



New Summerfield
Independent
School
District

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April 5, 2017

Mr. Mike Morath, Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

RE: Notice to the Commissioner of Education of New Summerfield Independent School District Board of Trustees' Approval of Local Innovation Plan

Dear Commissioner Morath,

This letter is to inform you that on April 4, 2017 the New Summerfield ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously on the adoption of a proposed innovation plan. The plan has been posted for the required thirty days on the district website. As required by TAC Ch. 102, Subchapter 11, enclosed is the list of approved exemptions on the agency form provided.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

Brian A. Nichols, Ed. D.
Superintendent

New Summerfield ISD

District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, allows public schools to have more flexibility. This provides districts with the opportunity to meet the needs of our students and community.

This plan would go into effect for the 2017-2018 school year. The plan could be amended at any time by the committee with approval by the board of trustees.

District Innovation Committee

Brian Nichols, Ed.D.	Superintendent
Josh Faucett	Junior High/High School Principal
Angie Tucker	Elementary Principal
Joe Brannen	Junior High/High School Assistant Principal
Craig Wilcox, Ed.D.	Curriculum Director
Ashley Faucett	Counselor
Troy Jenkins	Technology Director
Lanita Felder	Business Manager
Susanne Reid	ACE Director
Eric Boyett	Maintenance Director
Elizabeth Miller	Teacher
Portia Wright	Teacher
Janda House	Teacher
Theta Burns	Teacher
Tom Dullard	Teacher
Jamie Pearman	Teacher
Elizabeth Marvel	Teacher
Jodie Neeley	Parent

I. District of Innovation Timeline

November 9, 2016- Board adopts Resolution to Initiate Process to Consider District of Innovation Status

November 16, 2016- Staff meeting to discuss District of Innovation.

December 12, 2016- Public Hearing to discuss District of Innovation and Board approval of District of Innovation Committee members.

January 10, 2017- Administrative meeting to discuss further options available with District of Innovation plan.

February 22, 2017- District of Innovation committee meeting to approve plan. Plan posted to website.

February 27, 2017- District of Innovation staff meeting.

March 7, 2017- District of Innovation staff meeting.

April 4, 2017- Board Meeting to approve District of Innovation Plan

II. Term of the Plan

The term of New Summerfield ISD's Innovation Plan will be five years. The plan will become effective upon approval of 2/3 vote of the Board of Trustees. This plan will go into effect with the 2017-2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year unless eliminated by the New Summerfield ISD Board of Trustees. The District Innovation Committee will annually assess the effectiveness of the plan. If recommendations are made to amend the plan it would be done as required by law that includes public posting, approval by the committee, and the Board of Trustees.

III. Innovations

Teacher Contract Days

(DCB Legal, DCB Local) (Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently, education law defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days. We would propose having the option to reduce teacher contract days from 187 to better align with the current required minutes of instruction with no effect to salaries. This plan would take effect beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

In subsequent years it will be part of the calendar planning process to maintain the reduced number of contract days.

Innovation Strategy

The reduction in contract days at our current salary schedule would make us more competitive.

This plan would increase the daily rate of pay for our teachers.

School Start Date

(EB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Currently, students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. In the past districts could apply for waivers to begin earlier.

Innovation Strategy

We would propose moving the start date up one week, or no earlier than the 2nd Monday in August. This would allow the first and second terms to be closer in the number of days of instruction. By moving the proposed start date up earlier it would also align our schedule better with our partnering institute of higher education.

Teachers would begin no earlier than the 1st Monday of August.

Teacher Certification

(DK Legal, DK Local, DK Exhibit, Ed. Code 21.003, Ed. Code 21.053)

Currently, if the district is unable to find a certified teacher or a teacher is teaching a subject outside their certification, the district has to submit a request to the TEA. The TEA then must either approve or deny this request.

Innovation Strategy

An individual with industry experience could be eligible to teach a CTE course through a local certificate. It would also benefit the district to have the flexibility to employ individuals with college teaching experience on a part-time or full-timer certification. It would also benefit the district to have the ability for a certified teacher to be able to teach a subject outside their certification area.

By obtaining an exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit and career and technical/STEM teachers, the District will have the flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors or university professors in specified content areas in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach crafts of trades and vocations (such as welding, fine arts, etc.) in career and technical/STEM courses if teachers are not available to teach these courses.

The principal would submit a request to the superintendent with the individual's credentials. The superintendent would then either accept or deny the request. The superintendent would then report to the board this action prior to employment. The employee would be at-will and the local certificate would be for one year.

Class Size Waivers

(EEB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

Currently, K-4 classes must be kept at a 22 to 1 teacher ratio. When class sizes exceed this limit, districts must submit a waiver to TEA. If approved, the district must notify parents by specifying the class for which an exemption from the limit imposed was granted and state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted.

