

# Barbers Hill Independent School District

## Local Innovation Plan

**Renewal Adoption Date – June 7, 2026**

### Local Innovation Committee Members

Name	Role
Taja Wilson	Community/Business Member
April Ponder	ECC Teacher
Carl Gray	Elementary Teacher
Alma Polydore	Intermediate School Teacher
Malissa Phillips	Middle School Teacher
Patrick Pages	High School Teacher
Michelle James	Middle School Principal
Jackie Brown	Elementary School Principal
Chloe Yowell	Asst. Supt. of Curriculum & Instruction
Mandy Malone	Executive Director of Student Services
Matt Barnett	Director of School Principals
Barbara Ponder	Asst. Supt. of Human Resources
Natasha Holden	Director of Curriculum & Program Integration
Dr. Ashlee Boothe	Coordinator of State & Federal Programs

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tex. Educ. Code, Chapt. 12A, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On November 17, 2021, the Barbers Hill Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

On March 22, 2021, the Board appointed a local District of Innovation Committee comprised of various stakeholders. The Committee met on November 17, 2021, to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. The Committee sought and considered input on the Plan through the District Education Improvement Council. The Committee met on November 12, 2025, to discuss and draft a revision to the Local Innovation Plan.

## **II. TERM**

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning June 7, 2026, and ending at the end of June 7, 2031, unless amended or terminated earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

## **III. A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board Goals, District Goals, District Vision & Mission, and Current Challenges.

### **A. Board Goals**

#### **ACADEMICS**

- To maintain our tradition of excellence by strategically utilizing all necessary resources to ensure student and staff safety
- 100% seniors graduate via the State Accountability Program and will be college, career, and military ready
- 100% of all secondary students will participate in a competitive team activity to ensure that all students are plugged in, thus fostering stronger mental health and a safer school environment
- Maintain and improve a comprehensive cybersecurity initiative aimed at preventing any monetary loss and confidentiality breaches

- Maintain high standards in all student activities, specifically including dress code and the elimination of student vaping
- 100% of eighth-grade students will pass the STAAR Reading and STAAR Math tests to advance to the ninth grade

### **FINANCE**

- Diversify and enhance revenue by creating new revenue streams and/or finding more efficient ways to manage such resources so that new revenue streams can be created
- Maintain and improve a comprehensive cybersecurity initiative aimed at preventing any monetary loss and confidentiality breaches
- Evaluate the surrounding 6A school districts' athletic facilities for possible capital outlay recommendations
- Formalize procedures for the self-insurance initiative

### **COMMUNITY**

- Strengthen and foster relationships with the City of Mont Belvieu, Cove, Beach City, Old River, Lee College, Chambers County and the legislature, and emphasize safety initiatives involving all parties

## **B. Vision**

The vision of the Barbers Hill ISD is academic excellence characterized by goal-driven, college/career-ready graduates who are responsible, accountable, contributing members of society.

## **C. Mission**

The mission of the Barbers Hill ISD is to:

- Provide the highest level quality of instruction and learning opportunities that produce motivated and successful learners;
- Promote excellence, teamwork, and a commitment to continuous improvement; and
- Reinforce the tradition of excellence to enhance unity, strengthen relationships, and foster cooperation among stakeholders.

## **D. Current Challenges**

The District of Innovation Committee met to determine challenges that could impede educational excellence in Barbers Hill ISD. Barbers Hill ISD is focused on quality instruction and maximizing the learning opportunities for all

students. To that end, the District of Innovation Committee identified three growth opportunities.

- Improve the quality of instruction
  - Teacher support
    - Professional development
    - Instructional specialists and coaches
    - Class size
    - Peer observations
  - Logistical/Framework Support
    - Calendar
    - Master schedule
    - Minutes per day
    - Start/end time
    - **Course syllabi**
    - **Library materials**
- Expand Stakeholder understanding of the level of rigor needed to succeed in college and beyond (not impacted by state or local policy)
  - Inform parents of learning expectations
  - Promote reading at all levels and in all disciplines
  - Develop “grit” and persistence. Help students define their future story
- Manage Growth (not impacted by state or local policy)
  - Address the academic needs of new students enrolling from other schools
  - Refine/define affidavit policy
  - **Monitor facility capacity regarding high student growth**
- **Maximize the use of personnel**
  - **Create effective district-wide systems and procedures for resolving complaints**

## **E. Innovations**

To achieve the District's Vision and Mission, to align the District's practices and operations with the District's strategic priorities and current challenges, the District needs the flexibility to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels, to:

