GEORGETOWN ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

COLLECTIVE DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE STATEMENT

As a collective group of community and district stakeholders, we enjoyed the opportunity to engage in this process and explore the designation of District of Innovation ("DOI"). By bringing together a wide range of perspectives in such a collaborative environment, we were able to design a plan that we feel will help us reach the full potential of the Georgetown ISD Learner Profile.

From the beginning, we were given full authority to organically create a plan and engaged in open dialogue, disagreements, deep discussion, consensus building and voting for collective approval for the plan as presented. Although a multitude of exemptions are allowable under such a designation, the committee feels that the plan presented best encompasses exemptions that align with the District's vision, mission and strategic plan.

Opportunities for school districts to customize teaching, learning and operations are rare, and we felt like it was our moral imperative to pursue it. **Signed by the District of Innovation Committee.**

STATUTE RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §25.0811 FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Plan includes the following Belief Statements that guide our actions and decisions related to this recommended exemption:

- **Developing leaders is vital to our success.** Leadership development at all levels drives our performance as a district, and viability as a thriving community.
- **Instruction should be designed based on the needs of the learners.** Learners require customized, well-designed educational experience that develop their unique interests and talents to create a passion for learning.
- **It is our responsibility to prepare students for their future.** A growth mindset, ongoing evaluation, and adaptation are critical in our evolving and growing society.

RATIONALE

Currently, the first day of school may not be held prior to the fourth Monday of August.

Proposed Changes: Current statute prevents the District from designing calendars that best meet the needs of students. Having the flexibility to set the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and our community. This empowers us to personalize and customize learning for all District learners, including teachers and staff through professional development, and allows us to balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness.

Removing the constraints of the current uniform start date will allow Georgetown ISD to implement a possible short first

week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school, ultimately allowing for more flexible professional development opportunities and preparation time for our staff.

PARAMETERS

- The District, through the recommendation of the District Performance Council, shall determine locally, on an annual basis, the upcoming school year calendar.
- The District will design and adopt a calendar with a school start date that begins on or after the second Wednesday of August and ends no later than the first week of June.

STATUTES RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §11.252 DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING
TEC §11.253 CAMPUS PLANNING AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Plan is explicit about the desire and expectation to "invite deeper participation and gather input in decision-making through recurring engagement opportunities that connect students, parents, teachers/staff, and community members." The requirements in content and format of the district improvement plan have shifted an otherwise important planning process into a bureaucratic process that detracts from the importance of thoughtful planning and implementation. As a learning organization, Georgetown ISD is committed to deepening clarity and impact of strategic direction by collectively measuring progress, identifying future explorations, and cultivating collaboration and engagement.

RATIONALE

GISD has a strong history of involving teachers, administrators, parents, community members and students in the decision- making process. We are committed to maintaining that same level of engagement with our stakeholders. It is our intent to align our District Improvement Plan to the vision, mission, beliefs and goals that these same stakeholders have developed and embraced as the key drivers for our district planning and decision-making structure. The items listed in TEC §11.251 detailing the selection of representatives for the District Improvement Committee will continue to be implemented. However, the items listed in TEC §11.252(a)-(e) and 11.253(a)-(h) of a compliance nature will no longer be implemented and will be replaced by relevant components of the Georgetown ISD Strategic Plan.

PARAMETERS

To assure both collaboration and collective ownership while accomplishing alignment between the Georgetown ISD Strategic Plan and District Improvement Plan, we will take the following steps:

- Review district performance data from a wide variety of sources, including but not limited to: state, district, campus and classroom assessments that align to the Learner Profile and High Priority Learning Standards; data that informs the district about the physical, mental and emotional wellness of students; and multiple measures that reflect community engagement, value and perception about the progress of the district.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in student and programmatic performance.
- Through local sources, including but not limited to the District/Campus Performance Committee, develop annual plans for improvement that align to the district's vision, mission, beliefs, goals, and Learner Profile.
- Report to the Board of Trustees the status of the district's Strategic Plan and future actions to continue our efforts in achieving the district's vision, mission, and beliefs.
- Adapt teaching and programs driven by student needs based on an ongoing review of student performance

data, both academic and behavioral.

- Provide regular reports to the community on the status of the school district and campuses through a Community Based Accountability System.

STATUTE RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §25.092 MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The GISD Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of instruction designed based on the needs of the learners. One of the overarching goals in the Strategic Plan within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning is to implement tools, resources and training that support personalized learning for both students and teachers. GISD is committed to developing a future-ready learning experience that reflects student voice, choice and ownership. Strategies to achieve this goal include designing and activating personalized learning experiences focused on the Learner Profile and High Priority Learning Standards. Having the flexibility to deliver instruction through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online, is one example where exemption from Section 25.092 will likely foster greater innovation to promote active learning and improve student outcomes. As a District, we will need to allocate resources, technology and collaborative spaces that reflect a student's need for choice and also create opportunities to address physical, mental and emotional wellness. In addition, exemption from this requirement will allow the district not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities and will promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities.

