

Zavalla ISD
District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)
2016-2017

Zavalla ISD is using HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, to establish more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have been allowed. Zavalla ISD believes this is a great opportunity for our local district to establish plans based on the unique needs of our students and community.

This plan will be in effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

District Innovation Team

1. Ricky Oliver Superintendent
2. Kathy Caton High School Principal
3. Shana McCugh Elementary School Principal
4. Caryn Calhoun Coordinator of Special Programs
5. Emily Roebuck District Counselor
6. Elizabeth Boulware CTE Teacher
7. Preston Cooper CTE Teacher
8. Tara Boulware Parent Representative
9. Jamie Dykes Business Representative

Timeline

Resolution to the Board of Trustees	January 26, 2017
Committee Meeting Review and revise plan	January 27,2017
Resolution to notify Commissioner	January 27,2017
Final version plan posted	January 27, 2017
District level meeting	February 23, 2017
Board Approval of Plan	February 28, 2017

1. Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4 class size

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.112, 25.113)

Currently

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.

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. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. ZISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a K-4th core classroom reaches 24:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives ZISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

2. Teacher certification

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.057)

Currently

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed

In order to best serve ZISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.

- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.

3. School Start Date

(TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

Currently

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of 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.

Proposed

1. Zavalla ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August. This change will create better flexibility in the creation of the district calendar as well as allowing more opportunities in scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.

2. The earlier start date will allow the district to move instructional days that occur after state mandated testing dates to the front of the school year.

3. The earlier start date will provide more balance to the first 3 six weeks grading periods during the first semester.

4. Teacher Contract days

(DCB Legal, DCB Local) (Ed. Code 21.401)

Current

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

This plan reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. Being the smallest school in the county, it is difficult to compete with other larger county schools in the area of teacher salary. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make our salaries more competitive.

- 1 . This plan will increase the daily rate the district pays its teachers.
2. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger, county districts.
3. This plan will significantly improve teacher morale.
4. This plan will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.
5. In the four other plan years, it will be part of the calendar planning process to maintain the reduced number of teacher contract days.

5. Teacher and Principal Evaluation

(DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL)(Ed. Code 21.203, 21.352) (Ed. Code 21.3541)

Currently

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, that will be called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Districts currently have the option to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Zavalla ISD teachers are formally evaluated at least once every two years.

Principals must also complete one formal walk-through each 9-week grading period. New staff members will have two additional formal walkthroughs throughout the year.

Principals are evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

Proposed

A committee of administrators and teachers would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument that fits the needs and goals of ZISD.

- a. Zavalla ISD will create and utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.

b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration, campus administration, and teachers. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PCESS, and any other relevant best practice.

c. Campus teachers must be formally evaluated at least every other year.

d. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and to set personal goals and a staff development plan for the coming year.

e. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually with locally developed instrument.

f. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Zavalla ISD.

6. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit of Final Grade (TEC 25.092)

TEC 25.092 states that except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade twelve may not be given a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered. This exemption will give needed flexibility for supporting students in dual enrollment and/or career preparation programs allowing for a flexible start and end date between the District and partnering businesses, colleges and/or universities. As ZISD continues to expand learning opportunities aligned with House Bill 5 and the Next Generation Accountability System, flexibility with “seat time” will be critical to ensure student internships are a viable means of accruing credit for relevant courses. ZISD will look to exercise this flexibility with Angelina College and local business partners.