

Greenwood ISD

“GISD will educate and develop students in a culture of excellence! We will value integrity, leadership, and discipline.”

District of Innovation Plan

Amended on August 9, 2018



District of Innovation Committee

District Representatives:

- Mr. Ariel Elliott, Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Byron Moreland, Assistant Superintendent
- Mr. Stacy Jones, High School Principal
- Mr. John-Paul Huber, Brooks Middle School Principal
- Mrs. Crysten Hopkins, Elementary Principal

Elementary Representatives:

- Mrs. Lacy Box, Elementary Teacher
- Mrs. Melinda Little, Elementary Teacher
- Mrs. Tammy Shoults, Elementary Teacher

Brooks Middle School Representatives:

- Mrs. Janet Kendall, BMS Teacher
- Mrs. Lindsay Malson, BMS Teacher

High School Representative:

- Mrs. Amanda Lambert, HS Teacher
- Rebecca Randolph, HS Teacher

Special Representatives:

- Mrs. Shelly Byard, Special Populations
- Mrs. Danica Moreland, Special Populations
- Mrs. Heather Brown, Non-teaching Professional

Parent/Business/Community Representatives:

- Mrs. Kim Cooper, Parent
- Mr. Jeff Franklin, Parent
- Mr. Lee Graham, Community
- Mrs. Shay Elliott, Business
- Mrs. Michelle Tedder, Business
- Mrs. Becky Watkins, Community

District of Innovation Timeline

- **December 12, 2016** – Superintendent Elliott addressed the School Board about becoming a District of Innovation. The School Board instructed Superintendent Elliott to proceed and meet with the committee.
- **January 4, 2017** – The District of Innovation Committee members held a meeting.
- **January 9, 2017** – Public Hearing held to present District of Innovation information and frequently asked questions.
- **March 28, 2018** – The District of Innovation Committee members held a meeting.
- **April 9, 2018** – Our local Greenwood ISD Board of Trustees approved making changes to our District of Innovation Plan.
- **August 9, 2018** – Our local Greenwood ISD Board of Trustees approved final District of Innovation Plan.

District of Innovation

What is a “District of Innovation”?

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

Should my district become a “District of Innovation”?

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Flexibility:** District will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:
 1. School state date
 2. Minimum Minutes of Instruction



School Start Date Waiver Issue

The uniform school start date for the 2017-2018 school year is August 28, 2017. Using this state date will force our school calendar to the end of May or beginning of June.

If we receive this “District of Innovation” designation, we can start school on August 17, 2017 and will be able to maintain a school calendar similar to the current adopted calendar.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction (early release days)

A day of instruction means 420 minutes of instruction. The length of a school year is 75,600 minutes of instruction.

If we receive this “District of Innovation” designation, it will allow GISD to make more time for professional development and other innovations. It will also allow GISD to create a calendar that addresses our shortage of bus drivers.

Steps from here:

- **Each Campus will have at least two teachers to serve on an innovation planning team to develop the Innovation Plan.**
- **School Board will consider adopting the Innovation Plan after it has been posted online for 30 days.**
- **School Board will consider adopting an Innovation Plan in April.**
- **Innovation Plans may have a term of 5 years.**
- **Schools must achieve “met standard” on accountability ratings in order to maintain the Innovation Plan.**



District of Innovation Plan

What exemptions does Greenwood ISD intend to pursue?

- **GISD will apply for exemptions of the following legal requirements:**

- 1. Uniform School Start Date (EB Legal)(Education Code 25.0811):** This will allow GISD to provide a calendar that addresses student instruction and a focused professional development plan in conjunction with the new instructional minutes rather than the instructional day required.

- 2. Minimum Minutes of Instruction [early release dates] (EC Legal & EB Legal)(Education Code 25.081e and 25.082a):**

This will allow GISD to make more time for professional development and other innovations. This will also allow GISD to create a calendar that addresses our shortage of bus drivers.

3. Probationary Contracts Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b) Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals: TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district. This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.

Proposal: Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract certified employees subject to T.E.C. Chapter 21, will be subject to a two year probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

4. Teacher Certification Requirements Exemption: TEC §21.003(a) TEC§21.053 Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals: • TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher or other certified position unless the person holds an appropriate certificate. • TEC §21.053(b) states that an educator may not be paid for teaching or work done before the issuance of a valid certificate. Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. When that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. We would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to, CTE and languages other than English. Special Education teachers will continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Additionally, we will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

- 5. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade:** Texas Education Code §25.092 Currently State law currently requires students attend class 90% of the school days the class is offered in order to earn credit. The law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on demonstrated mastery of the learning.

Proposal: The Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade requirement is also referred to as the 90% rule. This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of the learning. The Local Innovation Plan would maintain a minimum attendance percentage for classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system. It would also provide flexibility in time, location, and instructional methods of meeting the needs of student that allow for blended learning and increased active learning opportunities.

- 6. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator:** Flexibility to allow AP's to serve in this capacity. This would allow a more effective approach to student discipline. It would also help improve communication between the school and our parents.
- 7. Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade:** TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. 25.112. Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Schools begin the school year with staff based on projections of student enrollment. Often, enrollment will exceed projections for one grade level. As a result, teachers and/or students must be moved from class to class or school to school to meet the 22-to-1 requirement. As a result, students leave behind friends and teacher relationships that have already formed. Being exempt from the inflexible 22-to-1 requirement will allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates that they began the year with, fostering continuity and stability which will support increased student achievement.

Local Guidelines:

The District will strive to keep class sizes at 22:1, with the flexibility to go above 22:1 if needed.