MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Deer Park Independent School District is to maximize educational opportunities for all students so they may perform at their highest potentials and be successful in meeting the challenges of the future.
DEER PARK ISD
DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On February 21, 2017, the Deer Park Independent School District’s Board of Trustees passed a resolution to adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District’s flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

On February 21, 2017, the DPISD Board held a hearing to allow the public to learn more about the plan, the designated innovations, and to provide feedback. The School Board appointed a District of Innovation Advisory Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District’s stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The committee met on February 22, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan and met additional times to refine the plan on February 28, 2017, and March 21, 2017. The plan was posted online for public viewing and feedback on March 1, 2017. The District of Innovation Advisory committee met to consider feedback received and made final adjustments to the plan before presenting it to the DPISD Education Improvement Committee (EIC) on April 4, 2017. At that time, the EIC meeting was open to the public for further comments. After receiving EIC approval, the recommendation was made by the committee that the plan be presented to the School Board for consideration and approval. The plan was considered for adoption by the Board of Trustees on April 10, 2017.

II. TERM

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2017-2018 school year and concluding at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. District policies will be amended as necessary to be consistent with the statutory exemptions and the Local Innovation Plan. The EIC will continually monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the plan.
### District of Innovation Advisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Brabham</td>
<td>High School North Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Byers</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffin</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>High School Wolters Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Corry</td>
<td>High School South Campus Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Deepwater Junior High Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Dickey</td>
<td>Parkwood Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Dorthy</td>
<td>High School South Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Ellis</td>
<td>Fairmont Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Che’</td>
<td>Gamble</td>
<td>Carpenter Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>San Jacinto Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>Henley</td>
<td>Dabbs Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Hart</td>
<td>Executive Director for Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy</td>
<td>Kerbow</td>
<td>Deer Park Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica</td>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>Deepwater Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronda</td>
<td>Kouba</td>
<td>Assistant Superintendent for Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>Director of Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>McLaughlin</td>
<td>Deer Park Elementary Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Mercado</td>
<td>Instructional Facilitator and DPEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari</td>
<td>Murphy</td>
<td>Chief Technology Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deana</td>
<td>Parrish</td>
<td>Deepwater Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Patterson</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>Turner</td>
<td>High School South Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>Webb</td>
<td>Deer Park Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy</td>
<td>Zorn</td>
<td>Deepwater Junior High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Timeline – District of Innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2016-January 2017</td>
<td>Inform Board of Trustees of the interest to become a District of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13, 2017</td>
<td>District of Innovation Resolution presented and adopted by the Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20, 2017</td>
<td>Public Hearing regarding District of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees approved committee to develop District of Innovation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22, 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with District of Innovation Advisory Committee to develop plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2017</td>
<td>Proposed plan posted to the District website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees sends letter to Commissioner informing of intent to become a District of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20, 2017</td>
<td>Update on Process given to Trustees at Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21, 2017</td>
<td>District of Innovation Advisory Committee met to consider recommended changes to the plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4, 2017</td>
<td>Public meeting with District EIC at which committee submits plan for consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10, 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees considers adoption of District of Innovation Plan during special meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14, 2019</td>
<td>Inform Board of Trustees of the interest to amend the District of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15, 2019</td>
<td>Proposed amendments posted to the District website</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## IV. INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS

### Instructional Rounds

Deer Park ISD embarked on the journey of instructional rounds during the summer of 2016. This new practice pushes administrators and teachers to learn new ways of thinking about the instruction delivered in our classrooms by focusing on the instructional core – the students, the teacher, and the content. It is based on the professional practice of medical rounds used by doctors in teaching hospitals. Medical rounds are a teaching and learning process where doctors lead groups of residents and specialists to interview patients, observing and analyzing their medical data that would then allow them, along with the doctor, to formulate the best plan for the patient’s improvement.

