



## **Pittsburg ISD**

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

### ***Renewal***

### ***2022-2027***

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas for public schools. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law to which charter schools are currently entitled. This provides an opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2022-2027).

#### Committee Members

Jyl Wood – Primary School Principal  
Benita Tomlinson – Primary School Teacher  
Terri Foster – Primary School Teacher  
Heather Griffin – Elementary School Principal  
Kelly McGee – Elementary School Teacher  
Susan Gilbert – Elementary School Teacher  
Todd Newman – Intermediate School Principal  
Kristal Williams – Intermediate School Teacher  
Jennifer Hammonds – Intermediate School Teacher  
Kristane Moore – Junior High Principal  
Melody Wright – Junior High Teacher  
Shele Reyes – Junior High Teacher  
Jonathan Hill – High School Principal  
Cheyenne Reynolds – High School Teacher  
Jamie Craig – High School Teacher  
Patti Ayers – Community Member  
Dia Hardeman – Community Member  
Laurie Smith – Director of Health Services  
Beth Anne Dunavant – Deputy Superintendent  
Terry Waldrep – Superintendent

## **PISD District of Innovation Plan Renewal Timeline 2021 for 2022-27 Renewal**

- September 20, 2021
  - Board approve resolution for renewal of plan
- September 28, 2021
  - Committee public meeting to approve proposed plan
- September 29, 2021
  - Final version of plan posted to website for 30 days
- November 1, 2021
  - Superintendent notify commissioner of board of trustees' intent to renew
- November 15, 2021
  - Board of trustees consider/approve proposed local plan
- November 16, 2021
  - Superintendent notify commissioner of approved plan
  - Local approved plan posted to district website
  - Superintendent provides TEA link to approved plan on website

### **1. School Start Date TEC §25.0811**

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 start date best meets the needs of the students and local community. It allows students participating in embedded dual enrollment classes an opportunity to work with more balanced semesters. It allows the district the opportunity to more closely align the fall and spring semesters in the number of minutes and/or days of instruction. Also, altering the school start date from the fourth Monday in August could provide an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.

#### **Local Guidelines**

Pittsburg ISD will determine, annually, when each school year will begin.

## **2. Employment Contracts**

### **TEC § 21.002**

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 TEC § 21.002 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced certified staff.

### **Local Guidelines**

1. 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.

## **3. Teacher Certification Requirements**

### **TEC §21.003(a), TEC§21.053, TEC §21.057**

#### **TEC §21.003(a)**

*A person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless that person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and /or State Board of Educator Certification*

#### **TEC §21.053**

*This 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 as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.*

#### **TEC §21.057**

*This requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.*

### **Proposed**

*The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for all positions. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Exemption from TEC §21.003 would allow the district the ability to locally*

*certify teachers in order to better meet the educational needs of our students, allow more flexibility in scheduling, enrich applicant pools, and provide more options for our students.*

- 1. Individuals with certain qualifications who are not certified as teachers can be eligible to teach in positions including but not limited to: Math, Spanish, ELAR, and Career and Technical education.*
- 2. Certified teachers, due to their education, background, and/or experience, could be equipped to teach a course outside of their certification area or grade level. This would allow the district the option of locally certifying them to do that.*
- 3. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials.*

#### **Local Guidelines**

- 1. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification for an individual. The individual may have background, experience, skills, work related or industry experience, an industry certification, or a post-secondary degree at a bachelor's level or higher. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document the credentials the individual possesses to teach the subject.*
- 2. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or in a grade level out of their certification area. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document the credentials the certified teacher possesses to teach the subject/grade level.*
- 3. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification of a qualified applicant holding an out of state certificate.*
- 4. The superintendent may approve or deny requests for local certification.*
- 5. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.*
- 6. An employee working under a local certification will receive a non-chapter 21 contract and will be paid in accordance with district guidelines.*
- 7. An employee working under a local certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.*
- 8. An employee working under a local certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of certified teachers including 30 clock hours per year of continuing education.*

#### **4. Inter-district Transfers**

##### **TEC §25.036**

Under Texas Education Code, 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 year.

## **Proposed**

Pittsburg ISD maintains a transfer policy requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application yearly. In approving transfer requests, the student's disciplinary history and attendance records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, 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. Pittsburg ISD is seeking the flexibility to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfers in any of the following circumstances:

1. The student's behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in an alternative program, or expulsion.
2. Student attendance falls below the TEA attendance standard of 90%.
3. Parent/Guardian is uncooperative in addressing behavior or attendance.

## **Local Guidelines**

1. Non-resident students who have been accepted as a district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expelled.
2. Non-resident students not meeting the state 90% attendance standard will be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.
3. Non-resident students whose parent/guardian is uncooperative in addressing the student's behavior or truancy concerns will be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.

## **5. Class Size and Notice of Class Size** **TEC §25.112, TEC §25.113**

### **TEC §25.112**

This statute limits the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **TEC §25.113**

This statute requires districts to notify each parent of students in the class section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

## **Proposed**

Pittsburg ISD values small class size and believes it plays a positive role in the classroom. However, we believe, in certain situations, that the addition of up to two students may be accomplished without

necessarily producing a negative consequence. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom that influence the learning environment. PISD will attempt to keep all K-4 core classrooms to a 22-1 ratio. If this is not reasonably possible, Pittsburg ISD is seeking the flexibility to add up to two students without additional paperwork.

### **Local Guidelines**

1. Should it appear necessary for the class size of a K-4 classroom to exceed this ratio, the classroom data will be compiled by the principal for review by the Superintendent.
2. The decision to increase the class size of a classroom will be made by the Superintendent.
3. A TEA waiver and parent notification will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

## **6. Local Role in Teacher and Principal Evaluations**

### **TEC §21.203, TEC §21.352**

#### **TEC §21.203**

This requires a written evaluation of each teacher at annual or more frequent intervals. The board must consider the most recent evaluations before making a decision not to renew a teacher's contract if the evaluations are relevant to the reason for the board's action.

#### **TEC §21.352**

In appraising teachers, each school district shall use:

- 1) The appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner; or
- 2) An appraisal process and performance criteria: developed by the district and campus level committees established under Section 11.251, containing the items described by Sections 21.351 (a) (1) and (2), and adopted by the board of trustees.

### **Proposal**

The district reserves the option to exercise control over decisions regarding teacher and administrator appraisals. The new statewide systems (T-TESS and T-PESS) are being introduced as a change for evaluating educational professionals for the first time since 1997. This exemption would allow PISD the flexibility to implement T-TESS or T-PESS and/or other locally developed evaluation systems.

### **Local Guidelines**

1. Develop and implement a teacher and administrator appraisal system that seeks to meet the needs of students and faculty and review and adapt this plan annually as needed for student success.
2. The plan may include components of T-TESS and/or T-Pess as well as other locally adopted components.

## **7. School Health Advisory Committee**

### **TEC §28.004 (d-1), (m) (1) (2) (3) (4)**

This law implements strict meeting (at least 4 times per year) and reporting guidelines for the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC).

### **Proposal**

The members of the SHAC will determine how often the committee should meet and how it should make a formal report to the Board of Trustees.

### **Local Guidelines**

1. The SHAC shall meet at least once per year.
2. The SHAC shall determine its own formal reporting guidelines.