Borden County
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION
PLAN 2019 - 2023
Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to become a District of Innovation. Borden County ISD will obtain exemptions from certain regulations of the Texas Education Code. On October 21, 2019, Borden County ISD Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process to become a District of Innovation (DOI). The purpose of passing the resolution is to increase local control over Borden County ISD operations and the district’s goals by supporting innovation and local initiatives to improve educational opportunities for the benefit of our students, staff, and community. HB 1842 does not allow for exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, or academic and financial accountability.

Process

The Borden County ISD Board of Trustees appointed the Site Based Decision Making Committee to create the plan for the district. The plan will be created by the Site Based Decision Making Committee over several meetings and then posted on the Borden County ISD website for 30 days. The committee will vote on the plan after receiving stakeholder feedback, and will present the proposal to the school board for approval.
Borden County Independent School District Site-Based Decision Making/DOI Committee

Johnny Tubb                     Superintendent
Britt Gordon                   Principal
Teresa Kuehler                 Counselor
Kyle Kuehler                   Technology Director
Carissa Buchanan              Classroom Teacher
Lisa Gray                      Classroom Teacher
Amy Grigsby                    Classroom Teacher, Parent
Tricia Allen                   Intervention Specialist
Hollye Hightower               School Nurse
Maria Zorola                   Parent
Kevin Edwards                  Parent
Jennifer Edwards               Parent
Vance Guthrie                  Parent/Community/Business
Ryan Webb                      Parent
Brenda Webb                    Parent
Jibber Herridge                Community/Business
Benny Allison                  Community/ Law Enforcement
District of Innovation Timeline

October 21, 2019  Board of Trustees voted to adopt the Resolution to Consider Designation as District of Innovation

December 16, 2019  Board held a public hearing to consider whether the district should become a District of Innovation

December 16, 2019  Board appoints the Site Based Decision Making Committee to develop a local District of Innovation Plan

December 19, 2019  Site Based Meeting to create District of Innovation plan

January 23, 2020  Site Based Meeting to create District of Innovation plan

January 30, 2020  Final Draft to be posted onto district website for public review and comment (30 days)

March 5, 2020  Site Based Committee unanimously vote at public meeting to recommend District of Innovation Plan to Borden County ISD Board of Trustees

March 16, 2020  Board of Trustees approved the District of Innovation Plan

March 17, 2020  Notify TEA of proposed District of Innovation Plan

Term

The plan will begin March 17, 2020 and end July 31, 2023 unless terminated, amended or renewed by the board of trustees in accordance to the law. The Site Based Committee will review the plan annually and will continue to determine the effectiveness of the plan.
Innovations

Borden County ISD proposes flexibility and seeks an exemption in the following areas:

1. **First Day of Instruction** (TEC 25.0811)
   A. State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August
   B. Rationale for exemption
      - More professional development opportunities during the school year for teachers
      - Balances grading periods for more equity in instruction of scope and sequence
      - Balance the amount of instructional time/days per semester.
      - Additional instructional days prior to required state assessments (E.O.C./S.T.A.A.R.)
      - Allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition back to school for all students
      - Calendar would be more aligned with college schedules, allowing students to enroll in summer courses that start in early June
   C. Proposed Innovation
      - The Borden County ISD Site Based Committee will continue the current calendar recommendation process to meet the needs of the district.

2. **Teacher Certification** (TEC 21.003)
   A. Texas law restricts the district’s ability to hire educators outside the SBEC approved certification fields
   B. Rationale for exemption
      - The law limits the district’s ability to hire non-certified instructors for CTE courses
      - Small school district’s schedules need flexibility in order to avoid the disruption of an instructional path
   C. Proposed Innovation
      - To best serve the students of Borden County ISD, decisions on certifications will be determined locally.
      - The district will establish local requirements such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications.
      - The district will utilize this exemption in the areas of career and technical education (CTE) and courses needed for instructional paths
      - A currently certified teacher could teach one section of a course/subject, per year, outside his/her state certified field through a local teaching certificate in order to avoid the disruption of an instructional path, with the approval of the district’s superintendent
● Teachers certified to teach locally will need to pursue state certification prior to the end of the school year in which the local certification is awarded.
● The superintendent will report any action of this type to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment
● The teacher must complete classroom management training along with any other continuing education requirements prior to teaching in the classroom and will be assigned a state certified teacher as a mentor

3. Absences for College, University, or Military visits (TEC 25.087)

A. Texas law states that students are excused for a maximum of two days for college or university visits in their junior year and again in their senior year
B. Rationale for exemption
   ● High school students are not allowed to receive an excused absence if they take more than two visits during their junior and senior year
C. Proposed Innovation
   ● The district shall excuse a student for up to two days during their junior year and up to four days during their senior year to visit an accredited institution of higher education and/or military enlistment activity

4. Transfer Students (TEC 25.036)

A. Texas law allows a district to accept students as transfers who are not eligible to enroll in the district. TEC 25.036 requires the school district to enroll a student as a transfer for a period of one school year. Borden County ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring non-resident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. Before approving a transfer request, the availability of space, availability of instructional staff, availability of programs and services, and determination of the overall impact of any individual transfer on the educational program of Borden County ISD will be evaluated for each student. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district
B. Rationale for exemption
   ● On rare occasions, student behavior warrants in school suspension, out of school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), or expulsion
   ● The district’s efforts to ensure exemplary services and performance could be negatively impacted by transfer students.
A transfer student’s enrollment of one year could negatively impact campus culture due to behavior or attendance concerns.

C. Proposed innovation

- The district is seeking exemption from the one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants.
- Transfer students may have transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences or in school suspension, out of school suspension, placement in DAEP, or expulsion.
- Students not meeting the state’s attendance and/or truancy standard may also be subjected to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

6. **Teacher Probationary Contracts Exemption:** (TEC 21.102(b), DCA(Legal) - TEC code 21.102(b)

   A. Texas law states that a probationary contract 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 proceeding employment with the district.

   B. Rationale for exemption

   - This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom since the timeline demands that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.

   C. Proposed Innovation

   - Probationary contracts for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may be extended up to two years including those employees with dual contracts.

   - The superintendent will make contract recommendations to the Board of Trustees as per policy. Benefit: This will provide the District more flexibility in determining the teacher’s ability to teach effectively, see if they are a fit for the community, and to see how they interact with the students.