

Breckenridge Independent School District

Local Innovation Plan

Whereas, the 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 allowing Texas public school districts local control by accessing exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code through the District of Innovation process, and whereby, Breckenridge ISD qualifies having “met standard,” the Breckenridge ISD Board of Trustees set forth a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation, on Monday, November 14, 2016. December 12, 2016, a Public Hearing was held allowing for input and questions about the district’s participation in the program. The Breckenridge ISD Board of Trustees, then, appointed the District Education Improvement Committee to serve as the Local Innovation Committee to research, discuss and develop the Local Innovation Plan.

The Breckenridge ISD District Education Improvement Committee met on December 14, 2016, to review, discuss, and develop the innovation plan. The plan, having been approved by the Local Innovation Committee, was posted online, December 16, 2016, for public viewing and feedback and remains on-line presently. The Local Innovation Committee met again January 20, 2017 to review the plan and any feedback received. The Local Innovation Plan Committee approved a Final version of the plan on January 20, 2017, and recommended it to the Board of Trustees, by unanimous vote. Having received some suggestions and clarifications from Texas Education Agency, Office of Accreditation, the plan was amended. On April 10, 2017, a final version of the plan was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Local Innovation Committee (District Improvement Committee)

Molly Johnson	District Level Representative
Dwayne Dove	Technology Director
Mandi Farmer	High School Representative
Kendra Cornett	High School Representative
Mich Etzel	Jr. High Principal
Caralisa Mayo	Jr. High Representative
Mitchel Etzel	Jr. High Representative
Rebecca Houchin	South Representative
Kaysi Adams	South Representative
Lisa Dye	North Representative
Cheryl Logan	North Representative
Barbara Collinsworth	East Principal
Marci Reed	East Representative
Shelle Crenshaw	East Representative
Danielle White	Parent Representative
Lara Townson	Parent Representative
Ronnie Calsoncin	Business Representative
Melinda Lane	Business Representative
Rhonda Crawford	Community Representative

Breckenridge ISD Board of Trustees

Jeff Dooley, President
Thomas Tennison, Vice-President
Carey Woodward, Secretary
Paige Townson, Member

Graham Reaugh, Member
Russell Creager, Member
Patrick Escalon, Member

Allowable Exemptions

District personnel, along with the Local Innovation Committee, having considered the allowances set forth in Sec 12A.003 of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to allow flexibility in creating programs that meet the challenges related to educating a low socio-economic population in a rural, West Texas setting, the Local Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees, jointly agree to these requested allowances.

I. **Uniform Start Date (TEC §25.0811)**

Currently, state law mandates a start date of the fourth Monday in August, except for districts that operate a year round program.

Rationale for Exemption

Flexibility in start date will allow several benefits to enhance the programs at Breckenridge ISD. First, it will allow more days throughout the school year for which teacher preparation, planning, and data driven decision-making. Second, it will allow us to balance the number of days in the first and second semesters. Third, it will allow for scheduling around local activities, such as the Stephens County Fair.

II. **Length of School Day (TEC §25.081)**

Current law requires that a school day must be 420 minutes to be an eligible day for ADA calculations and funding purposes, with each day adding to the 75,600 minutes required, annually.

Rationale for Exemption

Allowing selected days to deviate from the 420-minute day requirement would allow the district's stakeholders to determine whether the students are better served by replacing part of the school day with teacher planning, student enrichment, and/or community involvement activities. While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year.

Specific days being exempted from the 420-minute rule would give the district the flexibility to schedule professional development activities, planning time, parent-conference time, and community involvement opportunities without losing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements.

Specific days exempted would be selected by the Campus-Level or District-Level Planning Committees or the Board of Trustees.

It is understood that the 75,600 minute rule will still be in effect and that funding will be reduced accordingly if it is not reached.

III. Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003)

State law requires that classroom teachers holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate State Board of Educator Certification. When a properly certified teacher cannot be obtained, the district must file a request for an Emergence Certification through the Texas Education Agency and the State Board for Educator Certification.

Rationale for Exemption

Statewide, teacher shortages are hampering school districts' ability to find qualified teachers, particularly, in the areas of math, science, languages other than English, and career and technology. Some certified teachers are much less qualified than some uncertified teachers. This flexibility would allow the district to employ the teacher candidates that have the best knowledge and skills, along with the greatest passion for teaching and learning.

Special Education and Bilingual teachers will still be required to have the appropriate certification.

IV. Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios (TEC §25.111, §25.112, §25.113, and §25.114)

Current law requires a student-teacher ratio of 22-1 for students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade, and for Physical Education Classes a student teacher ratio of 45-1.

Rationale for Exemption

While no one will argue that a smaller class size will not allow for more individual attention, clearly the district must be able to assess the current staff and students and place them in the situation that allows for optimum learning. The qualities of the teacher have a much larger impact on learning than class size. Flexibility from this rule will allow plans that may increase the student teacher ratio for part of the day, while at the same time allowing for more individualized attention in other parts of the day. When a qualified teacher cannot be found to reduce the class size to current law, it is better to have a few extra students with a qualified teacher. Class sizes in Kindergarten through Fourth Grades will be increased over 22-1 only when the administration feels that the quality of learning is best preserved by that situation. Physical education classes may be increased when in the view of the administration the result is increased instructional time or that the individual academic needs of students are met by allowing greater numbers of

students in the physical education class. Parent notification will still be made if the students are assigned to a class that exceeds the limits in current law.

V. **Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)**

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Rationale for Exemption

With the passage of §25.081, which changed the required days of instruction to minutes, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. Changing the format of the school year from school days to instructional minutes, may necessitate restructuring of the contract days in order to smoothly facilitate the school year plan.

Term and Implementation

The term of this innovation district plan will be five years or until terminated by the Breckenridge ISD Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. Should the district choose to request further allowances that would increase student achievement, the Board will re-establish the Innovation Plan Committee and repeat the process.

Implementation of this plan will be carried out by the Administration, Board of Trustees, and Campus-Level and District-Level Planning Committees. Board Policies affected by the implementation of these innovation strategies will be reviewed and revised as necessary by the Board of Trustees.