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06/19/17 Board Approved

Lindsay I.S.D.
District of Innovation Plan
2017-2022

Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which would allow them to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Lindsay ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and will request the following exemptions from the Texas Education Code.

Term

Lindsay ISD's Innovation Plan will begin with the 2017 – 2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021 – 2022 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Lindsay ISD Board in accordance with HB 1842. If at any time within this 5 year plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Board will appoint a committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

Innovations

The goals, statutes related to each goal and the innovation strategies are described on the following pages.

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Goal #1

Certification – General

(TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan.

TEC 21.003(a) states 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.

Innovation Strategies

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for the assignment should also be noted.
2. The current certification requirement severely limits the districts options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CATE and STEM related courses along with other required courses needed throughout the district. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a). This exemption will allow the district to:
 - a. Consider part time professionals to teach courses.
 - b. Opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession.
 - c. Increase the number of CATE, Fine Arts, and STEM type courses available.
 - d. Trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses.
3. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following this assignment.
4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

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Goal #2

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class size

(TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL)

Statues that relate to this goal.

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

TEC 25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

Innovation Strategies

1. At the beginning of each school year, Lindsay ISD will meet the suggested student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. The determination of whether to add another teacher to bring the class under the 22:1 mandate will be made by the campus administration and this recommendation will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Goal #3

Length of School Day

(TEC§25.082a)(SAAH3.8.1)

Statues that relate to this goal.

TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions.

SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement.

The current rules allows no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.

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Innovation Strategies

1. The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
2. This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
3. The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff. This flexibility will be used to create a unique bell schedule instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate.
4. The district will provide the teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.

Goal #4

School start date

(TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

Statutes that relate to this goal.

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

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 represents community interests in this matter.

Innovation Strategies

1. Lindsay ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August. This change will create better flexibility in the creation of the district calendar as well as allowing more opportunities in scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.

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2. The earlier start date will allow the district to move instructional days that occur after the state mandated testing dates to the front of the school year.
3. The earlier start date will provide more balance to the first 3 six weeks grading periods during the first semester.

Goal #5

Contract Service Days

Exemption from TEC 21.401

Related Board Policy: DC Legal

Currently

Texas Education Code requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposal

With the passage of TEC 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. Lindsay ISD proposes to reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with on effect on teacher salaries. This proposal will provide a meaningful recruiting tool for new hires and it will also show current support for existing staff.