



Splendoria Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Timeline

| Date | Action | Description |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1/25/17 | DEIC Input | The board of trustees adopts a resolution or a petition is signed by a majority the members of the DEIC to consider becoming a district of innovation. |
| 2/8/17 | Public Hearing | A public hearing is held for public input. |
| 2/8/17 | Adopt a Resolution | The board of trustees adopts a resolution. |
| 2/8/17 | Appoint a District Level Advisory Committee (DAC) | The board of trustees appoints a district level advisory (DAC) committee to develop a plan on innovation. |
| 2/9/17 | Develop Plan of Innovation | DAC develops a plan of innovation in accordance with TEC, 12A.003. |
| 2/15/17 | Vote on Adoption of DOI Plan | DEIC/DAC approves the plan of innovation by majority vote. |
| 2/16/17 | Post Online for 30 Calendar Days | Plan of Innovation is posted on the Splendoria ISD website for 30 calendar days. |
| 2/16/17 | Notify Commissioner | The Commissioner of Education is notified the same day the plan is posted online. |
| 3/20/17 | Public Hearing to Consider Plan | DAC holds a public meeting to consider the final plan. |
| 3/20/17 | Plan Approved by Board of Trustees | The plan is approved by the board of trustees. |
| 3/21/17 | Notify Commissioner of Approval of the DOI | TEA's form is completed and submitted. |

District of Innovation Advisory Committee

- Dr. Jeff Burke, Superintendent
- Rick Kershner, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services and Human Resources
- Kevin Lynch, Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Facilities
- Dr. Tami Greggerson, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Brian Kroeger, Director of Human Resources
- Dr. Carolyn King, Greenleaf Elementary School Principal
- Kevin Meyer, Splendora High School Assistant Principal
- Tamara Abke, Splendora Junior High School Teacher
- Shelia Hebert, Greenleaf Elementary School Parent
- Ashley Cranney, Secondary Instructional Specialist
- Monica Mizell, Splendora High School Parent
- Carrie Beshears, Piney Woods Elementary Teacher
- Jonathon Andrews, Peach Creek Elementary Teacher
- Tiffany Bailey, Peach Creek Elementary Parent
- Chris Johnson, Community Member

Introduction

House Bill 1842, Section 4, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, allows Texas public school districts to modify certain state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of the students served. By allowing school districts this opportunity districts can develop strategic plans that are unique and tailored to their community and students they serve. As a District of Innovation, Splendora ISD will be able to implement the Board's vision of developing and providing an educational setting where every student is empowered to be self-motivated, confident, adaptable in learning, critical-thinking, and a productive citizen.

Term

The District of Innovation Plan (DOI) will become effective in August 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through August 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. Any amendment to the DOI must follow the same process as the plan development. The District Advisory Committee would consider any proposed amendment. Any amendment would require majority approval of the District Advisory Committee, a majority approval of the DEIC, and posting on the district website for 30 days. Approval by the Board of Trustees would be required for final approval of any amendment.

Vision

The Splendora ISD vision is to provide an educational setting where every student is empowered to be self-motivated, confident, adaptable in learning, critical-thinking, and a productive citizen.

Beliefs

- We believe in providing curriculum and instruction that is student centered.
- We believe in setting high standards of learning for all students.
- We believe that all stakeholders actively participate as a community of learners in the continuous improvement model.
- We believe that educators adapt to embrace new technologies as potential for learning.
- We believe that parent and community involvement enriches student success.
- We believe that character education supports the development of a well-rounded student.

Comprehensive Educational Program

The District Improvement Plan includes three core guiding principles.

1. To provide an education as individual as your child.
2. To maximize student achievement with available funding.
3. To provide facilities that ensure student success.

Exemptions

District-Level and Site-Based Decision-Making (TEC §11.252, §11.253)

Texas Education Code §11.252 states each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Sections 39.053(c)(1) -(4). Texas Education Code §11.253 states that each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

Currently, a long list of compliance measures outlined in TEC §11.252 and TEC §11.253 has removed meaning and relevance from the district and campus level decision-making process. The requirements in content and format of the district and campus improvement plans have shifted an otherwise important planning process into a bureaucratic process that detracts from the importance of thoughtful planning and implementation.

