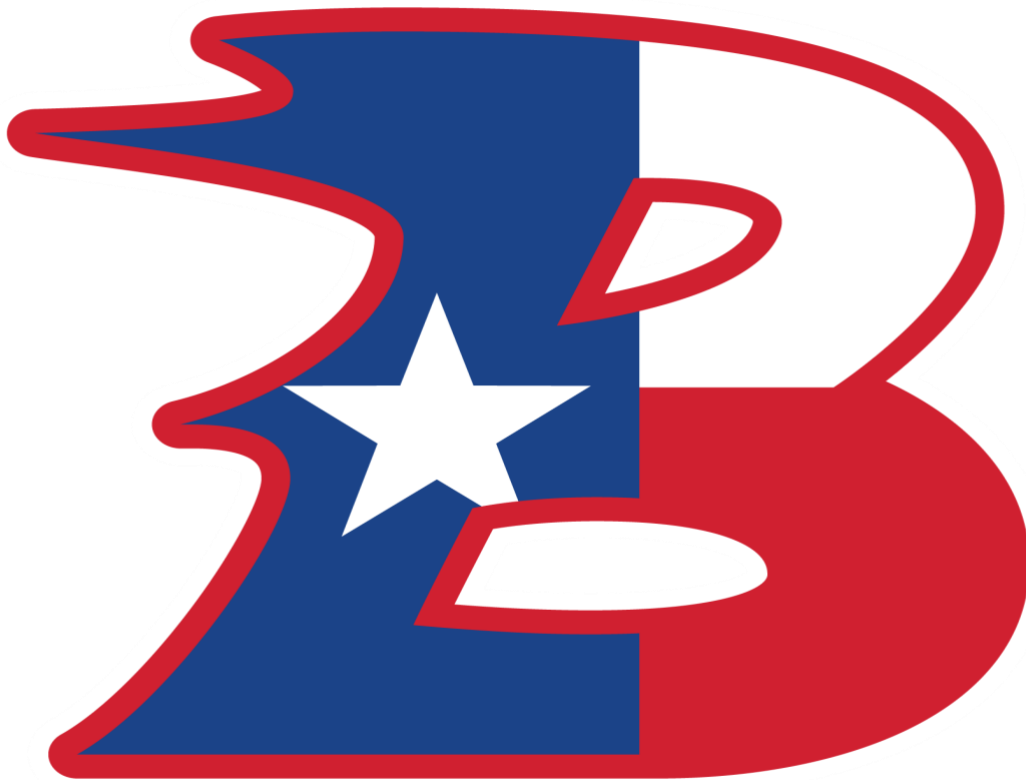


**BULLARD
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**



2022-2027

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

District of Innovation

[AF (LEGAL)]

House Bill 1842, Section 4, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts be designated as Districts of Innovation, thereby allowing them the flexibility to be exempt from or modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of the students and personalize learning.

Districts of Innovation provide opportunities for:

- Greater local control
- Increased flexibility governing education programming
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently

Districts are not exempt from statutes related to curriculum, graduation requirements, nor academic and financial accountability.

This innovation plan was initially developed by a diverse group of thirty-seven members, including teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, and it was shaped by additional input from principals, teachers, district staff, parents, and community members in an effort to improve the school experience. The advisory committee was focused on exploring innovations to give additional time for teachers for planning, preparation, and professional development. On January 9, 2017, the Bullard ISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation (DOI). In addition, the Board of Trustees requested a DOI committee be formed to develop an innovation plan. On February 13, 2017, the Board of Trustees held a public hearing in which they instructed the superintendent to move forward to create an DOI Committee (DOI) to develop the plan. On March 8, 2017, the District of Innovation process was shared with all campus principals and DOI committee members. Participants brainstormed possible exemptions and innovations to better meet the needs of our students and diverse community. On March 22, 2017, the DOI Plan was initiated. From March 23 - April 4, 2017, the DOI plan was developed with input from the DOI Committee. This five-year District of Innovation Plan will be in effect from May 12, 2017- May 12, 2022. May 24, 2017-Clarification needed on TEC reference numbers from TEA. June 9, 2017 - Clarification of TEC reference numbers resolved, Board of Trustees approval and submitted to TEA on June 10, 2017.

The following is the timeline of events for the renewing of the District of Innovation Plan:

March 30, 2022 - The Commissioner of Education was notified of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.

