



**BROWNSBORO INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

District of Innovation Plan

February 15, 2022-February 15, 2027





District of Innovation

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 giving traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. Any district with an academic performance rating of at least a "C" or better is eligible.

The idea behind Districts of Innovation is that a local school district may want to pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other areas. An innovation plan allows a district to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements, thus gaining more local control. Each innovation plan is expected to be unique to each school district, allowing for local values and goals to be incorporated into the plan.

Some areas where Districts of Innovation can gain flexibility are: school start date, minimum minutes of instruction, class size ratio, 90-percent attendance rule, teacher certification and contracts, teacher appraisal system, and student discipline provision. Each district may identify different areas where their plans would take advantage of the flexibility that is available.

Requirements that Districts of Innovation cannot be exempted from are: elected Boards of Trustees, PEIMS reporting, criminal history checks, curriculum and graduation requirements, bilingual education, special education, PreK programs, academic accountability including student assessments, financial accountability, open meetings, and public records rules, and purchasing regulations.

The term of the Local Innovation Plan Renewal will begin on February 15, 2022, and end on February 15, 2027 unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will revisit the plan annually to ensure that the recommendations are still in line with the needs of the district. Any changes recommended would be on the website for 30 days and require approval of the Local Innovation Committee and the School Board.



District Innovation Committee Members

1. Keri Hampton Superintendent
2. Brad Robertson Director of Student and Staff Services
3. Jon Lundmark Executive Director of Finance
4. Rita Gray Director of Federal and Special Programs
5. Sandra Duke Director of Special Education
6. Sandra Choate Director of Career and Technical Education
7. Brent Cooper Brownsboro High School Principal
8. Jacob Roach Brownsboro Junior High Principal
9. Billy Beasley Brownsboro Intermediate Principal
10. Melissa Barrett Chandler Intermediate Principal
11. Robbi McCarter Brownsboro Elementary Principal
12. Ricky Daily Chandler Elementary Principal
13. Stephanie Pulido Horizon Academy/Compass Principal
14. Amy Wright Brownsboro High School Teacher
15. Jennifer Cook Brownsboro Junior High Teacher
16. Baylie Sims Brownsboro Intermediate Teacher
17. Stephanie Bassinder Chandler Intermediate Teacher
18. Anna Cleere Brownsboro Elementary Teacher
19. Abigail Gray Chandler Elementary Teacher



District Timeline

October 13, 2021	Reviewed current plan with district cabinet members and discussed options for renewal
November 4, 2021	Reviewed current plan with Assistant Principals and Teacher Leadership Academy Members and discussed options for renewal
December 6, 2021	District of Innovation Committee will meet to review, discuss, and revise the proposed plan
December 14, 2021	The final version of the proposed plan will be made available on the district's website for 30 days
January 4, 2022	The Superintendent will notify the Commissioner of Education of the intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan
January 18, 2022	The District Level Committee will hold a public meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan and approve the plan
January 10, 2022	The Board of Trustees will review the proposed plan
February 14, 2022	The Board of Trustees will adopt the proposed plan
February 15, 2022	The District will notify the Commission of Education of approval of the plan
February 15, 2022	A copy of the plan will be posted on the District's website
February 15, 2022	A copy of the plan will be provided to the Texas Education Agency for posting on the agency website
May 8, 2023	Amendments made and approved by the Board to teacher certification and first day of school start date



Background Information

BISD's current Local Innovation Plan was first implemented during the 2017-2018 school year. The following exemptions are cited in the current plan to be reviewed.

- School Start Date (Texas Education Code 25.0811)
- Certification Required (Texas Education Code 21.003)
- First Day of Instruction (Texas Education Code Section 25.0811)
- Operation of Schools (Texas Education Code Subchapter C)
- Pre-Kindergarten Exemption
- Minimum Service Required (Texas Education Code 21.401)
- Probationary Contracts (Texas Education Code 21.102)

The following are areas to be considered for the 2022-2027 BISD Local District of Innovation Plan:

1. 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 decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-the-year classroom and student data. By allowing campus and district administrators to provide an additional year of probationary status to new hires to the district, 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.

Proposed

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher 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 the fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

2. 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 187 days to a decreased length with no effect on their salaries
 - Increases the daily rate that the district pays the teachers
 - Enhances recruitment to improve morale

Proposed

BISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align teacher contracts with the number of days students are in attendance.