RATIONALE

The Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade requirement is also referred to as the "90% rule". Currently, state law requires students to attend class 90% of the school days the class is offered in order to earn credit. The law requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" and traditional reporting methods, rather than based on mastery of the learning that students may demonstrate in ways that reflect choice, acceleration, and personalized pacing. The GISD DOI Plan would maintain a minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and at a more flexible pace. Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 29.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code § 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code § 28.026. The district will continue to explore the evolving educational needs of our learners and systems in which students can demonstrate mastery, as well as research and examine current institutional constraints that may inhibit this innovation.

PARAMETERS

- Continue to utilize representative committees, such as the Curriculum Advisory Council, to develop specific systems for innovative approaches to earning course credits.
- Examine different formats and instructional strategies, such as online coursework, blended coursework, dual enrollment, early college, performance tasks, community based learning, independent study, mentorships, and credit recovery for optimum student engagement.
- Examine non-traditional opportunities and assessment mechanisms for students to demonstrate mastery of High Priority Learning Standards at all grade levels as practicable.

- Design and activate personalized learning experiences focused on the Learner Profile and High Priority Learning Standards.
- Explore a Learning Management System that allows teachers to design and customize learning experiences for students.
- Provide appropriate resources to monitor and facilitate appropriate subject-based acceleration and personalized learning, considering learning styles and preferences.
- Deploy a professional learning system that is personalized and cultivates continuous learning.
- Examine and implement multiple measures of assessment to monitor student growth and engagement in learning.

STATUTE RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §21.003 TEACHER CERTIFICATION

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Plan includes the following Belief Statements that guide our actions and decisions related to this recommended exemption:

- **Instruction should be designed based on the needs of the learners.** Learners require customized, well-designed educational experience that develop their unique interests and talents to create a passion for learning.
- **It is our responsibility to prepare students for their future.** A growth mindset, ongoing evaluation, and adaptation are critical in our evolving and growing society.

RATIONALE

The district is committed to providing an excellent learning experience for students and validates the need for certified teachers.

The instructional plan and offerings for students can be impacted if a quality candidate cannot be found to teach a course due to lack of certification. The district is pursuing this exemption to provide greater flexibility for hiring individuals who are knowledgeable and equipped to fill positions other than bilingual, special education, or PreK. Flexibility in this area will assist the district in finding quality candidates in order to avoid the disruption of an instructional path for students. The exemption from Texas Education Code 21.003 will enable the district to locally certify teachers through a grow your own program in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students today and into the future with a sustained plan of filling our teacher pipeline. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the opportunity to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those traders and vocations (such as fine arts, etc.).

PARAMETERS

The District will establish its own local qualification requirements in lieu of the requirements set forth in Texas Education Code § 21.003. This exemption will only be exercised in a limited way in specific situations, adhering to all Chapter 22,Subchapter C, Criminal History requirements, including fingerprinting, and all applicable Board policies. Individuals hired under this exemption will be provided with district-identified training, resources and support.

STATUTES RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §21.352 TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM
TEC §21.354 – APPRAISAL FOR ADMINISTRATORS OTHER THAN PRINCIPALS TEC §21.3541 – APPRAISAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FOR PRINCIPALS

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Plan includes Strategies and the following Action Plan related to this recommended exemption:

- Develop a teacher evaluation system connected to our mission, vision, beliefs and goals.
- Explore/research leadership behaviors/practices; evaluation process for all district administration teams.

RATIONALE

A committee of administrators and teachers will have the option to develop a system that includes focus on our local emphasis, such as tenants of the Learner Profile and goals of the Strategic Plan. In order to promote professional development that focuses on individual growth, the District needs to maintain local flexibility to continue its multiple observations, goal setting and tracking, and evaluation measures on teacher and administrator appraisals. This appraisal system would also prohibit the use of standardized test scores from being utilized to evaluate teacher and administrator performance; instead focusing on the overall portfolio of the person being appraised. Having our own appraisal system for all GISD staff will allow us to create individualized learning plans for all district employees.

PARAMETERS

- We will follow T-TESS and T-PESS until a new system is developed.
- Should we include a student growth measure, it will be a district developed method.
- Georgetown ISD will implement a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.
- The GISD evaluation instrument will be developed collaboratively by district administration, campus administration, and teachers. It will employ staff input, T-TESS, T-PESS, goals from the Strategic Plan, Learner Profile attributes, and other relevant best practices.
- All campus teachers will continue to be formally evaluated within the timelines specified by a district adopted appraisal cycle. Every teacher will receive a minimum of 6 informal walk-throughs per year.
- Principals, Assistant Principals, Campus Administrators, other campus professional staff, and other members of the District Leadership Team will continue to be evaluated on an annual basis through a locally developed instrument.
- Locally developed evaluation instruments and processes should include continuous feedback that reflects individual strengths, growth opportunities, and the pursuit of campus and district goals.