March 31, 2022 - The District of Innovation Committee held a meeting to review the BISD District of Innovation Plan. The decision was made to renew the proposed plan which will be in effect from 2022-2027 unless rescinded, amended or renewed by the BISD Board of Trustees during that time. The plan was posted to the district website after the meeting for public viewing and comments for 30 days.

May 4, 2022 – The district-level committee established under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.251, held a public meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan and the plan was approved.

May 9, 2022 – The Bullard ISD Board of Trustees approved the District of Innovation plan with a unanimous vote.

District of Innovation Committee

Member

Amanda Goode
Amy Bickerstaff
Angie McClure
Angie Peters
Beth Gardner
Brandy Swinney
Cheryl Conner
Cheryl Hendrix
Dave Deffenbaugh
Dr. Jack Lee
Helene Cortinas
Jenny Kasson
Jodie Albritton
John Dixon
Kathy Sleeper
Kenley Dover
Kim Murphy
Laurissa Ridgley
Lee Sleeper
Sharla Rounsavall
Stephen Monahan
Terra Lee
Will Flores

Member Roll

Principal - Bullard Early Childhood
Elementary Curriculum Director
Teacher
Counselor
Teacher
Teacher
Counselor
Assistant Superintendent
Business and Community Member
Superintendent
Assistant Principal - Bullard High School
Principal - Bullard Elementary School
Principal - Bullard Intermediate School
PRIDE Coordinator
Teacher
Principals - Bullard Primary School
Director of HR and Student Services
Teacher
Director of Technology and Operations
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Parent

Areas of Innovation

1. First and Last Day of Instruction/Early Release

(Exemption from EB (LEGAL); DMA(Local), TEC §25.0811, TEC §25.0812)

Current: TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August.

TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

TEC §25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.

Proposal: These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable the district to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in BISD. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date no later than the first Friday in June. By ending earlier, BISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

The district seeks relief from TEC §25.0811 in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development. The district seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and district needs.

2. Teacher Certification

(Exemption From: DBA (LEGAL); TEC §21.003(a) TEC §21.057

Current: 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 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 consider 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 teacher 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 or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposal: Bullard ISD will continue to seek traditionally certified candidates for all teaching positions. However, when unable to hire state certified teachers, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position needing to be filled. This would require the submission of credentials and superintendent approval. However, for Dual Credit and/or CTE courses for which a traditionally certified candidate is not identified, the District will recruit instructors with an appropriate Master's degree (dual credit) or industry certifications/experience in the field of need (CTE). Bullard ISD can extend the employee a one-year local certificate approved by the superintendent. The District will develop minimum required qualifications for persons hired for such positions and also will identify required professional development in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum and more. After thoroughly vetting candidates for hire, Bullard ISD will consider the instructors hired for these positions to be appropriately qualified and will not provide additional special notification to parents of students in their classes that the instructor does not hold a traditional teaching certificate. This innovation will allow Bullard ISD to consider broader applicant pools and to broaden the District's course offerings or fill hard-to-staff positions while maintaining a high quality of instruction.

3. Teacher Appraisals

(Exemption from: DN (LOCAL), DNA (LEGAL), DNA (LOCAL), TEC §21.352, TEC 21.353)

Current: TEC and TAC require that state standardized test scores (student growth measure) be used as one of the evaluation measures for teachers and administrators. (TEC 21.3541, 21.352, Additionally, the Bullard ISD Local Policy DNB, district principals and other campus administrators shall be appraised annually.

Proposal: Bullard ISD believes it is essential to maintain flexibility in using a variety of measurements, including goal setting, observations, student growth progress toward learning objectives, and other formative assessments in determining the performance of its educators. To best improve teaching and learning, we intend to focus our efforts on areas in most of need of growth such as new teachers or those in need of improvement. By claiming exemption from TEC §21.352, the district can determine locally the most appropriate appraisal criteria to evaluate its educators. Bullard ISD proposes the following:

Evaluations every other year for teachers who are rated Proficient or higher.

Criteria for the off year will include:

- Goal setting
 - Minimum of two documented Walkthroughs
 - Portfolio/Artifacts in relation to set goals to be turned in at the end of the year

4. Minimum Attendance Required

(Exemption from: FEC (LEGAL), FEC (LOCAL), TEC §25.092)

Current: A student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class.

The board of trustees of each school district shall appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions for class credit or a final grade by students who are in attendance fewer than the number of days and have not earned class credit or a final grade. Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the membership of the committee.

