SILSBEE ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN
January 2025-January 2030
(Effective Date of January 14, 2025)
(Amended Date October 14, 2025)

Innovation: *School Start and End Date*

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies: EB Legal

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of the annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Innovation Strategies:

a. Relief from that statute will allow SISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focus professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minute's requirement, rather than days.
b. Flexibility to align the district calendar with local universities, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
c. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.
d. The SISD District Advisory Committee will convene annually to collaborate on the design of and make recommendations to the Superintendent on a district calendar which promotes the effective delivery of classroom instruction and school/district operations.

Innovation: *Teacher Certification*

Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.0031; TEC §21.053; TEC §21.055

Relevant Board Policies: DBA Legal, DBA Local, DK Legal, DK Local

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

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TEC §21.003 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 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 for Educator Certification.

TEC § 21.0031 declares a contract void if an employee does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a certificate.

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

TEC §21.055 states that if a teacher is not certified, the District may issue a teaching permit to employ the individual. This process requires notice to the Commissioner and its usefulness is extremely limited.

Innovation Strategies:

The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certifications. The District will make every effort to attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, exemption from certification requirements for hard to fill positions will afford the district the flexibility to recruit and hire qualified individuals that would normally not be able to fulfill specific teaching roles in trade, vocational, dual credit and other unfilled positions, if certified teachers are not available or equipped to teach those courses. This flexibility does not extend to positions requiring Special Education or ESL certification.

Candidate Qualifications may include a combination of:

- Professional work experience;
- Formal training and education;
- Relevant industry licensure, certification, or registration; and/or
- Any combination of work experience, training and education, or industry credentialed related to the subject matter he/she will be teaching.

a. For secondary and elementary positions, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an individual to teach a

course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what qualifications the individual possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject(s).

b. If the uncertified teacher is performing on T-TESS and has a proficient evaluation at a level that is acceptable to the District, the District may consider retaining the services of this employee with the expectation that the employee show they are working toward obtaining the appropriate certification through workshops, college classes, and/or other venues to prepare them for the examination. In addition, the employee will be at-will until the employee acquires SBEC certification or appropriate licensure.
c. Silsbee ISD will utilize the standard teacher salary schedule when hiring non-certified individuals.
d. Instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers, Curriculum Coordinators or other qualified personnel. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.
e. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.
f. Campus administrators will have the ability to consider out-of-state or out-of-country educator certifications and professional qualifications or credentials of candidates, as well as to review the strengths and qualifications of campus staff to make local recommendations for teaching outside of certain certification areas in hard to fill positions, as allowed by locally established policy. The Superintendent or designee will approve all local certifications and will report to the Board of Trustees at the first Board meeting following the assignment.
g. Parents of students enrolled in a class where the teacher lacks appropriate certification will continue to be notified as per TEC 21.057.

Innovation: ***Probationary Contracts***

Exemption from: TEC §21.102

Relevant Board Policies: DCA Legal

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Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC §21.102 states that a person employed as an experienced principal, teacher, counselor or nurse by the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Innovation Strategies:

A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate effectiveness since contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

a. For experienced principals, teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that has been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for a maximum of two years.

Innovation: ***Transfer Students***

Exemption from: TEC §25.036

Relevant Board Policies: FDA (local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC §25.036 states that a student transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

A district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instruction staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are evaluated and considered. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the rules and regulations of the District. Currently TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment without

termination after acceptance.

Innovation Strategies:

The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications for the following circumstances;

a. Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion.
b. Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standards.

Campus leadership will meet with the Campus Transfer Committee to make a determination on transfer request and student status. The Committee determination will then be submitted to the Superintendent for a final decision.

Innovation: ***Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size Reporting Requirement***

Exemption from: TEC §25.112; TEC §25.113

Related Board Policies: EEB Legal

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for kindergarten through 4th grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA and is a burdensome process for school districts.

TEC §25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.

