

# Hawkins ISD

District of Innovation Plan



## I. Hawkins ISD as a District of Innovation

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation. Becoming a District of Innovation allows traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open enrollment charter schools. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in the Texas Education Code chapter 12A. On October 1, 2018, the Board of Trustees of Hawkins ISD passed a resolution to initiate the process of exploring and considering designation of the District as a District of Innovation under HB 1842. Becoming a District of Innovation, increases local control, therefore allowing the district to create and support innovative ideas that improve instructional outcomes for our students.

On October 17, 2018, the first District of Innovation meeting was held with all District personnel invited to attend. At this time, a preliminary committee was formed consisting of teachers and administration from all campuses. On November 5, 2018, a public hearing was held to further discuss the pursuit of the District to become a District of Innovation. At this time, the Board of Trustees approved the appointment of a Local District of Innovation "DOI" Committee. It was determined that this committee would consist of those teachers who attended the preliminary meeting along with campus administrators and the District Superintendent. It was determined that community members and parents would also be invited to join the DOI committee to provide further input. The DOI will pursue and consider input from all stakeholders.

## II. Committee Formation

On December 13, 2018, the official DOI Committee was formed consisting of the following members:

Kathy Boyd	Librarian
Jason Boyd	High School Teacher
Jennifer Browning	Middle School Teacher
Laura Cranford	Elementary Teacher
Micki Fannin	Elementary Teacher
Ron Howard	Middle School Teacher
Lisa Langford	Middle School Teacher

Morris Lyon	District Superintendent
Stephanie McConnell	Elementary Principal
Crystal Smith	Community Member
Shahana Trull	Community Member
Dr. Gregg Weiss	Secondary Principal
Dr. Dionne Williams	Curriculum Director
Lindsay Wilson	Community Member
Erin Wright	Community Member

### III. Mission and Strategy

The Hawkins's District of Innovation Plan is founded and aligned to the Board's Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Values/Beliefs for the District.

Increased local control and flexibility will improve the District's ability to pursue its current Mission Statement along with developing an innovative culture within the District. Developing an innovative culture will allow the district to improve student outcomes on college and career readiness, leadership skills, and workforce ready skills. Increased local control and flexibility will also allow for innovative and unique solutions for professional development along with increasing opportunities to provide innovative curriculum that better fits the needs of our students. The District anticipates that promoting innovation within the district can further stimulate a growth mindset. The district seeks a growth mindset within all its academic and extracurricular programs.

### IV. Texas Education Code Exemptions

Under HB 1842, the District may identify Texas Education Code (TEC) under which the District would seek exemption.

Sec. 12A.003. LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN.

(b) A local innovation plan must:

(2) identify requirements imposed by this code that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan.

Given the goals outlined by the District, and the necessity for local control in decision making of these plan elements, Hawkins ISD seeks exemption from the following TEC requirements under the HB 1842 statute.

#### A. First Day of Instruction

Under current Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 the District is prohibited from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

**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.

### **Proposed**

The flexibility of an earlier start date allows the District to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best fits the needs of the students and local community. Hawkins ISD would not begin instruction before the second Monday in August.

This would allow the District to better balance the amount of instructional time in each semester. By adjusting the school start day in August, semesters would be more balanced around Winter break. An earlier start date will provide more instructional time prior to state assessments. Junior High sports will benefit from an earlier start date by allowing more practice time before their first contest date. Teachers can have built in days to provide planning and collaboration. These opportunities, along with innovative professional development opportunities, will enable teachers to improve and design instruction that best fits the needs of our students. The school year can be designed to better fit the needs of students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities and those enrolling in college courses that begin in early June.

### **B. Probationary Contracts**

Currently, for experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

**Sec. 21.102. PROBATIONARY CONTRACT.** (a) Except as provided by Section 21.202 (b), a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28, 1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract. A person who previously was employed as a teacher by a district and, after at least a two-year lapse in district employment returns to district employment, may be employed under a probationary contract. (b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

### **Proposed**

In order to provide the most qualified teachers, the District seeks flexibility in extending Probationary Contracts for all teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired to the District effective May 2019. The District feels one year is not sufficient to truly evaluate new hires to the district.