Teachers and administrators come together much like the doctor and residents, observing side by side in classrooms, describing what they see in nonjudgmental language, looking at patterns, making predictions, and providing possible next steps for academic gains. Our schools develop a Problem of Practice – a school-identified problem with student learning that could be improved if specific information is obtained, providing a course of action to pursue. Network teams composed of teachers and administrators visit schools to conduct the instructional rounds, providing valuable information to the school. In addition to the Network Rounds Teams, individual schools conduct internal rounds, visiting classrooms, observing and gathering information focused on the identified problem of practice. The
continuous process allows our District to make reflective changes in our instructional delivery while creating a culture of success for our students.

**Professional Learning Communities**

The practice of Instructional Rounds has allowed our schools to begin having deep conversations around our own current instructional practices. The focus of our Professional Learning Communities is not on teaching but on learning, with the intended commitment of success for all students. Collectively, teachers and staff members work collaboratively to focus on student learning. The questions considered within our discussions are: 1. What do we want each student to learn; 2. How will we know when each student has learned it; 3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? 4. How will we respond if they already know it? Students who experience difficulty are then provided with systematic and timely interventions. Our goal through our PLCs is for our teachers to work together to improve and analyze their classroom practices with a continuous focus on student learning and success.

**V. INNOVATIONS**

**DPISD seeks flexibility and exemptions from the following statutory requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uniformed School Start Date</th>
<th>EB (Legal)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas Education Code §25.0811 (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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rationale:**
Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:
- Balance the amount of instructional time/days per semester
- Flexibility in the start and end of the school year
- School calendar would align more with college schedules, allowing students to enroll in summer courses that start in early June
- Allows for flexible opportunities for professional development
- More instructional days before required state assessments (i.e. STAAR)
- Provide additional flexibility in calendar planning

**Innovation:** TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) *innovative curriculum, instructional methods*, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement
**Action Steps:**
- Revise calendar to start before the last Monday in August
- Balance instructional days per semester
- End the first semester before winter break
- Keep CIC, EIC and the community informed of the changes to the calendar and the rationale behind it
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of School Day</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEC 25.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) A school day shall be at least 7 hours each day, including intermissions and recess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC (Legal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rationale:**
Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:
- Individual campus flexibility, independence and creativity for designated early release days
- Additional opportunities for teacher professional development and collaboration
- Individualized, flexible opportunities for alternative high school students

**Innovation:** TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) *Modifications to the school day or year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Steps:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Create a flexible calendar, which includes early release time for students during each nine-week grading period to accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Utilize the early release days to support the information gained through campus and network instructional rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Utilize the early release days to support campus principals, teachers and staff through their Professional Learning Communities as they perfect their craft of teaching, deepen their content knowledge and analyze data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plan time for parent teacher conferences to be scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Schedule early release days for the administration of final exams at the secondary level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texas Education Code §25.092</th>
<th>FEC (Legal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rationale:
This would provide flexibility for students to be awarded credit based on course completion rather than daily attendance. It would apply to students who:
- Have chronic health issues
- Experience family issues that keep them from attending school
- Want to accelerate their academic career through our Wolters DPHS accelerated school
- Want to complete District approved on-line courses for credit

### Innovation:
TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) **innovative curriculum**, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement

### Action Steps:
- Allow students to demonstrate mastery of the course through various methods to award credit, including but not limited to personalized learning and varied locations and times for instruction
- Evaluate a student’s potential for success in these various opportunities through the recommendations of teachers, counselors and administrators, who will evaluate a student’s potential for success in these various opportunities
- Examine different formats and instructional strategies such as online course work, blended course work, dual enrollment, early college, performance tasks, community-based learning, independent study, mentorships, and credit recovery for the awarding of credit
- Examine practical opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of content-specific standards at all grade levels
**Teacher Appraisal System/Local Role**

