



BELLEVUE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan

District Improvement Committee Approved: February 16, 2017

District Improvement Committee Renewal: February 15, 2021

School Board Approved: April 20, 2017

School Board Approved, Renewal: pending board approval

Nondiscrimination

Bellevue ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, economic status, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

I. Introduction:

House Bill 1842 was passed during the 84th Legislative Session which allowed Texas Public Schools to become Districts of Innovation. Becoming a District of Innovation allows a school to exempt from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code, which will allow more local control. To allow our students, staff, and community more opportunities to meet the diverse needs of our district, Bellevue ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation.

The process of Bellevue ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 23, 2016. During that time, a District of Innovation Team (DIT) was established to take charge of creating a collaborative local innovation plan to improve the needs of our school. The DIT met on January 19, February 2, and February 16 to discuss the development of the plan. The DIT used data driven decision making to devise a Local Innovation Plan (LIP) to bring needed changes to Bellevue ISD.

Bellevue ISD's LIP will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with HB 1842. If at any time within the 5 year plan, other areas are to be considered, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

II. Comprehensive Educational Program

The Bellevue Innovation plan is guided by and aligned with the District's mission, beliefs, values, and goals established in the District Improvement Plan.

A. Mission

○ **In partnership with parents, teachers, and students, Bellevue ISD is committed to providing a quality education to meet the varied needs of a diverse student body. Every learner will have the opportunity to be challenged, successful, and prepared for a future as a responsible and productive citizen.**

B. Vision Statement

To show our students that education and hard work are the ultimate rewards

Core Values:

- Love first, Teach Second
- Practice, Promote, and Support Honesty
- Growing Lifelong Learners
- Encourage Fun, Innovative, and Critical Thinking
- Foster Excellence and Integrity

C. District Motto:

Bellevue Schools:

Fly high Eagles, and soar above the rest!

D. Desired Graduate Characteristics for Bellevue ISD:

- Person of High Moral Character
- Sound Academic Foundation
- Skills to Work Collaboratively
- Prepared for Post Secondary endeavors
- Critical Thinker/Learner
- Technology Literate
- Hungers for Continued Learning

E. Board Goals

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- (a) Continue to identify ways to create an optimal learning environment for all students and staff.
- (b) Monitor the learning environments to ensure safety of all students and staff.
- (c) Provide consistent discipline across the school.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- (a) Continue to develop college, career, and military ready students.
- (b) Find ways to teach our students life skills that will help them become productive citizens.
- (c) Continue to promote extracurricular activities and participation in those activities.
- (d) Provide our students opportunities to develop soft skills for future employment.

COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- (a) Continue a District Facebook page to share information with all constituents.
- (b) Connect with local newspapers and news channels to highlight Bellevue activities.
- (c) Develop promotional resources to grow enrollment in the future.
- (d) Support a strong PTFO, alumni organizations, and other parent/community groups.

PERSONNEL

- (a) Use the High Reliability Schools research model to provide quality professional development.
- (b) Maintain technology and training for staff to ensure continued success of students.
- (c) Encourage positive communication among staff, kids, and parents in all situations.
- (d) Maintain a positive work culture for retention of staff.

DISTRICT FINANCES

- (a) Provide and maximize CTE opportunities to grow WADA and increase attendance.
- (b) Support the continuation of small/midsized school adjustments with policy makers.
- (c) Educate the public on Chapter 41 and the difference between M&O and I&S.
- (d) Strive to maintain a balanced budget

District Improvement Team Members

Wade Wesley	Superintendent
Laura MacTavish	Business Representative
Jessica Johnson	Parent
Shayla Crawford	Parent
Magen Orton	Parent
Sunny Mitchell	IT Director
Kassandra Burk	Elementary Teacher
Debbie Rogers	Elementary Teacher
Blythe Sewell	Secondary Teacher
Lori Shoemaker	504 / Special Ed Representative
Johnny Chandler	Counselor / District Testing Coordinator

III. Timeline for Renewal Plan

January 28, 2021

- District of Innovation Plan sent to teachers and staff to solicit input of any additions, changes, or deletions of the existing District of Innovation Plan

February 15, 2021

- District Improvement Team meets to review existing plan, discuss changes suggested through survey of staff, and consider renewal of draft for board consideration
- District Improvement Team approves the BISD Renewed Innovation Plan

March 8, 2021

- Renewal draft of District of Innovation Plan placed on District website for public consideration
- Email sent to notify parents of the Renewed District of Innovation plan was available for viewing on the District's website.

March 11, 2021

- Board to take action to approve notifying the Texas Commissioner of Education of their intent to vote on adopting Renewal of BISD Innovation Plan with changes.