Proposed

SISD district and campus level strategic planning committees will be established as outlined in TEC §11.251 to review, learn, study, and analyze multiple data sources regarding success of all aspects of district operations, most importantly students' success. The committee will meet at least two times per year and generate a strategic plan for district resources and efforts. Under the DOI, the prescriptive list of requirements in the District and Campus Improvement Plans will be replaced with a Strategic Planning process. Compliant items listed in the TEC §11.252 & TEC §11.253

will be replaced by relevant strategic plan components that will directly address the unique needs, talents, and interests of SISD’s community and staff with a targeted focus on the Board of Trustees vision and mission.

Rationale

Using a systematic SISD’s strategic planning process will eliminate the use of prescriptive requirements and allow the district and campuses to develop meaningful strategic plans that include goals, objectives, and action steps that address the unique needs, talents, and interests of our perspective stakeholders to empower and impact achievement.

| Action Steps | | | |
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| | District Level | | Campus Level |
| 1. | Appoint a District Strategic Planning Committee that includes representatives from all stakeholders as outlined in TEC 11.251. | 1. | Appoint a Campus Strategic Planning Committee that includes representatives as outlined in TEC 11.251. |
| 2. | Learn, study, and analyze the strengths, needs, and challenges of the district through the use a formal and informal review process. Review will include but is not limited to state, district, campus and classroom assessments. | 2. | Learn, study, and analyze the strengths, needs, and challenges of the campus through the use a formal and informal review process. Review will include but is not limited to state, campus, and classroom data. |
| 3. | Design a strategic plan that aligns with the Board’s vision and meets the needs of SISD’s students, community, and staff. | 3. | Design a strategic plan that aligns with the Board’s vision and meets the unique needs of the campus’s students, community, and staff. |
| 4. | Communicate the strategic plan to all stakeholders in various ways—post on website, DEIC meetings, and leadership meetings. | 4. | Submit campus strategic plan for review and feedback. |
| 5. | Schedule yearly review of strategic plan and revise and modify based on an ongoing continuous improvement model process. | 5. | Communicate the strategic plan to all stakeholders in multiple ways—post on campus website, faculty meetings, and CIP meetings. |
| 6. | Report to the Board of Trustees the status of the District strategic plan. | 6. | Schedule yearly reviews of strategic plan and revise and modify based on an ongoing continuous improvement model process. |
| 7. | Provide reports to the community on the status of the school district and campuses through the development of a community based accountability system. | | |

Teacher Certifications (TEC §21.003)

Texas Education Code §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire hard-to-fill positions such as professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM), Foreign Language, History, English Language Arts courses, Languages Other than English (LOTE). This system is burdensome and does not consider the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

Proposed

To best serve SISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

Rationale

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. However, 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. Splendora ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE, STEAM, and LOTE. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

Action Steps

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| 1. | Human Resources stay up-to-date with hiring needs in all areas and develop a strategic recruitment calendar making every effort to find qualified individuals for hard-to-fill positions. |
| 2. | The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject out of their certified field. Notification must include the reason for the request and document which qualifying credentials the teacher holds justifying the out of certification assignment. |
| 3. | The campus principal may consider the following criteria as minimum qualifications for eligibility to contractually hire certified personnel under a district teaching permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Professional work experience in related field exceeding 5 years○ Formal training, professional work certification, or registration in related field○ Combination of work experience, training, and education○ Demonstration of successful working experience with students○ Equal or similar out of state certification |
| 4. | Any employee hired under this local district teaching permit must comply with the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in Splendor ISD School Board policy for Personnel. |
| 5. | Any employee hired under the local teaching permit must be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies DNA and DNB (LOCAL). |
| 6. | The superintendent will approve the request if they feel the individual possesses the knowledge, skills, and experience required of a classroom teacher. |
| 7. | The superintendent will report the action to the Board of Trustees prior to employment. |
| 8. | Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paper work will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. |

