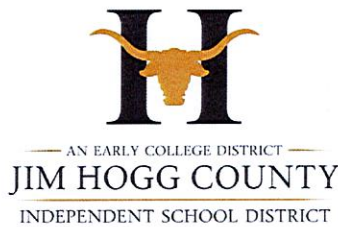


— AN EARLY COLLEGE DISTRICT —
JIM HOGG COUNTY
—
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan
2017 – 2022

Adopted by Board of Trustees on June 21st, 2017



District of Innovation Plan 2017 – 2022

I. Introduction

What is a “District of Innovation”?

The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas’ open-enrollment charter schools.

Why choose a District of Innovation?

Jim Hogg County ISD will have the freedom to make decisions at the local level within the parameters set forth in the HB 1842. A local school district may want to pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other ideas. Essentially, innovation plans are about local control that best fit the needs of the school district and community. Jim Hogg County ISD’s innovation plan will focus on effective strategies that will positively impact student achievement and strengthen the connection and involvement of the community and school district.

District of Innovation Potential Benefits Include:

- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Customization:** Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g., only high schools), grade level, or a single campus.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.
- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:
 - School start date
 - Class-size ratios

- Minimum Minutes of Instruction and School Day Length
- Site-based decision-making processes
- Use of planning and preparation periods
- Teacher Certification

Not all of these possibilities will be the right fit Jim Hogg County ISD. The Jim Hogg County ISD's District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC) will meet to review and develop an awareness of the District of Innovation (DOI) process. This Advisory Committee will determine which laws are applicable to sustain and which laws would be beneficial to recommend flexibility for the benefit of meeting improvement goals.

II. Process

On March 22, 2017, the Jim Hogg County Independent School District's Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a Resolution to explore the District of Innovation processes, needs, and advantages to support innovative and local initiatives that are expected to improve student learning.

With no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC) to discuss and draft this District Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration and local community members. The committee met initially on March 28, 2017 to discuss and initiate needs for the district. A follow-up meeting was held on April 2, 2017 to continue the exploration of the plan and approve areas of implementation for innovation.

On April 25, 2017, Jim Hogg County ISD held a public hearing for community-discussion and input on the DEIC's involvement, preparation, and approval of identified as areas of innovation.

The plan will be available on the District's website (www.jhcisdpk12.org) for 30 days beginning on April 25, 2017. Jim Hogg County ISD will notify the Texas Education Agency's Commissioner of Education on May 25, 2017. Jim Hogg County Independent School District Board of Trustees will hold a regular board meeting on June 21, 2017, which is expected to have an agenda item to approve the JHCISD District of Innovation Plan. The district may opt to conduct a Special Called Meeting prior to its regularly scheduled meeting to address the approval.

Committee meetings were open to the public, and Jim Hogg County ISD invited all parents from each campus and members of our community to be part of the development process.

District Educational Improvement Committee

District of Innovation Advisory Committee

NAME	AFFLIATION
Esther Garcia	Board Member
Juan J. Maldonado, Sr.	Interim Superintendent
Ernesto Perez	Director of Curriculum and Early College
Leonor Hernandez	Director of Special Education
Roldan J. Montalvo	Director of Athletics
Cynthia Martinez	District Librarian
Laura N. Garcia	Finance Representative
John Eric Salinas	High School Principal
Ray Garza	Junior High School Principal
Jo Ann Valderas	Elementary School Principal
Lynda Almaraz	High School Counselor
Bridgette Gonzalez	Junior High School Counselor
Dora Hinojosa	Elementary School Counselor
Jo Ann Stacy	High School Teacher/ UIL Academic Coordinator
Lynda Martinez	Junior High School Teacher
Francine Aguilar	Elementary School Teacher
Karmen Ybanez	District Support Staff
Norma Hinojosa	Parent
Evelyn Ramirez	Parent
Mario Martinez	Parent
Julia Huff	Community Member

III. Term

How long does an innovation plan stay in effect?