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers, new to the profession or with less than five years of experience, hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC Sec. 21.102(c).

### **C. Transfer Students**

Under current Texas Education Code 25.001, 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 school year.

**Sec. 25.036. TRANSFER OF STUDENT.** (a) Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

### **Proposed**

Hawkins ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (LOCAL) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. 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 records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the 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. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applications for the following circumstances:

- Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion;
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard.
- Academic Achievement is not satisfactory.

Final decision to revoke transfer would be made by the District Superintendent.

### **D. Teacher Certification**

Teacher Certification for Dual Credit, Career and Technical Education Instructors, and High School Courses.

The District desires to improve student outcomes with college and career readiness. This includes the ability to offer dual credit courses, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) courses and CTE courses. With current teacher shortages, innovative solutions are necessary to provide instructors for these hard to fill positions. Under current Texas Education Code

Sections 21.003, 21.0031, 21.044, 21.053, the district is inhibited from hiring for these hard to fill, high demand areas.

**Sec. 21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.** (a) 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:

**Sec. 21.0031. FAILURE TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION; CONTRACT VOID.**

(a) An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee:

(1) does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification;

(2) fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend the employee's temporary, probationary, or emergency certificate or any other certificate or permit issued

**Sec. 21.044. EDUCATOR PREPARATION.** (a) The board shall propose rules establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. The board shall specify the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.

**Sec. 21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES.** (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

(b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

### **Proposed**

The goal of the District is to always hire the most qualified candidate for every teaching position. The District will always seek to hire certified individuals to fill teaching positions when possible. The District is seeking flexibility and exemption from TEC Code, Secs. 21.003, 21.0031, 21.044 and 21.053 under the following circumstances:

- Career and Technical - The ability to hire qualified professionals with industry and field experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.
- Dual Credit Teacher Certifications - Credentialed community college instructors or university professors, in specific content areas, may be employed to teach courses in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available.
- When qualified, secondary teachers would be allowed to teach one course outside of their content area when a certified teacher is not available. This would allow the District to increase the number of innovative courses offered at the secondary level.

## **E. Student Discipline**

### **TEC Sec. 37.007 (c), Sec. 37.010(b)**

Currently TEC Sec. 37 states that a student placed in a DAEP who engages in documented serious misbehavior while on the DAEP campus despite documented behavioral interventions may be removed from class and expelled. "Serious misbehavior" includes: (1) Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; (2) Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat; (3) Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or (4) Conduct that constitutes the offense of: a. Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07; b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08; c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03; d. Personal hazing under Penal Code 37.152; or e. Harassment, under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), of a student or district employee. If the student is expelled, the board or its designee refers the student to the authorized officer of the juvenile court for appropriate proceedings under Family Code Title 3 (Juvenile Justice Code). The Texas Education Code makes no allowance for students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction and is detrimental to the educational environment to be expelled.

### **Proposed**

- A student placed in a DAEP who engages in documented serious misbehavior (as defined above) while on the DAEP campus despite documented behavioral interventions may be removed from class and expelled.
- A student placed in a DAEP who engages in documented persistent misbehavior while on the DAEP campus, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled.

## **V. Terms of District of Innovation Plan**

The District of Innovation Plan is for five years. The plan will become effective May 2019, and will remain effect through May 2024, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DOI Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

Activation of the exemptions from the TEC will most likely require the revision and/or addition of Hawkins ISD local policies.

## **VI. Process Timeline**

October 1, 2018, Board of Trustees passed the Resolution to initiate the process of Designation of a District of Innovation.

October 17, 2018 Initial Innovation Committee meeting.  
November 5, 2018 Board of Trustees conducts a public hearing to discuss the District of Innovation process and possible options. The Board of Trustees approved the formation of an official District of Innovation Committee.  
November, 2018 District of Innovation Committee formed.  
December 13, 2018 District of Innovation Committee meeting.



