

## Tioga ISD 2022-27 District of Innovation Plan

Tioga ISD will comply with Texas Education Code (TEC) 12A.007, which pertains to the amendment, rescission or renewal of local innovations plans.

### Committee Members (Newly Appointed as of February 2022)

_____	Charles Holloway	Superintendent
_____	Josh Ballinger	Asst. Superintendent
_____	Jana Smith	TES/TMS Principal
_____	Keith Kirkland	THS Principal
_____	Garra Ballinger	HS Advisor/Library Media
_____	Nicole Hanks	Middle School Counselor
_____	Daniel Tanguma	Tioga Community Leader
_____	Ryan Walters	TISD Advisory Member
_____	Sheri Woodall	THS Teacher
_____	Alton Rhymes	THS Parent
_____	Penny Tucker	TES Teacher
_____	Julie Armstrong	TES Parent
_____	Ammie Scott	TISD Teacher/PEIMS
_____	Michael Mann	THS Teacher/Coach
_____	Amy Hough	TES/TMS Asst. Principal
_____	Lisa Neal	TISD Registered Nurse

## **TERM**

The District of Innovation renewal committee voted to develop a 5-year plan to begin the 2022 – 2023 school year.

In order to best serve our students and align our learning to the TISD Board goals/beliefs, the district of innovation committee developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan to serve the district from 2022 – 2027. The plan will provide opportunities to allow the TISD Board of Trustees the ability to use their best judgment to make decisions regarding the students of TISD. TISD is a school district made up of families from a variety of surrounding communities and has unique challenges. Giving the board local control of these decisions will provide lasting effects on our students, parents and community.

## **INNOVATIONS**

### **I. First Day of Instruction and School Start Date**

Exemption from: TEC 25.0811

Under current Texas law, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

#### *Proposed Innovation Strategy*

The innovation strategy would be to annually determine the school start date that is best for our community. This would give flexibility to balance the number of days in each semester, provide more instructional days before state assessment is given, and more properly align classes to college courses. Tioga ISD is an Early College High School Campus.

TEC 25.0811 restricts flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and the community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable the district to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of students in TISD. An earlier start date allows a school end date prior to June. By ending earlier, TISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier start date, and therefore an earlier end date, allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

Education is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders-students, educators, parents, and community.

## **II. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator(s)**

Exemption from: TEC 37.0012

A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.

### *Proposed Innovation Strategy*

Flexibility with regard to the designation of campus behavior coordinators allows for greater collaboration when addressing the social and emotional learning of students. Time and resources can be spent on fostering positive school culture and implementing multi-systemic prevention and intervention programs.

Under the provisions of the Texas Education Code, and in-line with expectations of the district, Tioga ISD will assign a campus level administrator along with a selected group of educators and students to serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator Team. The coordinator will facilitate behavior meetings of this team and then interpret the fairness and equability of the student code of conduct as approved by the TISD Board of Trustees.

TISD will focus on building a Culture of Excellence that fosters the development of social-emotional learning. In addition to exempting the district from the application of TEC §37.0012, any authority, responsibility, or duty granted to a Campus Behavior Coordinator by law or TISD Board Policy shall be exercised by other appropriate school officials as well.

## **III. Certification Required, Educator Preparation, Presentation & Recording Certificates and Parental Notification.**

Exemption from: TEC 21.003, 21.053 and 21.057

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

### *Proposed Innovation Strategy*

In order to best serve TISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. This strategy will allow TISD to have the flexibility to hire the most qualified individuals

who are experienced and knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.

b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent, or their designee, will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year.

c. This will allow more flexibility in scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings beyond traditional, core-based coursework while also expanding the offerings of our Early College High School Program (TECH - Tioga Early College High).

Learning is enhanced by passionate and highly qualified educators who pursue expertise in their fields and are highly valued by the entire community. An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid local certificate.

Flexibility in the noted requirements allows the district to make specific employment decisions exclusively at the local level. Making local decisions about recruiting and employing effective and experienced individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate increases the degree to which the district can offer an innovative curriculum and instruction.

Tioga ISD will make every attempt to hire the most qualified individuals with appropriate certifications by the appropriate state agency for the position in question. Primarily certified teachers will be sought before locally certified personnel. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire the most qualified individuals who are experienced and knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

1. The principal must specify in writing to the superintendent the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this

individual to teach a related subject that is outside the certification of that particular teacher.

2. Emergency situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted and stated reasons documented.

3. Tioga ISD will allow District Teaching Certifications based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.

4. An individual with certain qualifications who is not state certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions including, but not limited to, TEA approved shortage areas such as Languages Other than English (LOTE) and Career & Technical Education (CTE), etc. The exception to this would be that of State Tested Subjects and Core class subjects, where only certified teachers should fill these positions unless no certified teachers can be found and the campus is able to prove all viable options have been exhausted.

