



# Santo ISD

## Proposed District of Innovation Plan Renewal

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## School Start and End Dates

TEC §25.0811; §25.0812

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

Student instruction cannot start before the fourth Monday of August. Waivers are no longer allowed to alter start date. This change occurred through the lobby of tourism groups which argued the loss of business due to local control of school calendars.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

With input from staff on both campuses and community feedback, Santo ISD would create a balanced instructional calendar based on community needs. A shortened week at the beginning of school would ease the transition for students, families, and staff and the start date will not be before the second Monday of August. This would allow the first semester to end before the holiday break, achieving more balanced six-week grading periods/semester cycles. The earlier start date would also allow more instructional time prior to the administration of spring state assessments. The district would end the instructional year prior to Memorial Day, providing students the opportunity to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized transcripts.

## Teacher Contract Day Requirements

TEC §21.401(b)

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days. As the trend of a 4-day school week spreads across the state and the minutes-vs-days requirement in statute, the 187-day requirement for teachers seems almost discretionary from district to district.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

The plan would allow the local Board of Trustees control over the teacher contract days. Teachers and staff on 10-month contracts will be required to work a minimum of 7 days beyond the scheduled student calendar instructional days. Each year, the teacher contract days will be reduced or added to match the adopted school calendar. Any decrease is not intended to have any effect on the teacher's annual compensation, though may result in an increase in a teacher's daily rate of pay. Staff development will include professional development and workdays for teachers. The change will enhance teacher recruitment, retention, and morale.

This will go into effect immediately upon approval of this plan for contracts in the 2024-2025 school year.

## Teacher Certifications

TEC §21.003(a); TEC§ 21.057

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC §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 his or her certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEC§ 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.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

The District would make every effort to hire certified and skilled professionals to serve our students in grades K-12. However, the combination of a rural district and teacher shortage in Texas makes it difficult to fill

positions with high-quality, certified instructors. Rural districts are now faced with higher needs and less certified teachers to fill vacancies. The district will establish its own local qualification requirements to ensure an instructor is deemed qualified in their field. Further, the district will establish requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

Parental notification of “inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers” under TEC 21.057 would no longer be required. The final determination of employment shall be determined by the Superintendent and Board of Trustees. The exemption will not apply to Special Education, ESL/Bilingual, or Pre-Kindergarten teachers, as those individuals are required to have the appropriate certification.

The secondary campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for an annual *SISD Out-of-Field Certification* that will allow a certified teacher to teach a subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified for up to 2 periods. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach the proposed subject for an *SISD Out-of-Field Certification*. The certification will be reviewed and approved on an annual basis.

An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/industry experience to work full-time or part-time in a designated area. The principal shall submit a request to the Superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials qualify the individual to teach the subject.

## Probationary Contracts

**TEC 21.102(b)**

**DCA(LOCAL)**

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC §21.102(b) states a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

Often, eight months is not sufficient time for a campus principal to evaluate a new teacher, seasoned or new to the profession. Santo ISD would like the option to renew the probationary contract two additional years for any teacher who is new to the district or has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of eight years preceding employment by the District to give campus administration more time to evaluate performance and “fit” into campus culture.

## Year-Long Transfer Student Commitment

**TEC 25.036**

**FDA(LOCAL)**

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District.

**Santo ISD's Innovative Plan**

The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications. The District will reserve the right to revoke/rescind the transfer of a student at any time during the year if the student violates district expectations of:

1. Student Behavior: When the student's behavior warrants an In-School Suspension or DAEP placement, the Superintendent or designee may revoke the transfer application. Each case will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to discipline history and circumstances.
2. Attendance: If a student's attendance falls below 90% or the TEA truancy standard of the four unexcused absences in a four-week period or ten unexcused absences in a 6-month period of time, the transfer application may be revoked. Multiple instances of late arrival, early dismissal, or late pickup may also result in a revocation of a transfer.
3. Academic Achievement: Failure of two or more core classes for two six weeks may result in a revocation of a transfer
4. Falsifying Documentation: If any information on the transfer application or registration paperwork is found to be false, the transfer application may be revoked.
5. At the campus principal's discretion

Communication with parents will be a priority. Campus principals will refer requests to rescind transfer students to the superintendent who will make the final decision to retain or rescind a transfer student.

