



**Ingram ISD
District of Innovation Plan
2017 – 2022**

Advisory Committee

Mindy Merkel, Chair
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Jessica Beaver, ES Teacher
Terri Cody, Curriculum/Instructional Coach
Charles Kennedy, MS Teacher
Michael Goodwin, HS Teacher
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Juanita Perkins, Parent
Tim and Rebecca Huchton, Parents
Lydia Nichols, Parent
Karen Bordovsky, Assistant Superintendent

Ingram ISD Vision Statement

Inspiring Student Success from the Inside Out

Ingram ISD Mission Statement

Our purpose is to ensure an environment that provides for rigorous learning and support; where each student masters the curriculum at every level, is continually inspired to ascend to the highest levels of good character, and thoughtfully and diligently prepares for a successful life after high school.

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code that are available to open charter enrollment schools. This designation provides more local control to districts to determine how exactly to best utilize the designation to better serve students.

Term

The term of the Plan is for no more than five years unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. This plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if approved by vote of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees.

First Day of Instruction

(Texas Education Code §25.0811)

Currently

The Texas Education Code states a school district may not begin student instruction before the fourth Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design and balancing of instructional semesters to meet the needs of students or the wishes of the local board of trustees, who represent community interests in this matter.

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 the District to personalize learning, increase summer employment opportunities, 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. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction

(Texas Education Code §25.081, Texas Education Code §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 (including intermissions and recess). Texas Education Code §25.082 requires instruction to be at least 420 minutes per day.

Proposed

Exempting from the requirement of 75,600 minutes of instruction for the year and 420 minutes of instruction per day allows the school district to create flexible schedules, which incorporates needed professional development, early release days for the purpose of teacher/parent/student conferences and future innovations that currently are restricted due to the requirement of 75,600 annual minutes and 420 daily minutes. The district will establish a process to determine when it will be appropriate for a school schedule to include a regularly scheduled day that will be less than 420 minutes.

90 Percent Attendance Rule

(Texas Education Code §25.092)

Currently

State law currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn credit. The law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on content mastery.

Proposed

This exemption will allow IISD administrators to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts, rather than because they've attended a certain number of school days. The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students. This will accommodate students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, provide access to college-level coursework/learning, reduce dropouts, and increase the number of qualifying graduates. IISD will also explore other innovative ways to demonstrate mastery, given this exemption. Relief from Section §25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules.

Student Discipline Provisions

(Texas Education Code §37.0012)

Currently

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed

IISD's approach to discipline is becoming more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the IISD Student Code of Conduct.

Teacher Certification

(Texas Education Code §21.044, Texas Education Code §21.003)

Currently

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

IISD is committed to placing a life changing educator in every classroom. In order to best serve IISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to acquire teachers who teach hard-to-fill positions such as: high demand dual credit, foreign language classes, and career & technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in the law. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals to teach those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Teacher Probationary Contracts

(Texas Education Code §21.102)

Currently

The Texas Education Code requires that teachers newly-hired by the District who have five years of experience in public education in Texas within the last eight years can only be placed on a one-year probationary contract, and after the first year, must be placed on a term contract. The one-year probationary period is insufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom because the teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made before the end of the school year.

Proposed

Beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year and beyond, for all experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Ingram ISD that have been employed as a teacher (or other role) in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Ingram ISD shall be for a period of two years with probationary contracts issued for each of the two years.

Class Size

(Texas Education Code §25.112, Texas Education Code §25.113)

Currently

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. Districts are required by state law to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes.

Proposed

Beginning of the year hiring decisions will be based on projected 22:1 ratios. To the extent possible, each school year will begin with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per Kindergarten - 4th homeroom classes. Each section in a grade level would receive new students equally. If two or more classes in a grade level exceed the 24:1 ratio at any time during the year, the Superintendent, campus principal, and grade level teachers will have thoughtful communication. The Superintendent will then determine what is in the best interest of the students.

District-and Campus Level Planning and Decision-Making

(Texas Education Code §11.251, Texas Education Code §11.252, Texas Education Code §11.253)

Currently

Texas Education Code mandates specific guidelines and procedures for the membership of these committees which limits flexibility for districts to collaborate and make decisions in an effective and timely manner.

Proposed

Return Site Based Decision Making back to the local district/campus by allowing the local district to determine the makeup of the committee and which decisions will be referred to the committee, except those prescribed by law

INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFERS

(Texas Education Code §25.036)

Currently

Currently, under Texas Education Code §25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC §25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed

Ingram 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, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Ingram ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Teacher Contract Days

(Texas Education Code §21.401)

Currently

Texas Education Code §21.401 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

In the event of a district wide cancellation of school, ie bad weather day, this plan allows the reduction of teacher contract days by the number of cancelled days eliminating the need to make up these days.

Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary

(Texas Education Code §21.002, Texas Education Code 21.402, Texas Education Code §21.415)

Currently

All districts, when hiring a retired educator must pay them their salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale; in addition, the districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge.

Proposed

Ingram ISD would like the opportunity to hire an eligible retired educator and pay them below the TEA minimum pay scale while also paying the required TRS surcharge. We believe that by hiring an eligible retired educator our students, campuses, and district will reap the rewards of having a veteran educator who is still involved and passionate in the education process. In addition, the district will be able to have an experienced educator at a significantly less cost than had we paid them based upon the TEA minimum pay scale plus the TRS surcharge. Thus, by hiring an eligible retired educator Ingram ISD will be adding value in the schools and will be making sound fiscal decisions for our district's stakeholders.