Appraisals and Incentives (TEC §21.352, TEC §21.354)

Texas Education Code §21.352 and Texas Education Code §21.354

Currently, Texas has introduced new state-wide teacher appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). As well these systems require state standardized test scores be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators

Proposed

Because SISD believes there is much more involved in the education of our students than a standardized test score we propose to establish a committee of administrators and teachers to develop a local teacher and administrator evaluation system that could be a combination of the T-TESS and T-PESS, but includes other best practices as outlined in the Board's vision and goals.

Rationale

This exemption would allow flexibility to evaluate various performance measures, including classroom observations, goal setting and tracking, and collective student growth progress toward identified learning objectives.

| Action Steps | |
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| 1. | Appoint a committee to research a possible locally developed teacher and administrator appraisal system that is based on best practices and aligned with the Board's vision and goals including the district's current incentive plan. The locally developed plan can include a combination of the T-TESS and T-PESS currently used by SISD. |

First Day of Instruction (TEC §25.0811)

Texas Education Code §25.0811 prohibits districts from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

Currently, TEC 25.0811 prohibits districts from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. This causes an imbalance among the fall and spring semesters as well as less flexibility to strategically plan for meaningful professional developments throughout the year.

Proposed

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider a flexible calendar option which may include an earlier start date. Students may begin earlier than the fourth Monday of August. As well, it allows the SISD to schedule more timely and meaningful staff developments throughout the year.

Rationale

Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the SISD to be more responsive to teaching and learning by balancing the amount of instructional time between the first and second semesters. Balancing instructional days before and after winter break allows teachers to better pace the delivery of instruction within an academic school year. Once a start date is determined, professional development days can be embedded in a timely manner that allows for more immediate implementation.

| Action Steps | |
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| 1. | DEIC subcommittee reviews other area district calendars as well as local college calendar and discusses professional development day options, historical holiday preferences, and flexibility. |
| 2. | DEIC subcommittee drafts multiple calendar options. |
| 3. | Potential draft calendars are shared with all DEIC committee members for input and revisions. |
| 4. | Campus improvement teams share the calendar options with staff and reach consensus on the calendar of choice for that campus. |
| 5. | Calendars are posted online for community and staff voting. |
| 6. | DEIC committee members reach consensus for final calendar recommendation that best meets the needs of students, families, and SISD staff. |
| 7. | Final calendar choice is recommended to superintendent to be presented to the Board of Trustees. |

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC §25.092)

Texas Education Code §25.092 mandates a student may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75 percent and less than 90 percent may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the campus administrator and meets the instructional requirements for the class.

The current law requires districts to award class credit to students based on “seat time” rather than content mastery. Local districts need flexibility to set attendance requirements which reflect their specific situations and expectations.

Proposed

SISD would examine possible structures for maintaining a minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and a more flexible pace.

Rationale

Abstaining from this requirement means the district will not have to penalize students who miss class due to extracurricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. Exemption from this requirement can provide educational advantages to some students by providing active learning through formats such as blended learning.

It should be noted that relief from Section §25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules. Opting out of Section §25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher’s right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with TEC §28.0214 nor does it restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with TEC §28.0216

| Action Steps | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Appoint a committee to conduct research and analysis for maintaining a minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and more flexible pace. |
| 2. | Committee will review other districts minimum attendance structures and plans. |
| 3. | Committee will review impacts on compulsory attendance and UIL requirements. |
| 4. | Committee will review impact on assignment of grades provided by teacher. |
| 5. | Committee will make a recommendation to the superintendent to consider different options for minimum attendance for final class credit. |
| 6. | If decided a strategic plan to support minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes and flexible structures for demonstration of mastery of content will be designed. A roll out plan and how it will be communicated will be included in the strategic plan |