April 8, 2021

- District Improvement Team conducts a public meeting for consideration of the Renewal of the District of Innovation Plan with changes.
- BISD Board of Trustees meets for deliberation, consideration, and approval of Renewal of District of Innovation Plan with changes

April 9, 2021

- Update all policy changes with TASB if necessary
- Notify the Commissioner of Education of Board decision of Innovation Plan

IV. Term of Plan:

The term of the renewed District of Innovation plan, as constituted by statute, may not exceed five years. The term of the Bellevue District of Innovation plan upon Board approval will begin with the 2021-2022 school year and conclude at the end of the 2026-2027 school year. The plan will stay in effect for the time period listed unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by Board action in accordance with state law, or the plan is terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan must be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Improvement Team, and must have two thirds majority vote of the Board to take effect. The school district must notify TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date, not to be later than start of the following school year, to become in compliance with all sections of the Texas Education Code.

The District Improvement Team will annually review the Innovation plan to monitor the effectiveness of the plan, and make recommendations of amendments, modifications, renewals, or rescission to the Board. 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 Commission of Education of any action to amend or renew the plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and the dates of approval of such amendments and renewals.

V. Innovation Plan:

It has been determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the goals of the Bellevue School District in meeting the needs of the students at this time. In each section, the district will establish the Education Code requirements and district policies to be exempted with brief explanation of and parameters the district will follow in replacement of the requirements.

The following was the original plan approved by the BISD Board of Trustees on April 20, 2017.

A. Uniform School Start Date

Exemption sought from TEC §25.0811
Related Board Policies: (EB Legal)

Current Law:

Under TEC §25.0811, a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Prior to this requirement, a waiver was allowed for districts to begin earlier, but was taken away with this mandate. When considering calendars that could begin as late as August 28th, the school district's calendar has no additional time for local activities, professional development, extended holidays, and the ability to end before June. A calendar that extends into June negatively impacts additional opportunities for

students as it conflicts with summer school, college courses beginning in June, and other camps/enrichment summer programs for kids.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from the current uniform school start date of the 4th Monday in August, would provide the district with the flexibility to create a calendar that meets the needs of the community, allows for staff development days, extended holiday time for students/families, and the ability to end in May.

Strategies:

1. Bellevue ISD will begin instruction before the 4th Monday of August in an effort to create greater flexibility in the school calendar.
2. The earlier start date will also offer more preparation time for staff and students to prepare for state mandated testing.
3. The flexibility will also provide more time for staff development days throughout the calendar year.

B. Length of School Day

Exemption sought from TEC §25.081, TEC §25.082(a)

Related Board Policies: (EC Legal)

Current Law:

In TEC §25.081, the school day is to be 420 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students, and rephrased another way in TEC §25.082(a) as the school day is to be 7 hours of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students. Bellevue ISD will achieve the 75,600 minutes of instruction per year, but seeks an exemption to allow the district to reach this total through a creative use of time management to maximize student achievement and accommodate local interests.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from setting a time requirement on the length of the school day would provide the district with greater flexibility to utilize more than the maximum 6 waiver days that are currently allowed to reduce the length of certain school days. With this flexibility, the district could create a schedule that allows for staff development, early release, late arrival, and/or alter the schedule when it would be beneficial for students, parents, or local stakeholders without the fear of diminishing state funding or becoming out of compliance.

Strategies:

1. The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each

campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.

2. This exemption will also allow greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
3. The district will provide teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.

C. Probationary Contracts

Exemption sought from TEC§ 21.102

Related Board Policies: (DCA Legal)

Current Law:

Under TEC §21.102, the probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from the current probationary contract limit of one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher or administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district, will allow BISD extended time for the evaluation and training of new personnel. One year, in some cases, is a limited and insufficient amount of time to fully determine a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. A campus principal would need to make a quick decision that would not be beneficial to the teacher or to the school district. The principal would need to decide to recommend termination of the contract or make a hasty decision to recommend moving the employee to a term contract. Local control could provide an additional year to evaluate, mentor, and/or develop necessary strategies.

Strategies:

1. For experienced teachers and counselors new to Bellevue ISD that 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 years from the last date of district employment.
2. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.

BISD is committed to effectively managing teacher contracts.

D. School District Teaching Permit

Exemption sought from TEC§ 21.055

Current Law:

Under TEC § 21.005, states that districts must submit requests to the TEA to hire teachers who are teaching a subject outside of their certification area.

Innovation Strategies

1. Campus principals may submit to the superintendent a written request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field and/or grade level in which he/she is not certified. The superintendent will approve or deny requests, basing decision on whether this person can be an asset for students. Upon approval, the superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees for final approval.
2. This will allow more flexibility in scheduling and offer our students opportunities to take courses that are not offered due to the restrictions in TEC 21.055.
3. This will also allow our district to fill hard to hire subjects with qualified teachers, without submitting a request to the TEA.

E. Certification - General

Exemption sought from TEC §21.003(a), TEC §21.057.

Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal), DK (Legal), DK (Local), DK (Exhibit)

Current Law:

TEC §21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern, 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. As a rural school district, hiring certified personnel can be difficult, especially in certain subject areas, when a limited or no qualified applicants have applied. When the district is unable to find a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request an emergency certificate from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEC §21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns a noncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instruction days.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from the current state teacher certification requirements will allow the district flexibility to hire qualified, experienced individuals that may not have state certification. The district will have the ability to hire community college instructors, university professors, professionals in certain trade or vocational areas, areas in health

science, and/or law enforcement. The exemption would provide the district the ability to hire full or part time instructors to enrich the academic curriculum for college readiness and/or to teach necessary skills for career success.

