

Sands CISD District of Innovation Plan 2018-2023

House Bill (HB) 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. To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Sands CISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows traditional public schools to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. We feel this is an opportunity for our district to modify certain areas based upon the needs of our students and community.

Once approved by the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Trustees and the District of Innovation Committee, this plan will be in effect for the 2018-2019 school year through the 2022-2023 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

Sands CISD District of Innovation Timeline:

- December 18, 2017 Public Hearing on District of Innovation held by the Board of Trustees.
- December 18, 2017 Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate the District of Innovation Plan.
- December 18, 2017 Board of Trustees approved a District of Innovation Committee.
- December 19, 2017 Commissioner notified by email of Resolution approved by the Sands CISD Board of Trustees to pursue a District of Innovation plan and designation.
- January 8, 2018 District of Innovation Committee meeting to discuss DOI Plan.
- January 11, 2018 District of Innovation Committee meeting to hold public hearing on a finalized version of the DOI plan.
- January 12, 2018 Post the District of Innovation Plan on the SCISD website for 30 days.
- February 15, 2018 Recommend final DOI plan to Board of Trustees.
- February 16, 2018 Board of Trustees formally notifies Texas Commissioner of Education of approved plan.
- February 22, 2018 Update all policy changes with TASB

District of Innovation Committee Members

Wayne Henderson	Superintendent
Lenny Morrow	Principal
Tana Howard	Counselor/Fine Arts
Dustin Wall	UIL/Secondary Staff
J’Ryan Gicklhorn	Agricultural Science/FFA
Katie Walker	Elementary Staff
Cody Sandlin	Parent

Board of Trustees

Tommy Staggs	President
Jody Howard	Vice-President
Robin Barraza	Secretary
Matt Snell	Member
Michael Wigington	Member
Wes Higgins	Member
Cole Walker	Member

Sands CISD District of Innovation Plan

First and Last Day of Instruction

Exemption:

- TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812, EB(Legal), EB(Local) First Day of Instruction (Starting before the 4th Monday in August) and Last Day of Instruction (Ending before May 15th).

Plan:

- The flexibility of a start date and end date allows the District to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community.

Benefit:

- This will allow the first and second semester to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- Increased instructional time prior to Fall administration of End of Course exams and Spring STAAR exams.
- Students participating in dual enrollment opportunities will work with a balanced semester, which align with our local colleges.

Length of School Day

Exemption

- TEC 25.081 State Law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Plan:

- Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Sands CISD the flexibility needed to:
 - a) Alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it is locally determined to be necessary or beneficial to the District and its stakeholders
 - b) Obtain an amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the District to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements.

Sands CISD does not have any intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days would be planned and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media. Sands CISD will strive to meet the minimum requirement of 75,600 total instructional minutes.

Benefit:

- This will allow Sands CISD to have flexibility in responding to unforeseen issues that arise throughout the year.

Teacher Certifications

Exemption:

- TEC 21.002, 21.003, 21.051, 21.053, and 21.057 Teacher Employment Contracts and Certification Required (DK Legal, Local)

Plan:

- To best serve the students of SCISD, decisions on certifications will be determined locally.
- The Principal may submit in writing to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subjects out of their field(s) of certification.
- The principal must specify the reason for the request and must show what credentials the teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach the subject.
- An individual with experience in CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate.
- The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual’s credentials.
- The superintendent will then approve the request if he/she feels the individual could be an asset to the students and program.
- The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment.
- This employee will be at-will.
- The superintendent may approve teaching certifications from other states.
- The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment.
- The teacher will be given a probationary contract until they have received a Texas Teaching Certification.
- Sands CISD will work diligently to hire certified teachers.

Benefit:

- Provide more flexibility in scheduling.
- Provide more options for students in class offerings.
- Provide industry certified and or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses.
- Provide opportunity to employ part-time professionals to teach special courses.
- Streamline hiring process for out-of-state teachers.

Teacher Probationary Contracts

Exemption:

- TEC 21.102(b), DCA(Legal) - TEC code 21.102(b) states that a probationary contract 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 proceeding employment with the district.

Plan:

- This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since the timeline demands that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.
- Probationary contracts for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may be extended up to two years including those employees with dual contracts.
- The superintendent will make contract recommendations to the Board of Trustees as per policy.

Benefit:

- This will provide the District more flexibility in determining the teacher's ability to teach effectively, see if they are a fit for the community, and to see how they interact with the students.

