

## HUFFMAN ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

### **1. Teacher Certification for Career and Technical Education and Special Education Instructors Exemption from Texas Education Code §21.003, TEC §21.053, TEC §21.057**

TEC 5 21.003(a) states 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.

TEC 5 25.053 requires a teacher to present his/her certificate to Huffman ISD before his/her employment contract will be binding and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid teaching certificate at the time.

TEC S 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.

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Languages other than English (LOTE) courses, and other courses where a certified teacher cannot be secured. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local certification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements and criteria set forth in the Texas Education Code.

### **2. Class Size and Notice of Class Size Exemption from TEC §25.112a-g, TEC §25.113a-b**

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten - 4th Grade classes. TEC 5 25.1 13 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. Districts are required by state law to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten - 4th Grade classes.

The intent of this statute was to ensure that classrooms maintained a small teacher/student ratio under the belief that smaller classes led to improved achievement for students who benefitted from more individualized teacher attention. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, said waivers must be applied for annually and must be applied for by each district, each year. By seeking an exemption, the District would not be required to seek waivers annually.

The District intends to remain within the 22:1 ratio in PK-4. In the event a classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio in grades PK-4, the situation may be reviewed by appropriate district and campus personnel and additional assistance will be provided.

### **3. First Day of Instruction** **Exemption from TEC §25.0811**

TEC 5 25.0811 states a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC 5 25.0812 states a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15th. Huffman ISD exempted itself from these laws in its first DOI Plan.

The goal is to allow for a school calendar which fits the local needs of the District community, emphasizing active learning, college & career readiness, and social and emotional needs of students. In addition, the District seeks to improve student attendance rates and student success through the flexibility in the calendar. By starting earlier, not only may there be greater balance, particularly important in semester long courses, but it may allow more instructional days and professional development opportunities prior to standardized assessments.

### **4. Counselor Duties** **Exemption from TEC §33.006**

Texas Education Code 5 33.006(d)-(h), passed during the 87th legislative session, requires a school counselor to spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program, requires the Board to adopt a related policy, and requires the District to provide documentation relating to compliance with the Commissioner of Education.

Exemption from this statute will allow the District, in consultation with district counselors, to utilize school counselors' time in a manner that best meets student and District needs, without concern as to whether counselors are strictly complying with TEC 533.006(d)-(h). Furthermore, exemption will eliminate the administrative burden of responding to requests from the State regarding compliance with the new law, and avoid the possibility of extra paperwork for counselors to prove compliance with this new law. The District will work to ensure that counselors spend the maximum amount of time appropriate performing duties contemplated by Chapter 33 of the Texas Education Code, and helping students and their families.

### **5. Teacher Contract Days** **Exemption from TEC §21.401**

Texas Education Code 21.401 stipulates two provisions related to a teacher contract: (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Exemption from this statute allows Huffman ISD to reduce the number of days of to less than 187 contract days for educators employed under a 10-month contract with no effect on salaries to increase the daily rate, enhance educator recruitment, and improve morale. This plan will also provide greater opportunity for beneficial staff development specific to the educator's field of

study. Any stipend paid for additional duties and responsibilities will be unaffected by a reduction in contract days. Educators under contracts other than 10-months will be unaffected.

**Re- Adoption Process:**

Approval of majority of district advisory committee – January 11, 2023

Presented to Board of Trustees in Public Hearing – January 23, 2023

Approval to employ representatives from DEIC and SHAC to create District of Innovation Plan – January 23, 2023

Update current DOI plan with DEIC and SHAC – February & March

Post plan on district website for 30 days – April 20, 2023

Send plan to Commissioner of Education (No Approval Required) – April 20, 2023

District Committee holds public meeting to approve plan – April 18, 2023

School board approves plan – May & Notification sent to the commissioner of final approval – May 22, 2023

**2024 Amendment Process:**

Propose amendment to current DOI plan with DEIC – January

Post plan on district website for 30 days – January

Send plan to Commissioner of Education (No Approval Required) – February

District Committee holds public meeting to approve plan – February

School board approves amended plan February 29, 2024