

# **HAWLEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN**



**2018-2019**

# District of Innovation Committee Members

## 2016-2018 Advisory Committee

### ADMINISTRATION

Jimmy Burns

Mitch Ables

Melody Collier

Laurie Florence

Nikki Grisham

Chad Hoffman

Wende McAndrews

Kevin Stoker

Terry Thompson

Superintendent

Athletic Director

Student Services/ District Programs Director

Elementary Principal

High School Principal

Middle School Principal

Food Services Manager

Technology Director

Maintenance Director

### DISTRICT STAFF

Kara Barbee

Donna Bullington

Evynne Caffey

Amy Chapman

Christen Cruse

Tiffany Doughty

Sonya Fleener

Tara Gardner

David Gaston

Alicia Gruben

Melissa Guidera

Misty Heathington

Vivian Sayre

Robyn Scott

Regina Siller

Charla Sims

Lisa Snow

Marci Stokes

Brenda Wehmeyer

Classroom Teacher

School Counselor

Classroom Teacher

School Counselor

Classroom Teacher

Classroom Teacher

### COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Misti Allen

Parent/ Community Member



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

House Bill 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 January 13, 2017, Hawley Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation (DOI). The purpose of passing the Resolution was to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve the educational opportunities for the benefit of students, staff, and the community.

## **II. TERM**

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2017–18 school year and concluding at the end of the 2021–22 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

## **III. A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board's Mission and Strategic Goal Priorities.

### **A. MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of Hawley ISD is to produce responsible, productive citizens in a safe, structured, and nurturing environment.

- Goal 1

Hawley ISD will create an atmosphere where every individual student is engaged, challenged, and supported in order to reach overall success.

#### **Indicators of Success**

- Every student has opportunities and resources for post-secondary training.
- The district will create an atmosphere for student to connect daily.
- Every student will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.

- Goal 2

Hawley ISD will strive for a purposeful, inviting community-school relationship where community interaction is valued and encouraged.

### **Indicators of Success**

- School and Community lines are blurred.
- Open facilities resources to include library, gym and elementary park in the evening.
- Deliberate planning of school/community spirit events that promotes collaboration of the school and community stakeholders.

- **Goal 3**

Hawley ISD will develop and maintain plans for the short to long term maintenance of school facilities.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Expansion of and efficient use of current facilities for possible growing populations.
- Support the maintenance and acquisition of new technology and infrastructure.
- Provide a safe environment for students.

- **Goal 4**

Hawley ISD will hire and develop educators who will embrace the challenges of preparing all students to become lifelong learners.

### **Indicators of Success**

- Support and facilitate high quality professional development.
- Ensure high quality instruction to enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals.
- Provide leadership and professional representation to benefit positive community, teacher and student relationships.

## **B. PARAMETERS:**

The following parameters are established as guidelines for how decisions would be made and approved in accordance with our beliefs, mission and objectives:

1. We will make decisions in the best interest of students.

2. We will treat all people with dignity and respect.
3. We will model and expect personal responsibility.
4. We will practice responsible stewardship of our resources.
5. We will not compromise our commitment to excellence with integrity.

### **C. STRATEGIES:**

The following strategies are adopted for accomplishing our strategic vision, mission, and goals:

1. We will craft a system of innovative learning approaches, patterns, and practices that respond to the unique needs, interests, and talents of all students.
2. We will ensure a culture of integrity, service, and community committed to excellence, innovation, and responsiveness.
3. We will leverage the use of time, resources, and space to address the needs and learning goals of our students and community.
4. We will expand and enhance unique learning opportunities through strategic partnerships both in and outside the District.

