

# **SABINAL**

## **Independent School District**

### ***LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN***

#### **Background**

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code by becoming a designated District of Innovation. On February 13, 2017, during the regularly scheduled board meeting, a public hearing was conducted to consider whether Sabinal ISD should develop a plan for designation as a District of Innovation. The Sabinal ISD Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution to consider developing a Local Innovation Plan. The board of trustees appointed a Local Innovation Committee to research, discuss and develop the Local Innovation Plan.

#### **Local Innovation Committee**

Michael Neuman, Assistant Superintendent and Chair

Richard Grill, Superintendent

Steve Alvarado, Principal

Patrick Peabody, Principal

Dustin Baumann, Todd Winkler, Miranda Dvorak, Jennifer Karre, Annette Horton, Jennifer Kusch, Dana Scheel, Veronica Piles, Kim Reyes, Melissa Smart

The committee met on the following dates: December 12, 2016, January 9, 2017, and February 13, 2017. In addition to the face-to-face meetings the committee collaborated on-line and each member reviewed plans from many other school districts. The Local Innovation Committee reviewed provisions in Texas Education Code that apply to HB1842 and identified those laws that an exemption would provide for greater local control and more flexibility therefore benefitting the students of Sabinal ISD. It is the belief of the committee that we, the professionals that work with our students on a daily basis and are a part of our community, are in the best position to make decisions for the betterment of students of Sabinal ISD. We believe we have developed a plan

that will allow us to do just that. Our committee voted unanimously, 13-0, on January 9, 2017 to post the following plan on-line for public comment and feedback.

This plan will take effect June 1, 2017 and continue for 5 consecutive years ending June 1, 2022. This plan may be amended by the board of trustees at any time.

Please direct any feedback and/or questions to one of the committee members listed above. You may also call or email Michael Neuman at 830-988-2472 or [mneuman@sabinalisd.net](mailto:mneuman@sabinalisd.net)

## **Timeline**

December 12, 2016	Presented to the District Improvement Team  Petition was passed and signed by a majority of the DIT
December 12, 2016	Discussed in public at the board of trustees meeting
January 9, 2017	DIT developed LIP and posted on the website
January 9, 2017	Presented to the board of trustees, which included the draft LIP
February 13, 2017	DIT discusses LIP
February 13, 2017	LIP was presented at a public hearing and board gave permission to inform the TEA Commissioner of intent to vote
February 24, 2017	LIP and notification letter sent to the TEA Commissioner of Education
March 6, 2017	DIT final approval by Board of Trustees

Sabinal ISD seeks relief from the following laws:

**First Day of Instruction (TEC 25.0811a)**

The Sabinal ISD Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of an innovative learning environment, college and career readiness, along with leadership and social and emotional development. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Finally, starting the school year earlier for students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school will promote social and emotional learning by giving those students additional time and support to enable them to adjust socially and emotionally to their new campus environments.

**Site-Based decision making TEC11.251 and TEC 28.004**

The Sabinal ISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth for by the Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 and 28 are burdensome, time consuming and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of this district, school and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one size fits all approach as detailed in the TEC 11.251 and TEC 28.004. This innovative practice will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees, as well as make better use of community, parent and business members required to be on those committees, that is required by law and it will better serve this community. In place of the Campus Improvement Teams and the SHAC, a single District Improvement Team committee will be established, meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district/campus' success and most importantly, students' success. This committee will fulfill all the federal requirements for comprehensive needs assessments for each campus, but will do it as a district committee. The committee will convene at least three times per year and generate direction of the district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will yield greater opportunity for one council to address a multitude of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

### **Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – Grade -4 class size (TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)**

While we believe that in certain circumstances small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, in many cases master teachers, who are highly trained in student engagement strategies, are equally effective with larger class size environments. Often it is not the number of students but the classroom environment that influences student learning outcomes. Sabinal ISD will attempt to keep all the core K-4 classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report this to the Board of Trustees. He will make recommendations at that time whether Sabinal ISD will look to add another teacher or use other resources available to the district at that time. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. This will give SISD flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within TEA.

### **Teacher Certification (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.057)**

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Sabinal ISD proposes, in order to best serve Sabinal ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject. b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will. c. This will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.