

Pringle-Morse Consolidated Independent School District

Local Innovation Plan

District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members:

Scott Burrow	Superintendent
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Shannon Lane	Teacher, Interventionist
Wirt Davis	Board Member
Christy Hart	Board Member
Carolyn Shields	Board Member

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill (“HB”) 1842 passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (“TEC”). On November 17, 2016, the Pringle-Morse Consolidated Independent School District’s 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 (this “Plan”). The adoption of this Plan seeks to increase the District’s flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and the community.

II. TERM

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning March 28, 2017, and ending July 31, 2021, 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 innovations 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/EXEMPTIONS

The District proposes the innovations below by exempting itself from the requirements of the Texas Education Code in the following areas:

A. Uniform School Calendar – (TEC § 25.0811) (TEC § 25.0812)

Board Policies Affected: (EB(LEGAL)) (EB(LOCAL))

Current Law

Section 25.0811 of the Texas Education Code states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Section 25.0812 of the Texas Education Code Section states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Plan

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of the community, this Plan gives the District the flexibility to change the date of the first and last days of school. Under this Plan, no student will begin earlier than the second Monday of August. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- 1) This Plan will allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and utilize more instructional time prior to the state assessments given in early May.
- 2) An additional goal is to improve the District attendance rate and student success through flexibility in the calendar.

B. Teacher Contract Days – (TEC § 21.401)

Board Policies Affected: (DC(LEGAL)) (DC(LOCAL))

Current Law

Section 21.401 of the Texas Education Code defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract requiring 187 days of service.

Plan

This Plan gives the District the flexibility to set the required number of teacher contract days each year between 182 and 187 days with no effect on teacher salaries. In each Plan year, it will be part of the calendar planning process to establish the number of required teacher contract days. This innovation will provide the following advantages:

- 1) This flexibility in contract days without a corresponding reduction in teacher salaries will make the District's salaries more competitive.
- 2) This may increase the daily rate the District pays teachers.
- 3) This should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the District on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.
- 4) This may significantly improve teacher morale.
- 5) This will provide teachers opportunities during the summer months to seek beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

C. Teacher Certification

Board Policies Affected: (DK(LEGAL)) (DK(LOCAL)) (DK(EXHIBIT)) (DBA (LEGAL)) (DBA (LOCAL))

Current Law

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or where a teacher will teach a subject outside of his or her certification, the District must first submit a request to the Texas Education Agency before hiring a non-certified teacher or allowing a teacher to teach outside of his or her area of certification. TEA then either approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Plan

Under this Plan, decisions regarding District employee certification will be handled locally as follows:

- 1) The Superintendent/Principal will make a determination to allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of his/her certified field.
- 2) The Superintendent/Principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which would qualify that individual to teach the relevant subject.
- 3) This will provide flexibility in scheduling and options for class offerings to students.

D. Teacher Duty Free Lunch – (TEC § 21.405)

Board Policies Affected: (DL(LEGAL))

Current Law

Under current law teachers and full-time librarians are entitled to at least a 30-minute lunch period free from all duties and responsibilities connected with the instruction and supervision of students

Plan

This Plan will give the District the authority to require teachers to remain on duty during lunch on a rotating basis. This will provide the District with the following advantages:

- 1) This will provide the District with scheduling flexibility.
- 2) This will provide students with direct contact with teachers during lunch and/or recess period, which will allow for a better understanding of student-to-student relationships and also improve student conduct and reduce inappropriate behavior.
- 3) This will allow for a safer school environment by having appropriate staff available to meet the needs of students.

E. Planning and Preparation Time – (TEC § 21.404)

Board Policies Affected: (DL(LEGAL))

Current Law

Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Plan

This Plan will exempt the District from the requirement to provide the planning and preparation time mandated by section 21.404 of the Texas Education Code. This will give the District the flexibility as to when and how it provides planning and preparation time to its teachers. It is necessary for teachers to use planning time to discuss student needs across content areas, student interventions, and instructional strategies needed for student academic growth. A collaborative time is needed to review data from universal screener with a collaborative team with like planning times. This will allow the data to be used in the most advantageous way to promote student growth.

Flexibility in planning and preparation time helps in creating schedules where teachers can reach more students and have more planning time on teacher teams. All teachers will have planning and preparation time each week, but this Plan will provide the District with additional flexibility in this area.

These planning events will be on an as needed basis, but the District will strive to require no more than one such planning event per week.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate personnel. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.