

ADOPTED DISTRICT INNOVATION PLAN – GROOM ISD

Groom ISD Innovation Plan - 2017

Groom Innovation Committee

Jay Lamb, Superintendent

Timeline:

Board Authorizing Resolution

December 20, 2016

Board Public Meeting (DOI)

January 16, 2017

**DOI Committee Appointed by
Board**

January 16, 2017

DOI Committee Meetings

February 1, 2017

February 8, 2017

DOI Plan Completed

February 8, 2017

DOI Plan Posted to Website

March 2, 2017

TEA Notification of Board

Action on the DOI Plan

March 2, 2017

District Decision-Making

Committee Public Meeting

February 22, 2017 - Approved

Board Action to Adopt DOI Plan

April 10, 2017 APPROVED

Plan Effective – June 1, 2017

GROOM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Local Innovation Plan

Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

- Jay Lamb - Superintendent
- Stephen Vanderpool - Principal
- Tony Dodson - Asst. Principal/Technology
- Kaitlyn Moritz - Counselor
- Jowannah Powers- High School Teacher
- Kamy Whatley- Middle School Teacher/CATE
- Lisa Roskens – High School Teacher/CATE
- Melissa Ritter – Elementary Teacher
- Dayna Britten – Middle School Teacher
- Melissa Lambert – Parent
- Nicole Ritter – Parent
- Brenda Hendricks – Community Member
- Sara Hudson – Community Member

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, during Regular Session of 2015, permits eligible Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In accordance with **19 TAC § 102.1305**, on **December 20, 2016**, the Groom Independent School District’s (“Groom ISD” or the “District”)’s Board of Trustees (to be known as “Board”) passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

On **January 16, 2017**, the Board appointed the members listed above as the Local Innovation Plan Committee (“Committee”) comprised of district administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. The Committee met on February 1 and February 8, 2017 to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan (“Plan”).

Term

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning **June 1, 2017, and ending May 31, 2022**, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with applicable law. The Committee will annually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan on or before May 1st of each year of implementation. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Groom ISD Local Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency.

Innovations

The District proposes the innovations below by exempting itself from the requirements of the Texas Education Code in the following areas:

I. Teacher Certification - TEC §21.003, TEC §21.053, TEC §21.057

*Board Policies Affected: DBA(LEGAL), DBA(LOCAL), DK(LEGAL),
DK(LOCAL), DK(EXHIBIT)*

Texas Education Code Section §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 of 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.

Texas Education Code Section §21.053 states that:

(a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

(b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Texas Education Code Section §21.057 states that:

(a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom.

(b) The superintendent of the school district shall provide the notice required by Subsection (a) not later than the 30th instructional day after the date of the assignment of the inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher.

(c) The school district shall:

- (1) make a good-faith effort to ensure that the notice required by this section is provided in a bilingual form to any parent or guardian whose primary language is not English;*

(2) retain a copy of any notice provided under this section; and

(3) make information relating to teacher certification available to the public on request.

(d) For purposes of this section, "inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher":

(1) includes:

(A) an individual serving on an emergency certificate issued under Section 21.041(b)(2); or
 (B) an individual who does not hold any certificate or permit issued under this chapter and is not employed as specified by Subdivision (2)(E); and
 (2) does not include an individual:
 (A) who is a certified teacher assigned to teach a class or classes outside his or her area of certification, as determined by rules proposed by the board in specifying the certificate required for each assignment;
 (B) serving on a certificate issued due to a hearing impairment under Section 21.048;
 (C) serving on a certificate issued pursuant to enrollment in an approved alternative certification program under Section 21.049;
 (D) certified by another state or country and serving on a certificate issued under Section 21.052;
 (E) serving on a school district teaching permit issued under Section 21.055; or
 (F) employed under a waiver granted by the commissioner pursuant to Section 7.056.