**School District Depository Contract**

**TEC Subchapter G §45.205**

**BDAE(LEGAL), BDAE(LOCAL)**

**Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations**

TEC Subchapter G 45.205 states (A) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. (B) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year-terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. (C) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

**Santo ISD's Innovative Plan**

Santo ISD is a small, rural school district with one bank in our attendance zone and within a 15-mile radius. If the district determines the current contract pricing remains competitive, we desire an exemption from the statute requiring Santo ISD to bid/prepare & review RFP/Board action to select a school depository and maintain the relationship with the current depository. Santo ISD would renew the extensions in two-year-terms unless the Board decides to choose another banking entity. In addition, this fosters goodwill in our rural community and is convenient for our employees to have a local banking option in our small town.

**Student Growth & Progress Measure in Appraisals**

**TEC §21.352, TEC §21.354, TEC §21.3541**

**DNA(LOCAL)**

**Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations**

The listed statutes/codes require student academic growth or progress as a mandatory component of the teacher and administrator appraisal.

**Santo ISD's Innovative Plan**

Santo ISD adopted and continues to evolve a locally-developed teacher appraisal system that fits the needs of our district that includes some T-TESS components but not the student growth or progress measure. The locally developed evaluation tool reflects the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Santo ISD.

## **DAEP**

### **TEC §37.008(7)**

#### **FOCA(LLEGAL), FOCA(LOCAL)**

#### **Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations**

TEC §37.008(7) states that a DAEP employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.

#### **Santo ISD's Innovative Plan**

Santo ISD is a small, rural district and assigns few students to DAEP each year. The district often does not have certified teachers available when DAEP is needed. The district would like to use non-certified staff, with necessary support from the campus behavior coordinator, to properly supervise the program. All academic coursework/resources will be provided by the teacher of record for each course, with each teacher checking in with students daily. SPED/CTE students in DAEP will be provided direct instruction as required in statute.

## **Statutory Compliance Training Requirement**

### **TEC 21.451, 21.4515(a)(b)**

#### **DMA(LLEGAL), DMA(LOCAL)**

#### **Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations**

Texas Education Code states a) 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. TEC 21.4515(a)(b)Current statute mandates the Board of Trustees annually review the TEA Continuing Education and Training Clearinghouse and create a professional development plan for employees, including statutory compliance.

#### **Santo ISD's Innovative Plan**

Santo ISD maintains a well-trained staff who are very effective at identifying social indicators such as substance abuse, bullying, and the maltreatment of children. In addition, the faculty and staff embed conflict resolution and healthy social/emotional relationships among students into their daily routine. Mandated annual required trainings defined in TEC 21.451 only serves to add redundancy to start-of-school work that can be better utilized in preparing for the students to return. Professional development should be locally-driven and focused on areas of need, local data, and student engagement.

The district will continue to maintain a database for all employees. Employees will participate in formal Statutory Compliance Training every five years as mandated by law. All full-time employees new to the district will complete the required compliance training that applies to their position during the first year of employment in the district. Workers in specified groups (i.e. those who handle food or bodily fluids) are not exempt from annual trainings mandated for their position.

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

The District also seeks exemption for TEC 21.415 (a) and TEC 21.415 (B) in which the Board must annually review the SBEC clearinghouse and adopt a professional development plan. With ever-changing statutes and newly emerging social issues, the District does not want to burden the Board with an annual review and plan; campus

and district needs are ever-changing—administration should be able to adapt to those needs without Board approval. The District desires the flexibility to allow campus principal and teacher-driven staff development during the professional development day(s) embedded in the instructional calendar each year. The SBEC Clearinghouse website is still in its early stages and many ESC’s have not caught up with the required trainings.

