



## **HIGHLAND PARK – AMARILLO (188-903) DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN**

The District of Innovation concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools. To take advantage of these new opportunities, a school district's board of trustees must approve an Innovation Plan. Only districts with acceptable performance ratings are eligible to become a District of Innovation. Once approved, the Innovation Plan is in effect for up to 5 years.

As a District of Innovation, HPISD will have:

- Greater local control over the educational and instructional model for our students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, while maintaining accountability for results; and
- The ability to innovate and think outside the box, to the benefit of students, educators and staff.

The HPISD District of Innovation Committee is focused on five (5) areas of innovation:

1. School start date
2. Class size ratio
3. Teacher certification requirements
4. Teacher contract days
5. Teacher and Principal appraisal

### **DOI Plan Development Timeline**

- Board of Trustees adopted DOI Resolution – March 8, 2017
- Public Hearing held by Board of Trustees – April 19, 2017
- Board of Trustees appointed DEIC to serve as DOI Committee – April 19, 2017
- DEIC approved the DOI Plan by majority vote – May 10, 2017
- Board notified commissioner of intent to vote on DOI Plan – May 17, 2017
- DOI Plan posted on HPISD website – May 19 – June 21, 2017
- Board of Trustees approved the DOI Plan – June 21, 2017
- TEA notified of DOI Plan approval – June 22, 2017

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the HPISD will operate in order to provide improved student and educator opportunities. This plan sets out the laws from which HPISD seeks exemption, so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its students, educators and community. While this plan sets out those parameters, it does not and cannot establish the full

scope of innovative practices within the HPISD. Development of specific implementation plans will be ongoing in order to fully realize the work of the Committee.

If needed, adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees. It is the expectation of the Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this plan.

Any and all changes that arise from the District of Innovation work will be accompanied by a comprehensive communication plan for students, families, and the community.

## **1. School Start Date**

***Exemption from:*** Texas Education Code §25.0811

***Related Board Policies*** EB (LEGAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:***

Texas Education Code Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year:  
Texas Education Code §25.0811 prohibits school districts from starting school before the fourth Monday of August.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:***

HPISD will begin instruction no earlier than the third Monday of August in an effort to create greater flexibility in the school calendar which will enable the district to be more responsive to students by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, allowing teachers to better pace and deliver instruction and completing the first semester before the winter break. Further, this will maximize instructional time prior to administration of state assessments. The District Education Improvement Council will receive staff and community input to build the school calendar. The recommended school calendar is subject to Board approval.

## **2. Class Size Ratios**

***Exemption from:*** TEC §25.112, 25.113

***Related Board Policies:*** EEB (Legal)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:***

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted.

The district believes that lower class sizes have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Kindergarten through 4th grade students and does not seek to unilaterally create higher class sizes. We do believe, however, that appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level without the necessity of waivers from the Texas Education Agency. The goal is to make governance decisions based on the unique needs of the district's students and community.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:***

Hiring decisions prior to the start of school will be based on projected 22:1 ratios. The district will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per Kindergarten through 4th grade homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. Enrollments into a campus grade level will continue until the class size has reached 23:1 in each section of the grade level. Once a campus grade level reaches 23:1 in each section, approved transfers into that grade level will be examined for possible placement back at their home campus. A teacher may be recommended for hire at any time during the school year if the campus principal and superintendent agree that it is in the best interest of the students to do so. Transfers will not be allowed into a grade level if it will increase the ratio to over 22:1. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a Kindergarten through 4th grade homeroom class exceeds the 22:1.

**3. Teacher Certification Requirements**

***Exemption from:*** TEC § 21.003, 21.053, 21.057

***Related Board Policies:*** DBA (Legal), DK (Legal), DK (Local), DK (Exhibit)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** Current statute requires that all teachers be fully certified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)/State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), regardless of previous work experience and/or demonstrated knowledge and skills in their area of specialty. Although it is possible to seek an emergency certificate, certification is dependent upon TEA approving the request. This process is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

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 20 consecutive instructional days.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** HPISD may establish a local certification for a teacher to teach one subject outside of their state certified field and/or a grade level in which the teacher is not state certified and for industry professionals

with experience to teach Career and Technical Education and STEM courses. This strategy will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings and industry certifications. Local certification will be issued for teachers only. The district will establish local criteria such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certification to qualify for a local teaching certificate. To bolster classroom management skills of non-SBEC certified teachers, HPISD shall implement a mentorship and intensive training program for any new hire lacking SBEC certification that must be no less than one year in length. Campus principals will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials. The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the students to locally certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment.

