

## **Sabine ISD District of Innovation Plan 2023 - 2028**

Introduction During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed which allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which would allow them to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Sabine ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and will request the following exemptions from the Texas Education code.

### **Term**

Sabine ISD's Innovation Plan will implement the District of Innovation Plan in April of 2023 school year. The plan will go through the TEA renewal process in April of 2028 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Sabine ISD Board of Trustees in accordance with HB 1842. If at any time within this plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Sabine ISD Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

### **Innovations**

#### **1. School Start Date (TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)**

Current Law TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before The 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the development and design of the annual school calendar to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the Sabine ISD Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

#### **Innovation Strategies Proposed :**

- A. Sabine ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August. This change will create better flexibility in the development of the annual school calendar as well as allowing more opportunities in scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.
- B. The earlier start date will allow Sabine ISD to move instructional days that occur after state mandated testing dates to the front of the school year.
- C. The earlier start date will provide opportunity for an equitable balance of days for each of the three six week grading periods in the first semester.

## **2. Certification - General (TEC 21.003a) (DBA LEGAL)**

Current Law TEC 21.003(a) states 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 as provided by Subchapter B. Innovation Strategies Proposed

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach outside of their certified field(s) in hard to fill areas. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.

2. The current certification requirement sets limitations for the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CTE and STEM related courses needed throughout the district. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEA 21.003(a).

This exemption will allow the district to:

- A. Consider part time professionals to teach courses
- B. Opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession.
- C. Increase the number of CTE and STEM type courses available.
- D. Opportunities for trade related professionals to teach related courses.

3. The district will have the flexibility to recognize out of state certifications and extend the temporary one year certificate requirement. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow certified out-of-state teachers to continue to teach a course or grade level beyond the one year state temporary certificate requirement. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual is an asset to students. State issued temporary certificates will renew locally for an additional year with a two year maximum time to pass state certification test(s).

4. The superintendent will report this action to the Sabine ISD Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.

5. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

## **3. Teacher and Principal Appraisal Exemption from: TEC § 21.352, 21.353, 21.354, 21.3541**

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

Sabine ISD believes that all staff members can and must continually improve in their role of supporting student achievement and growth. 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. While Sabine ISD realizes that the STAAR test is an important measure of success it is not the only measure. Sabine ISD believes that evaluations should target progress made on reaching local goals and aspirations identified by the individual faculty and campus.

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

Sabine ISD 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 measure of rate performance. Student Growth Measures, as outlined by the state, will not be used as part of the evaluation process.

#### **4. Inter-District Transfers (Texas Education Code 25.036)**

**The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants.**

Student behavior warranting suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, expulsion, and attendance will be evaluated. In these rare cases, Sabine ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

#### **Local Guidelines**

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-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 expulsion. Students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

#### **5. Teacher Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102(b))**

Texas Education Code currently states that a probationary contract 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.

Under the current statute, when a teacher or administrator is new to the district who qualifies under the 5 of 8 rule, after the first year, the district must either offer them a term contract or terminate their contract. Sabine ISD feels that this one year period is not long enough to adequately assess if the teacher or administrator is a good fit in their position and in the district.

**Local Innovation Strategy:**

Sabine ISD would like to have the flexibility to renew the probationary contract of a teacher or administrator employed under the 5 of 8 rule for one additional year period, for a maximum of two school years for teachers and administrators who are new to the District.

This will give the principal and/or district more time to effectively evaluate and assess the teaching, interpersonal, and/or management skills of the incoming teacher or administrator to make sure they are a good fit for the District.

**6. Removal of Unwanted Visitors (Texas Education Code 37.105)****Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan**

Texas Education Code §37.105, applies to rejecting unruly visitors from campuses and school events. In 2017, the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he can appeal the ejection.

**Category of innovation**

Other innovations prescribed by the Board of Trustees.

**Innovation strategies**

The flexibility would allow designated staff members the authority to remove guests whose behavior is deemed inappropriate without warning or written notice.