



District of Innovation Plan

Huntsville Independent School District





District of Innovation Planning Committee Membership

Member Name	Role
Dr. Howell Wright	Superintendent
Dr. Greg Rodríguez	Deputy Superintendent
Rissie Owens	Board Member
Amanda Burris	Parent/Community Member
Julie Cooper	Parent/Community Member
Christie Coy	Parent/Community Member
Jake Dixon	Parent/Community Member
Beverly Echols	Parent/Community Member
Dr. Stacey Edmonson	Parent/Community Member
John Escobedo	Parent/Community Member
Tina Felder	Parent/Community Member
Kristi Glasgow	Parent/Community Member
Nicole Holland	Parent/Community Member
Scott Kaukonen	Parent/Community Member

Demetrica Lee	Parent/Community Member
Dr. Lee Miller	Parent/Community Member
Eric Odom	Parent/Community Member
Stephanie Pitts	Parent/Community Member
Joel Saucedo	Parent/Community Member
Kenyetta Scott	Parent/Community Member
Carol Smith	Parent/Community Member
Kelly Strong	Parent/Community Member
Lisa Varnado	Parent/Community Member
Dr. Richard Watkins	Parent/Community Member
David Zuniga	Parent/Community Member
Jessie Anderson	HISD Staff
Amber Bearden	HISD Staff
Lisa Black	HISD Staff
Rachel Henley	HISD Staff
Tim Hooks	HISD Staff
Maria Martinez	HISD Staff
Tracie Simental	HISD Staff
Amy Turner	HISD Staff
Shannon Williams	HISD Staff
Jayden Mathis	Student
Tristan Riggins	Student

Overview

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On February 18, 2016 the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation.

Districts are eligible for designation if certain performance requirements are met and the district follows certain procedures for adoption as outlined in statute. The designation provides the district will be exempt from certain sections of the TEC that inhibit the goals of the district as outlined in the locally adopted Innovation Plan.

The term of the designation as a district of innovation may not exceed 5 years.

District of Innovation Public Notice

Public Notice Posting - District of Innovation Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 31, 2016
Time: 5:30 pm
Location: Huntsville ISD Support & Learning Center (White Room)
1010 8th Street
Huntsville, TX 77320

Date: Thursday, September 22, 2016
Date: 5:30pm
Location: Huntsville ISD Support & Learning Center (White Room)
1010 8th Street
Huntsville, TX 77320

Strategic Design

The Strategic Design committee reviewed the compiled data from the summits, survey and focus groups to design our strategic plan. This committee's work resulted in the development of a set of shared beliefs, vision, mission, goals, action steps, a learner profile and learner outcomes. This team provided much insight to contribute to the development of our five-year plan. The commitment for those participating on the Design Team was to attend five day-long sessions.

Step 1

Design Work - November 17 & 18, 2015

Day 1 -

Discover Shared Beliefs

Call To Action: Create First Draft of District Vision

Data Analysis, SWOT Analysis

Revisit Call To Action for Agreement

Day 2 -

Finalize Call to Action and any remaining Beliefs

Report out SWOT Analysis

Critical Issues & Opportunities

Create Goals

Create Action Ideas & Research Questions

Step 2

Create Work - December 1 & 8, 2015

Day 1 -

Review Strategic Design

Create Learner Profile

Create Learner Outcomes

Create Research Questions

Day 2 -

Share All Research

Create Action Ideas

Come to Agreement on Specific Results

Create Timeline for Specific Results

Step 3

Lead Work - January 7, 2016

Understanding the Design Framework

Specific Result Analysis

Write Action Plans

Final Step

Presentation to the Board - January 28, 2016

Beliefs

We believe that...

- all students can learn.
- all students deserve opportunities to take ownership of their learning.
- diversity is essential to dynamic learning environments.
- real world applications connect all students to content and skills.
- all students are best served in schools by building positive relationships and connections inside and outside of school to help prepare them for the real world.
- all teachers are facilitators guiding students to deeper, profound learning through differentiated, meaningful lessons.
- teamwork, resources, and communication are essential at all levels.

Vision/Call to Action

All students thrive as lifelong learners and global citizens prepared for the futures they create.

Strategic Design Goals

- We will continually grow reciprocal partnerships that strengthen the bonds in the community.
- We will strategically address all identified perceptions associated with our district.
- We will enhance communication with the entire community to bring about greater success for our district.

