

# **HEDLEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## District of Innovation Plan

### **District of Innovation Plan Committee Members**

Garrett Bains, Superintendent

Eric Alston, Principal

Kim Harper, Coach/Teacher

Mandi Gay, Classroom Teacher

Jennie Owens, Tech Coordinator

Lon Adams, Ag. Sciences

Angela Branigan, Elementary Teacher

### **Hedley ISD Board of Trustees**

Dana Bell, President

Carol Ward, Vice-President

Michael Metcalf, Secretary

Cindy Lambert, Member

Billy Hall, Member

Troy Monroe, Member

### **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed the 84th Texas Legislature, during Regular Session 2015, permits eligible Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In accordance with 19 TAC § 102.1303 On January 18, 2017, the Hedley Independent School District's Board of Trustees (to be known as "Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

On January 18, 2017, the Board appointed the members of the Districtwide Educational Improvement Committee as the District of Innovation Plan Committee ("Committee") comprised of district administrators, teachers, parents. The Committee met on January 25, 2017 to discuss and draft this District of Innovation Plan ("Plan").

### **Term**

The term of this Plan will start with the 17-18 school year and will end in five years with the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with TEC §12A.006 and §12A.008. The Committee will annually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan on or before August 1st of each year of implementation. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Hedley ISD District of Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency.

## Innovations

The district proposes flexibility in the following areas:

### **Site-Based Decision Making (TEC 11.251 & 11.252) (BQ Legal/Local, BQA Legal/Local)**

Hedley ISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision-making (SBDM) process and the convening of the school health advisory committee (SHAC) and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth in the Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: giving students the best education possible.

Innovation Strategies:

A. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of the District, school, and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one-size fits all approach as detailed in the code.

B. In place of the SBDM will absorb the responsibilities of the SHAC Committee, and will establish, meet, review, and analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district's success and most importantly, student's success. This team will convene at least three times per year and generate the general direction of district resources and efforts. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this small community. This consolidation will yield greater opportunity for one team to address a multiple of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

### **Courses of Study; Advancement - School Health Advisory Council (BDF Legal) (TEC§28.004)**

(TEC 28.004 d-1) The local school health advisory council shall meet at least four times each year.

#### **Our plan:**

Hedley ISD will be exempt from the requirement to hold a minimum of four meetings per year. The HISD SHAC committee shall meet at least once per year. 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, advise, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings. The HISD Board of Trustees and the members of the SHAC committee should determine how often the committee should meet. Hedley ISD seeks exemption from 28.004 d-1.

### **Inter-District Transfers**

TEC 25.036 Districts transfers are for an entire school year. (FDA Local)

#### **Our plan:**

Hedley ISD would follow FDA Local policy requiring nonresident students to file a transfer application each school year.

- a) 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 will be evaluated.

- b) Transfer students are required to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the district.
- c) Transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent or designee at any time during the school year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences such as suspension (in school or out of school), placement at the DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the student's transfer status.

**Benefit:**

- a) Allows HISD the flexibility to revoke transfer students, who on rare occasions violate the transfer policy.
- b) Allows HISD to better utilize school resources for the benefit of the district.

**Teacher Certification**

*(TEC §21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)*

*Texas Education Code Section §21.003 (a) states that 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 of permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. 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.*

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CATE) and Science, Math, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM), Foreign Language, History, and English Language Arts courses. The District would also like to honor candidates with Bachelor's degrees and certifications from bordering states as fully certified teachers eligible for a Texas Probationary teaching contract in our District and remain eligible for the period of time outlined in District policy DCA (LEGAL) for Probationary Certificate. This provision would mirror the DCA (LEGAL) policy term of one year with the District's option to extend two additional years.