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Innovation Strategies:

SISD believes in a low student to teacher ratio in all its classrooms and fully intends to follow current class size requirements. In the event that any class grade K-4 exceeds the 22:1 ratio during the school year the following actions will be taken.

a. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
b. The Superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees.
c. The requirement to notify parents and TEA of larger class sizes will be eliminated.

Innovation: ***Campus Behavior Coordinator***

Exemption from: TEC §37.0012

Relevant Board Policy: FO (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

The District is required, by Texas Education Code §37.0012, to appoint a person at each campus to serve as campus behavior coordinator with the primary responsibility for maintaining student discipline. The campus behavior coordinator is also required to promptly notify parents, by telephone and in writing, when a student is suspended, removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer.

Innovation Strategies:

In Silsbee ISD, the campus principal serves as the de facto Campus Behavior Coordinator (CBC). However, the requirement to designate a single employee to maintain student discipline and make all required parental notifications inhibits the District's ability to implement an effective and systematic approach to student discipline. The shared responsibility of discipline among campus principals and assistant principals will minimize the loss of instructional time and ensure the safety of all students as well as provide increased opportunities to build relational

capacity with parents and students. All campus administrators engage in comprehensive professional learning to support the implementation of the Silsbee ISD Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, by spreading the CBC responsibilities across the campus administrative leadership team, the team will more positively impact student learning through uniform instructional supervision.

The District will designate all campus principals and assistant principals to fulfill discipline and behavior duties of Campus Behavior Coordinator.

Innovation: ***Statutory Compliance Training Requirement***

Exemption from: TEC §21.451

Relevant Board Policy: DMA (Legal)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 21.451 provides that the staff development provided by a school district to an educator other than a principal must be: 1) conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district; and 2) designed to improve education in the district.

Innovation/Strategies:

Silsbee ISD maintains a staff perceptive at the identification of social indicators such as sexual harassment, bullying, and suicide. Additionally, the staff has a clear understanding of the requirements of FERPA. Mandated annual training in these areas adds redundancy to preparation for the beginning of a school year when this time could be better utilized.

The district will compile and maintain an updated database for all employees with a 2022-2023 baseline.
Employees will participate in formal Statutory Compliance Training every five years in the following areas when mandated by law:

- Anaphylaxis and Epinephrine Overview
- Automated External Defibrillators
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Bullying Prevention

- Child Abuse and Maltreatment
- Cybersecurity - Internet Safety
- Maintaining Positive Student Relationships/Conflict Resolution
- Sexual Harassment
- Suicide Prevention and Intervention
- Teen Dating Violence and Abuse
- Trauma-Informed Care

All employees new to the district will complete specified compliance training during the first year of employment in the district.

District and campus administration may assign training to an employee or group of employees as needed during the five-year cycle.

Workers in specified groups, such as coaches, those who handle food or bodily fluids, are not exempt from annual trainings mandated for their specific job types, roles, responsibilities, and duties.

Innovation: ***Local School Health Advisory Council***

Exemption from: TEC §28.004

Relevant Board Policy: EHAA (Legal) and (Local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC §28.004 requires the District's Board of Trustees to establish a local school health advisory council ("SHAC") to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's health education instruction. Further, the law outlines a variety of requirements of SHAC regarding health instruction and curriculum, student health concerns, counseling program, safe and healthy school environment and employee wellness. The law also requires the SHAC to meet four times per year, and requires notice, audio or video recordings of meetings, and posting of meetings and minutes on the District's website.

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The law, as currently written, is cumbersome and does not fit the needs of the District.
Innovation Strategies:

The goal of exemption is to allow greater flexibility regarding the makeup and meetings of the Board, and to reduce the administrative burden regarding requirements related to SHAC meetings. The SHAC is made up of employees and members of the public, which makes scheduling a meeting particularly challenging. Exemption from the SHAC meeting requirements under the law will allow for greater flexibility about scheduling meetings and will allow for the meetings to run more efficiently. Further, exemptions will give the District and Board greater flexibility when making decisions regarding school health matters.