### **D. INNOVATIONS:**

To achieve the District's Vision and Mission, as well as to align the District's Practices and operations with the District's Goals, Hawley ISD needs the flexibility to exert local control, at both the District and Campus levels, to:

- Promote innovative curricular approaches
- Promote innovative instructional pedagogical practices
- Promote blended learning and digital ethics
- Promote innovative use of learning time by modifying the school calendar and the use of learning time
- Promote innovative ideas regarding campus governance

- Promote innovative ideas regarding parental involvement
- Promote innovative ideas regarding Community participation

In order to achieve these goals, the District needs local flexibility in the areas listed above to improve student learning and ensuring that graduates are empowered learners, global competitors, responsible citizens, and innovative entrepreneurs.

Subsequently, the District needs more latitude to expand the potential for providing more high-quality, meaningful professional learning opportunities for staff so that they can enhance their professional capacity and collaborate regarding best practices.

The promotion of innovative curriculum and instructional pedagogical practices will help the District provide more engaging and challenging learning, using digital tools and systems so that learning is not confined to the four-walls of the classroom and students have a personalized pathway to meet their learning needs. Promoting innovative ideas regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement will help build strong supports for students, schools, and the community by increasing community partnership which brings together education, business, and civic agencies so that every school, family and student will feel supported by, and connected to, the District.

Finally, modifications in the scheduling of the school year and the school day will provide the flexibility necessary to:

- Move from an emphasis on “seat time” to an emphasis on “learning time”
- Try new innovative approaches that engage students in enriched and accelerated learning opportunities
- Allow more time for providing professional learning opportunities for staff.

#### **IV. REQUIREMENTS OF THE EDUCATION CODE THAT THE LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTS THE DISTRICT FROM (UPON ADOPTION OF THE PLAN)**

##### **A. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC 25.092)**

In order to provide engaging and challenging learning to all students, the District needs relief from Texas Education Code Section 25.092, which inhibits the goals of the DOI Plan by not allowing the District to issue class credit or a final grade for a class if a student is not in attendance an arbitrary percentage of the time that a class is offered. In other words, the law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on “seat time” rather than based on content mastery.

Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting active learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, and reducing the number of dropouts/increasing the number of qualifying graduates.

**Proposal:**

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on “seat time” rather than based on content mastery. Flexibility in the abstaining from the requirement means the district won’t have to penalize students who miss class due to enriching activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances that supports the district goal to educate the whole child. To meet the needs of 21st century learners, the district would like to investigate the option to provide students credit for courses based on content mastery, not the amount of time the student spends in the classroom.

One district goal is to provide a rigorous, active, and engaging K-12 curriculum through innovative teaching and learning methods. These methods and strategies may require varied forms of delivery and be supported by problem-based, blended, and personalized learning for students and may require flexible scheduling in regards to where and how students learn. Students working independently or working on group projects may complete work in various locations (including but not limited to labs, field trips, work-related areas, etc.) and varied timelines. Exemptions from Section 25.092 will benefit our students in the way that instruction will be delivered and ultimately in student learning outcomes. The district believes that awarding a student credit or a final grade for a class based on content-based mastery rather than “seat time” will improve student achievement, student test scores, and graduation rates.

This exemption would allow the district to provide innovative options to promote student engagement in course material in flexible ways, ultimately allowing learning to happen anytime anyplace apart from the traditional way of delivering instruction. Our students attain valuable and meaningful learning from extra/co-curricular activities and experiences that currently count against the student’s 90% attendance availability if a student has to miss part of the traditional school day. Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

**B. First Day of Instruction (TEC 25.0811)**

The District Goals emphasize the importance of responsive learning environments, students reaching their full potential, and the importance of students producing authentic work products that are indicative

of high-level thinking and incorporate 21st Century skills. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

**Proposal:**

Flexibility to begin instruction no earlier than the third Monday of August will enable the District to be more responsive to students 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. Another important consideration is the fact that by delaying the start of school, summer activities are pushed later into June. Thus, things such as summer school, summer enrichment programs, and other sports activities are delayed because of starting school later. 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, for students transitioning from elementary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school, starting the school year earlier 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.

**C. Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003)**

Texas Education Code TEC 21.002 states that “a school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under either a probationary, continuing, or term contract. TEC 21.003 states that “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.”

