

## **DeKalb ISD**

**EXEMPTIONS §25.0811 Uniform School Start Date** A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

**Proposed** This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the below opportunities:

- An improved balanced instructional calendar because currently we have 77 days in the fall and 94 days in the spring for the 2016-17 school year. With starting school 5 days earlier, our instructional calendar would be 82 days in the fall and 89 days in the spring.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges.
- An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well.
- Creates Flexibility for District to pursue other calendar options for identified populations.

**Local Guidelines** The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

**§25.112 Class Size and Notice of Class Size Texas Education Code 25.112** limits the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade to 22. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, the waivers 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 ration, and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

**Proposed** By seeking an exception from TEC 25.112, the District would have flexibility for all campuses and classrooms for the duration of the District of Innovation Designation and would not be required to seek waivers annually. While the District intends to remain within the guidelines of the current education code as much as possible, the District seeks flexibility to provide the best learning environment for our K-4 students, including more flexibility when teaching, creative ways of delivering instruction, and ability to manage increases in class sizes. Research shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning and not the absolute class size. 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.

**Local Guidelines** In the event a classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio in grades K – 4, the class sizes will be reviewed by appropriate district and campus administration. The Board of Trustees will be informed of K- 4 classes that exceed 22:1. TEA waivers for class sizes exceeding 22 will not be required. An exemption from TEC 25.113 is also requested.

**§21.102 Employment Contracts** Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that 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** Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. 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 and counselors newly hired in DeKalb ISD.

**Local Guidelines** At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

**§21.003 Certification** - TEC 21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher 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 by Subchapter B. TEC21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

**Proposed** In order to best serve DeKalb 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. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Often there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of 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.

**\*Exception Special Education and Bilingual teachers must continue to be SBEC certified**

**Local Guidelines**

**a)** The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level 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)** An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for Core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/ industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area. The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. **c)** The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certificati