

# Santa Rosa Independent School District Local Innovation Plan



## I. Introduction

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. To better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all members, Santa Rosa ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

A resolution to initiate the process of Santa Rosa ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 18, 2017. The Board of Trustees approved a committee that was charged with crafting a local innovation plan to improve opportunities for the students of Santa Rosa ISD. The District Innovation Committee (DIC) met on January 23, 2018 and February 6, 7, and 8, 2018 to develop the plan. Several components were discussed and data was reviewed to develop a plan that would systemically improve opportunities for students.

The Santa Rosa ISD plan is for five years, beginning in 2018-2019 school year and ending in April 2023 school year. The board of trustees will need to renew the plan in April 2023 for it to remain effective for the rest of the 2022-2023 school year. The plan may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The committee will monitor its effectiveness and provide updates and/or necessary modifications to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

## **II. District Innovation Committee**

1. Heriberto Villarreal, Superintendent
2. Rebecca Corpus, Santa Rosa High School Principal
3. Jaime Garcia, Jo Nelson Middle School Principal
4. Sylvia Ramos, Elma E. Barrera Elementary Principal
5. Manuel Lopez, Santa Rosa High School Teacher
6. Rene Ortega, Santa Rosa High School Teacher
7. Maxine Zamarripa, Jo Nelson Middle School Teacher
8. Sylvia Gonzalez, Elma E. Barrera Elementary Teacher
9. Marcy Cuevas, Parent
10. Nora Flores, Parent
11. Christy Costilla, Parent
12. Monico Prado, Community Member
13. Javier Florencia, Community Member
14. Raul Hinojosa, Community Member

## **III. District Timeline**

December 18, 2017	The board of trustees approves the Resolution to initiate consideration of a plan.
January 18, 2018	The board of trustees holds a public hearing and approves the District of Innovation Committee
January 23, 2018	DIC works on plan.
February 6, 2018	DIC works on plan.
February 7, 2018	DIC works on plan.
February 8, 2018	DIC works on plan.
February 13, 2018	Proposed plan presented to Jo Nelson Middle School Staff.
February 15, 2018	Proposed plan presented to Elma E. Barrera Staff
February 19, 2018	Proposed plan presented to Santa Rosa High School Staff.
February 28, 2018	Proposed plan posted on the district website for 30 days and sent to the Commissioner.
April 2, 2018	District-wide Advisory Committee (DAC) pursuant to Texas Education Code 11.251 holds a public meeting to approve the plan.
April 2, 2018	Board meets to approve the District of Innovation Plan by a 2/3 majority vote.

## IV. The Plan

### A. Flexibility with Calendars

A goal of Santa Rosa ISD is to ensure all students are reaching post-secondary readiness. Currently, some students are discouraged from enrolling in dual credit programs because of a conflict between the district and college/university calendars. Exempting from the requirements of the Texas Education Code provisions listed below will encourage more students to enroll in dual credit courses because it will allow the district to adopt a calendar with a flexible start and end dates to match those of the colleges and universities with whom we partner.

**TEC 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.

Strategy: Develop a calendar that assists our students taking dual enrollment classes that will match start and end dates of the colleges and universities with whom we partner, which will also allow students to register for the first summer session at a local college or university. Develop a calendar that will allow the district to balance six weeks by the number of days which will include an extra week to prepare students who are re-taking End of Course exams.

### B. Teacher Certification

In order to offer opportunities to our students, Santa Rosa ISD would like to explore the possibility of offering elective courses to our middle school. High school students will be provided opportunities to explore career pathways under HB5 by designing CTE programs that will lead to a certification by graduation. Due to the size of our district, a full-time teacher in these areas is not needed, but the possibility to provide a part-time teacher with experience in the various career fields, even if not certified, will provide students with possibilities beyond post-secondary. Therefore, Santa Rosa ISD seeks exemption from the following provision.

**TEC Sec. 21.003 – Requires districts to submit a request to the Texas Education Agency for permission to fill a position with personnel that does not hold corresponding certifications.**

Strategy: Santa Rosa ISD proposes to hire personnel exempted from certification requirements to fill positions within the district in elective courses based upon need. This will only apply to elective courses and not to core or special population programs. In addition Santa Rosa ISD would also like to use the exemption to allow those teachers that have an EC-4 certification to be able to teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **C. Class Size**

According to Section 25.112 and Section 25.113 of the Texas Education Code, grades K-4 may not have a class size greater than 22 without requesting a Class Size exemption. Santa Rosa ISD is requesting a relief from this requirement of a Class Size exemption and notification to parents. Santa Rosa ISD is a single campus rural district and student enrollment will fluctuate slightly above and below this ratio.

**TEC Sec. 25.112, TEC. 25.113 – Requires district to maintain a class size of twenty-two students or less for kindergarten-fourth grade classes. Also, requires district to notify parents of waiver filed for class size.**

Strategy: Santa Rosa ISD proposes to waive the class size limit of the 22 not to exceed 23 students in any classroom in grades K-4.

### **D. Contracts**

Santa Rosa ISD employs experienced teachers when they are the best candidate for the job. However, it is only permitted one year to evaluate the teacher before the teacher is entitled to a term contract, this time period is not sufficient to evaluate a teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Therefore, Santa Rosa ISD seeks exemption from the provision below.

**TEC. 21.102, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.**

Strategy: For experienced teachers new to Santa Rosa ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.