3. 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, defines learning by seat time rather than learning; treats all student situations the same, regardless of the unique circumstances of each student; creates an academic penalty (withholding of credit) for non-academic behavior (attendance) and assigns non-academic consequences to resolve, typically at the end of the semester, and creates burdensome implementation procedures for campus staff. Enacting an exemption of Texas Education Code 25.092 shifted the control of the 90% attendance rule from the state to the district to better serve our students by enabling:

- A focus on learning over seat time
- Allowing more timely interventions by campus administration and teachers
- Ensuring the whole child approach to intervening in cases of excessive absences

Proposed

BISD would allow local attendance committees flexibility to determine attendance credit based on student circumstances, grades that demonstrate mastery, etc. if a student does not meet the 90% attendance criteria.

4. Teacher Certification Requirements

Texas Education Code 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.

Texas Education Code 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 teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

Texas Education Code 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year. Current challenges include:

- A lack of highly qualified staff for innovative or hard-to-staff courses.
- Archaic, antiquated, and overregulated certification rules determined by traditional grade groupings.
- Regional and school finance barriers such as location, salary ceilings, and other costs of living adjustments.
- Perception and support from state elected officials, regulatory statute, and bureaucratic rules as they influence the overall impact on recruitment of quality staff.
- A lack of teachers with specialized certifications.
- Inability to hire subject-matter experts for specialized courses.
- Limited flexibility in scheduling and staff assignments.

Proposed

Brownsboro ISD will continue its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, 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 in question. Brownsboro ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students.

A. All decisions regarding teacher certification and assignments will be decided locally, to serve the needs of students, the district, and the community.

B. Brownsboro ISD will allow Local District Teaching Certifications based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.

1. An individual with certain qualifications who is not state-certified as a Teacher or is not certified in the specific content area can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions under the district Grow Your Own certification program

2. A person seeking Local District Teaching Certifications should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position.
 3. The principal must submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee, a request for District Teaching Certifications outlining all the individual's credentials/qualifications.
 4. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - a. Professional work experience.
 - b. Formal training and education, including an Associates/Bachelors/Masters/Doctoral Degrees.
 - c. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration.
 - d. Combination of work experience, training, and education.
 - e. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.
 5. The Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee will recommend the request to the Board of Trustees if he/she believes the individual possesses the knowledge, skills, and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students.
 6. An employee working under a District Teaching Certifications will not receive a term contract but will work on a probationary contract.
 7. Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
- The Brownsboro ISD Board of Trustees will be notified no less than one (1) time per semester of the number of teachers who have District Teaching Certifications. Teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency, as the district will be exempt from notification regulations.
 - An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
 - An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.
 - An employee working under a local teaching certification must be enrolled in an Alternative Certification program and be actively seeking SBEC certification.
 - All special education teachers and ESL teachers must be SBEC certified and cannot be locally certified in lieu of SBEC certification **unless it is an extreme circumstance and specific approval is granted**

5. First Day of Instruction

Texas Education Code 25.0811 states that students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

The flexibility of the school calendar allows the district to support students with remediation, as well as support students who are entering college, trade school or the military. An earlier start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

Proposed

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider moving the mandatory start date back one week which would better benefit our students. The school calendar would include the 75,600 minimum number of instructional minutes in order to meet the requirements set forth by the Texas Education Agency as defined in the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than August 1st
- b. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

6. Alternative Education Setting Exemption

Texas Education Code 25.081 requires all campuses to meet the 75,600-minute requirement. Being exempt from the minimum requirement will permit the District to offer alternative programming with fewer minutes that focuses on quality programming that will be designed to fit the needs of at-risk students without having to apply for a waiver.

Horizon Academy offers an alternative education program designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students. This program offers an opportunity for students to accelerate credit attainment, acquire credits at a faster rate, and mitigate credit deficiencies. Horizon Academy provides an alternative route to graduation for students who have not been successful in the traditional school due to special circumstances and challenges.

Proposed

Horizon Academy may offer multiple options to accommodate student needs that allow flexibility to increase successful completion of the program and graduation.

7. Teacher Planning Periods

Texas Education Code 21.404 states that each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Proposed

Exemption from this requirement will provide each campus with the local control needed to determine how to best use staff time, especially as it pertains to collaborative planning and best meeting the needs of students. This exemption would also reduce the number of after-school meetings for teachers.