Teacher Contract Days

Exemption:

- TEC 21.401 Minimum Service Required (teachers on 10-month contracts must provide a minimum of 187 days of service) (DCB Legal and Local)

Plan:

- Reduce teacher contract days to match the adopted school calendar.
- It will be part of the calendar planning process to reduce the number of teacher contract days, contract days will not exceed the 187 but may be lessened based upon the needs of the district.

Benefit:

- Provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.
- Daily rate will be consistent with a 187-day calendar.
- Improve teacher morale.
- Enhance teacher retainment and recruitment.

Inter-District Transfers

Exemption:

- TEC 25.036 District transfers are for an entire school year. (FDA Local)

Plan:

- SCISD would follow FDA Local policy requiring nonresident students 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 will be evaluated. The parent's willingness to cooperate with Sands CISD teachers, coaches, and administration in a positive manner will also be a determining factor.
- Transfer students are required to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district.
- Transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent at any time during the school year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences such as suspension (in school or out of school), placement of the DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the student's transfer status. Furthermore, the student's transfer may be revoked by the superintendent if the parents or legal guardians fail to support the District in a positive manner.

Benefit:

- Allows SCISD the flexibility to revoke transfer students who, on rare occasions violate the transfer policy.
- Allows SCISD the flexibility to revoke transfer students, whose parents do not support the district.
- Allows SCISD to better utilize school resources for the benefit of the District.

Class Size Waiver (Kindergarten-4th Grade)

Exemption:

TEC (25.111,25.112, 25.113) State law requires districts to maintain an average student-teacher ratio at most of 20:1 for average daily attendance. Kindergarten-4th grade classes are to be kept at a 22:1 student; teacher ratio according to state law. If the number exceeds the 22:1 ratio the parents are to be notified and a waiver must be filed with TEA.

Plan:

- Sands CISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds the ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees. A waiver will not be filed with TEA. Sands will strive to communicate with our parents to keep them informed if the number exceeds the ratio of 22:1. However, in the rare event the ratio exceeds 22:1 for a short period of time the plan will allow the district to not have to notify the parents.
- The district will strive to employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance; however, the plan will allow the district to exceed this requirement based on campus or district needs.

Benefit:

- This give Sands CISD the flexibility without having to file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency in the event we exceed the 22:1 ratio. This also

Teacher Appraisal System

Exemption:

- The state issued a new teacher appraisal system in the 2016-2017 school year, call the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal and Support System (T-PESS). (TEC 21.203, 21.352, 150.1001)

Plan:

- Sands CISD will continue to use a modified version of the T-TESS/T-PESS appraisal system with the exception of the provisions of the Texas Education Code 21.351 and 21.352, as they relate to student growth within teacher appraisal as clarified in the Texas Administrative Code 150.1001. The T-TESS instrument is robust enough without the addition of student achievement to the teacher evaluation. Administrators already consider student achievement whether it is through retention rates, passing rates, STAAR, or other test measures.
- All teachers will be formally evaluated once every two years.
- Probationary teachers will be evaluated annually.
- All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals.
- Principals will be evaluated annually.

Benefit:

- Allow the District the option to improve teacher morale by using evaluations that are the best practices for the district.
- Allows the District the option to utilize local control of decisions regarding teacher and administration evaluations.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

Exemption:

- TEC 37.008 requires each school district to provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only certified teachers who meet all certification requirements under Subchapter B, Chapter 21

Plan:

- Sands CISD seldom needs the existence of a DAEP and is usually a short-term requirement since there will be a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP. Since the classes will be provided using computer based instruction, it is not necessary to have certified teachers monitoring DAEP. The campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.

Benefit:

- This would allow Sands CISD to better utilize resources we currently have available.

Site-Based Decision Making (TEC 11.251 and 11.252) (BQ Legal/Local, BQA Legal/Local)

Exemption:

- Sands CISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision-making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth in the Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of the District, school, and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one size fits all approach as detailed in the code. In place of the SBDM and the SHAC, a Superintendent's Advisory Council (SAC) will be established, meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district's success and most importantly, student's success. This council will convene at least two times per year and generate the general direction of district resources and efforts.

Benefit:

- This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community.
- This consolidation will yield greater opportunity for one council to address a multiple of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

TERM

- The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in August 2018 and will remain in effect for five years, through July 2023, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DOIC will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan on an annual basis and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

