



# HALLSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Excellence in Education"

## DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 that allows school districts greater local control and flexibility regarding certain state-level regulations in an effort to utilize the designation to better serve students.

The proposed plan, once adopted, will remain in effect for the next five years (2019-2023). The plan may be amended at any time by the District of Innovation Committee with the approval of the school board.

## STATUTES UNDER CONSIDERATION AT THIS TIME INCLUDE:

### **Probationary Contracts**

DCA(LEGAL) (Ed. Code 21.102)

#### **Current Statute:**

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five years of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

#### **Proposed:**

Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired in Hallsville ISD, which will allow us to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.

### **K-4 Class Size**

EEB(LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

#### **Current Statute:**

Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.

Along with this waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

#### **Proposed:**

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 students, but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. HISD will attempt to keep all K-4<sup>th</sup> core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a K-4<sup>th</sup> core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives HISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

### **Teacher Certification**

DK(LEGAL), DK(LOCAL), DK(EXHIBIT)

#### **Current Statute:**

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.

#### **Proposed:**

In order to best serve HISD 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/school district teaching permit. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all of 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/school district teaching permits will be for one year. The employee will be on a probationary status.
- c. This will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

### **Uniform School Start Date**

EB(LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

#### **Current Statute:**

Students may not begin school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August. In the past, districts could apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier to meet the needs of the local community. This waiver opportunity was met with resistance from the Texas tourism groups who lobbied to have the practice ended, because they believed it was detrimental to the Texas tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, with no exceptions.

**Proposed:**

The flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Flexibility to start earlier in August would help our district plan for balanced instructional time in the semesters that would support semester course curriculum. This flexibility will be implemented beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.



Addendum: Approved 12/17/2018

## **Contract Service Days**

DC(LEGAL) DEA (LEGAL) (TEC 21.401)

### **Current Statute:**

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days.

### **Proposed:**

Reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 184 days with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students (§25.081).

- a. Enhance teacher recruitment by improving daily rate
- b. Improve campus morale
- c. Provide flexibility during summer months for teachers to seek out beneficial professional development