**Our plan:**

To allow flexibility for hiring certified personnel, Hedley ISD will:

- Make all decisions on teacher certification and assignments locally.
- Notifications of district teaching permits (local certification) shall not be necessary.
- The campus principal may submit in writing to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject outside of their certified field in the event there is a need for which he/she is not fully certified in Texas according to SBEC guidelines.
  - Notification must include the reason for the request and document which qualifying credentials the teacher holds, justifying the out of certification assignment.
- The campus principal may consider the following criteria as minimum qualifications for eligibility to contractually hire certified personnel under a district teaching permit:
  - Professional work experience in related field exceeding 5 years
  - Formal training, professional work certification, or registration in related field
  - Combination of work experience, training, and education
  - Demonstration of successful working experience with students

- Equal or similar out of state certification
- Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- Any employee hired under this local district teaching permit must comply with the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in the Hedley ISD School Board policy for Personnel located in “Section D.”
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies DNA and DNB (LOCAL).

## **Calendar**

***(TEC §25.0811) (TEC §25.0812) (EB LEGAL)***

*Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Texas Education Code §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15th.*

*House Bill 2610 signed into law during the Regular Session of the 84th Legislature in 2015 permits school districts to operate a full school year as defined by 75,600 minutes. Section §25.081 (e) of the bill defines a full instructional day as 420 total minutes.*

Districts are no longer afforded the flexibility through a waiver to alter the start and end dates of the school calendar. School districts are not afforded the flexibility intended in HB 2610 to bank minutes of instruction to be used when an emergency, bad weather, and half day events are needed within the district’s regular approved calendar. It is the intent of Hedley ISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community. This flexibility will allow the district to evaluate these needs annually and make the best decision for the well-being of our students and community.

## **Our plan:**

To allow for the flexibility in the calendar start and end dates and to use the minutes earned within the district with flexibility, Hedley ISD will:

- Provide flexibility in school start and end dates
  - This will allow Hedley ISD students to improve academic success by balancing the instructional time evenly between semesters
  - This will allow Hedley ISD teachers the proper instructional time to pace the first and second semesters.
  - This will promote Hedley ISD additional time within the first semester for transitioning students in grades K, 6, and 9.
- Minimum Minutes of Instruction (TEC Code 25.081, HB 2610)
  - The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. HISD does not intend 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 and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published/distributed to district stakeholders in advance of the school year. The district would not schedule early release days under this exemption that were shorter than 240 minutes (4 hours).

## **Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)**

*(TEC §21.401 (b) states that an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service)*

With the passage of §25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision, given the district does not reduce the annual pay of the employee's contract.

## **Our Plan**

### **Teacher Contract Days**

*(DCB Legal) (DCB Local)*

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10-month contract equivalent to 187 days. The plan would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries allowing flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel and to attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of the students, Hedley ISD will:

- maintain the current salary schedule for all certified employees
- Annually, the Board will consider the certified salary schedules as part of the regular budgeting process.
- Annually, the administrative staff will evaluate the number of contract days needed for certified staff in that school year and shall set the number of calendar work days prior to September 1st of the contract year.
- Hedley ISD will not reduce the annual salary of certified staff, except in accordance with TEC§21.4021 (Furloughs) which the district is not seeking exemption.

## **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

### **Our plan:**

Hedley 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 or oversight from a teacher, 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 certification as needed.

## **Group Health Benefits for School Employees (TEC§22.004)**

### **Texas Education Code §22.004(i) Inhibits the Goals of the Local Innovation Plan**

*TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.*

**Exemption from Texas Education Code §22.004(i)**

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).

**Implementation**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities for academic success. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campus leaders and grade level teacher leaders. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.

## **Signature Page**

District of Innovation Plan Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Lon Adams  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Angela Branigan  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Mandi Gay  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Kim Harper  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Jennie Owens  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Eric Alston  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Garrett Bains

By signing this document, I agree to the terms of this Plan and support its implementation in Hedley ISD. As a member of the District Innovation Plan Committee, I agree to monitor and provide feedback to the Board, no less than annually. Feedback will comprise edits, deletions, additions, and approval based on stakeholder's input and recommendations.