



# **DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN**

**Date Posted: April 18, 2017**

**RESOLUTION OF THE KOPPERL ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF DESIGNATION OF  
A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION**

**WHEREAS**, Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable academic performance; and

**WHEREAS**, 19 Texas Administrative Code 102.1301 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's FIRST rating is at least acceptable as indicated in the applicable year's financial accountability system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kopperl School District's most recent academic performance rating under Education Code 39.054 was at least acceptable by the "Met Standard" rating and the District's financial accountability rating was at least acceptable as reflected by a "Superior" rating; and

**WHEREAS**, Kopperl ISD and Board of Trustees are committed to the success of all students and are committed to parent and community involvement while providing the best innovative classroom instruction to our students; and

**WHEREAS**, Kopperl ISD and Board of Trustees believes that local control and decision-making for students based on student and community needs is vital to the success of our students and will develop a local innovation plan to improve performance for the district according to House Bill 1842 if the District of Innovation is sought; and

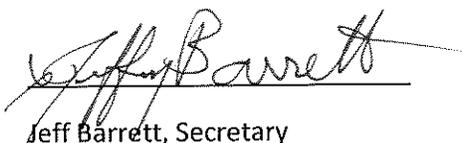
**WHEREAS**, Kopperl ISD will develop the local innovation plan in conjunction with the campus/district improvement plan if the district seeks to become a District of Innovation and will hold a public hearing to receive feedback and community input from all stakeholders before considering the creation of a local innovation plan;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Kopperl Independent School District Board of Trustees by the adoption of this resolution initiates the process as allowed under Education Code Chapter 12A to become a district of innovation.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017, by the Board of Trustees.



Harold Wellborn, President



Jeff Barrett, Secretary

## ***Kopperl ISD***

### ***District of Innovation Plan***

#### **Introduction**

HB 1842 was passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session in 2015 which offers Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation (DOI). The Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a DOI if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 is at least acceptable. In order for a district to pursue the possible flexibilities available, the local Board of Trustees can initiate the process through the adoption of a resolution and create a committee to study and develop a plan.

Districts who choose to capitalize on this opportunity must collaboratively develop a local innovation plan that explains the statute from which the district is seeking an exemption and the identified innovative practice that will be implemented as a result. Although statutes pertaining to academic and financial accountability, graduation requirements and the teaching of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills are ineligible for exemption, local innovation plans provide districts with a variety of benefits including:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional methods used in meeting the needs of each student being served;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

#### **Process**

On March 9, 2017, the Kopperl Independent School District Superintendent reviewed and led a discussion of the revised AF (LEGAL) policy INNOVATION DISTRICTS with the Board of Trustees as part of the Texas Association of School Board Update 107. The Board was informed of the possibility the administration would be presenting a recommendation in the near future, to the Board to consider a plan for innovation.

On April 11, 2017, the Kopperl ISD Site-Based Committee met to discuss initiatives available to the District by becoming a District of Innovation and the steps required to achieve the designation.

On April 13, 2017, The Kopperl ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing on whether the District should pursue the designation as a District of Innovation.

On April 13, 2017, the Kopperl ISD Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to promote local initiatives that lead to greater student growth and performance.

On April 13, 2017, the Kopperl ISD Board of Trustees appointed the District Site-Based Committee to study and discuss possible initiatives and draft a Local Innovation Plan.

On April 17, 2017, the Kopperl ISD Site-Based Committee met to develop a DOI Plan.

On April 18, 2017, the District of Innovation Plan was posted on the District's website and TEA was notified.

On May 18, 2017, the Kopperl ISD Board of Trustees will consider approval of the DOI Plan.

**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. Any amendment to the DOI Plan must follow the same process as the plan development. The Site-Based Committee would consider any proposed amendment(s). Any amendment(s) would require majority approval of the Site-Based Committee and posting on the district website for 30 days. A 2/3 vote by the Board of Trustees would be required for final approval of any amendment(s).

The Commissioner of Education may terminate a district's designation as a DOI if the district receives for two consecutive years an unacceptable academic performance and/or an unacceptable financial accountability rating.

**District Site-Based Committee**

Kenneth Bateman, Superintendent

Katrina Adcock, Principal

Roy Henry, Counselor

Paula Allen, Special Education

Charlotte Borth, Classroom Teacher

Kallie Seay, Classroom Teacher

Christy McFarland, Auxiliary

Lisa Robinson, Auxiliary

Chelsey Phillips, Parent

Elise Watts, Parent

**District of Innovation Exemptions**

**I. SCHOOL START DATE**

*Policy (EB LEGAL) Texas Education Code 25.0811*

A school 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 of this requirement.