5. A person seeking District Teaching Certifications should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position.

6. Qualifications that may be considered can include, but are not limited to:

a. Professional work experience.

b. Formal training and education, including an Associate's Degree (CTE), certification in their field and Bachelors/Masters/Doctoral Degrees.

c. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration.

d. Combination of work experience, training, and education.

e. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.

f. Bachelor's Degree may be waived in certain CTE courses with sufficient professional work experience and certification.

G. Demonstration of language proficiency for LOTE (Example: foreign language/sign language).

7. The Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee will then approve the request if he/she believes the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students.

8. Teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency, as the district will be exempt from notification regulations.

9. An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.

10. An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

11. The campus will be responsible for notifying parents in writing of any core subject that is not being taught by a certified teacher for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

12. In order to ensure high quality instruction, Tioga ISD will provide additional support for candidates hired under a TISD local teacher certification.

13. The campus principal and program director will create a personal professional development plan for each locally certified teacher.

**\*\*\*Districts of Innovation must comply with the requirements to have a certified educator in a bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), or special education classroom.**

#### **IV. Probationary Contracts**

Exemption from: TEC 21.102

Under current Texas Law, newly hired teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses who have been employed in public education for five of the previous eight years are limited to a one year probationary contract. This requires employment decisions to be made before the school year ends, and before state assessment results are available.

##### *Proposed Innovation Strategy*

Innovation Strategy would be for teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be renewed for up to two years from the first day of employment.

A person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time shall be employed under a probationary contract for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years.

Note: A "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate.

Flexibility with regard to probationary contracts allows the district sufficient time, when needed, to determine a teacher's effectiveness. Adequately determining a teacher's effectiveness makes it more likely that only those teachers who advance the art and science of teaching will be retained.

Innovation Strategy would be for teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years.

#### **V. Administrator Evaluations**

Exemption from: TEC 21.3541

Principals and other administrators are primarily evaluated in the state of Texas using the T-PESS appraisal system.

*Proposed Innovation Strategy*

Principals and other administrators will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

The state education commissioner shall establish school leadership standards and a set of indicators of successful school leadership to align with the training, appraisal, and professional development of principals.

These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Tioga ISD.

**VI. Site-Based Decision Making**

Exemption from TEC 11.251 – 11.255

Site-based decision making is 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 basic premise of site-based decision making is that the most effective decisions are made by those who will actually implement the decisions.

*Proposed Innovation Strategy*

The implementation process for site-based decision making occurs at two levels – district and campus. While all stakeholders are represented, it is often a difficult task for parent, community, and business reps to offer a voice in a broad sense. Although each offers perspective, feedback is typically more representative of individual perspective than as an advocate for those in similar roles.

As a result, Tioga ISD is claiming exemption from the specific provisions and shall determine the processes and memberships of its site-based management committees. While Tioga ISD will continue to develop district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment, the district is claiming exemption from the specific mandates of these sections and shall determine the contents of its plans while honoring federal mandates that cannot be excluded. Regardless of whether any adjustments or changes are made to site-based decision-making rules and laws, Tioga ISD believes this issue to be a local decision as opposed to a state mandate.

Over time, both district- and campus-level parents of students enrolled in the district, community members, and business and industry representatives have expressed concerns feeling they had little to contribute to the overall conversation in the traditional format of these committees. Because so much is to be considered as a part of the district and campus improvement plan (including federal and state law), leaders (both principals and teacher leaders) must have deep conversation prior to the site-based management committee meetings. As a result, the committee is merely a rubber-stamp committee and needs to be woven within the District of Innovation Committee.

## **VII. School Health Advisory Committee**

Exemption from: TEC 28.004

The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

The local school health advisory committee shall meet at least four times each year.

### *Proposed Innovation Strategy*

Tioga ISD will be exempt from the requirement to hold a minimum of four meetings per year. The TISD SHAC shall meet at least once per year. The district's size and stability of the membership of the SHAC ensures that the committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are able to accomplish the required actions in fewer than four meetings.

In a small district, the same staff members are required to sit on several different committees thus limiting their ability to effectively serve on those that meet at the same time, or require several meetings throughout the year. Additionally, the members of the SHAC will have a much more intimate relationship with the needs and goals of this committee due to the small number of students it serves, thus not requiring four meetings throughout the year to update its plan and vision. TISD SHAC committee shall meet at least once each year as part of the District of Innovation Committee meetings.

As a small district committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are often able to review and revise the District's plan in a single meeting, such as the District of Innovation Committee meetings. This should be a matter for the local board of trustees and the committee members to determine how often they need to meet to meet the district's needs.