Innovation Strategy

The class size exemption would allow the district the flexibility based on financial and staffing needs to adjust class size accordingly. Our goal will remain to have small class sizes. However, in the event that it is necessary to exceed this ratio, the superintendent will report to the board of trustees.

Inter-district Transfers

(FDA Legal, Local) (Ed. Code 25.036)

A district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. A transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year. New Summerfield ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated.

Innovation Strategy

Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, New Summerfield ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

Professional Development/ Mentor Teachers

(DEAA Legal) (Ed. Code 21.451; Ed. Code 21.458)

TEC 21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the district may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, despite the fact that a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The District needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experienced teachers in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teachers, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers

Innovation Strategy

The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.

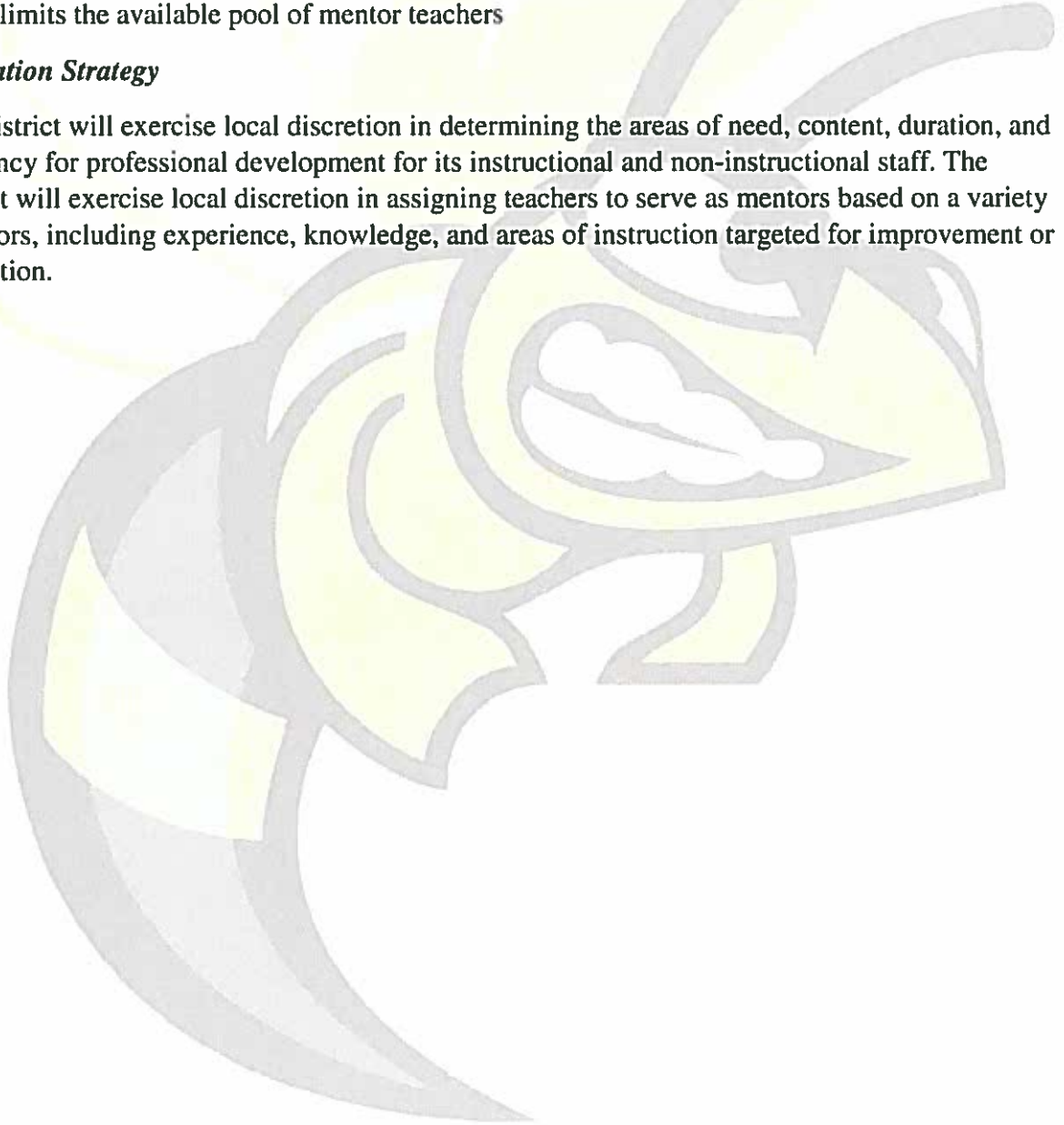


Figure: 19 TAC §102.1307(d)

Innovation District

Please submit, on district letterhead, a letter to the commissioner of education stating the date that the board of trustees adopted a resolution to develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as an Innovation District.

