, the District may issue a teaching permit to employ the individual. This process requires notice to the Commissioner. Additionally, the language of this section could be construed to prohibit the issuance of a local teaching certificate.

TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an appropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

Innovation Strategies

- a. The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the available position; however, when that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the open position. In core subjects, K12k individuals must have a Bachelor's Degree. By the end of the 3rd year of employment with the

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District, the individual must have completed certification requirements if the individual is teaching core subjects.

- b. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher (including those with out-of-state certifications) to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified.
- c. An individual with experience in the content of a course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed corrections officer teaching a criminal justice course or a retired CPA teaching an entry level accounting course.
- d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided with teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources and/or other supports.
- e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.
- f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.
- g. All teachers will still be required to complete the criminal background check in compliance with State Board of Education rules.

Teacher Contracts Days of Service

Exemption from: Texas Education Code §21.401

Board Policies Affected: (DC Legal) (DC Local)

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TEC 21.401 states that a teacher must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Innovation Strategies

- a. SISD seeks to align 10-month contract employees with the “minutes of instruction” requirement of 75, 600 minutes for students. Contract employees will work a minimum of 170 days
- b. During those 10-months, teachers will be expected to meet the 75, 600 minutes of daily instruction as well as serve in his/her professional capacity during staff development days and teacher workdays.
- c. Teacher contracts will more closely align with the 75,600 instructional minutes required for students and will also include staff development/workdays. This flexibility will afford SISD opportunities to create a culture/climate that empower us to leverage time based on student outcomes.
- d. Professional employees will not receive a reduction in pay for any reduction in service realized by this change.
- e. The determination of days required to fulfill an employee’s contract should be a local decision.
- f. It may increase the daily rate on the professional salary scale (for teachers only).
- g. It will enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the District on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.

Probationary Contracts

Exemption: TEC 21.102

TEC 21.102 Probationary contract 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 with the district. (DCA LEGAL)

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Innovation Strategies

- a. Allow provision for SISD to place an experienced teacher, new to the district, who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years, on a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of employment.

Number of College Days Attendance Rule

Exemption from: Texas Education Code §25.087 (b-2)

Board Policies Affected: (FEC Legal)

TEC 25.087 (b-2) allows a school district to excuse a student from attending school to visit an institution of higher education during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education, provided that: (1) the district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year; and (2) the district adopts: (A) a policy to determine when an absence will be excused for this purpose; and (B) a procedure to verify the student's visit at the institution of high education.

Innovation Strategies

- a. Spur ISD is in a remote location in relation to a number of schools that SISD students are interested in attending. Limiting students to only 2 days does not allow for students to travel round-trip as well as visit a campus.
- b. SISD will waive the 2-day limit per year and adopt a policy allowing seniors to miss 4 days per year, juniors to miss 3 days per year, sophomores to miss 2 days per year and freshman to miss 1 day per year.
- c. SISD will expand its college and career readiness emphasis by allowing students 9-12 to visit colleges of interest. This will allow students to gain a greater understanding of the steps needed to achieve their college/career goals at an earlier age.

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90% Attendance Rule

Exemption from: Texas Education Code §25.092

Board Policies Affected: (FEC Legal)

TEC 25.092 currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn credit. The law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on “seat time” rather than based on content mastery.

Innovation Strategies

- a. The 90% rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. It will also allow SISD administrators to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts, rather than because they’ve attended a certain number of school days.
- b. The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, location and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts and reducing dropouts. This exemption supports personalized learning for both students and parents.
- c. Relief from Section 15.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher’s right to determine the finality of a grade nor does it restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with TEC Section 28.0216.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (TEC§37.008)

TEC 37.008 states that 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

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Innovation Strategies

Spur ISD seldom needs the existence of a DAEP and is usually a short-term requirement since there will be a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP. Since the classes will be provided using computer-based instruction, it is not necessary to have certified teachers monitoring DAEP. 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

SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPOSITORY CONTRACTS

Exemption from: • TEC §45.205 • TEC §45.206 Related Board Policies: • BDAE (LEGAL) • BDAE (LOCAL)

Description of the Current provision:

The depository for the District shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for two additional two-year terms. Per S.B. 754, passed by the 85th Texas Legislature, effective September 1, 2017, TEC Section 45.205 will allow the District to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year. An extension is not subject to the requirements of Education Code 45.206, Education Code 45.205 and Education Code 45.204.

Innovation Strategies:

In a small district and a small town, the District's choices for its depository bank are limited. SISD uses services provided by the bank on a daily basis. SISD will continue to use the local depository for the District without rebidding. At the end of each two-year term, the District and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for multiple two additional year periods. The District must review the contract to ensure the best value and support for the District and obtain Board approval for each of the two-year periods. Nothing in this process would hinder the District's ability to undertake bidding the District Depository Bank at the end of any of the two-year periods. The time saved by the superintendent, business manager and the board of trustees by not having to deal with this ministerial duty every two years will allow the superintendent, business manager and the board more time for studying and planning for student progress, instructional strategies, and innovative options for the district educational goals. The District believes it can operate most optimally if it is not limited to two or even three additional two year extensions of its depository contract.

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