STATUTE RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §33.002 SCHOOL COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Plan includes the following Belief Statements that guide our actions and decisions related to this recommended exemption:

- It is our responsibility to prepare students for their future. A growth mindset, ongoing evaluation, and adaptation are critical in our evolving and growing society.
- It is our responsibility to prioritize student well-being and implement both individual and systemic support so students are psychologically safe and prepared to learn.
- Our actions should be student-centered. All children deserve positive relationships with caring adults who recognize their potential and attend to the needs of the whole child.
- GISD's Strategic plan emphasizes creating opportunities to address physical, mental, and emotional wellness.

RATIONALE

The district is committed to providing an excellent learning experience for students and recognizes the need to address the whole child in this effort. While all staff members play a role in this effort, the district recognizes the emphasized role and need for the professional and certified school counselor. School counselors are specifically trained to lead this effort by providing a comprehensive school counseling program which aligns to the Texas Model for Comprehensive Counseling. The district is experiencing difficulty in hiring certified school counselors as the need for these positions across the State of Texas has resulted in a shortage of candidates to fill the number of vacancies. The district is pursuing this exemption to provide greater flexibility to fill school counselor positions. The personal/social support for a student can be negatively impacted if a quality candidate cannot be found to fill the role of the professional school counselor. Flexibility in this area will assist the district in finding quality candidates to fill the role of a school counselor in order to prevent students from failing to benefit from the programming offered by the school counselor. The exemption from TEC § 33.002 will enable the district to establish local criteria for hiring quality personnel.

PARAMETERS

The District will establish its own local qualification requirements for the certified school counselor in lieu of the requirements set forth in TEC § 33.002.

- Individuals considered for the professional school counselor position will remain mental health professionals with a Master's degree or higher and licensed by the Texas Behavioral Health Council to include licenses in the following:
    - Those licensed through the Texas State Board of Social Works- Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and Licensed Clinical Social Worker- Supervisor (LCSW-S)
    - Those licensed through the Texas State Board of Professional CounselorsLicensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor Associate, and Licensed Professional Counselor- Supervisor
- All counselors in GISD, including those hired subject to this exception, will align all work to the existing Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling. Hired individuals would function solely in the role and assume the same limitations as the professional school counselor, and not perform any additional duties, even if those duties are allowed under their licensure with a Texas Behavioral Health Board.
- This exemption will only be exercised in a limited way in specific situations, adhering to the current policy of contract approval by the Board.
- Individuals hired under this exemption will be provided with district-identified or-developed training, resources

and support.

STATUTES RECOMMENDED FOR EXEMPTION

TEC §26.011(a) - GRIEVANCES
TEC §26A.001(a)-(c), (e), (g) – GRIEVANCE POLICY
TEC §26A.002 – TIMELINES FOR FILING AND APPEAL

State law requires districts to adopt a grievance policy that conforms to the requirements of Texas Education Code Chapter 26A. The new grievance requirements of Chapter 26A drastically change the grievance framework the District previously operated under and include, among other things, new filing deadlines, new protocol for filing new claims or evidence at any grievance level, and new procedure regarding grievance decisions.

CONNECTION TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT

Georgetown ISD's Strategic Blueprint includes the following Strategic Visions and Objectives that guide our actions and decisions related to this recommended exemption:

- Parents and community members engage in GISD schools.
- GISD employees find meaning and value in their work through a culture of voice, collaboration, recognition, respect, and belonging.
- GISD is transparent with reporting progress and providing access to information in a manner that is easily understood.

RATIONALE

District parents and administrators are familiar with the District's previous grievance process, which functioned ideally. Under the previous grievance policy, grievances were addressed expeditiously and effectively. The District found that implementation of the grievance policies outlined in 26A.001-002 significantly reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of the District's grievance process. This amendment allows the District to revert back to the previous grievance policy that is more familiar to the District students, parents, and administrators.

PARAMETERS

The District will maintain local control over its grievance policies, procedures, and process. Specifically, the District will amend board policy DGBA, FNG, and DF to include specific provisions of Chapter 26A to the extent it deems such provisions necessary and appropriate.

Specifically, the District will:

- Prohibit retaliation in all aspects of the grievance process;
- Ensure that grievance reviews and appeals are heard by a person with authority to address the grievance;
- Maintain a record of all grievances;
- Ensure that incorrectly submitted grievances are redirected to the appropriate administrator;
- Require recusal if the hearing officer is the subject of the grievance;
- Allow board members to file grievances but require recusal of the board member from the voting process;
- Allow for remand to a lower level of review; and
- Maintain the option to delegate authority to hear and decide a grievance to a committee of at least three (3) members composed only of members of the board of trustees.