With the adoption of House Bill 5 by the Texas Legislature in 2013, the state’s graduation requirements moved to a more personalized graduation plan that allowed students to earn endorsements in specific areas of study, including STEM, business and industry, public services, etc. Many of the career pathways that fall under the endorsements, such as health services or engineering, require very specialized certification in that particular field. 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 to hire without certification, with the requirement for the individual to obtain certification in a specified time. TEA then approves or denies this request.

The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of specialized CTE course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the certification requirements set forth in law.

## **Proposal:**

To adequately supply programs with qualified candidates, the district requires the flexibility to hire community college and university professors, as well as current staff members who would qualify for placement in assignments outside of their traditional certification areas and to retain them. The district will make decisions on certification needs for the various special programs. These exemptions are of particular importance for hard-to-fill and high-demand courses. The district will ensure that professional development plans are in place to train non-certified personnel in pedagogy and to provide needed support.

Before examining the employment of non-certified personnel, all efforts will be made to hire state certified teachers. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction, the District will have the flexibility to hire professionals in trades, community college instructors, university professors, business professionals or certified teaching professionals seeking assignments outside of their certification area. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools in specialized CTE course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

In order to best serve our students, decisions on teacher certification in these specialized areas will be handled locally.

- The Campus Principal may submit to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject out of his/her certified field.
- An individual with experience in a CTE field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The Campus Principal will submit the request to the Superintendent with all the individual's credentials.
- The Campus Principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the person possesses qualifying this individual to teach this course.
  - The employee must possess a state recognized license or certification in the course of study for which they are being recommended for employment.
  - Included in this request must be a summary of all the steps taken to find a state certified educator for the position.

- The Superintendent will then submit this action to the Board of Trustees for Board approval prior to the individual beginning any employment.
  - Local teaching certificates will be for one year.
  - The employee will be given an employment agreement for one year.
  - This local certificate option is not available for any course below 7th grade.
  - Parental notification to those parents who have a student enrolled in a course with a locally-certified teacher will continue as currently required by law.
  - Locally-certified teachers must complete district-led classroom management training along with any other continuing education requirement determined by the Board of Trustees and will be assigned a state certified teacher as a mentor.

#### **D. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)**

Currently, a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary 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.

This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data. Upon exemption from TEC 21.102(b), all contract employees will be subject to the probationary period set out in TEC 21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

#### **Proposal:**

- Flexible Evaluation Period of New Employees – Hawley ISD may issue a probationary contract of up to two years for new employees that are experienced teachers, counselors, nurses, or administrators that have been employed in public education for at least three of the last five previous years. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness because current timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the end-of-year evaluations.
  - Local Guidelines:
    - Probationary Employees will receive a plan designed for growth with clear goals and benchmarks.

- Probationary Employees will be assigned a trained Mentor for support and feedback.
  - Campus Principals will evaluate the Employee through additional observations and walkthroughs.
  - Campus Principals will submit persons for renewal or nonrenewal to the Superintendent.
  - The Superintendent will determine if the decision is in the best interests of the district.
- The Board may terminate a probationary contract based on Superintendent recommendation at the end of the contract period and shall give notice to the employee no later than the ten days before the last day of instruction required in the contract.

#### **E. Teacher Appraisal System (TEC 21.352)**

Appraisal of Teachers must be based on job-related performance, and as per Texas Education Code 21.352 Appraisal of Teachers, 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 teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures, and the performance of teachers' students.

The new statewide teacher appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are being implemented statewide for the first time since 1997. While we have piloted these programs, Hawley ISD believes that the following modifications to the current evaluation schedule would benefit the District more adequately.

#### **Proposal:**

- Hawley ISD will continue to use T-TESS with the following amendments to the evaluation system.
  - a. All teachers must be formally evaluated every school year. Every teacher will receive a minimum of 1 formal announced evaluation and 3 informal walkthroughs per year, with or without a pre-conference.

- b. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and to set classroom goals and a staff development plan.
- c. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on T-P ESS.