



District of Innovation
2021-2022

Introduction:

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

Term:

The term of the plan will begin with the 2021-2022 school year and terminate at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the District website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Innovation Committee:

Dr. Tommy Hunter	Superintendent of Schools
Leann Loyless	Assistant Superintendent
Jennifer Mulkey	Director of Assessment and Accountability
Leon Elsbecker	Director of Technology
Tammy Austin	Instructional Technology Coordinator
Melissa Dorum	Assistant Director – DCSEC
Jennie Flaa	Sanger High School Principal
Anthony Love	Linda Tutt High School Principal
Jim Cain	Sanger Middle School Principal
Larry Shuman	Sixth Grade Principal
Sally Herrell	Clear Creek Intermediate Principal
Larry Beam	Butterfield Elementary Principal
Cari Cockrell	Chisholm Trail Elementary Principal
Karly Sury	Elementary Teacher
Jennifer Reynolds	Secondary Teacher
Mandy George	Parent
Rachel Corbin	Parent
Hailey Phillips	Parent

Timeline:

May 10, 2021 – 6:00 pm Board Meeting.

The School Board approved the 2021-2022 District of Innovation plan.

District Improvement Plan:

This Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the District Improvement Plan.

Mission

The mission of Sanger Independent School District is to create a learning community that engages, challenges, and inspires all students. We will educate our diverse population in an atmosphere that encourages academic, physical and creative achievement and promotes strong character.

Vision

Our Students develop into responsible, productive citizens, and life-long learners.
Our Schools attract and retain the most qualified and dedicated personnel, and have facilities that are safe, clean, pleasant and equipped.
Our Schools hold high learning standards for learning in all subject areas and challenge all students to achieve at the highest possible level.
Our Community provides an environment of trust, respect, and pride. The Community supports our educators and provide resources and support for students to achieve.

Innovation Plan Exemptions:

1. Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th grade

Texas Education Code Section 25.112 (a) states that, except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. Texas Education Code Section 25.113 (a) states that a campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

The District will maintain the 22:1 student to teacher ratio in Kindergarten through 4th grades and will continue to follow the process of thoughtful planning, assignment of teachers to the schools with growing student enrollment, reviewing staffing ratios, and making decisions in the best interests of students while taking into consideration the financial capacity of the District. In the event that class sizes exceeds the 22:1 ratio, in Kindergarten – 4th grade, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the Superintendent will submit a request to the Board of Trustees for approval. Additionally, parents will be informed of all efforts relative to class size. This exemption provides SISD local control over class.

2. First Day of Instruction (School Start Day)

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 (a) states that a school district may not begin instruction before the 4th Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus (es) are educationally disadvantaged.

Flexibility to the start date would allow the district to address issues caused by the current calendar constraints. The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers, which will remain the same.

3. Teacher Certification – CTE

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 or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

SISD will establish local guidelines to have the option to issue local teaching permits for any CTE core and non-core class teacher. The district's local guidelines will maintain the requirements for criminal background checks and classroom management training and preparation, including optional support at the district discretion for a mentor teacher. Refer to Policy DBA.

4. Site-Based Decision-Making

Texas Education Code Section 11.251 states that the board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students.

SISD remains committed to valuing all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community and business) in the design of the educational programming. Therefore, SISD will continue to remain transparent with all campus and district matters; however, each SISD campus will now have the flexibility to determine the membership of their site-based decision-making team as appropriate for their unique campus needs. SISD will continue to develop district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment.

5. Probationary Contracts

Texas Education Code Section 21.102(b) states that "a 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."

Many times this period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand employment decision must be made prior to the availability of end of the year classroom and student data.

By providing an additional year of probationary status, the campus and district administration can:

- Better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness;
- Ensure fit for the district and campus culture; and
- Provide an opportunity for teacher growth.

6. Teacher Contract Days

Texas Education Code Section 21.401 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

School law has converted required student Instructional and attendance days to 75,600 minutes. This change has resulted in the possibility of decreasing days students must attend school, but does not address a similar need to decrease the number of days required for teachers if a district deems it appropriate to do so.

- This would better align the numbers of teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students
- Reduces teacher contract from 187days to a decreased length with no effect on their salaries
 - Increases the daily rate that the district pays the teachers
 - Enhances recruitment
 - Improves morale

7. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Texas Education Code Section 25.092 requires that a student must be in attendance a minimum of 90% of the school days to receive credit.

There may be a variety of ways to allow students to show mastery of a given course despite the unforeseen circumstances that caused their attendance to fall below the 90% barrier. With a strategic goal that includes personalized learning, instruction and learning platforms may be developed to allow students a variety of options including those for non-traditional students.

8. Removal of Unwanted Visitor

Texas Education Code Section 37.105 applies to rejecting unruly guests from campuses and school events. In 2017 the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he can appeal the ejection.

SISD would allow designated staff members the authority to remove parents or visitors whose behavior is deemed inappropriate without warning or written notice.

9. School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)

Texas Education Code Section 28.004 States that a district shall establish a health advisory committee to ensure that local values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

This change would allow for members of the SISD District Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) to address the district's health education needs as they are aware of the needs of the district and the students. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community. The DEIC will convene at least two times per year to address these needs as well as many other necessary.

Implementation and Policy Expectations:

The District of Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which Sanger ISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which SISD seeks relief so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses, departments and committees in order to fully realize the work of the Innovation Committee.

Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed and presented to the Board of Trustees where appropriate. It is the expectation of the innovation Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan.

The Board of Trustee will annually convene the Local Innovation Plan Committee to review the Local Innovation Plan to ensure the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the SISD District Improvement Plan, Mission and Vision.