

Pringle-Morse Consolidated Independent School District

Local Innovation Plan

District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members:

Scott Burrow	Superintendent
Edward Beck	Counselor
Janet Wilson	Teacher Pre-K
J.J. Shields	Teacher, 1st Grade
Leslie Ford	Teacher, 3 rd Grade
Jeff Forrest	Teacher, Junior High Science
Cindy Lieb	Teacher, Junior High Social Studies
Suzanne Frazier	Teacher, Elem/ Junior High SpEd
Amber TeBeest	Teacher, Junior High Band
Haden Hart	Teacher, Junior High Math
Shannon Lane	Teacher, Interventionist
Wirt Davis	Board Member
Christy Hart	Board Member
Carolyn Shields	Board Member

Campus and District Improvement Committee Members

Cindy Lieb	Teacher, Junior High SS
Scott Burrow	Superintendent
Amber TeBeest	Teacher, Band
Suzanne Frazier	Teacher, 3 rd Grade
Darlene Curry	Counselor
Jeff Forrest	Teacher, JH/HS Science
Neomi Bernal	Parent
Janet Wilson	Teacher, Pre-K
Kathryn Mancini	Teacher, SpEd
Shannon Lane	Teacher
Paige Speck	Business Manager

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 August 1st, 2021 and ending July 31, 2026, 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 first 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 – (TEC § 21.003)

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

Current Law

The Texas Education Code requires a public school employee to have the appropriate certification for his or her current assignment unless the appropriate permit has been issued. 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

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, and career and technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses, as well as our bilingual education classes

In order to best serve District students, certain decisions on certification will be handled locally. Campus administrators will have the ability to consider out-of-state educator certifications and professional qualifications or credentials of candidates, as well as to review the strengths and qualifications of campus staff to make local recommendations for teaching outside of certain certification areas in hard to fill positions, as allowed by locally established policy. The Superintendent or designee will approve all local certifications and will report to the board of trustees.

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.

F. Probationary Contract – (TEC §21.102)

Board Policies Affected: Board Policy DCA (Legal)

Current Law

Current law requires that for experienced teachers new to the district who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for one year.

Plan

For experienced teachers new to the district who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two additional years from the date of employment with Pringle-Morse CISD.

By providing additional year(s) of probationary status, the district/campus administration can:

- better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness;
- Ensure fit for the district/campus culture; and
- Provide an opportunity for teacher growth.

G. Transfer of Student (Inter-District Transfer) – (TEC § 25.036)

Board Policies Affected: Board Policy FDA (Legal), FDA (Local)

Current Law

Currently, any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

*Note: This rule has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Board Policy

Plan

Pringle-Morse CISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring students not residing in the Pringle-Morse Consolidated Independent School District to file an application for transfer each school year. In approving transfers, several factors are considered:

- Student's latest report card
- Student's attendance records
- Student's scores on all applicable state-mandated assessments
- Student's disciplinary history
- Availability of space, resources, and instructional staff
- Existence of any outstanding balances that the student may have with the District
- Potential adverse effect of the transfer on the financial well-being of the District or the Districts' ability to continue providing quality educational services to all students.

The District will reserve the right to revoke the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on one or a combination of the following factors:

- Academic standing
- Course grades
- Assessment scores (state and local)
- Work habits
- Behavior
- Disciplinary history
- Excessive tardies
- Attendance

Revocation of transfers for the above reasons is final and may not be appealed.

H. DISTRICT-LEVEL AND SITE BASED DECISION-MAKING – (TEC §11.251, §11.252, §11.253, §11.255)

Board Policies Affected: Board Policy BQ (Legal), BQ (Local), BQA (Legal), BQA (Local)

Current Law

The Texas Education Code requires a process for decentralizing decisions to improve the educational outcomes at every school campus through a collaborative effort by which principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives assess educational outcomes of all students, determine goals and strategies, and ensure that strategies are implemented and adjusted to improve student achievement.

The board of trustees of each independent school district is required to ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students.

Plan

Pringle-Morse CISD is located in an extremely small, rural community consisting of few residents and property used mainly for agricultural purposes. The District and Campus are combined into one building. The District has an enrollment of 110 students (PreK-12). Resources for persons serving as members of the District/Campus Planning Committee and other school-related committees are limited without asking the same people to serve on several. One Administrator serves the District as superintendent/ principal. The proposal to allow the District/Campus Planning Committee to become synonymous with the Local Innovation Committee with the same duties as required in law of the District/Campus Planning Committee would be beneficial in order to develop a more cohesive plan that establishes continuity of programs and performance through grades PreK -12.

Therefore, Pringle-Morse CISD is claiming exemption from the specific provisions of TEC § 11.251 - 11.255 allowing the District to determine the processes, including but not limited to the number of meetings within the school year, and memberships of the committee along with which decisions will be referred to the committee, except those prescribed by law.

I. Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented) – (TEC §22.004)

Board Policies Affected: Board Policy CRD (Legal)

Current Law

TEC §22.004 (i) states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all District employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

On _____(date) the Board of Trustees adopted findings declaring that Texas Education Code 22.004 is not in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to Texas Education Code 12A.004 and the list of the

Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.

Plan

Increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs.

J. Local School Health Advisory Council – (TEC § 28.004)

Board Policies Affected: Board Policy BDF (Legal)

Current Law

Currently, the District is required to establish a local School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to assist a district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction. A majority of members are required to be parents of students enrolled in the district and must not be employed by the district.

Plan

Pringle-Morse CISD will claim an exemption to this requirement. The District will determine the make-up of members to the local school health advisory council. The members of the SHAC should determine how often the committee should meet; however, the PMCISD SHAC shall meet at least once per year. Due to the District's size, the SHAC is consistently aware of the needs of the District's students and are often able to review, advice, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings.

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.