- We will create an environment where all students will learn through a rigorous standards based curriculum focused on engagement.
- We will close the achievement gaps through using research-based strategies focused on our diverse population.
- We will provide learning facilities that are safe, functionally efficient; able to evolve with future educational needs and promote a positive learning atmosphere.

TERM

The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as outlined by the Texas Education Agency, is five years; therefore, the plan shall commence with the 2016-2017 academic year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District of Innovation Plan Committee (SPC) will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications as needed to address innovative disruptions.

INNOVATIONS

To achieve the District's Call to Action and address Board Goals, to align the District's practices and operations and to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan, flexibility is required to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels to create the following benefits:

1. An academic calendar to address the needs of students
2. An innovative practice for addressing teacher certification so as to enhance any area of the curriculum

The District requires local flexibility in the areas listed above to support each student in the district's vision where, "All students thrive as lifelong learners and global citizens prepared for the futures they create."

1. Flexibility with Calendars

As outlined in the goals and specific results statements of the Strategic Plan, Huntsville ISD will close the achievement gaps through the use of research-based strategies focused on our diverse population. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan calls for district practices focused on creating an environment where all students will learn

through a rigorous standards based curriculum focused on engagement. As such, relaxing the requirements of Texas Education Codes listed below will create a system that nurtures a calendar conducive for supporting students in dual enrollment programs and alternative school settings by allowing a flexible start and end date. These dates will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees.

Additionally, the flexibility will address the differences between the calendar of the school district and the calendars of partnering colleges and universities. As Huntsville ISD continues to expand learning opportunities aligned with House Bill 5 and the Next Generation Accountability System, flexibility with attendance will be critical to ensure student internships are a viable means of accruing credit for relevant courses.

Sec. 25.0811. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Other Considerations (Alternative Education)

School start and ending time for alternative school settings.

Offering a learning environment that is not bound by age, but is based off of students mastering specific competencies (ex. reading).

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Exempting from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Huntsville ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule to meet the needs of students enrolled in an alternative education or dropout recovery programs.

Sec. 25.082. SCHOOL DAY

(a) A school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses

Sec. 25.092. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.

2. Teacher Certifications

House Bill 5 has added significant support for the need to expand college and career opportunities for students. However, this call for increased opportunities does not adequately accommodate the special challenges faced by school districts as they seek to find individuals with the education or work-related experience needed to adequately educate students in specialized areas of instruction. Districts must often compete with industries that pay substantially more than education. In addition, industry professionals interested in education, often face increased costs from participation in alternative certification programs.

~~An exemption from TEC Code 21.055 would allow our district to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate but who the district deems qualified to teach based on a determined set of criteria.~~

An exemption from §21.003 (Certification Required) should adequately cover any teacher certification issues that may be applicable to the district and innovation strategy (note that your special education and bilingual teachers must continue to be certified).

At the present time, Huntsville ISD would focus on academic and non-academic CTE courses. However, in the future, the district may choose to exercise this option in other courses including core courses. For example, a practitioner with expertise such as computer science coding may be able to provide relevant coursework on a part-time basis. Additionally, an elementary certified literacy specialist may be able to serve in a secondary school with struggling and non-readers.

The Huntsville ISD is situated in a university town (Sam Houston State University) and this exemption would also allow for the district and the university to partner to build innovative instructional/learning environments and focus on teacher quality using

professors who may not have a teacher certification and undergraduate/graduate students with specialized skills in math, reading, or science.

Our local board of trustees would also be able to issue the school district teaching permit for an individual teaching these courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as:

- Professional work experience
- Formal training and education
- Relevant industry license, certification, or registration
- Any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credential related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching.

All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught. *A bachelor's degree would not be a requirement for CTE courses.*

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the district would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. This would require the superintendent to certify to the board of trustees that the individual has undergone a criminal history background check and is capable of proper classroom management. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain a set number of hours in classroom management training. Any school district permit would only be valid in the Huntsville Independent School District.

Additional Considerations

1. Grounded in the continuous growth models of T-TESS and T-PESS appraisal systems, the district proposes an option for new administrators as well, as teachers new to the district who have taught 5 of the last 8 years to hold a probationary certificate for two years instead of one year following their

employment with HISD. This provides new administrators and teachers to Huntsville ISD an opportunity to demonstrate adequate growth T-TESS or T-PESS model.