Strategies:

1. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CATE and STEM related courses along with other required courses needed throughout the district. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003. This exemption will allow the district to:
 - a. Consider part-time professionals to teach courses
 - b. Opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession.
 - c. Increase the number of CATE and STEM type courses available.
 - d. Trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses.
2. The current certification requirement also limits the district from creating a departmentalized elementary. This exemption will allow the district to:
 - a. Departmentalize the elementary to improve student instruction
3. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments and a teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to TEA.

In these cases, TEA's approval would not be necessary for local certification

F. Teacher Contract Days

Exemption sought from TEC §21.401

Current Law:

TEC 21.401 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Strategies:

1. With the limits to our budget due to property values in our district, it is hard for Bellevue ISD to compete with other local schools on teacher salaries. This strategy would decrease the number of teacher contract days from 187 to 182 to allow an increase in the daily rate paid to teachers employed by Bellevue ISD. This will level the playing field for recruiting and retaining high quality teachers in our area. Along with competitive salaries, this reduction in contract days will also have a positive effect on teacher morale in our district.

The following are being added to the renewal plan proposed to the BISD Board of Trustees on March 11, 2021.

G. Transfer Students

Exemption sought from TEC §25.036
Related Board Policies: FDA (Local)

Current Law:

Currently in TEC §25.001, a school district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC §25.036 a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year. FDA (Local) states, "Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time."

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from the one school year requirement for accepting a transfer application would allow the district to accept high risk transfer students. Students that are seeking a school change in hopes of starting fresh to help with their school grades, attendance, and discipline could potentially not be accepted because of the one year requirement. Bellevue ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, the student's grades, and attendance records are taken into consideration for approval. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, policies, and regulations of the District.

Strategies:

1. *Student Behavior.* When the student's behavior warrants an In-School suspension, the Superintendent or designee may revoke the transfer application. Each case will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to discipline history and circumstances. If a student's behavior results in a DAEP placement or expulsion, the transfer application will immediately be revoked.
2. *Attendance.* If a student's attendance falls below 90% or the TEA truancy standard of four unexcused absences in a four week period or ten unexcused absences in a 6 month period of time, the transfer application will immediately be revoked.
 - a) *In all situations, communication with parents will be a priority.*

H. School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings

Exemption sought from TEC §28.004(d-1)

Related Board Policies: (BDF Legal)

Current Law:

Currently there are legal requirements concerning the required number of meeting for the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC). In TEC §28.004(d-1), the SHAC is required to meet at least four times each year.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from the required number of days would allow local control by the board of trustees and the committee members to determine. The district's size and the stability of the membership of the SHAC committee ensures that committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are often able to review, discuss, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings.

Strategies:

1. *Number of Meetings.* Bellevue ISD will reduce the number of meetings to two (2) meetings per year. A meeting to determine goals and objectives at the beginning of the year, and another meeting to evaluate the program goals and report to the school board will continue to be of priority.

I. School District Depositories Contract

Exemption sought from TEC §45.205

Related Board Policies:

Current Law:

Currently there are legal requirements a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. (b) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. (c) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Innovative Plan:

An exemption would allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 6-year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of

banking institutions available to bid on the district's business. This will further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to change direct deposit instructions each time a new depository occurs and allows the district flexibility with respect to banking relationships.

Strategies:

1. The district will only send depository services out to bid if the district determines contract pricing becomes uncompetitive or there is some operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. With this exemption in place, none of the additional requirements related to the bid or request for proposal detailed in Sec 45.206 through 45.209 would be applicable.

J. DAEP Teacher

Exemption sought from TEC §37.008(a)(7), TAC§103.1201(h)(1).

Related Board Policies: FOCA (Legal)

Current Law:

In TEC §37.008(a), Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21

Innovative Plan:

An exemption from this requirement would give the district flexibility in scheduling teachers and aides as needed. There are very few students that are assigned to a DAEP setting that would require the district to hire a full time certified teacher. In times that the DAEP setting is utilized, the time assigned could potentially be very minimal. Computer based instruction is often utilized if a student is assigned a large number of days.

Strategies:

1. *Student Support.* The campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.

VI. Summary

The goal to become a District of Innovation is to reduce inhibiting factors of current law set by Texas Education Code in an effort to better serve and support our students, parents, staff, and community in new ways. Through HB 1842, Bellevue ISD will be able to grow in our ability to utilize innovative approaches in making decisions for our children that move the district to establish a more locally customized environment.

The implementation of the exemptions from the TEC will require revision of Bellevue ISD policies and procedures. Bellevue ISD will utilize a local policy development process that includes input from various stakeholders. The superintendent will promulgate regulations, policies, and procedures to govern the areas for which local exemptions were sought.

The Bellevue ISD community is grateful to the legislators who developed and passed the District of Innovation legislation for HB 1842 giving the school district more local decision making ability. Bellevue ISD is committed to the challenges that lie ahead to bring this ideology to full benefit for the best interests of our students and community.