| Texas Education Code §21.352 (a)(2) The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including: 
| 
| i. The performance of teachers’ students (student growth measure) |
| Rationale: |
| - It is essential to maintain flexibility in using a variety of measurements, including goal-setting, self-assessment, observations, student progress toward learning objectives, and other formative assessments in determining the performance of our teachers |
| - Flexibility in the evaluation of various performance measures is valued in the creation of the DPISD appraisal instrument |
| - DPISD believes this should be a local decision to meet the needs of our students, teachers, and community |
| Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, *campus governance*, and parental involvement. |
| Action Steps: |
| - Eliminate the student growth measure component from the DPISD appraisal instrument used for the evaluation of certified personnel |
| - Evaluate teachers using various performance measures, including classroom observations, walk-throughs, self-assessments, goal-setting and tracking |
**Campus Behavior Coordinator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texas Education Code §37.0012 (a)</th>
<th>FO (Legal)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rationale:**
- Principals and Assistant Principals already serve in this capacity and it is unnecessary at this time
- The collaboration between a principal and their assistant principal(s) is valued in implementing Chapter 37 of the TEC

**Innovation:** TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, *campus governance*, and parental involvement.

**Action Steps:**
- Serving currently in this role are principals and assistant principals
- Collaboration among campus principals and assistant principals addresses the requirements of Chapter 37 of the TEC
- Developing rapport with students, administrators can hold students accountable while teaching them how to more effectively monitor their own behavior in the future
## Class Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEC 25.111-113</th>
<th>EEB (Legal)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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. A campus or district must submit a waiver to TEA seeking an exception from the 22:1 class size ratio. They must also provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rationale:
Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- The district does believe that small class size can play a positive role in student learning, but also realizes that this must be balanced with the logistics and timing of adding staff.
- According to the work of researcher John Hattie, class size holds an effect size of 0.15 which demonstrates little impact within the classroom.
- Most importantly, research demonstrates it is the teacher in the classroom, not class size, which has the greatest impact on learning.

### Innovation: TEC 25.111-113 Modifications to Class Size
The District will maintain the 22:1 student to teacher ratio in Kindergarten through 4th grades and will continue to follow the process of thoughtful planning, assignment of teachers to the schools with growing student enrollment, reviewing staffing ratios, and making decisions in the best interests of students while taking into consideration the financial capacity of the District. In the event that class sizes exceed the 22:1 ratio, in Kindergarten – 4th grade, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the Superintendent will notify the Board of Trustees for approval. Additionally, parents will be informed in the event a K – 4th core classroom reaches 24:1. This exemption provides DPISD local control over class size ratios, without the unnecessary step of seeking a waiver from the Texas Education Agency.

### Action Steps:
- Survey campus enrollment, staffing ratios, and class sizes at the beginning of each school year and monitor throughout.
- Reassign available staff when possible to relieve classrooms with student enrollments exceeding 22:1.
- Review campus enrollment, staffing ratios and class sizes with the Superintendent.
- Review staffing ratios to determine if additional staff can be hired and if the timing of a new hire is in the best interests of students.
- Notify the Board of Trustees to seek approval of classes exceeding 22:1.
- Notify parents of class sizes exceeding 24:1 and explain plans to meet student needs.
### Alternative Group Health Coverage

**TEC 22.004**

(i) provides notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a district participating in the uniform group coverage program established under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, may not make group health coverage available to its employees under this section after the date on which the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, is implemented.

(i) precludes the district from providing alternative group health coverage available to its employees under this section after the date on which the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, is implemented “program” (TRS ActiveCare) established by 1579 of the Insurance Code.

**Rationale:** Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- DPISD would be able to provide alternative group health coverage to its employees in addition to the health coverage made available by TRS ActiveCare without opting out of the “program” as described in 34 Texas Administrative Code 41.30(a)(4).
- This would provide the ability to provide better and cheaper health coverage to its employees without violating any State statute or regulation.

**Innovation:** TEC Ch. 22.004 *Alternative Group Health Coverage* is not in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District’s local innovation plan pursuant to Texas Education Code 12A.004 and the list of the Commissioner’s prohibited exemptions in Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.

**Action Steps:**

- Currently DPISD is only allowed to offer TRS – ActiveCare to employees. DPISD will investigate possible innovative Group Health Coverage plans that can be developed to reduce costs, improve convenience for employees, offer innovative healthcare solutions such as, but not limited to, telemedicine, district-based clinics, ‘local’ physician networks, etc.