RED OAK ISD

District of Innovation Plan

I. Term

The term of the Red Oak ISD District of Innovation Plan will be the five-year span from the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year through the end of the 2025-2026 school year, unless the Board of Trustees should desire to terminate or amend the plan.

II. An Aligned Program

The Plan is in alignment with the Board's Vision of: "Realizing Our Individual Student's Dreams"

The Red Oak ISD family believes education is not one-size-fits-all. We prepare each student to thrive in our rapidly changing world through personalized learning and multiple pathways to success – all without sacrificing the timeless values that have built our country and community.

Strategic Priorities in Academics

- Preparing students for their future through multiple pathways [dual credit, career technical, advanced placement, NJROTC]
- Engaged classrooms through student-focused instruction
- Personalized learning rather than one-size-fits-all
- Partnerships with institutions of higher learning, parents, and community

This Plan Reflects

The work of the District Education Council and the District Leadership Team.

1. An exemption from the specified rules regarding teacher certification in order to obtain increased flexibility when hiring in specialized areas
2. An exemption from the specified rules regarding probationary contract limits for new hires with prior experience
3. Flexible school start date
4. Class size ratio exemption
5. Depository contracts exemption
6. Transfer students
7. Flexibility in group health insurance offering, uniform group coverage program
8. Grievances

III. Requirements of the Texas Education Code Currently Inhibiting Plan Goals

a. Teacher Certification

(TEC §21.003; §21.044; §21.053 and §21.057)

Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.044 and 21.053 and 21.057 limit the ability to hire teachers in highly specialized, hard-to-fill areas, and limits the district's ability to adjust course offerings based upon student demand and State regulations. Through an exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, Red Oak ISD will be granted the flexibility to hire professionals in specialized trades and vocations to teach identified career and technical courses. This also allows Red Oak ISD to utilize certified teachers to teach one subject out of their certified field for one year with the approval of the superintendent. The District will also have the flexibility to hire credentialed community or university college instructors in specific content areas to afford more students the opportunity to take dual-credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses, and allows the district to accommodate student incremental course requests with the current staff until reasonable staffing adjustments can be accomplished.

b. Probationary Contracts

(TEC §21.102)

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and administrators who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a second-year probationary contract for a total probationary period of up to two years for experienced administrators, teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired in Red Oak ISD.

c. Flexible Start Date

(TEC §25.0811)

Red Oak ISD is seeking an exemption from the uniform start date in order to offer flexibility within the development process of our local district calendar and address local priorities and needs when establishing the annual calendar, such as achieving a balance of instructional days between the two semesters.

d. Class Size Ratio

(TEC §25.111, 25.112, 25.113)

The District works to minimize the number of State waivers filed to address class size. Given that Red Oak ISD is anticipating rapid growth, relief from the class size mandate will allow the District to follow local protocols in determining class size, without the additional requirement to file a State waiver in the event of overage.

e. Depositories Contract

(TEC §45.205)

Current statute requires school districts to enter into a two-year contract with a depository bank. This two-year agreement does not provide stability which in term can cause depository banks to limit options of service, interest rates, and fees. In addition to costs and time involved in the request for proposal process, a district incurs additional costs for printing checks should the district be forced to change depositories. Relief from this mandate would allow the District to continue with a depository bank as long as it is beneficial to the District.

f. Transfer Students

(TEC §25.036)

The transfer policy for non-resident students is deemed to be a one-year commitment on the part of the District. Relief from the code governing this policy would eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in the event of exceptional circumstances which would include, but are not limited to: student misbehavior warranting in or out of school suspension, placement in DAEP or expulsion; or attendance which falls below the TEA truancy standard including absences from school, and/or multiple instances of late arrival, early dismissal or late pickup.

g. Uniform Group Coverage Program

(TEC §22.004 (i))

TEC §22.004 (i) states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all Red Oak ISD employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the Red Oak ISD Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

h. Grievances

(TEC §26A.001)

The new law created and requires a standardized grievance policy for all districts across the state. The policy specified by SB 12 applies to all school district grievance policies, permitting grievances to begin at higher levels in some circumstances, permitting grievant to add arguments and claims at each level throughout the process, requiring that written grievance decisions to explain the basis for the decision, identify each document that supports the decision and provide information regarding filing an appeal including the timeline to appeal to the Commissioner if applicable, providing standardized forms for filing grievances on the District website and the ability to file a grievance electronically on the District's internet website, and requiring an annual report to the commissioner of all grievances filed in the District. This statewide policy also creates new timelines for filing parent grievances, including a 60-day timeline for a parent to file the complaint, 10 calendar days for a district to hear the complaint at each level, 20 calendar days for parents to appeal each level, and 20 calendar days for a response at each level. However, SB 12 only requires that these expanded timelines apply to parent or student complaints and not necessarily to employee or community grievances. Maintaining the current grievance policy which has a requirement to submit a complaint within 15 business days of the incident will provide timely information. This timeframe is important for collecting statements and video, if available. The District local process includes 10 business days to file an appeal after a decision is made.