Proposal: The Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade requirement is also referred to as the 90% rule. This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of the learning. The district needs the flexibility to award class credit to students based on content mastery rather than seat time. The DOI plan would maintain a minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and a more flexible pace. BISD does not wish to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, field-based experiences, distance learning activities, or other extenuating circumstances. Freedom from the minimum attendance required rule will allow the district to implement blended learning, problem-based learning, and community partnerships and internships, that will increase student engagement in innovative learning opportunities.

5. Inter-District Transfer

Exemption from TEC 25.036, FDA(LOCAL)

Current: TEC 25.036 states that students attending a district through an inter-district transfer may apply for transfer annually. This is interpreted that the inter-district transfer must be for a term of one school year. On rare occasions, 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, Bullard ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Proposal:

- Bullard ISD will continue to accept transfers as space and local policy allows.
- An inter-district transfer student 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, or demonstrates a pattern of disciplinary action behaviors that are in violation of the student code of conduct.
- An inter-district transfer student may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student's attendance requires the implementation of truancy prevention measures.
- In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

6. Teacher Contract Days

Exemption from TEC 21.40(b), DC(LEGAL)

Current: TEC 21.401(b) states that an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. The ability to adjust the minimum number of days of service will better allow Bullard ISD to align contracts to the 75,600 instructional minutes requirement. Further, annual salaries will not be decreased as daily rates will be adjusted to reflect annualized salary divided by total days of service creating an increase in daily rate.

Proposal: Bullard ISD will present a recommendation to the Bullard ISD School Board each year as part of the District Compensation Plan for the minimum days of service with a 10-month contract.

7. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from TEC21.102(b), DCA (LEGAL)

Current: TEC 21.102(b) states that for experienced teachers 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. A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Proposal:

- For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years.
- All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

8. Out-of-School Suspension for Students Below Grade 3

Exemption from TEC37.005

Current: Under Texas Education Code 37.005, a student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension, unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in:

- Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05;
- Conduct that contains the elements of a violent offense related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.011, 22.02, 22.021; or;
- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of an amount of:
 - Marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 USC Section 801 et seq.;
 - A dangerous drug, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483; or
 - An alcoholic beverage, as defined by Alcoholic Beverage Code 1.04.

Proposal:

To best serve the students of Bullard ISD and provide a high-quality learning environment for all students, the District proposes that school administrators be able to exercise professional judgment and place students of any grade level in out- of-school suspension when they deem it necessary for safety and in order to maintain an orderly learning

environment for all students. Specifically, the District seeks the flexibility to authorize school administrators to suspend students out-of-school below grade 3 when necessary. The District currently monitors the suspensions of all students, regardless of grade level, to ensure that District policy and the Student Code of Conduct are applied appropriately across the district. Should an exemption from TEC §37.005 be granted, the District would continue to monitor the suspensions of all students, which would now include students in grades below 3, to ensure that suspensions are appropriate.

The benefits of the proposed innovation are to allow for school-based decision making, assist in maintaining an orderly learning environment for all students, and allow school administrators to more effectively ensure the safety and security of all students.

Campus principals would have the option to place a student below grade 3 in out-of-school suspension based on violations of the Student Code of Conduct and documented interventions and office referrals.

9. Unauthorized Persons: Refusal of Entry, Ejection, Identification

Exemption from TEC37.105

Current: a district must maintain a record of each verbal warning issued under Section 37.105 (a)(2)(A), including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of issuance. At the time a person is refused entry to or ejected from a school district's property under Section 37.105, the district must provide the person a written information explaining how to appeal. Each school board must adopt a policy that uses the district's existing grievance process to permit a person ejected or denied entry to address the Board of Trustees in person within 90 days of the commencement of the appeal, unless the appeal is granted sooner.

Proposal:

Texas Education Code section 37.105 includes a process for ejecting or denying entry to a visitor who presents a substantial risk of harm or behaves in a manner inappropriate for the school setting. To better ensure the safety and security of students and staff in Bullard ISD, we propose that the District not be required to maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from district property/facilities, nor be required to provide written information explaining the appeal process to those who have been refused entry to district property/facilities or removed from district property/facilities. The District currently attempts to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities. Should an exemption from TEC §37.105 be granted, the District shall continue to provide written notice to persons

who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities in situations where the administrator on site feels it is reasonable and safe to do so. Campus and District administrators, as well as school resource officers and District police officers if applicable, may refuse to allow a person to enter or may eject a person from property under the District's control in accordance with law. An appeal notice must be filed with the Superintendent, in writing, and submitted to the Administration Office for review.