Sec. 21.002. TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS. (a) A school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under:
(3) a term contract, as provided by Subchapter E.

2. The district proposes the option to waive the class size limit specifically for online or distance learning courses and requests relief from the requirement of a Class Size exemption and notification to parents (TEC 25.112 and 25.113).

The District of Innovation Committee met on September 22, 2016 and used guiding questions to initiate a review and discussion of the proposed plan. The questions and responses of the committee are included in the addendum.

After the District of Innovation committee used the questions to clarify and initiate discussion on the proposed plan, Dr. Howell Wright asked if there were any questions or clarifications to the discussion questions and if not, this meeting information would be added to the District of Innovation plan.

After a further discussion the committee agreed they were prepared to post the plan to the Internet for a 30-day review and ultimately submit the plan to the Commissioner of Education, and present the plan to the District Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees for approval.

A motion was made to accept the District of Innovation Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

ADDENDUM

Q: What freedoms or exemptions from TEC will allow all students to thrive?

- Allows the district to differentiate instruction to a variety of students needs using strategies and practices that are currently limited by TEC.
- Flexibility for program to run all year round to benefit student who may experience roll back during summer months
- Flexibility to set less hours in a day but perhaps more days of instruction for those student who would benefit more from that type of instruction
- Allow for drop out students, who perhaps have to work to take care of their families, the opportunity to return to school with an alternative setting to best meet their needs
- Allow for clinical teaching-offer subject content areas of interest to students but do not have a certified teacher for or classes we are required to teach but can't find qualified teacher.
- Virtual classrooms

Q: What systems are necessary to ensure that all new teachers and new administrators have an opportunity to grow into the HISD vision?

- Orientation and onboarding sessions, both together and separate so that each audience gets the appropriate information relevant to their role-not just one but for all.
- Evaluation systems that outline exact expectations for the roles of teachers and administrators as tied to our vision. Accountability and evaluation system.
- A recruitment and hiring system that brings in candidates that meet and exceed the expectations of a district of innovation, use what we want as a district.

- A mentorship program for new teachers and administrators that provides continuous support and training their first year (s) as a member of our HISD family.
- A continuous program.
- Allow two years for a new teacher or administrator the opportunity to realistically show growth in their role

Q: What exemptions from TEC are necessary to allow full implementation of HB5 endorsements and career pathways?

- ~~21.055 Allows the district to issue local certification-allow district to self-certify~~
- 21.003 Allows for exemption from teacher certification-be allowed to bring someone in with industry experience but no certification
- 25.0811 Allows for different first day of instruction
- 25.082 Allows to modify the school day time
- 25.092 Allows for minimum attendance (90% days of instruction) allows for early graduation

Q: How can we provide more choices for more learning for more students with this plan?

- Exempt ourselves from constraints by being allowed to hire teachers with expertise but don't hold certification
- Flexible schedules (learning anytime and anywhere) for our students-alternative settings
- Distance learning/online courses
- Exempt from class size limits for online courses-not regular classes
- Provide more choices in courses they are taking

Q: How can a flexible start date provide more opportunities for all students to thrive?

- Allows time for supporting and building highly effective teachers-gives children the summer to play etc and gives teachers time to model programs, write and design curriculum, allows time for teachers to practice their craft
- Helps our students in dual enrollment programs due to calendar being able to align with partnering colleges and universities
- Students are allowed to participate more in internships-literally go all day

- AEP (Alternative Education Programs) students allowed to go to school and work which helps with flexibility for dropout students to get back into school

Q: How can waving certification requirements help struggling students and provide options for staffing critical shortage teaching areas?

- Helps struggling students by providing teachers that are trained in different areas such as welding, nursing, criminal justice, computer science to use their work experience to help student strive in the futures they create
- Waiving state certification requirements and using work expertise to help students thrive
- Struggling student can benefit by assistance from non certified teachers
- Bringing in retired college professor or someone with field experience who could benefit the students
- Wealth of information is available by uncertified persons who can bring that expertise to our students
- Teachers with Elementary Certification still be able to teach at secondary level, struggling students need that level of teaching



EXHIBIT 1: Exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code

The Huntsville Independent School District lists the following sections of the Texas Education Code that we seek exemption from as a District of Innovation.

Sec. 25.0811

Sec. 25.082

Sec. 25.092

~~Sec. 21.055~~

Sec. 21.002

Sec. 21.003

Sec. 25.112

Sec. 25.113

