



**DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN
BIG SANDY ISD
2020**

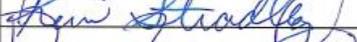
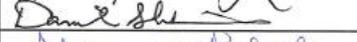
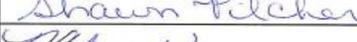
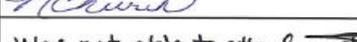
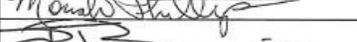
Introduction

The 84th legislature passed House Bill 1842, which allows traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas' open enrollment charter schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, the Districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation." At this time, I would recommend that the Big Sandy ISD Board of Trustees approve the initiation of the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation.

Texas school districts must develop and adopt an innovation plan in order to receive the designation as a "District of Innovation", as authorized by House Bill 1842 and as set forth in Texas Education Code, Chapter 12A. In developing the local district plan, Districts of Innovation are provided with flexibility with regard to several areas of statute, which allows for greater local control in decision- making regarding educational programming and operations. The increased autonomy and flexibility afforded by the District of Innovation designation allows school districts, in collaboration with local stakeholders, to make educational decisions that best meet the needs of their students and schools. It is important to note that, although there is much flexibility that may be achieved through the development of a local district plan, Districts of Innovation may not be released from statutes that address curriculum, assessment, graduation requirements, or academic and financial accountability.

Members of the Committee:

Linda Baggett Community Member
 Julia Fonteno Parent
 Kim Stradley Secondary Principal
 Donna Varnado Elementary Principal
 Chuck Isaac Secondary Assistant Principal
 Andrea Blavier Elementary Assistant Principal
 Ty Anne Tapley Secondary Counselor
 Honey Ratcliff Elementary Counselor
 Daniel Shipman Secondary Teacher
 Shawn Pilcher Elementary Teacher
 Nancy Church Special Education Teacher
 Mary Troboy Business Manager
 Larry Minter Athletic Director
 Moriah Phillips Technology Director
 Jay Ratcliff Superintendent

District of Innovation Committee Members		
Linda Baggett	Community Member	
Julia Fonteno	Parent	
Kim Stradley	Secondary Principal	
Donna Varnado	Elementary Principal	
Chuck Isaac	Secondary Assistant Principal	
Andrea Blavier	Elementary Assistant Principal	
Ty Anne Tapley	Secondary Counselor	
Honey Ratcliff	Elementary Counselor	
Daniel Shipman	Secondary Teacher	
Shawn Pilcher	Elementary Teacher	
Nancy Church	Special Education Teacher	
Mary Troboy	Business Manager	Was not able to attend 
Larry Minter	Athletic Director	
Moriah Phillips	Technology Director	
Jay Ratcliff	Superintendent	

Innovation Area #1:

Teacher certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DK LEGAL)

TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher 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.

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district. By claiming exemption from TEC §21.003(a), the district shall have the right to recruit individuals from certain trades, industries, and vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience and consider qualifications based on experience, industry certification, etc.

District leadership including the superintendent, principals, CTE administrators, human resource department, etc. shall determine whether it is in the best interest of its students to certify individuals based on these factors rather than appeal to the Commissioner of Education as stated in Sec. 21.055.

By claiming exemption from TEC §21.003(a), the district will be able to increase the amount of course offerings and utilize creative instructional methods, the district will need flexibility in the area of teacher certification requirements, which are governed by §21.003, §21.044, and §21.053. In lieu of these requirements, the district will establish its own local qualification procedures. Freedom from the latter requirements will make it possible to hire industry experts and post- secondary instructors to teach CTE courses, thereby increasing the number of students able to receive such instruction.

Innovation Strategies

A. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.

B. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local certification. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. This person will be considered an "at-will" employee of the district

Innovation Area #2:

School Start Date (TEC §25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Innovation Strategies

Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year, earlier than the 4th Monday of August will:

- A. Enable the District to balance the amount of instructional time in each grading period, which will allow students more time to accumulate test and assignment grades
- B. Enable the District to balance the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break
- C. Enable teachers to invest more instructional time with students prior to high-stakes STAAR & EOC State assessments
- D. Enable the District to begin Summer School intervention earlier for students who need to retest in SSI grades or retest in EOC assessments for graduation purposes

Innovation Area #3:

Probationary Contract Time Period (TEC §21.102) (DCA LEGAL)

For experienced teachers who are 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. §21.102

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

A one-year probationary period is not a sufficient amount of time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Currently, contracts for Big Sandy ISD teachers occur in April, which demands that employment decisions must be made with very little time for completion of teacher summative appraisals.

Innovation Strategy

For experienced teachers who are new to the District that have been employed as in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the first day of employment in Big Sandy ISD.

Innovation Area #4:

Teacher Contract Days (TEC §21.401) (DC LEGAL)

Current education law in Chapter 21 requires a teacher who is on a 10-month contract to work an equivalent of 187 days. TEC §21.401

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

There is no flexibility in this area to allow the district to align the teacher work schedule with the new statutes of number of minutes required, rather than the old days required of student instruction.

Innovation Strategy

In an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students, the District will have the option to reduce the number of contract days with no effect on teacher salaries. On an annual basis, the Big Sandy ISD superintendent will recommend a teacher contract day calendar to the Board of Trustees for approval, using authority established in DK(LOCAL). The number of teacher contract days must be inclusive of all instructional days, any TEA professional development waiver days, and a minimum of five non-waiver professional development days.

Innovation Area #5:

Inter-District Transfers (TEC §25.036)

Currently, under Texas Education Code §25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the District, but TEC §25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year. TEC §25.036

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

Big Sandy 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, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district. TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. In rare circumstances, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Big Sandy ISD would benefit from an exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Innovation Strategy

Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students at Big Sandy ISD may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.