District of Innovation Plan
August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017- July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022

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“Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow!”
**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.

Prairiland ISD wishes to implement an Innovation Plan with increased flexibility and freedom necessary to personalize learning experiences. As a District of Innovation, Prairiland ISD intends to utilize the opportunity to enact maximum local control and design local policies as needed to best meet the needs of our students, employees, and community.

**Term**

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in August 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through July 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District of Innovation Planning Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity/Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 23, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees passed Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan</td>
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<td>January 23, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees held public hearing and appointed District of Innovation Planning Committee to draft Plan</td>
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<td>February 10, 2017</td>
<td>Initial orientation and planning meeting of the District of Innovation Planning Committee</td>
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<td>February 21, 2017</td>
<td>Planning meeting to finalize the District of Innovation Plan</td>
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<td>February 23, 2017</td>
<td>Post District of Innovation Plan on PISD website</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27, 2017</td>
<td>Public Hearing and District of Innovation Planning Committee vote on plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 28, 2017</td>
<td>District of Innovation plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education</td>
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Planning Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Campus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crystie Dawson</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cory Wood</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Junior High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paige Jordan</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malinda Oats</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsha Cunningham</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janice Patterson</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Bell</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Junior High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meagan Musgrove</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Junior High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paige Latham</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanie Butler</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jala Nation</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyle Blanton</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Bassano</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanny Mathews</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Watson</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Junior High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Hostetler</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Ballard</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>District</td>
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School Start Date

Exempt from: TEC 25.0811
Relevant Board Policy: EB LEGAL

Currently

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed

Prairie ISD would like to locally determine the start date for school. This flexibility would allow the district to determine, on an annual basis, what start date best meets the needs of the students. It also offers the following opportunities:

- Beginning school before the fourth Monday in August gives the ability to help balance semesters.
- An earlier start permits students additional instruction prior to state assessments.
- This will allow for a calendar that fits the needs of our local communities, staff, and students.
Teacher Certification
Exemption from: TEC 21.003; TEC 21.053; TEC 21.057
Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL/LOCAL; DK LEGAL/LOCAL

Currently
TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided in Subchapter B. TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time. TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed
In order to best serve Prairiland ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district’s exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology, and also assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings. Teachers certified in other states could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. This would also allow experienced certified teachers to teach a course outside their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines
A. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subjects and/or grade levels out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

B. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification of uncertified individuals. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying him/her to teach the subject.

C. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification and will submit approved requests to the Board of Trustees for approval prior to the individual beginning employment.

D. Uncertified teachers, who receive local teaching certificates, will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports. The local teaching certificate will be issued for one year and the employee will be at-will.
**Minimum Minutes of Instruction**
Exemption from: TEC 25.081; TEC 25.082
Relevant Board Policy: EB LEGAL, EC LEGAL

Currently
Both Texas Education Codes 25.081 and 25.082 address the length of the instructional day by limiting it to “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses”, totaling 75,600 minutes for the year.

Proposed
Prairiland ISD would like to be exempt from the 420 minute day requirement and have the flexibility to alter the length of the school day on selected days whenever it is determined to be necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders.
- The opportunity to be exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus.
- This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
- This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current waiver system.

**Class Size Waiver**
Exemption from: TEC 25.112; TEC 25.113
Related Board Policy: EEB LEGAL

Currently
Texas Education Code 25.112 limits the number of students in Kindergarten through 4th grade to 22 students per teacher. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, the waiver must be applied for annually. Texas Education Code 25.113 requires districts to notify each parent in the class section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed
While Prairiland intends to remain within the education code guidelines with regard to class size ratios, we seek local control to manage increases in class sizes to provide the best learning environment for our K-4 students. Small class sizes may have a positive effect in the classroom, but must also be balanced with the timing of adding staff, the qualifications of staff available, the makeup and chemistry of the classroom and other classroom influences. PISD wants to reserve the right to determine class size without filing a waiver.

a. PISD 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. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
Contract Service Days

Exemption from: TEC 21.401
Related Board Policy: DC LEGAL

**Currently**
*Texas Education Code requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.*

**Proposal**
With the passage of TEC 25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. Prairiland proposes to reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students - increasing the daily rate the district pays teachers – enhance teacher recruitment and improve teacher morale. Prairiland ISD will present a recommendation to the School Board regarding the number of contract days as a part of the total compensation and benefits program.

Employment Contracts

Exemption from: TEC 21.102
Related Board Policy: DCA LEGAL

**Currently**
*For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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.*

**Proposed**
For experienced teachers new to the district that have been employed as teachers in public education for at least five of the past eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. This will allow the district to more fully determine the staff member’s effectiveness.
Transfer Students
Exemption from: TEC 25.036
Related Board Policy: FDA (LOCAL)

Currently
Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed
Prairiland ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (LOCAL) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student’s disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applications for the following circumstances:

- Discipline
- Attendance
- Academic Performance
- Availability of Space