



SAN FELIPE DEL RIO

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

ORIGINAL PLAN APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MARCH 26, 2018

AMENDED PLAN APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES JUNE 15, 2020

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed in 2015 by the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, in part amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the TEC, providing more flexibility and local control in meeting the needs of students and the communities served.

On November 13, 2017, the San Felipe Del Rio CISD Board of Trustees (Board) adopted a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation. On December 18, 2017, the Board held a public hearing on the subject and on this same day appointed a Local Innovation Plan Committee (Committee) comprised of parents, teachers and community representatives. The 18-member Committee met January 23, January 30, and February 6, to discuss the process and draft a Local Innovation Plan (Plan); and met on March 20, 2018, to approve the final plan.

TERMS

By law, the term of the designation as a District of Innovation may not exceed five years. The term of the San Felipe Del Rio CISD Local Innovation Plan begins on March 26, 2018, and ends on March 26, 2023, unless rescinded or renewed by the Board in accordance with law, or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by recommendation of the Committee, a majority vote of the district-level committee established under TEC 11.251 (District of Innovation Advisory Committee) along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An amendment to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an innovation district; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify the Texas Education Agency (TEA) within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates. The Committee will review the plan annually in the spring, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the

District as intended and are aligned with San Felipe Del Rio CISD (SFDRICISD) Strategic Design efforts. An annual report will be provided to the Board based on the outcome of this review.

As part of the annual review process, the membership of the Committee will be renewed and/or modified by a majority vote of the Board. Outside of the annual review/renewal process, if a member of the Committee is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Board may appoint a replacement by majority vote. The intent of the Board is to maintain balanced representation on the Committee of parents/community members and staff.

The SFDRICISD District of Innovation – Local Innovation Plan is aligned with the beliefs, vision and goals of SFDRICISD as approved by the Board.

SFDRICISD SHARED BELIEFS

We believe:

- ✓ It takes a united community to produce citizens with 21st century skills.
- ✓ Our community should provide a safe, nurturing, and trusting environment.
- ✓ Each individual should be inspired and inspire others to exceed their own expectations.
- ✓ Each individual should be motivated to take ownership of their own learning.
- ✓ We must provide EVERYONE with the resources to meet the individual needs of all students.

SFDRICISD VISION

It is the vision of San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District to provide a safe and nurturing environment where all students become contributing citizens prepared to compete in an ever-changing world.

SFDRICISD GOALS

District Goal 1:

The district shall maintain a safe environment, utilize quality curriculum and diverse instructional opportunities to ensure student achievement at the highest standards of excellence.

District Goal 2:

The District shall be a good steward of the community's resources – financial, human, facilities – and explore new opportunities for organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

District Goal 3:

The District shall provide meaningful and effective communication in a timely manner to all parents, students, staff, and District Partners.

It is determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the pursuit of the goals of SFDRICISD in meeting the needs of students at this time.

INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTION 1: UNIFORM START DATE

San Felipe Del Rio CISD is requesting an exemption from TEC §25.0811a. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) ...a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

RATIONALE

Texas Education Code §25.0811(a) does not allow school districts to begin school before the fourth Monday of August. This requirement restricts the local community from designing a calendar that best meets the needs of students and families. This requirement limits the amount of instructional time available before local and state testing. Exemption from this requirement allows SFDRICISD to collaboratively design an academic calendar based on the needs of and input from the community.

STRATEGY

Implement an earlier school start date, specifically on the second Monday in August, which would allow SFDRICISD to:

- ✓ Provide a more balanced distribution of instructional time for one-semester coursework, as students who currently take a one-semester course in the fall have fewer instructional days to master course content than students who take the same one-semester course in the spring.
- ✓ Provide more instructional days in advance of standardized assessments, such as Advanced Placement and STAAR exams;
- ✓ Provide additional instructional time after the last official day of school for students retaking a STAAR exam over the summer;
- ✓ Complete fall semester exams before dismissing for Winter Break;
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for students to take advantage of the full array of summer offerings at institutions of higher education.
- ✓ Provide for additional days to mitigate the resurgence of COVID-19, or other emergency-related school closures.

INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTION 2: EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

San Felipe Del Rio CISD is requesting an exemption from TEC §21.003 (a). CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher 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 the position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

RATIONALE

Growth of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, course offerings, and HB5 endorsements have led to CTE teacher shortages in hard to fill program areas. An exemption from TEC §21.003 would allow SFDRICISD the flexibility to consider workforce professionals to teach CTE courses specifically within the Trades and Industry Certificates, Health Science Certificates, Family & Consumer Science Certificates, and Business Information Management (BIM) courses for which a traditionally, certified candidate is not available.

STRATEGY

San Felipe Del Rio CISD prides itself in hiring the highest quality teaching staff for the benefit of all learners. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the positions within the Trades and Industry Certificates, Health Science Certificates, Family & Consumer Science Certificates, and Business Information Management (BIM) courses; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the district will consider workforce professionals to teach CTE courses specifically for which a traditionally, certified, qualified candidate is not available; and have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and are fully equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question based on local certification criteria as referenced in the TEA Career and Technical Education Chart.

Qualification for local certification shall include all applicable TEA Career and Technical Education Chart criteria:

- ✓ Degree or formal training/education in the content area
- ✓ Professional work experience
- ✓ Current licensure by a state or nationally recognized accrediting agency in any approved occupations for the classes the instructor will be teaching

- ✓ Requirement of an appropriate Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification for instructors of Business Information Management (BIM) courses

All candidates will be carefully considered to ensure the individuals have sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to carry out the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught.

Staff hired under a school district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district. After the required posting period and candidate interviews, the CTE Director must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what specific credentials (i.e. experiences and expertise) the prospective teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach that subject(s). The superintendent must approve the selection and recommend to the Board for final approval. The District and local campus will assess appropriate training needs for any teacher hired under this exemption. Finally, this is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is noted that through the annual review process, further innovation and exemptions may be needed to continue the work of the district in meeting the needs of students, and amendments may be necessary. As other districts across the state pursue this process and implement plans through this provision for additional flexibility and increased local control, new ideas for innovation may emerge that have applicability in the SFDRCSID.