A local innovation plan must be developed for a school district before the district may be designated as an Innovation District. A local plan must provide for a comprehensive educational program for the district, which may include:

- 1) Innovative Curriculum
- 2) Instructional Methods
- 3) Community Participation
- 4) Governance of Campuses
- 5) Parental Involvement
- 6) Modifications to the school day or year
- 7) Provisions regarding the district budget and sustainable program funding
- 8) Accountability and assessment measures that exceed the requirements of state and federal law; and
- 9) Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.

A local innovation plan must identify requirements imposed by the Education Code that inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. The local innovation plan should specify the manner in which a particular statute inhibits one or more goals of the plan. Please use the form below to check the statutes specifically identified in your district's local innovation plan as inhibiting a goal of the plan. Checking a specific statute does not necessarily indicate eligibility for an exemption from all subsections of the statute. The local innovation plan controls with regard to the specific exemptions adopted by a district. The form below provides a reporting mechanism to fulfill the reporting requirements of the statute. Entire sections of code may not be eligible for exemption and each district should consult its legal counsel in developing its innovation plan.

Exemptions claimed for an Innovation District apply only to the specific provision of the Texas Education Code (TEC) cited, which may or may not be governed by a separate legal requirement. The exemption does not relieve the district of any requirement imposed by other state or federal law or a duty imposed under federal regulation, grant compliance, agency rule applicable to a charter school or a local legal requirement. Each district should consult its legal counsel to ensure adoption of necessary local policies to ensure compliance with all applicable legal requirements.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of exemptions.

Term of Plan: 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 School Year

Plan applies to: Entire District
 Campus (list) _____
 Other (please describe) _____

Chapter 11 – School Districts

Subchapter D. Powers and Duties of Board of Trustees of Independent School Districts

- §11.1511 (b)(5), (14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board
- §11.162 School Uniforms

Subchapter F. District-Level and Site Based Decision-Making

- §11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process
- §11.252 District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
- §11.253 Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision-Making
- §11.255 Dropout Prevention Review

Chapter 21 – Educators

Subchapter A – General Provisions

- §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts
- §21.003 Certification Required
- §21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void

Subchapter B – Certification of Educators

- §21.051 Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships.
- §21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates
- §21.057 Parental Notification

Subchapter C – Probationary Contracts

Subchapter D – Continuing Contracts

Subchapter E – Term Contracts

Subchapter H – Appraisals and Incentives

- §21.352 Local Role
- §21.353 Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance
- §21.354 Appraisal of Certain Administrators
- §21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

Subchapter I – Duties and Benefits

- §21.401 Minimum Service Required
- §21.402 Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff
- §21.4021 Furloughs

- §21.4022 Required Process for Development of Furlough Program or Other Salary Reduction Proposal
- §21.403 Placement on Minimum Salary Schedule
- §21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records
- §21.4032 Reductions in Salaries of Classroom Teachers and Administrators
- §21.404 Planning and Preparation Time
- §21.405 Duty-Free Lunch
- §21.406 Denial of Compensation Based On Absence for Religious Observance Prohibited
- §21.407 Requiring or Coercing Teachers to Join Groups, Clubs, Committees, or Organizations: Political Affairs
- §21.408 Right To Join or Not To Join Professional Association
- §21.409 Leave Of Absence for Temporary Disability
- §21.415 Employment Contracts
- Subchapter J – Staff Development**
- §21.451 Staff Development Requirements
- §21.452 Developmental Leaves of Absence
- §21.458 Mentors

Chapter 22 – School District Employees and Volunteers

Subchapter A – Rights, Duties, and Benefits

- §22.001 Salary Deductions for Professional Dues
- §22.002 Assignment, Transfer, or Pledge of Compensation
- §22.003 Minimum Personal Leave Program
- §22.006 Discrimination Based on Jury Service Prohibited
- §22.007 Incentives for Early Retirement
- §22.011 Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

- §25.0811 First Day of Instruction
- §25.0812 Last Day of School
- §25.083 School Day Interruptions
- §25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Subchapter D – Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size

- §25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios
- §25.112 Class Size
- §25.113 Notice of Class Size
- §25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes; Class Size

Chapter 37 – Discipline; Law and Order

Subchapter A – Alternative Setting for Behavior Management

- §37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
- §37.002 Removal by Teacher

Chapter 44 –Fiscal Management

Subchapter B – Purchases; Contracts

- §44.031 Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0331 Management Fees Under Certain Cooperative Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0352 Competitive Sealed Proposals
- §44.042 Preference to Texas and United States Products
- §44.043 Right To Work
- §44.047 Purchase or Lease of Automated External Defibrillator

Subchapter Z – Miscellaneous Provisions

- §44.901 Energy Savings Performance Contracts
- §44.902 Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy
- §44.903 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs in Instructional Facilities
- §44.908 Expenditure of Local Funds

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Subchapter G – School District Depositories

- §45.205 Term of Contract
- §45.206 Bid Or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms
- §45.207 Award of Contract
- §45.208 Depository Contract; Bond
- §45.209 Investment of District Funds

Other

Please list any additional exemption required for your Innovation District Plan:

TEC 25.036