

Dumas Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Board Approval Date: 3/9/2017



District of Innovation Plan

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INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations, in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Dumas ISD will be able to implement the work of our District Improvement Plan with increased flexibility and freedom necessary to be innovative with the kinds of learning experiences afforded to our students. Making educational decisions at the local level is the most effective way to support the innovation plan in our district.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

The District of Innovation Committee created this plan to provide the increased flexibility needed to enact the District Improvement Plan. Careful consideration was given to the selection of the exemptions contained within this plan. All were chosen to provide opportunities for Dumas ISD to personalize and enhance learning for students.

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district intends to follow the Texas Education Code (TEC) in all other areas. Any revisions or changes to the innovation plan that may arise will be brought before the District of Innovation Committee to explore the request. If the committee determines that a revision is needed, the innovation plan will then be taken back to the School Board for approval with the revisions.

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) “that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan...” The District Improvement Plan calls for innovative practices and opportunities for our students, and therefore, DISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

- Campus Behavior Coordinator
- Class Size Ratio
- Minimum Minutes of Instruction
- Probationary Contracts
- School Start and End Date
- Teacher Certification

TIMELINE

Board Resolution	January 16, 2017
Public Hearing	January 16, 2017
Appoint Innovative Plan Committee	January 16, 2017
Develop Innovative Plan	January 26 - February 3, 2017
30 day Public Review (Website Posting)	February 6 - March 7, 2017
Notification to TEA Commissioner	February 6, 2017
District Council Final Approval	March 8, 2017
Board of Trustees Final Approval	March 9, 2017
Notification of Approval, Publish	March 10, 2017
Annual Review	

INNOVATIONS

Campus Behavior Coordinator

Exemption from:

- TEC §37.0012

Related Board Policies:

- FO Legal
- FO Local
- Student Code of Conduct

Description of current provisions:

TEC§37.0012 requires a person be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC) who is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and implementation of Chapter 37 and allows duties imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator to be performed by the campus behavior coordinator.

Description of Innovative Plan:

The District believes it can better meet the social and emotional needs of its students by implementing a more personal discipline approach. This approach allows the campus principal to collaborate with and/or delegate assistant principals the responsibilities of the campus behavior coordinator. This enables all administrators to spend the necessary time with students to develop a rapport that can hold students accountable while teaching them how to more effectively monitor their own behavior in the future. By obtaining exemption from Section 37.0012, the District will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibility toward the community.

Class Size Ratios

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.112
- TEC §25.113

Related Board Policies:

- EEB Legal
- EEB Local (Will need to be created to address the local exemption plan)

Description of current provisions:

- TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.
- TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted.

Description of Innovative Plan:

The district believes that lower class sizes have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Kindergarten through 4th grade students and does not seek to unilaterally create higher class sizes. We do believe, however, that appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level without the necessity of waivers from the Texas Education Agency. The goal is to make governance decisions based on the unique needs of the district's students and community. The district class size ratio procedures are listed below.

- Hiring decisions prior to the start of school will be based on projected 22:1 ratios
- The district will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per Kindergarten through 4th grade homeroom class
- In the event that any class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students.

- Enrollments into a campus grade level will continue until the class size has reached 23:1 in each section of the grade level.
- Once a campus grade level reaches 23:1 in each section, the district will evaluate neighboring campus enrollments to determine if newly enrolled students will attend the neighboring campus or attend the home campus. In addition, approved transfers into that grade level will be examined for possible placement back at their home campus.
- A teacher may be hired at any time during the school year if the campus principal and superintendent agree that it is in the best interest of the students to do so.
- Transfers will not be allowed into a campus if it will increase the ratio over 22:1.
- A TEA waiver will not be filed when a Kindergarten through 4th grade homeroom class exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.082

Related Board Policies:

- EB Legal

Description of current provisions:

- TEC §25.082 requires that a school day be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Description of Innovative Plan:

Exemption from the 420 minutes'/day requirement would allow Dumas ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule whenever it was locally determined as beneficial to the district and its stakeholders to accommodate the unique needs of our students. The district would not be tied to 6 early release days which is the maximum that can be requested under the existing early release waiver process. Exempting the district from the 7-hour school day requirement would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of a loss of state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with the daily minute requirements. This would also allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, and relevant professional development. The district Minimum Minutes of Instruction procedures are listed below.

- Dumas ISD will meet or exceed the 75,600 minutes/year of instruction.
- Dumas ISD does not intend to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, "early release" days will be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

Probationary Contracts

Exemption from:

- TEC 21.102

Related Board Policies:

- DCA Legal

Description of current provisions:

Experienced teachers new to the district are placed on a probationary contract which may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Description of Innovative Plan:

A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired in Dumas ISD. This will allow Dumas ISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.

School Start and End Date

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.0811
- TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies:

- EB Legal

Description of current provisions:

- TEC §25.0811 states a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.
- TEC §25.0812 states a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Description of Innovative Plan:

The district plan is to begin instruction no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August and end the school year prior to June 1st. Having the flexibility to locally set a school start and end date allows for a school calendar which addresses the local needs of our community and emphasizes engaged learning activities, college & career readiness, and social and emotional needs of students. An earlier start date provides for staff development and holiday days that are spaced throughout school year and provides the ability to tie student holidays to traditional business holidays if and when possible. The innovative plan allows the first and second semesters to be closer in the number of days of instruction which will improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in each semester. Teacher preparation will be provided throughout the school year with opportunities for follow up and review. High School and NPOC also would have additional flexibility in order to promote attendance and course completion incentives.

Teacher Certification

Exemption from:

- TEC §21.003

Related Board Policies:

- DK LEGAL
- DK LOCAL
- DK EXHIBIT

Description of current provisions:

TEC 21.003 requires that 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 their certification, the district must request emergency certification for the Texas Education Agency and or the State Board of Educator Certification.

Description of Innovative Plan:

TEC 21.003 In order to best serve DISD students, the goal of the district will be to continue to hire certified staff in all positions and decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill and career and technical courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or

vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.)
if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.