Under current law, the plan may have a term of up to five years, and it may be amended, rescinded, or renewed during that time period. JIM HOGG COUNTY ISD's Innovation Plan will begin immediately upon the District's Board of Trustees' approval and will be implemented in the proceeding academic year (2017-2018) and conclude upon five calendar years of the Board of Trustees' approval, which should occur at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year.

The Board of Trustees has the option to amend or terminate the innovative plan in accordance with HB 1842. If at any time within this 5-year plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee to consider the new

exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan, unless specified for a new 5-year adoption.

IV. EXEMPTIONS REQUESTED

JIM HOGG COUNTY ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and will request innovations (exemptions) from the Texas Education Code.

Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was detrimental to the tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed

This 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. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also let the District start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, junior high school, and high school. Furthermore, this will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction and School Day Length

(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081, and 25.082)

Currently

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this requirement with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600

minutes of instruction or 7 hours each day (including intermissions and recess). The bill also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

Proposed

This exemption will provide Jim Hogg County ISD the flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction which will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. Exempting from the 420-minute day requirement would allow JHCISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. While there is already a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum.

Class Size Ratio

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

Currently

Kindergarten – 4th 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 the 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 Jim Hogg County ISD certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, this must be balanced with the logistics of the timing of adding staff, and the best teacher-to-student ratio that can be achieved given the total number of students. The District recognizes the partial impact of adding one or two additional students to the classroom enrollment; however, the District does not recognize the addition to negatively affect the instruction and classroom management. The District assures the quality of the learning environment and instruction to be maintained based on teacher effectiveness.

This plan also emphasizes the importance of flexible learning environments and student learning based upon student driven passions and needs. This grants flexibility in class size at all times (i.e. regrouping for success, small groups, large groups, etc). It also works to minimize paperwork requirements in order to free up time to place additional focus on student success. An exemption in meeting Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.112, will allow the ability to group

students based on academic, social, and emotional needs without adding ongoing filings of waivers when the need arises.

In the event the class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio for Kindergarten – 4th grade classes, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees for approval. In the event a K-4 core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation. This exemption only allows JHCISD the local control over class size ratios, not a disregard for the intent of the ratio requirements.

Teacher Certification

(DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL, DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.053, 21.057, and 19 TAC Chapter 231)

Currently

Within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning the Jim Hogg County ISD Strategic Plan sets forth specific goals under the initiative to improve college and career readiness options. The development of high school graduation plans, post-secondary readiness guidance plans, improvement of workforce skills, and expansion of dual credit programs are inhibited by the Texas Education Codes that present barriers for vast instructional opportunities. These laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit and career and technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses when high quality certified teachers are not available.

Proposed

Jim Hogg County ISD is committed to placing the right teacher in every classroom, and every effort will be made to ensure teachers hold the proper certification in the content area as assigned. However, the District incurs challenges in the recruitment of certified teachers in specific core and career technical education due to the geographic location of the community. Several applicants choose to reside in larger communities with district that have a high demand for teachers and offer competitive pay scales.

Jim Hogg County ISD will utilize hiring procedures that will err on the side of credential and certified teacher. However, in response to the need for more students to obtain the educational-benefit coursework that is applicable to the curriculum requirements set forth by the Texas Education Agency, dual credit, and career and technical/STEAM course offerings for graduation plans, the District seeks to establish its own local-qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

In circumstances where certified teacher candidates are not available or the best-fit, the District will lift the certification requirements and determine the employment of teacher candidates that will be fit the instructional needs. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors and university professors in specific content areas, as well as professionals in certain trades and vocations, such as welding, fine arts, etc.

The District will establish local criteria for training and locally certifying individuals rather than adhere strictly to mandates outlined in Section 21.053. In doing so, parental notification of “inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers” under Section 21.057 would no longer be necessary. The exemption would also allow internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area to be considered. This exemption directly supports the move from “highly qualified” requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Teacher Contract Days

Texas Education Code §21.401 DCB (Legal), DCB (Local)

Currently

Sec. 21.401. MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIRED. (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service.