- Modify the school year
- Expand the length of probationary contracts for all new professional staff to three years
- Alternative action for transfer students
- Class size exemption
- Bank depository contracts

- Instructional facilities
- Grievance procedures
- Course syllabus
- Library materials

#### IV. REQUIREMENTS OF THE EDUCATION CODE THAT INHIBIT THE GOALS OF THE PLAN FROM WHICH THE DISTRICT WILL BE EXEMPT UPON ADOPTION OF THE PLAN

##### A. First Day of Instruction

###### Current Requirement

*TEC §25.0811 First Day of Instruction*

*(a) A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.*

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###### Justification

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC §25.0811 to allow flexibility in beginning instruction earlier in the calendar year. This adjustment will enhance instructional quality by balancing the amount of instructional time between semesters and improving the delivery and timing of final examinations. As a result, teachers will be able to more effectively pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break. Additionally, this change will provide more time for teaching semester courses at the secondary level. By starting and ending the school year earlier, students will also have the opportunity to enroll in college courses that begin in early June, thereby promoting college and career readiness. Finally, adjusting the start date will afford additional days before:

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- State Mandated Testing
  - Advanced Placement Testing
  - Dual Credit Finals

##### B. Probationary Contracts

###### Current Requirement (Amended February 15, 2024)

*Sec. 21.102. PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS*

*(b) 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.*

###### Justification

Extending new professional staff probationary contracts provides campus administration ample time to evaluate staff proficiency and facilitates the employment of highly qualified, highly effective teachers, administrators, counselors, librarians, nurses, diagnosticians, LSSPs, and speech pathologists before offering a term contract.

### **C. Alternative Action for Transfer Students** (Amended January 23, 2023)

#### **Current Requirement**

*TEC §25.036 TRANSFER OF STUDENT.*

*(a) Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.*

*i. TRANSFER OF STUDENT. (b) A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.*

#### **Justification**

Barbers Hill ISD seeks an exemption from the one-year transfer commitment requirement for inter-district transfer students. At times, student behavior, attendance, or academic performance may decline after acceptance, resulting in disciplinary actions, truancy concerns, or failure to meet transfer standards. This exemption would allow the Superintendent or designee to revoke transfer status at any point during the school year when it is determined to be in the district's best interest. Factors for revocation may include student behavior or discipline history, criminal activity, safety concerns, poor academic performance, attendance or tardy issues, falsification of information, financial impact, or lack of space and staffing.

### **D. Bank Depository Contract** (Amended February 15, 2024)

#### **Current Requirement**

*TEC §45.205 Bank Depository Contract*

*(b) The depository bank, when selected, shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified.*

*TEC §45.206 Bid or Request for Proposal Notices*

*(a) Not later than the 60th day before the date a school district's current depository contract expires, the district shall choose whether to select a depository through competitive bidding or through requests for proposals.*

*Currently, the District must renew its depository contract every two years. The two-year contract term begins and ends in odd-numbered years. In accordance with the Texas Education Code, the District must use a uniform bid or proposal blank in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.*

## **Justification**

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 45.205 and 45.206 to allow the District's banking contract to be extended beyond the allowable contract term, if the District determines contract-pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the District's banking services out for bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the District's business.

## **D. Instructional Facilities**

### **Current Requirement**

#### ***TEC §7.0611 INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITIES***

(b) The agency by rule shall require each school district to annually report the following information in the form and manner prescribed by the agency:

- (1) the square footage of each school district facility and the acreage of land on which each facility sits;
- (2) the total student capacity for each instructional facility on a district campus;
- (3) for each campus in the school district:
  - (A) the enrollment capacity of the campus and of each grade level offered at the campus; and
  - (B) the number of students currently enrolled at the campus and in each grade level offered at the campus;
- (4) whether a school district facility is used by one or more campuses and the campus identifier of each campus that uses the facility;
- (5) what each school district facility is used for, including:
  - (a) An instructional facility;
  - (b) a career and technology center;
  - (c) an administrative building;
  - (d) a food service facility;
  - (e) a transportation facility; and
  - (f) vacant land; and
- (6) whether each school district facility is leased or owned.

## **Justification**

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 7.0611 to support operational efficiency, reduce redundancy, and uphold the principle of local control while maintaining full accountability for facility management and public stewardship. Additionally, portions of the required data—such as facility layouts, capacity, and shared use—pose potential security risks if widely published.

