

**Flour Bluff ISD  
District of Innovation Plan**



## **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations, in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan as set forth in Texas Education Code, Chapter 12A. To be eligible for designation as a District of Innovation, a school district's most recent academic performance rating must be at least acceptable. Once formally approved, an innovation plan is effective for five years. The plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed in the same way it was developed and approved at any time.

Each school district may pursue designation as a District of Innovation for different reasons. As a District of Innovation, Flour Bluff ISD will be able to increase flexibility necessary to personalize the learning experiences of our students. We also believe Flour Bluff ISD must have the ability to make important educational decisions for our students at the local level. As we developed our District of Innovation Plan, our community has been involved throughout the process, giving ongoing feedback on what they want for their children in order to prepare them to be positive contributors to the world.

## **Process**

**April 25, 2019**—Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees heard a presentation on District of Innovation.

**July 25, 2019**—Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees signed the resolution to proceed

**August 1, 2019**—Public Meeting

A public meeting was held to get feedback from the community

**August 29, 2019**—Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees approved to pursue the District of Innovation designation and delegated the Superintendent to appoint a committee

**September 12, 2019**—First Meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

**October 1, 2019**—Second Meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

## 2019-2020 District of Innovation Committee

Dr. David Freeman	Superintendent
Dr. Allison Schaum	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Linda Barganski	Director of Federal and State Programs
Edgar Van Geem	Director of Special Education
Jeanette Revels	Director of Human Resources
Kim Sneed	Public Information Coordinator
Chris Steinbruck	Athletic Director
Tracy Erickson	High School Administrator
Kelly Boswell	Junior High Administrator
Dr. Sal Alvarado	Intermediate Administrator
Dr. Nikol Youngberg	Elementary Administrator
Shea Hernandez	Primary Administrator
Amy Seeds	Early Childhood Administrator
Kristin Sanderford	Secondary Special Education Counselor
Beth Huckabee	High School Teacher
Maria McDonel	Junior High Teacher
George Henderson	Junior High Teacher
Micki Beauregard	Intermediate Teacher
Misty Beckwith	Elementary Teacher
Donna Kesselring	Primary Teacher
Christina Martinez	Early Childhood Center Teacher
Cheryl Hooper	High School Parent
Michelle Ewing	Jr. High Parent
Natalie Barganski	Intermediate Parent

Leann Minners	Elementary Parent
Katie Hoover	Primary Parent
Tamara Blair	Early Childhood Parent
Jennifer Welp	School Board Member
Nicole Peters	School Board Member
Dr. Alicia Needham	Community Member
Lynn Kaylor	Community Member
Kelly Martin	Community Member
Dr. Laurie Turner	Community Member
Monette Bright	Community Member
Christy Zamora	Business Member
Javier Wiley	Business Member

## Requested Exemptions

### **Uniform School Start Date**

*(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)*

#### **Currently**

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. Many districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was detrimental to the tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

#### **Proposed**

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also let the Flour Bluff ISD start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

### **Minimum Minutes of Instruction and School Day Length**

*(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081, and 25.082)*

#### **Currently**

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction or 7 hours each day (including intermissions and recess). The bill also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

#### **Proposed**

The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include, for example, a later start/early release time which will accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities for teachers to perfect their craft, deepen their content knowledge, analyze student data, and in the event of inclement weather.

## **Class Size Ratio**

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111, 25.112, and 25.113)

### **Currently**

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times, soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

### **Proposed**

Flour Bluff ISD, believes that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom. This must be balanced with the logistics of the timing of adding staff and the best teacher-to-student ratio that can be achieved given the total number of students. Many times, it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment. Most importantly, research clearly shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning, not absolute class size. In the event that class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio for Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> grade classes, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees for approval. Flour Bluff ISD will not allow a ratio greater than 23:1 in Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> grades.