(a-1) to (a-4) Expired.

(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

(c) The commissioner, as provided by Section 25.081(b), may reduce the number of days of service required by this section. A reduction by the commissioner does not reduce an educator's salary.

(d) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a contract between a school district and an educational diagnostician.

Proposed

By exempting the Jim Hogg County ISD from this law, the District will be able to explore and implement strategic goals and objectives that will provide opportunities to:

- Increase the daily rate the district pays teachers;
- Enhance teacher recruitment;
- Improve teacher morale at JHCISD; and,
- Provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months for professional growth.

This exemption provides Jim Hogg County ISD flexible contract days that reduce the number of days of service for educators under a 10-month contract from a minimum of 187 to a minimum

of 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make the districts salaries more competitive by increasing teachers' daily rate, and enhance teacher recruitment. Furthermore, this exemption provides the District with an edge over neighboring school districts for human capital initiatives in recruitment, retention, and professional growth.

V. Implementation and Policy Expectations

What impact could designation as a District of Innovation have on district policy?

This District Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the Jim Hogg County ISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which the District seeks relief so that it can develop more innovative programming to better meet the needs of students. While this Plan sets out those parameters, it does not and cannot establish the full scope of innovative practices within the Jim Hogg County ISD. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses, departments, and committees in order to fully realize the work of the Innovation Committee.

Policy changes will correlate with innovation plan changes. As a District of Innovation, revisions to local policies may be required, as well as adjustments to legal policies, to reflect that some legal provisions may be affected by the District's innovation plan. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees where appropriate. It is the expectation of the Innovation Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan.

Policy development resulting from this District Innovation Plan will be provided to the Committee for review and feedback before the policies are presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration. After policies resulting from this Plan are adopted, it is the expectation of the Committee that future revisions to these specific policy provisions, if any, will be reviewed by Committee members prior to Board review to ensure alignment with the work of the Committee.

Any and all changes that arise from the District of Innovation work will be accompanied by a comprehensive communication plan for students, families, and the community.

VI. Summary

Through HB 1842, Jim Hogg County ISD will be provided the opportunity and flexibility to make local decisions for our district and community. Through the District of Innovation Plan, the

district will be able to provide more effective and aligned decisions necessary for our students and community. The district will update and revise policies in Board Policy to reflect the changes recommended from the District of Innovation Plan. Jim Hogg County ISD is committed to the children of our community and pledge to implement the District of Innovation plan in the best interest of our students and community.

District of Innovation Timeline

- March 9, 2017
Administrative Staff Meeting to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Team.
- March 22, 2017 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Board of Trustees approve resolution to begin the exploration and potential development of a District of Innovation plan under HB 1842
- March 28, 2017
District Educational Improvement Committee Meeting for the Orientation and Development of a District of Innovation Plan
- April 4, 2017
District Educational Improvement Committee Meeting to review, develop, evaluate, and approve the District of Innovation Plan
- April 25, 2017
District of Innovation Plan available online at www.jhcisdpc12.org
- April 25, 2017
Jim Hogg County ISD Public Hearing to provide a briefing on the status of the development of a District of Innovation Plan and to hear public comment regarding the initiatives
- May 25, 2017
Notification to the Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on the adoption of the District of Innovation Plan
District Educational Improvement Committee meeting to approve the final version of the District of Innovation Plan
- June 21, 2017 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Board agenda item to approve the Jim Hogg County ISD District of Innovation Plan
- June 22, 2017
Update all policy changes with the Texas Association of School Boards



Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation

WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of trustees of the district; and

WHEREAS the Jim Hogg County Independent School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Jim Hogg County Independent School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A to become a district of innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that after the public hearing the Board of Trustees of Jim Hogg County Independent School District shall appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 21st day of June, 2017, by the Board of Trustees.


Presiding Board President


Vice-President


Secretary