

SCHULENBURG ISD - DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN



Approved by the SISD Board of Trustees on April 24, 2023

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). This distinction provides opportunities for increased local control over district operations and increased flexibility in academic programming to positively impact student achievement. It also empowers district leaders to innovate and transform systemically to improve the quality of services benefitting all educational stakeholders.

In order to best serve our students and align our learning to district goals, Schulenburg ISD has developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan. We believe that the plan as outlined will allow greater local consideration for the factors that uniquely impact the students of Schulenburg ISD.

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2028, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The plan will be formally reviewed annually and may be amended at any time by the District Advisory Committee with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Timeline	
02/13/2023	The SISD Board of Trustees approved the resolution to explore the opportunity for Schulenburg ISD to become a District of Innovation.
02/10/2023	A district team of administrators and staff met to discuss the District of Innovation process and explore options.
02/15/2023	The SISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing to get public input and consider developing a local plan for designation as a District of Innovation.
02/20/2023	The SISD Board of Trustees appointed the District Advisory Committee (DAC) as the District of Innovation Committee to develop a district plan.
03/01/2023	The District Advisory Committee met to develop a District of Innovation Plan using feedback provided from the public hearing and from district administrators and personnel.
03/01/2023	The District Advisory Committee approved the SISD District of Innovation Plan.
03/08/2023	The District of Innovation Plan will be presented to the SISD Board of Trustees as a discussion item in an open meeting.
03/09/2023	The District of Innovation Plan will be submitted to TEA and posted on the SISD website for at least 30 days.
04/24/2023	The District will hold a public meeting for feedback on the proposed plan.
04/24/2023	The SISD Board of Trustees will consider approval of the SISD District of Innovation Plan.

SISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(District Advisory Committee)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Dr. Douglas Moore	Superintendent, Interim
Callene Zapalac	High School Principal
Mike Baldree	Junior High Principal, Interim
Kristi McBride	Elementary Principal, Interim
Kacy Svatek	Elementary Assistant Principal
Luke Hobbs	Athletic Director
Rachel Robertson	Special Education Cooperative Director
Allison Machac	District Guidance Counselor
Heather Pavlu	District Counselor
Adina Barnett	Elementary Teacher
Nicole Cromey	Elementary Teacher
Kristen Holub	Elementary Teacher
Heather Ring	Elementary Teacher
Carrie Schulz	Elementary Teacher
Kim Wellborn	Junior High Teacher
Jennifer Knigge	Junior High Teacher
Martin Bigham	Junior High Teacher
Amy DeMarco	Junior High Teacher
Amy Hartman	High School Teacher
Mercy Silcox	HS Teacher/District Testing Coordinator
Amy Thibodeaux	High School Teacher
Denise Moore	District Nurse
Phyllis Valchar	District Nurse
Cheryl Pekar	Community Partner - Stanzel Foundation
Sheila Brossmann	Community Partner
Paul Zapalac	Community Partner
Terry Proske	Business Representative
Kim Olsovsky	Business Representative
Melissa Helms	Parent
Nancy Brenek	Parent
Dawn Hoffmann	Parent
Bridgette Hrachovy	Parent

Note: While the law provides for flexibility through exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC), districts are not exempt from statute related to curriculum, graduation requirements, academic accountability or financial accountability.

Schulenburg Independent School District

“Shorthorns Forever”



Mission

The mission of Schulenburg ISD is to create *Shorthorns Forever* –
Educating and empowering our students for success.

Shared Vision

Our Students...

- Are excited, engaged, and motivated
- Demonstrate strong character values and ethics
- Possess the knowledge and skills to be “future-ready”
- Rise to challenges and manage life’s adversity
- Exhibit pride in their school and in themselves

Our learning environment provides...

- Safe and secure campuses
- Inviting classrooms created by highly qualified teachers
- Interactive teaching in a modern, technologically-advanced, and structured environment
- Mutual trust and respect for all students
- Shared resources to unite the community, home, and school
- A variety of strongly developed programs to explore social, academic, vocational, athletic, and artistic opportunities

Our district and community...

- Unites in purpose and vision through effective communication and partnerships
- Cultivates a strong sense of pride and commitment
- Provides resources that facilitate success
- Values, supports, and respects diversity

Schulenburg Independent School District

“Shorthorns Forever”



Strategic Goals

Schulenburg ISD:

- Recruits and retains highly qualified teachers, administrators, and staff
- Provides safe, secure, and inviting facilities that accommodate current needs and future growth
- Provides a supportive infrastructure for technologically-advanced programs
- Provides a wide range of educational opportunities and resources for students' success
- Utilizes a variety of strategies and resources to meet the diverse needs of the individual student
- Communicates effectively and develops partnerships with students, parents, and community
- Utilizes state and local finances in a fiscally responsible manner

Finalized by Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee on February 8, 2014

Approved by SISD Board of Trustees on February 17, 2014

Reviewed with No Changes by SISD Board of Trustees on October 19, 2015

Reviewed with No Changes by the SISD Board of Trustees on November 28, 2016

SCHULENBURG ISD - DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

First Day of Instruction

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

SISD Goal Alignment

- 4) Provide a wide range of educational opportunities and resources for student success.
- 5) Utilize a variety of strategies and resources to meet the diverse needs of the individual student.

Challenge Created by Current Statute

The restriction for a late August start date inhibits the ability of the district to annually build an academic calendar that supports local goals of balancing grading cycles, embedding frequent professional learning opportunities for faculty and staff, maximizing instructional days prior to administration of standardized assessments, and promoting participation in community and county wide events.