(e) This section does not apply if a school is required in accordance with Section 1111(h)(6)(B)(ii), No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Section 6311), and its subsequent amendments, to provide notice to a parent or guardian regarding a teacher who is not highly qualified, provided the school provides notice as required by that Act.

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach **Career and Technical Education (CTE), Technology, Engineering, and the Arts.**

Our plan:

To allow flexibility in hiring personnel, Groom ISD will make all decisions on teacher certification and assignments locally as follows:

- *Notifications under TEC §21.057 shall not be necessary.*
- *The campus principal may submit in writing to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a field related to his/her field and for which he/she is not fully certified to teach in Texas, without seeking approval from TEA.*
 - ***The request must include the reason(s) for the request and document which qualifying credentials the teacher holds, justifying the assignment without proper certification.***
- *The campus principal may submit in writing to the superintendent a request to allow an uncertified individual to teach a particular class or classes, without seeking approval from TEA.*
 - ***The request must include the reason(s) for the request and document which qualifying credentials the uncertified individual possesses that qualify him/her to teach the relevant subject(s). The superintendent will***

then determine whether to recommend that the Board hire the individual to teach the relevant subject(s). The Board retains final authority for the employment of uncertified individuals as teachers.

- *Emergency certificates/permits from TEA will no longer be necessary under this Plan.*
- *Any employee hired under a local district teaching permit in accordance with this Plan must (1) comply with the professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in Section D of the Groom ISD School Board policy for Personnel, except as such standards, ethics, and requirements are amended by this Plan and (2) be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies DNA(LOCAL) and DNB(LOCAL).*
- *Additionally, a teacher instructing in an area outside of his/her primary certification area must be appraised in that instructional area.*

II. Calendar – TEC §25.081(e), TEC §25.0811, TEC §25.0812, TEC §25.082(a)

Board Policies Affected: EB(LEGAL), EB(LOCAL), EC(LEGAL), EC(LOCAL)

Texas Education Code §25.081(e) states that *“for purposes of this code, a reference to a day of instruction means 420 minutes of instruction.”*

Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that *“a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday of August.”*

Texas Education Code §25.0812 states that *“a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.”*

Texas Education Code §25.082(a) states that *“a school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.”*

Districts are no longer afforded the flexibility through a waiver to alter the start and end dates of the school calendar. Also, school districts are not afforded the flexibility intended in HB 2610 to bank minutes of instruction to be used when an emergency or bad weather event happens within the district’s regular approved calendar. It is the intent of Groom ISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community while maintaining annual total minutes of at least 75,600. This flexibility will allow the district to evaluate these needs annually and make the best decision for the well-being of our students and community.

Our plan:

To allow for flexibility in the school calendar start and end dates and to use the minutes earned within the District to provide additional flexibility in the instructional calendar, Groom ISD will:

- **Make decisions regarding school start and end dates locally**
 - This will allow Groom ISD students to improve academic success by balancing the instructional time evenly between semesters
 - This will provide Groom ISD teachers with the proper instructional time to pace the first and second semesters.
 - This will allow Groom ISD additional time within the first semester for transitioning students into Kindergarten and grades 6 and 9.
- **Provide flexibility in “banking” minutes for emergency situations**
 - **Groom ISD will maintain the school calendar year as 75,600 minutes but will use these minutes with the flexibility outlined in the Plan to account for the maximum instructional time while limiting the impact on parents and community.**
- **Make decisions regarding the length of the school day locally**

III. Contract Service Days – TEC §21.401

Board Policies Affected: DC(LEGAL), DC(LOCAL)

Texas Education Code §21.401(b) states that “an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.”

While the passage of HB 2610 changed the minimum required days of instruction to minimum required minutes of instruction, the law did not change the 187 days of service requirement for educators. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision, provided that the District does not reduce the annual pay of the employees’ contracts.