## Proposed

Kopperl ISD would like to have the freedom to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of our students, community and staff by locally determining an earlier starting date to begin student instruction.

## Innovation Strategies

- a) Students would begin no earlier than the third Monday of August
- b) This will allow the first and second semesters to be more equal in the number of instructional days
- c) Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges
- d) An early start date permits students additional days of instruction prior to state assessments scheduled in December
- e) Allows greater flexibility in scheduling staff training/work days and student holidays.

## II. INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFERS

*Policy (FDA LOCAL) Texas Education Code 25.036*

Kopperl ISD's transfer policy FDA (LOCAL) states that "A nonresident student wishing to transfer into the District shall file an application for transfer each school year with the Superintendent or principal.

***Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time. A transfer student shall be notified in the written transfer agreement that he or she must follow all rules and regulations of the District. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year."***

## Proposed

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 record are also evaluated. If approved for transfer, the student is notified by a written agreement that he or she must follow all 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. Kopperl ISD is seeking relief of the one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, the District seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

## Innovative Strategies

- a) If a nonresident student who has been accepted as an inter-district transfer student develops a discipline or attendance record approaching the possibility of revoking the transfer status, the student will be placed on probation and the student and parent will be notified in writing.
- b) If the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion the Superintendent may revoke the transfer status immediately.

- c) If the student does not meet the State's 90% attendance standard the Superintendent may revoke the transfer immediately.

### **III. TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

*Policy DK (LEGAL), DK (LOCAL), Texas Education Code 21.003*

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. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

#### **Proposed**

In order to best serve Kopperl ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. As a small rural school district, KISD sometimes has difficulty filling staff positions with properly certified personnel. 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 into 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. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

#### **Innovative Strategies**

- a) The campus principal shall 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 possess 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 shall 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 request for local certification.

### **IV. CONTRACT DAYS**

*Policy DCB (LEGAL), DCB (LOCAL), Texas Education Code 21.401*

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

## **Proposed**

Being a small rural school district, Kopperl ISD finds it difficult to compete with larger surrounding districts in the area of teacher salary and benefits. The exemption from the 187 contract days with no effect on teacher salaries will enable the District to retain current quality staff and enhance the ability to compete in future recruiting. Other anticipated benefits are:

- a) Increase the daily rate the district pays teachers
- b) Significantly improve teacher morale
- c) Provide teachers more opportunities during the summer month to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field, work on attaining additional certifications, or a higher college degree
- d) Better align teacher service days and instructional days

## **Innovative Strategies**

In each year of the five-year plan, it will be part of the calendar planning process to consider the reduced number of teacher contract days. This could be achieved by modifying the calendar and reducing the days of instruction after STAAR/EOC.

## **V. RELIEF FROM TERM OF DEPOSITORY CONTRACT**

*Policy BDAE (LEGAL) Texas Education Code 45.205*

Current state law requires that depository bank contracts not exceed a two-year term. The section provides school districts the authority to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms.

## **Proposed**

Kopperl ISD is a small rural school district located in Bosque County that has a population of approximately 18,000. There are five banks within convenient driving distance for business transactions. In recent years the banking business has changed to the extent that banks have little incentive to compete for a small school districts business as a depository. The last three times KISD has been required to go out for bids, only one bank has responded. Exemption from the current requirement would, to a large degree, eliminate unnecessary disruption to campus and district operations for our limited staff who needs to concentrate on student achievement and the huge volume of federal and state mandates and reports.

## **Innovative Strategies**

At least once every two years, the district will evaluate the performance of the current depository bank. Should the District determine that the contracted services are provided effectively and the quality of service is acceptable, the district will seek to negotiate terms to extend the contract for one additional two-year period. This process will include:

- a) No later than 60 days prior to the current contract expiration, the KISD superintendent will formally evaluate services provided by the current depository bank.
- b) Upon satisfactory evaluation, the superintendent will formally request that the depository bank submit a proposal for fees and services for the following two-year period.

- c) The superintendent will review the draft contract extension and negotiate charges as appropriate.
- d) If the proposal is satisfactory, the superintendent will recommend approval of a contract extension to the Board of Trustees.
- e) Upon Board approval, the contract extension will be executed by the Board President and appropriate bank officer.
- f) KISD finance administration will file the depository contract with the Texas Education Agency.
- g) Should the superintendent or the Board determine that an extension of the current depository contract is not in the district's best interest, the district will initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) process as presented in TEC 45.209.