Local Alternative Standard

SISD will continue collaborative local processes to create an annual academic calendar that aligns with the goals of balancing academic grading periods, considers local community and county events that impact student attendance, and includes regular professional learning opportunities for district personnel. The District will also work collaboratively with partnering school districts and Institutes of High Learning (IHL) to align academic calendars to benefit students participating in programs and/or activities provided through shared services, cooperatives, and other academic consortiums.

Timeline for Implementation

Year 1 and beyond

District & Campus Level Planning

TEC 11.251, 11.252 & 11.253 state that each campus and district shall have an improvement plan developed, evaluated, and revised annually. Under this statute the campus and district improvement plans must include nine compliance components and the improvement planning committees must hold at least one public meeting each year.

SISD Goal Alignment

- 4) Provide a wide range of educational opportunities and resources for student success.
- 5) Utilize a variety of strategies and resources to meet the diverse needs of the individual student.
- 6) Communicate effectively and develop collaborative partnerships with students, parents, and community to positively impact student growth, development and educational achievement.

Challenge Created by Current Statute

The nature of the components indicated in the standards references often make the campus and district improvement plans cumbersome compliance documents rather than workable guides for actionable goals.

Alternative Local Standard

The district has a history of collaboratively involving multiple stakeholders in the processes of annually assessing campus and district needs and establishing and monitoring short- and long-term goals. SISD will continue to move forward with our collaborative improvement plans being reflective of action-oriented tasks and measurable goals. The documents, however, will no longer restrict and overburden the content of the plans to encompass the previously included items relative only to compliance rather than relevant actions aimed at progress toward established goals.

Timeline for Implementation

Year 1 and beyond

▪

Probationary Contracts

TEC 21.102 (b) states that a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year and may be renewed for a maximum permissible probationary period of three school years for teachers new to the profession. Additionally, for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year.

SISD Goal Alignment

1) Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators, and staff.

Challenge Created by Current Statute

There are times when teachers' probationary programs have not sufficiently prepared them for success in the classroom and/or when their experiences in other districts have not equipped them for the level of performance expected by Schulenburg ISD. In these cases, the limit on the probationary period forces the district to non-renew probationary contracts as opposed to offering term contracts for teachers who need a longer probationary period for further development.

Alternative Local Standard

The district will continue to invest in orientation and development of teachers new to the profession and those new to the district. In Schulenburg ISD, an individual new to the profession will have up to a four-year probationary period and an individual new to the district, (but not to the profession) will have up to a two-year probationary period in the district. This allows the district to extend the opportunity for teachers to demonstrate the level of mastery expected by Schulenburg ISD. This will assist the district in retaining teachers in whom the district has invested valuable time and resources. It does not, however, require an extended probationary period. Campus and district administrators will retain the option to make annual employment decisions based on teacher proficiency and potential.

Timeline for Implementation

Year 1 and beyond.

▪

Teacher Certification

TEC 21.003, 21.051, 21.053 and 21.057 states that: a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds the appropriate certificate or permit by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, a district may request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency; a teacher must present his or her certificate to the district before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the district from paying an educator as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time; the district is required to submit to the commissioner the names, qualifications, and teaching assignments for anyone issued a local teaching permit. The commissioner reviews the submission and sends an approval determination to the district within thirty days of the district's submission; the district is required to submit written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than thirty consecutive instructional days.

SISD Goal Alignment

- 1) Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators, and staff.
- 4) Provide a wide range of educational opportunities and resources for student success.

Challenge Created by Current Statute

The indicated statutes do not consider the size, location and unique financial and instructional needs of Schulenburg ISD. While Schulenburg ISD strives to offer a market competitive salary for teachers, as a small rural school district it is not within the district's means to lead the scale of competitive salaries as compared to surrounding districts. This limits the ability of the district to recruit and retain highly effective personnel.

Additionally, Schulenburg ISD strives to offer freedom and flexibility to teachers in creative ways, including but not limited to, the opportunity to teach courses that they are passionate about and that align with student interests and strengths. This, however, may not always align with the teacher's area of certification and primary teaching assignment.

Additionally, Schulenburg ISD values CTE and STEM related courses that offer students opportunities to explore and earn certifications that lead to workforce development and/or continuing post-secondary education. The current certification requirement limits the ability of the district to recruit and hire individuals with demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as professional work experience, formal training and education, relevant industry license, certification, or registration, or any combination of these.

Finally, Schulenburg ISD seeks to cast a broad net with teacher recruitment beyond Texas, yet this is hindered by the statute's failure to acknowledge the validity of out-of-state teaching certifications.

Alternative Local Standard

The district will maintain high standards for teacher qualification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the positions available in Schulenburg ISD. However, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position. The exception is all Special Education, Bilingual/ESL and Pre-Kindergarten teachers will be required to be SBEC certified.

Teachers with industry experience, out-of-state certifications, and native languages other than English with qualified education and experience could be eligible to be employed as a teacher in Schulenburg ISD pending local certification requirements.

Additionally, teachers may be granted opportunities to teach courses outside of their standard certification area to teach to their passions and fulfill student interests.

Teachers with out-of-state certifications will be required to maintain a valid teaching certificate with a plan to achieve a Texas teaching certification within prescribed timelines.

The district will issue local teaching permits for personnel based on locally established qualification requirements. Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The district will maintain records on all teachers employed under local teaching permits for review upon request.

The district will also include a public awareness statement for the district at large in all parent and student handbooks indicating the potential employment of non-certified personnel. Employees' credentials will continue to be available upon review through traditional processes under the Public Information Act.

Timeline for Implementation

Year 1 and beyond

▪