Our Plan:

To allow flexibility in the number of required contractual days of service for District educators, decisions regarding the number of days of service required for District educators will be made locally as follows:

- *The District will maintain the salary schedule for all certified employees.*
- *Annually the Board will consider the certified salary schedules as part of the regular budgeting process.*
- *Annually the administrative staff will evaluate the number of contract days needed for District educators in that school year and shall set the number of calendar work days prior to September 1st of the contract year.*

- *Groom ISD will not reduce the annual salary of District educators as a result of any reduction in days of service made pursuant to this Plan, except in accordance with laws from which the District is not seeking exemption.*

IV. Probationary Contracts – TEC §21.102(b)

Board Policies Affected: DCA(LEGAL)

Texas Education Code §21.102(b) states that:

*(b) 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.***

Our Plan:

To provide flexibility in the length of the probationary period for experienced teachers new to the District, this Plan exempts the District from the statutory provision above that limits the probationary period to one year for persons who have been employed as teachers in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the District. This Plan does not exempt the District from the other provisions of Texas Education Code §21.102. This innovation will be implemented by the District as follows:

- *The District, in its discretion, may extend the length of the probationary period to two years, instead of just one year, for experienced teachers (those who have taught for five of the last eight years) who are new to the District. This will allow the District sufficient time to adequately evaluate the teacher's classroom performance and provide the teacher with sufficient time to acclimate to the District's educational environment.*
- *This extension will not be mandatory, but, may be utilized when deemed appropriate by the District.*

V. **Mentors – TEC §21.458**

Board Policies Affected: DEAA(LEGAL), DEAA(LOCAL)

Texas Education Code §21.458 states that “each school district may assign a mentor teacher **to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience** in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned.”

Our Plan:

To allow flexibility in the assignment of mentors to struggling educators, Groom ISD will:

- Continue to assign mentors to teachers with less than two years of experience;
- Have the flexibility to assign a mentor to any teacher, regardless of experience level, that is in need of assistance, at any time.

VI. **90% Attendance Rule – TEC §25.092**

Board Policies Affected: EI(LEGAL), EI(LOCAL), FEC(LEGAL), FEC(LOCAL)

Texas Education Code §25.092 states that, “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 percent of the days the class is offered.**”

Our Plan:

To allow flexibility in determining attendance standards locally, Groom ISD will have the ability to exercise local discretion in awarding credit to students upon successful completion of course objectives without regard to the mandatory 90% seat time rule.

VII. Depositories – TEC §45.205

Board Policies Affected: BDAE(LEGAL), BDAE(LOCAL)

Texas Education Code §45.205 states as follows:

*(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall **serve for a term of two years** and until its successor is selected and has qualified.*

*(b) **A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms.** An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206.*

(c) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Our Plan:

Because Groom ISD is a small, rural community possessing only one local financial institution and because, historically, no neighboring financial institution has ever successfully bid for the District's business as the District's depository, the Plan will allow local flexibility in the length of the depository contract, as follows:

- *The Plan allows the District to designate the length of the initial term and any renewal terms for its depository contracts.*
- *For example, this will give the District the ability to have a five year depository contract with the option of two five year renewals prior to rebidding the contract.*

Implementation

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities for academic success and to ease some financial constraints on the District. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate district leaders, administrators, and grade level instructional leaders. **Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.**

Signature Page

Innovation Plan Committee Members:

Jay Lamb - Jay Lamb, Superintendent
Stephen Vanderpool - Stephen Vanderpool, Principal
Tony Dodson - Tony Dodson, Asst. Principal
Kaitlyn Moritz - Kaitlyn Moritz, Counselor
Jowannah Powers - Jowannah Powers, Member
Kamy Whatley - Kamy Whatley, Member
Lisa Roskens - Lisa Roskens, Member
Melissa Ritter - Melissa Ritter, Member
Dayna Britten - Dayna Britten, Member
Melissa Lambert - Melissa Lambert, Member
Nicole Ritter - Nicole Ritter, Member
Brenda Hendricks - Brenda Hendricks, Member
Sara Hudson - Sara Hudson, Member

By signing this document, I approve the terms of this Plan and support its implementation in Groom ISD.