

# **Sulphur Bluff ISD District Of Innovation Plan**



**2017-2018 School Year  
To  
2021-2022 School Year**

## **INTRODUCTION**

House Bill 1842 passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to be designated as Districts of Innovation. This designation allows districts flexibility to exempt certain state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. As a District of Innovation, Sulphur Bluff ISD intends to utilize the opportunity to enact a high degree of local control over policies and procedures to best meet the needs of our students, employees, and community.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

## **PROCESS**

On December 15, 2016, the Sulphur Bluff Independent School District's Board of Trustees initiated the innovation process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On January 19, 2017, the Sulphur Bluff ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the Site Based Decision Making Team to discuss and draft a local innovation plan. The committee met initially on February 14, 2017, to discuss and develop the plan. A follow up meeting to finalize the plan was held on February 28, 2017.

The plan will be posted on the district website for 30 days before being presented to the SBDM Team on April 4, 2017. Sulphur Bluff ISD will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of the District's final District of Innovation Plan. The finalized plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval on April 20th.

## **TERM**

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in April 2017 for the 2017-2018 school year and will remain in effect for five years, through March 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The SBDM Team will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications.

## TIMELINE

December 15, 2016	Board of Trustees passed Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan
January 19, 2017	Board of Trustees held public hearing and appointed SBDM team to draft Plan
February 14, 2017	Initial meeting of SBDM team to discuss District of Innovation Plan
February 28, 2017	Meeting to finalize District of Innovation Plan
March 1, 2017	Post the District of Innovation Plan on Sulphur Bluff ISD website
April 4, 2017	SBDM team vote on District of Innovation Plan
April 5, 2017	District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
April 5, 2017	Notification of Board of Trustees intent to vote on District of Innovation Plan submitted to Commissioner of Education
April 20, 2017	Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan
April 21, 2017	Approved District of Innovation Plan submitted to Commissioner of Education

## SITE BASED DECISION MAKING TEAM

Lindsey Collett	Parent
Abbie Carr	Parent
Kristy Russell	Primary Teacher
Lena Moore	Intermediate Teacher
Kathy Hogue	Junior High Teacher
Kelly Johnston	High School Teacher
Blake Hill	Campus Teacher - Athletic Director
Laura Alford	Reading Interventionist
Amy Northcutt	Elementary Principal
James Payne	Secondary Principal
Dustin Carr	Superintendent

## **School Start Date – Flexible Calendar**

Exempt from: TEC §25.0811

Relevant Board Policy: EB LEGAL

### **Currently**

A school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round.

### **Proposed**

Flexibility of start date would allow the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments and creates a more balanced instructional calendar within the two semesters.

## **Class Size Waiver**

Exemption from: TEC §25.112; TEC §25.113

Related Board Policy: EED LEGAL

### **Currently**

Texas Education Code limits the number of students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade to 22 students per teacher. Additionally, a campus or district that is granted an exception under Section [25.112\(d\)](#) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

### **Proposed**

As a district we look to provide the best learning environment for our K-4 student's while retaining the ability to manage increases in class size, should this arise. Sulphur Bluff ISD intends to remain within the education guidelines with regard to class size ratios, but this must also be balanced with the timing and ability of adding staff, the qualifications of staff available, the makeup and chemistry of the classroom and other classroom influences. This exemption allows Sulphur Bluff local control over class size ratios and is not a disregard for the intent of the ratio requirements.

In the event a classroom exceeds the 22 to1 ratio in grades K-4, the class sizes will be reviewed by appropriate district and campus administration and the Board of Trustees will be notified of any K-4 classes that exceed the ratio.

## **Teacher Employment Contracts – 187 Days**

Exemption from: TEC §21.401

Related Board Policy: DCB Legal

### **Currently**

In the Texas Education Code under Minimum Service Required, it mandates that an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

### **Proposed**

Sulphur Bluff ISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align with the 75,600 minutes required of students. Teachers employed under a 10-month contract would serve the school district for ten months and up to 187 days of service. This contract would include instruction time and district approved professional development days, while aligning with the board adopted school calendar, not to exceed 187 days of service.

## **Inter-District Transfers**

Exemption from: TEC §25.036

Related Board Policy: FDA Local

### **Currently**

According to Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

### **Proposed**

Sulphur Bluff ISD maintains a transfer policy requiring nonresident students wishing to attend SBISD file an application each school year. In approving transfer requests the district takes into account availability of space, instructional staff and the student's disciplinary history and attendance records. Sulphur Bluff ISD seeks the ability to revoke transfer status at any time during the year for nonresident students who have been assigned discipline consequences of suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.

## **Teacher Certification Requirements**

Exemption from: TEC §21.003, §21.057

Related Board Policy: DBA Legal

### **Currently**

The Texas Education Code states 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 or permit. The Education Code also requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

### **Proposed**

In order to best serve Sulphur Bluff ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. An exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and utilizing current teachers in an area outside their initial certification and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district will have flexibility in hiring hard to fill positions, the ability to hire experts in their field, and the capability to hire those with industry expertise as they are pursuing areas of certification. The Board of Trustees will be notified of any teachers with classroom assignments that are in an uncertified status.

## **Probationary Contract Extension**

Exemption from: TEC §21.102

Related Board Policy: DCA LEGAL

### **Currently**

For an experienced teacher new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

### **Proposed**

Sulphur Bluff ISD would like to extend this probationary period. Experienced teachers new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the past eight previous years, may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years. This will allow the district flexibility to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness.