

# **Springlake-Earth ISD Local Innovation Plan April 12th, 2022**

## **District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members**

Dr. Denver Crum-	Superintendent
Cindy Furr-	High School Principal
Charles McIver-	Elem/JH Principal
Marlana Tanaro-	Administrative Intern

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school district to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Codes. On January 20th, 2017, the Springlake-Earth ISD Board of Trustees("Board") passed a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students in the community. On January 9th, 2017 the Board appointed a three member District of Innovation Advisory Committee ("Committee") to meet with members of the District Advisory committee to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan("Plan"). On August 9, 2021, the DOI members presented a preliminary plan to the school board to discuss the intent to renew the local innovation plan. The school board voted to move forward with the proposed renewed plan and set August 26, 2021 as the date to consider adopting the new proposed plan. On August 26th, 2021 the school met to consider adopting the renewed plan. The school board voted to adopt the renewed plan at this meeting.

### **II. TERM**

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning August 1st , 2022 and ending July 31st, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

### **III. INNOVATIONS**

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

#### **A. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB Local)**

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the Christmas break. Alignment of the calendar with Advanced Placement (AP) Exams and STAAR/EOC timelines

Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.

1. Students will start school no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August.
2. Teachers will report for duty no earlier than the 1st Monday of August.
3. The school year will end no sooner than May 15th.

## **B. Teacher Employment Contracts (TEC §21.401; DCB Legal)**

Texas Education Code Chapter 21 Teacher Contracts defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

**Proposed** -Springlake-Earth ISD will move to a 4-day instructional week beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. On March 30, 2022, our District of Innovation committee met and unanimously approved an amendment to our Teacher Employment Contracts. The amendment will align teacher contract days to be based on a combination of instructional minutes calendar, teacher workdays, and staff development days. On April 11, 2022, the Springlake-Earth ISD board of trustees voted unanimously to approve the recommended amendments as proposed by the DOI committee members. Additional benefits of this proposed innovation: As a poor, remote, rural school district, we lack the resources to offer competitive salaries and benefits necessary to attract and retain high quality teachers. This is especially true when competing with larger districts possessing the means to pay substantially higher teacher salaries than our district. The plan as proposed would increase teachers' daily rate of compensation without incurring additional salary expenses for the district. Overall, the proposed plan would allow teacher contract days to better align with student instructional minutes while offering the district an additional benefit to attract and retain high quality teachers.

## **C. Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003; DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)**

**Current Law** -In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

**Proposed**-In order to best serve SEISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally

- a. Should the need arise for a certified teacher to teach one or more subjects outside their area of certification, a written proposal will be submitted to the district's superintendent. The proposal will articulate the rationale for the exception. Additionally, the principal will provide the

superintendent with appropriate documentation regarding the individual teacher's qualifications to teach outside their area of certification. The superintendent will determine if this teacher qualifies to teach outside their area of certification.

- b. An individual with experience in a 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 determine if the individual qualifies for a local teaching certificate based upon previous experience, principal observations and recommendations, Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will. The S-E ISD plan will make certification decisions locally that are based on the needs of the campus and students. In the event that the district is unable to locate a qualified certified teacher for a certain position or if a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, these individuals will be employed at-will. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year.

**Rationale**-If the district is afforded the opportunity to employ noncertified individuals possessing certain CTE field experience, or a particular vocational skill, we will be able to provide more course options for our students.

#### **D. Probationary Contracts** (*DCA Legal*) (*TEC 21.102*)

**Current Law**-A probationary contract may not exceed one year for new teachers to our district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district. Under this circumstance, the district must either give the teacher a term contract or terminate their contract after their first year in the district.

**Proposed**-S-E ISD would like to have the ability to renew the probationary contract one additional one-year period, for a maximum of two school years, for all teachers that are new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of eight years preceding employment by the District.

#### **E. Minimum Minutes of Instruction** (EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (TEC 25.081)

**Current Law**- House Bill 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 with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction (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 disasters, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or other reasons.

**Proposed** - To best serve the Springlake-Earth ISD community, the exemption from TEC 25.081 would allow our Superintendent or designee to determine whether to amend our District calendar to make up lost instructional time.

**Rationale** -The proposed exemption from TEC 25.081 will allow Springlake-Earth ISD to avoid submitting waiver requests to TEA in cases of unforeseen changes to school calendar, and will further allow S-E ISD to adjust school day schedules to better meet the instructional needs of students. S-E will meet the 75,600 minute minimum requirement regardless of amendments to the district calendar.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION**

The S-E ISD Innovation Plan is designed to create alternate, innovative parameters and guidelines by which the District will operate to better serve its students and community. Board policy will be modified and updated to reflect the improvements to current policies afforded by this Plan. Once approved a copy of the plan will be forwarded to the Texas Association of School Boards policy division to make appropriate changes to the district's current policy. District administrators will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Plan.