

# **SHALLOWATER** **ISD**

**DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN**



**ADOPTED 2021**

## **Introduction and Summary of Events:**

During the 84<sup>th</sup> session of the Texas Legislature, House Bill 1842 amended Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code, which authorizes school districts to pursue designation as Districts of Innovation (DOI). As such, this provides school districts greater flexibility and local control to better meet the needs of the students, staff, and community.

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, upon receipt of a petition from the district site-based committee, the Shallowater ISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to begin the process of becoming a DOI. At that time, the Board of Trustees authorized the site-based committee to develop a DOI plan.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the committee met to discuss possible Texas Education Code exemptions and associated innovations and to begin developing a district plan. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the committee met once again to review the plan and voted to submit it to the SISD Board of Trustees for consideration. After a review by the board members, updates were made by the committee before submitting the plan once again for consideration. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved the plan to be posted to the district website for public review. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the board voted to formally approve the plan.

Unless discontinued by the Shallowater ISD Board of Trustees, the DOI plan will be followed for a term of five years beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and may be amended anytime by the district to add additional exemptions/innovations if it is determined to be in the best interest of Shallowater ISD and the local community.



## **District Site Based Committee/ District of Innovation Team**

<b>Kella Beach</b>	<b>Parent</b>
<b>Jane Blackburn</b>	<b>Community Member</b>
<b>Marie Garcia</b>	<b>Community Member</b>
<b>Tammy Hamersley</b>	<b>Community Member</b>
<b>Aprill Hudson</b>	<b>Business</b>
<b>Mark Taylor</b>	<b>Business</b>
<b>Denae McLellan</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Morgan Castillo</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Michelle Gray</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Marchelle Moore</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Teresa Shires</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Candace Wilkins</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Tiffany Bair</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Jordynne Grantham</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Kamber Smith</b>	<b>Counselor</b>
<b>Julio Hernandez</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>
<b>Sheila Burt</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Sherry Lusk</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Kacie Waller</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Craig Nell</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Mary Hughes</b>	<b>Assistant Superintendent</b>
<b>Aron Strickland</b>	<b>Assistant Superintendent</b>



## Key Dates:

<b>October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>District Site Based Committee Approves DOI Exploration Petition</b></li></ul>
<b>October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Board Consideration &amp; Approval of Petition</b></li></ul>
<b>November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Committee Meeting to Discuss Development of DOI Plan</b></li></ul>
<b>December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Committee Meeting to Discuss Development of DOI Plan and to Vote on Submitting to SISD Board of Trustees for Consideration</b></li></ul>
<b>December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Present DOI Plan to SISD Board of Trustees for Review</b></li></ul>
<b>January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Committee Meeting to Discuss, Review, and Vote on Final DOI Plan</b></li></ul>
<b>January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Present Final Draft of DOI Plan to SISD Board of Trustees for Review and Formal Approval</b></li></ul>
<b>January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Post Board Approved Plan to District Website for 30 Day Public Review</b></li></ul>
<b>February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SISD School Board Votes to Formally Adopt the Final DOI Plan</b></li></ul>
<b>February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TEA Commissioner Notified of Trustees' Adoption of the Final DOI Plan</b></li></ul>



# **1. School Start and End Date**

## Current Requirement:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Proposed Innovation:

Currently, Texas Education Code requirements limit Shallowater ISD's flexibility in developing its academic calendar. By starting school earlier, SISD can take greater advantage of innovative scheduling options that will have a positive impact on student learning and on teacher professional development throughout the school year.

## Rationale:

Greater flexibility when determining the school start date will allow the district to better meet the needs of students, staff, and the community of Shallowater. Starting school earlier in August would help balance instructional time between the fall and spring semesters and would allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

- Will lead to balanced semesters with a more equal distribution of instructional days across all grading periods
- Will lead to more effective management of scope and sequence/curriculum maps in all classes, especially in single semester courses
- Will lead to greater flexibility in scheduling professional development days for Shallowater ISD staff throughout the school year

## Related Board Policies:

EB (Legal), EB (Local)



## **2. Group Health Benefits for School Employees**

### Current Requirement:

TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverage for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.

### Proposed Innovation:

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a district's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the opportunity to offer additional benefits plans to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the district to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district proposes that the District of Innovation Plan exempt Shallowater ISD from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).

### Rationale:

The current system offers no flexibility in the design of group health plans. Currently, the district is unable to explore other options that may provide better, more cost-efficient coverage for employees. Offering an alternative plan will provide employees with more options to fit their specific needs and may allow for substantial savings on cost.

- Will lead to a bigger menu of plans to fit employee needs
- Will lead to greater potential for savings due to expanded options

### Related Board Policies:

The committee is not aware of any policies that will be impacted by this proposed exemption.



### **3. Minimum Minutes and Days of Instruction**

#### Current Requirement:

TEC §25.081 states that districts are required to provide 75,600 minutes of instruction per school year. TEC §25.092 states that students must be in attendance for at least 90% of the days that a class is offered in order to earn credit or a final grade for the course.

#### Proposed Innovation:

The intent of the legislature is to standardize the amount of seat-time that students spend learning in the classroom. While Shallowater ISD aims to meet the required 75,600 minutes per year, and the 90% attendance minimum, it seeks to do so in a more flexible and innovative manner by making greater use of blended learning opportunities. Relief granted from 25.092 does not constitute a substantive exemption, but rather affords SISD greater flexibility in meeting the requirements for awarding attendance and course credit.

#### Rationale:

By incorporating blended learning as a means of awarding attendance and course credit, we can personalize learning and more effectively meet the unique needs of our students.

- Will lead to the opportunity for blended learning to assist us in meeting the 75,600 minutes requirement in the event of incremental school closures that are due to weather, illness, etc.
- Will lead to the opportunity to award remote attendance credit to individual students so that we may better assist them in meeting the 90% attendance rule that is required for course credit
- Will lead to expanded blended learning options that can better assist staff members in managing student “absences” in a more flexible, timely, and efficient manner

#### Related Board Policies:

EB (Legal), EHBL (Legal), FEC (Legal), FEC (Local)

