



Borger Independent School District District of Innovation Plan

BACKGROUND

During the 84th Texas Legislative Session in Spring 2015, House Bill 1842 was passed. House Bill 1842 provided the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue the designation of District of Innovation. This allows local school districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code to afford more flexibility and local control for innovative programming. This legislature afforded school districts the opportunity to seek the designation: District of Innovation.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from a myriad of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision maker over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum, graduation requirements, academic and financial accountability, as well as certain certification requirements such as Bilingual, English as a Second Language and Special Education.

To qualify for the designation as a District of Innovation, a school district's most recent academic performance rating must at least be acceptable.

Should the Borger ISD Board of Trustees approve the Local District of Innovation Plan, the plan will begin on that date, 2022 and continue for five years, ending on the approval date, 2027. Any amendments made, approved by the District Site Base Committee, and approved by 2/3 vote of the Board of Trustees will also expire on the approval date, 2027.



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PROCESS

- A petition submitted to the Board of Trustees, or a Resolution of the Board of Trustees starts the process
- A Public Hearing to discuss the purpose of pursuing a District of Innovation status must be conducted
- The Board of Trustees appoints a District of Innovation Planning Committee
- The Board of Trustees formally votes to pursue or decline the pursuit of District of Innovation Status
- Plan must be posted on the District website for 30 days and The Board must notify the Commissioner of Education of the intent to adopt a plan
- District Site Base Committee must hold a public meeting to consider and approve the final version of the Plan with a majority vote of the committee
- Board of Trustees must adopt the plan with a 2/3 majority vote and notify the Commissioner of Education of the District of Innovation Plan adoption.
- Plan must be posted on the district's website for the term of the plan.
- The District of Innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed.



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TIMELINE

February 23, 2022 Exploratory Committee met to discuss the possibility of pursuing a District of Innovation status based on two identified needs: teacher shortages and cost of group health insurance. The possibility of calendar needs in the future was also brought to the attention of the committee.

February 25, 2022 Principal Exploratory Committee met to discuss the possibility of pursuing a District of Innovation status based on two identified needs: teacher shortages and cost of group health insurance. Talking points to share with district staff were developed.

February 28, 2022 Campuses had staff meetings to discuss and explain the intent of a possible Borger ISD District of Innovation Plan regarding teacher certifications and group health insurance.

March 2, 2022 District Site Base Committee convened to discuss DOI. Needs were discussed: teacher shortages, group health insurance costs and possible calendar flexibility. It was learned that the group health insurance needs no longer requires a DOI designation to pursue other group plans. The committee voted to submit a petition to the Board of Trustees. A petition was signed.

March 10, 2022 Public Hearing to discuss the possibility of a District of Innovation status. Board approved motions to pursue a District of Innovation status and appoint a District of Innovation Planning Committee.

March 22, 2022 First meeting of Planning Committee- Development of plan was tabled to allow the district to discuss the possibility of adding probationary contract flexibility to the DOI plan.

April 4, 2022 District Site Base Committee convened to consider additional innovation of probationary contracts.

April 5, 2022 Second meeting of Planning Committee to develop plan. Draft was finalized.

April 7, 2022 Posted Draft Plan to Borger ISD website. May 7, 2022 is 30th day.

May 10, 2022 Public Meeting of District Site Base Committee. Recommend presenting to Board of Trustees at next Regular Board Meeting, May 12, 2022. Motion passed unanimously.

May 12, 2022 Board of Trustees unanimously approved DOI Plan.

Site Based Committee Approved: 5.10.22
School Board Approved: 5.12.22



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Borger ISD District of Innovation Committee

Chance Welch	Superintendent
Amy Blansett	Assistant Superintendent
Michael Cano	Assistant Superintendent
Matt Ammerman	High School Principal
Judy Cooper	Paul Belton Principal
Tracy Howard	Teacher
April Couch	Teacher
Clara Simmons	Teacher
Katie Rodriguez	Teacher
Kallie Garzon	Teacher
Veronica Davis	Teacher
Allison Cooper	Parent
Devon Thompson	Parent
Cyndee Hickman	Trustee
Diedre Hood	Trustee
Eric Schneck	Trustee



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CURRENT LAW TEC 21.003(a) Certification – States a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, education 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.

Challenges addressed: By having a process and local criteria for certifying teaching staff will allow the District to address high needs areas including coaching needs, as well as allow us to be more competitive with neighboring districts who are Districts of Innovation as we all compete for the same pool of candidates.

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers for high needs areas. Borger ISD is in a rural area and competes with the larger districts for teacher candidates. Borger ISD seeks to establish local qualification and local certification requirements to help fill high needs areas as well as address the current teacher shortages affecting our state. All non-certified individuals seeking certified positions must have Board approval and meet all other certified criteria as set by Borger ISD.

CURRENT LAW TEC 21.102(b) Probationary Contracts –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.

Challenges addressed: The statute limits the probationary period to one year for teachers hired who have taught five of the last eight years. One year is not sufficient time for the District or the employee to determine whether the employment relationship should continue.

Requiring all new teacher hires to be issued a probationary contract for a period of three years will allow the district the additional time before making term contract offerings. Three years will allow additional time to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness, improve effectiveness, and allow both the District and the employee sufficient time to be certain the employment relationship should continue.



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CURRENT LAW: TEC 25.0811 Uniform School Start Date – 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.

Challenges addressed: Statutes prevent the District from designing calendars that best meet the needs of students. The District would be able to create calendar options that meet the needs of students and address local challenges.

Adding this flexibility allows Borger ISD to begin instruction and develop a school calendar which meets the needs of the district (such as: professional development, academic or athletic needs). Borger ISD already has a calendar approved and established for the 2022-2023 school year and will not pursue this innovation until the 2023-2024 school year and thereafter as needed.