## **E. Grievance Processes**

### **Current Requirement**

*\*The following TEC sections are summarized for brevity. The complete text of each code is available at <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/>.*

***TEC §26A.001 GRIEVANCE POLICY***

- sets requirements for a school district's grievance policy
- establishes how grievances may be filed, amended, and processed by

***TEC §26A.002 TIMELINES FOR FILING AND APPEAL***

- defines how much time a complainant has to file a grievance (e.g. "Level One") and how much time is allowed for appeals under the district's grievance procedures

***TEC §26A.003 POSTING OF PROCEDURES AND FORMS***

- school districts are required to post grievance procedures and related forms publicly, so complainants know how to initiate grievances and access the proper documentation

***TEC §26A.004 TESTIMONY BEFORE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION***

- requires that, under certain circumstances (for example, if the Commissioner overrules a number of grievances), testimony must be taken before the State Board of Education

**Justification**

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 26A.001 to maintain flexibility, reduce administrative burden, and preserve established practices. These sections of the Education Code limit the District's ability to resolve student, staff, and community grievances efficiently, impose burdensome procedural requirements that divert scarce administrative focus from student achievement to repetitive and changing complaints at the discretion of the complainant efficiently and quickly. The exemptions enable the District to maintain local control over its grievance policies, procedures, and processes. The District already has, and will continue to have, an orderly process whereby grievances are addressed through the District's local publicly posted grievance policies and procedures, which include timelines for filing grievances and appeals, grievance and appeal forms, meetings/conferences, and decisions, and which also prohibit retaliation against an individual who files a grievance. Additionally, District employees who are the subject of a complaint will receive timely written notice and be allowed to provide a written response before resolution. The District will not adopt new policies contemplated by Texas Education Code 26A, but will continue to process complaints pursuant to its currently adopted grievance policies DGBA (Legal) and (Local), FNG (Legal) and (Local), and GF (Legal) and (Local).

**F. Instructional Plans and Course Syllabus**

**Current Requirement**

***TEC §26.0062 PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

- (1) require each teacher to provide before the beginning of each semester a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class for which the teacher provides instruction to:
  - (A) district administration; and
  - (B) the parent of each student enrolled in the class; and
- (2) provide for additional copies of an instructional plan or course syllabus to be made available to a parent of a student enrolled in the class on the parent's request.

### **Justification**

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 26.0062 to preserve teacher autonomy, instructional flexibility, and administrative efficiency. The statutory requirement to provide instructional plans or course syllabi to both district administration and parents prior to each semester places an unnecessary administrative burden on teachers and limits their ability to adjust instruction in response to student needs, pacing, and assessment data. The District already ensures transparency and parent communication through established practices, including campus handbooks, learning management systems, teacher communication platforms, and parent conferences. By maintaining local control over instructional planning and communication, the District can continue to support high-quality instruction that is responsive, dynamic, and aligned with student learning goals rather than static semester plans. This exemption allows teachers to focus their time on lesson design and student engagement while still ensuring parents remain informed and involved through existing, effective channels.

## **G. Acquisition of Library Materials**

### **Current Requirement**

*\*The following TEC sections are summarized for brevity. The complete text of each code is available at <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/>.*

#### **TEC §33.026 ACQUISITION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

- Require board approval of all new and donated materials;
- Make proposed materials publicly available for at least 30 days before approval; AND
- Require approval or rejection of the materials list in an open meeting

#### **TEC §33.027 CHALLENGE OR APPEAL REGARDING LIBRARY MATERIALS**

- A parent of a student, a district employee, or a resident of the school district may submit a written challenge to any library material in the catalog of a school library in the district using a district-adopted form

### **Justification**

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC §§33.026 and 33.027 to preserve local control, reduce administrative burden, and maintain efficient processes for selecting, reviewing, and managing library materials. Barbers Hill ISD already has well-established local policies ensuring transparency, parent and community input,

and alignment with state standards. Furthermore, the mandated posting, approval, and challenge timelines create procedural delays that hinder the District's ability to update and maintain library collections responsively. These local procedures allow for timely acquisition, review, and reconsideration of materials while ensuring collections remain age-appropriate, academically sound, and reflective of community values. The exemption will enable the District to continue these effective practices while focusing staff time and resources on supporting student learning and achievement.

## **V. CONTINUOUS EVALUATION**

As a District of Innovation, we will continue our process of ongoing evaluation on an annual basis. If other requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit goal attainment, we will expand this plan. As required, any additions or modifications would follow the same process:

- The District of Innovation Committee will shape and approve the plan
- The plan will be submitted to DEIC for approval
- The plan will be posted for 30 days, and the public will have the opportunity to review
- The plan will be submitted to the board for final approval
- The revised plan would be submitted to TEA