## Counselor Work Time

**TEC §33.006 (d-h)**

**DP(LEGAL), DP(LOCAL)**

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC § 33.006 states that a school counselor must “spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor’s total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005.” Further, “time spent in administering assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments, except time spent in interpreting data from assessment instruments, is not considered time spent on counseling.”

### Santo ISD’s Innovative Plan

Due to the unique needs of a rural school district, Santo ISD’s counselors play an integral role in student’s lives. Counselors’ duties consist of many additional responsibilities, and needs throughout the day and Santo ISD seeks an exemption from TEC 33.006 (d-h). While SISD seeks exemption from the statute, the district ensures our counselors will spend the maximum amount of time performing the duties necessary to provide the greatest help for our students and families.

## Long Range Energy Plan

**TEC §44.902**

**CL(LEGAL)**

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

TEC 44.902 states the Board of Trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district’s annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district’s energy plan.

### Santo ISD’s Innovative Plan

This exemption will allow Santo ISD to reduce energy consumption as determined feasible by the Superintendent and SISD Board through retrofits and new construction.

## Fuel Bids

**TEC §44.031**

**CH(LEGAL), CH(LOCAL)**

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

Currently, the District is required to procure all school district contracts for the purchase of goods and services, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period by the method that provides the best value for the district from a listing of options found in TEC 44.031.

### Santo ISD’s Innovative Plan

Santo ISD seeks an exemption from TEC 44.031 for vehicle fuel for which the district has solicited a contract utilizing a method found in TEC 44.031 (a) (1-3) on at least six occasions during the most recent 10 years and has only received one proposal, from the same company, both times while honoring federal regulations that

cannot be exempted.

## Parent-Requested Grade Retention

TEC §28.02124

EIE(LEGAL)

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

Amendments to TEC 28.02124 provide that a parent or guardian may elect for a student in grades one through eight, to repeat the grade in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year. In addition, for courses taken for high school credit, a parent or guardian may elect for a student to repeat any course in which the student was enrolled in during the previous school year. A parent or guardian may not elect for a student to repeat a course under this subsection if the school district determines that the student has met all of the requirements for graduation.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

While the district respects the rights of parents to request that their child repeat a grade or course, the district believes that this should be a joint decision with district educators made in the best interest of students. Additionally, this provision of the Texas Education Code does not state when or how often these requests can be made, which could create disruption on District campuses and to the child's education. As such, the district seeks exemption from TEC 28.02124. The district will work with parents and consider requests that a child repeat a year, provided the **request is made in writing to the campus principal at least 20 calendar days before the start of school**, to avoid disruption for the student and staff involved—no late requests will be accepted. At least one conference must be held by campus administration and the parent(s) prior to a request being granted. Requests will be granted if they are in the best interest of the student and made in good faith due to concerns regarding the student's well-being.

## Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

TEC §28.004 (d) (d-1) (d-2)

FFA(LEGAL), FFA(LOCAL)

### Current TEA Guidelines and Limitations

Sec. 28.004 (d) requires the Board of Trustees to appoint at least 5 members to the local SHAC, (d-1) requires the SHAC to meet four times annually, make an audio or video recording of the meeting and post the audio/video on the district's website no later than 10 days after the meeting.

### Santo ISD's Innovative Plan

Santo's SHAC committee is comprised of teacher/community/parent volunteers, campus administrators, and the district nurse. It is a struggle to plan 4 meetings a year around student events and activities, even when holding some in the afternoons and some in the evenings—attendance is always poor. The current process requires the same staff members and parents to sit on multiple committees, thus limiting their ability to attend or they themselves have children in sports or activities.

With this DOI flexibility, the SISD SHAC will meet once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester unless the duties of the SHAC warrant additional full-group or subcommittee meetings. This exemption directly supports the District's commitment to health education and instruction without overburdening council members.

Additionally, the requirement for a small district to have technology staff available to record and post the meetings online again requires the same staff member to be present for multiple meetings. Agendas and minutes from the meeting will be posted, but an exemption is sought from audio/video recordings of the meetings and the posting thereof.