The district will continue to form its own SHAC committee to make recommendations to the Board concerning issues identified in TEC §28.004.

Final decision-making on issues addressed in TEC §28.004 rests with the Board.

SISD will continue to emphasize transparency in the student health process and will ensure that parents have the necessary access to curriculum and instructional materials.

The District is not exempt from state curriculum or graduation requirements adopted under Chapter 28.

Innovation: ***Grievance Policy***

Exemption from: TEC 26A.001(a)-(c), (e); TEC 26A.002; TEC 26A.003

Related Board Policies: DGBA LEGAL/LOCAL; FNG LEGAL/LOCAL; GF LEGAL/LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 26A.001(a)-(c), (e), 26A.002, and 26A.003 requires the school district to adopt a grievance policy. This policy, among other things, significantly extends the timelines currently provided for under the district grievance policies.

Innovation Strategies:

Silsbee ISD seeks to resolve issues equitably, timely and at the lowest level possible. The district believes its previous grievance policies are effective and achieve the goals of resolving complaints. Upon Board adoption, SISD will discontinue the new policies written under TEC 26A revert to back to processing complaints using the district's previous grievance policies, that

provide for more efficient and effective time management for resolving grievances.

Innovation: *Instructional Plans and Course Syllabus*

Exemption from: TEC 26.0062

Related Board Policies: FA LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 26.062 requires the school district to adopt a policy that mandates the posting of instructional plans and course syllabus on the district's website each semester. The policy must also require teachers to provide the instructional plan or syllabus to district administration, and the parent of each student enrolled in the class prior to the beginning of the semester.

Innovation Strategies:

Silsbee ISD believes in effective and timely parent communication, especially regarding the instruction provided to students. As the district offers a range of classes at various levels, maintaining and providing each instructional plan or syllabus on the district's website prior to the to start of each semester creates a teacher and administrator burden. This practice will further restrict the district's flexibility in the instruction offered to district students. Further, the district's teachers provide instructional information to parents and issue syllabi to students, depending on campus, within the first few days of the school year, typically covering the topics and expectations for the entire year. Under this law, the district would be required to provide the same information to its parents' multiple times throughout the year, unnecessarily duplicating these communications.

- Upon Board adoption, SISD will discontinue the new policy TEC. 0062 that requires the district to post instructional plans or syllabi on its website or provide such documents to parents prior to the beginning of the semester. However, the district maintains it will ensure that parents are informed of the instruction being provided to their students and will provide additional information, as necessary, if parents request.

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Innovation: *Library Materials*

Exemption from: TEC 33.026; TEC 33.027(b), (d), (f), (g), and (h) Related

Board Policies: EFB LEGAL/LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 33.026 requires the school district to adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials which includes procurement or acceptance of donated library materials. The policy, among other things, requires the Board to approve all such library materials, allows the public to review a list of prospective library materials 30 days prior to final approval, and sets timelines by which the list of prospective library materials must be considered at a Board meeting.

TEC 33.027(b), (d), (f), (g), and (h) requires the school district to respond to challenges to library materials under certain timelines and to conduct reviews of the challenged library materials in specific ways.

Innovation Strategies:

- Silsbee ISD is committed to ensuring that students of all ages have access to library materials that are appropriate and academically relevant. Further, SISD is confident in the campus librarian, in conjunction with campus administration, to review and select such library materials.
- Upon Board adoption, SISD will discontinue the new policies TEC 33.026; TEC 33.027 (b), (f), (g), and (h) requiring Board approval of library materials. Board review can be utilized when necessary and any donated library materials will be received in compliance with Board Policy CDC (Legal) and (Local).
- Upon discontinuing policies TEC 33.026; and TEC 33.027 (b), (f), (g), and (h), SISD will not adopt a policy consistent with TEC 33.027. The district will revert to its previous local processes and procedures to respond timely to any library material challenge.