

BLOOMINGTON ISD

District of Innovation Plan

2019-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

II. Term

The term of the plan will begin with the 2019-2020 school year and terminate at the end of the 2023-2024 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the District website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. Refer to BISD policy AF.

III. Innovation Committee

The Innovation Committee developed this Plan and includes members representing the following:

Elvis Whaley, Interim Superintendent

Sylvia Hernandez, Administrator of Curriculum & Instruction

Dora Hernandez, Director of Special Programs

Dawn Guerra, Accounts Payable & PEIMS Coordinator

Melinda Perez, Placedo Elementary Assistant Principal

Louise Torres, Bloomington Elementary Principal

Carl Frisch, Bloomington Middle School Principal

Lina Moore, Bloomington High School Principal

Shirley Mumphord, Bloomington Middle School Counselor

Karla Gray, High School Teacher

Cynthia Clark, Middle School Teacher

Joy Gawlik, Bloomington Elementary Teacher

Sarah Harper, Bloomington Elementary Reading Interventionist

Sara Balli, Placedo Elementary Teacher

Griselda Perez, Bloomington Elementary Parent

Lori Delgado, Middle School Parent

Stephanie DeLaRosa, Middle & High School Parent

Jessica Shazli, Business Representative

IV. Timeline

January 21, 2019- 6:30pm Board Meeting

- Board approved Resolution for district to consider designation as a District of Innovation.
- Posted notice of Public Hearing to consider whether district should develop an Innovation Plan.

February 18, 2019- 6:20 pm Board Meeting

- Public Hearing held at Board Meeting.

February 18, 2019-6:30 pm Board Meeting

- Board appointed Innovation Committee.

March 6, 2019-5:30 PD Center

- Innovation Committee Meeting

March 20, 2019-4:30 PD Center

- Innovation Committee Meeting

V. Strategic Plan

This Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the District's Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, and District Improvement Plan.

Vision:

Bloomington ISD will empower students to be successful, lifelong learners who positively impact the global community.

Mission:

Bloomington Independent School District, in collaboration with the greater Bloomington community, will educate all students for college and career readiness through educational opportunities that promote self-directed learning via critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and reflection.

Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade

TEC Code: § 25.112. CLASS SIZE. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

§ 25.113 NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE. (a) A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

Proposed

- The district would no longer have to submit annual class size waivers that are continuously approved by TEA and do multiple communications to parents each six weeks allowing the district to redirect resources more effectively.

Local Guidelines:

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom, which influence the learning environment.

A. BISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22 to 1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees

B. A teacher may be hired at any time during the school year if the campus principal, and the superintendent agree that it is in the best interest of the students to do so.

C. A TEA Waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th core classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio

D. The district will continue to maintain established class size thresholds of kindergarten at 23 students to 1 teacher and Grades 1-4 at 24 students to 1 teacher. The district will provide parents class size notification at the start of school.

First Day of Instruction (School Start Date)

TEC Code: Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance - §25.0811 First Day of Instruction (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4th Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

Proposed

This flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and community.

Rationale for the Exemption:

- Restricting school start date to the 4th Monday in August operationally challenges BISD because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4th Monday in August and generally May 28th. Flexibility to the start date would allow the district to address the following issues caused by the current calendar constraints:
 1. Increased student regression due to longer summer break.
 2. The flexibility will permit more instructional days prior to state assessment in December.
 3. Allows a better balance between semesters.

Local Guidelines:

- The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year to fit the needs of the school district and community.

Ch. 21 Contracts

TEC Code: TEC 21.401 - Requires a teacher who is on a 10-month contract to work an equivalent of 187 days.

Proposed

Bloomington ISD seeks flexibility in the minimum 187 days of service requirement.

Rationale for the Exemption:

In an attempt to align the number of teacher contract days to the 75,600 minutes required of students, plus appropriate number of staff development days during the school year, the district would have the option to reduce the amount of contract days prior to each school year with no effect on teacher salaries. Due to low property values, it is difficult for Bloomington ISD to compete with area schools in the area of teacher salary. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make our salaries more competitive.

- A. This plan will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- B. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.
- C. This plan would significantly improve teacher morale.
- D. This plan will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Local Guidelines:

- During the 2019-2020 school year this would be achieved by modifying the adopted calendar to reduce the number of teacher duty days from 187 to 185, and to reduce the number of days teachers are contractually obligated to work under their ten-month contracts to 185.
- Every year during the calendar planning process, the district will strive to maintain the reduced number of teacher duty days and teacher contract days.

Teacher Certification - CTE

TEC Code: 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 as provided by Subchapter B.

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. This system is burdensome and does not consider the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC Code: Sec.21.053 requires a teacher to present his/her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certification at the time.

Proposed

In order to best serve Bloomington ISD students, decisions on certifications will be handled at the district level. Due to a limited applicant pool and teacher shortage, this exemption will allow greater flexibility in staffing in specific areas of need. Special education and bilingual teachers must continue to be certified.

Rationale for the Exemption:

- The exemption is to specifically allow the district to issue local teaching permits to teachers of non-core and CTE courses without intervention by the Commissioner to review the issued permits. The exemption is to allow the district to establish local requirements including the current requirements in Sec 21.003 for teacher preparation (including all background checks, training and classroom management preparation) to enhance our ability to compete for teaching resources with industry expertise. Additionally, an exemption to section 21.003 allows for further flexibility to not be limited to only those industry certifications where specific curriculum has been written by an industry group.

Local Guidelines:

In order to best serve BISD students, decision 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 the 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 of the individual 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 classified as an at-will employee.

C. This will allow more flexibility and innovations in our scheduling and more options and innovative offerings for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

Probationary Contracts

TEC Code: TEC 21.102(b) – 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 a least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Proposed

In order to best serve Bloomington ISD students, new contract certified employees with five or more years of experience may be subject to a two-year probationary period in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly evaluate the teacher's performance.

Rationale for the Exemption:

This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand the employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.

Local Guidelines:

New contract certified employees subject to TEC 21.102(b) may be subject to a two-year probationary period in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district who 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. This strategy will give the district sufficient time to truly consider the performance of experienced teachers before having to make a decision to end their employment. This will allow the school district the time to employ more innovative professional development strategies with teachers who may be struggling.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction per Day

TEC Code: TEC25.081 requires that each school day must be 420 minutes long in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes and to accumulate instructional minutes toward the 75,600 minutes of instruction required for students annually.

Proposed

Bloomington ISD will consider altering the length of an instructional day on a limited basis when it is locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders.

Rational for the Exemption:

Bloomington ISD does not have any intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis or without specific purpose (i.e. bad weather, professional development, early dismissal for events of community interest, for implementation of innovative instructional strategies, etc.).

Local Guidelines:

To the greatest extent possible, shortened days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.