#### **4. Teacher Contract Days**

***Exemption from:*** TEC §21.401

***Related Board Policies:*** DC(Legal), DC(Local)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** HPISD may reduce the number of days of service from a minimum of 187 to a minimum of 182 for educators employed under a 10-month contract with no effect on salaries to increase the daily rate, enhance educator recruitment, and improve morale. This plan will also provide greater opportunity for beneficial staff development specific to the educator's field of study. Any stipend paid for additional duties and responsibilities will be unaffected by a reduction in contract days. Educators under contracts other than 10-months will be unaffected.

#### **5. Teacher and Principal Appraisal**

***Exemption from:*** TEC § 21.352, 21.354, 21.3541

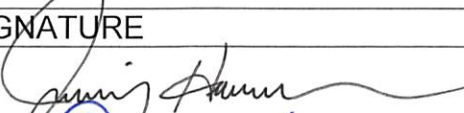


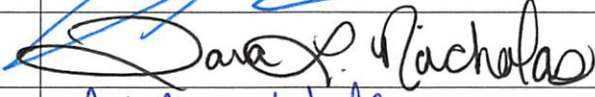
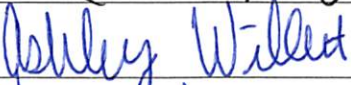

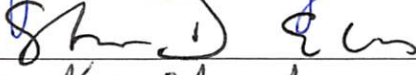

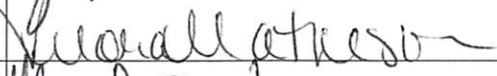


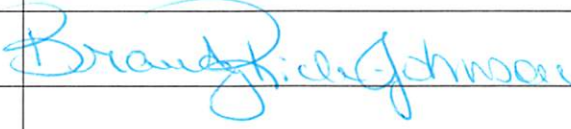
***Related Board Policies:*** DNA (Legal), DNA (Local), DNB (Legal), DNB (Local)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** HPISD believes that all staff members can and must continually improve in their role of supporting student achievement. In fact, HPISD goal #2 states that we expect administration and staff to provide an atmosphere for teaching and learning as a top priority. Teachers and principals should be evaluated fairly and assessed on the entire scope of their job functions. While student learning is the ultimate measure of teacher and principal effectiveness, multiple metrics should be utilized. We believe that our current state-required evaluation tool, T-TESS, places too heavy an emphasis on STAAR scores. We are equally concerned that our current systems will require the district to give additional

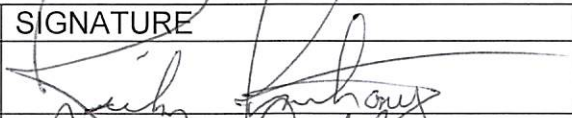
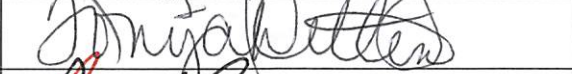

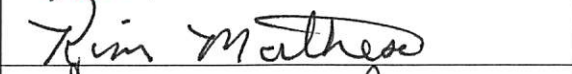



assessments in subject areas that do not have a STAAR test simply for the sake of testing to use on a teacher's evaluation. Further, evaluations should target progress made on reaching local goals and aspirations identified by individual faculty.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** HPISD intends to use the T-TESS and T-PESS as the tool for evaluating teachers and principals respectively, removing the portion of the evaluation related to using only STAAR scores and/or STAAR growth measures to rate performance.

**District Education Improvement Council (DEIC) /  
District of Innovation (DOI) Committee**

NAME	SIGNATURE	FOR	AGAINST
Jimmy Hannon		✓	
Vanette Barnett		✓	
Tim Landon		✓	
Tara Nicholas		✓	
Ashley Willett		✓	
Jordan Smith Gilley		✓	
Shari Ellis		✓	
Jennifer Kosechata		✓	
Velora Matheson		✓	
Mary Catherine Saylor		✓	
Elise Kovar		✓	
Ricardo Mercado			
Brandy Rich Johnson		✓	
Lacy Diaz			

Highland Park ISD Board of Trustees  
District of Innovation Plan Approval

NAME	SIGNATURE	FOR	AGAINST
Ricky Anthony		✓	
Tonya Detten		✓	
Brad Lee		✓	
Kim Matheson		✓	
Cindy Spanel		✓	
Candy Thornton		✓	
Amy Walton		✓	