Big Spring Independent School District
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Big Spring Independent School District Local Innovation Plan

I. Introduction

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to transform systemic improvement to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members, Big Spring ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

A resolution to initiate the process of Big Spring ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 12, 2015. At such time, a District of Innovation Team (DIT) was established and charged with crafting a cohesive local innovative plan to improve the outcomes of all stakeholders. The DIT met on February 12, 19 and May 20, 2016 to discuss and craft the plan. The DIT considered multiple data points in an effort to construct a local innovation plan (LIP) to bring about systemic change in Big Spring ISD.

The Big Spring ISD LIP is for five years, beginning in 2016-2017 school year and ending in 2021-2022 school year. The LIP may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The DIT will monitor the effectiveness of the LIP and provide updates and/or necessary modifications to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

II. Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task	Due date
November	Board Meeting- BSISD Board of Trustees discusses rules and process for being an Innovation District	November 12, 2015
	Board Meeting- Board votes to adopt Resolution to initiate consideration for being designated as an Innovation District	November 12, 2015
	Board Meeting- Board holds public hearing, appoints the District Innovation Team (DIT), the current BSISD District Leadership Team, to develop a Local Innovation Plan (LIP).	November 12, 2015
February	DIT meets to discuss innovative ideas for the school district.	February 12, 2016
	DIT meets again to discuss calendar options and more.	February 19, 2016
May	DIT meets with to review data and determine focus areas	May 20, 2016
June	Board votes to notify Commissioner of its intention to vote on adopting final LIP	June 9, 2016
	Post District Innovation Plan on district website	June 14, 2016
July	District Innovation Team hosts public meeting to consider final version of BSISD Innovation Plan	July 14, 2016
	District presents the proposed District Innovation Plan to Board of Trustees for approval with 2/3 vote.	July 14, 2016
	District sends approved plan to Commissioner of Education for final approval	July 14, 2016

III. District Innovation Team (DIT)

a. Chris Wigington, Superintendent
b. Jim White, Assistant Superintendent
   **Jay McWilliams, current Assistant Superintendent
c. Heidi Wagner, Director of School Improvement (Project Lead)
   **Debbie Park, current Director of School Improvement
d. Kristen Joslin, Director of Curriculum
   **Dr. Raemi Thompson, current Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
e. George Bancroft, Community Relations Coordinator
f. Carol Walston, Director of Special/Federal Programs
g. Melissa Miller, Big Spring High School Assistant Principal
h. Tom Giles, Marcy Elementary Principal
   **Alecia Hancock, current Marcy Elementary Principal
i. Michelle Schreiner, Goliad Elementary Principal
j. Rosie Lain, Moss Elementary Principal
k. Kari Eggleston, Washington Elementary Principal

l. Patsy Sanchez, Big Spring Intermediate School Principal
m. Becky Otto, Big Spring Junior High Principal
n. Burt Otto, Community Member
o. Kelli Wigington, Kentwood Early Childhood Center Principal
p. Debra Green, CFO
**Susan Bryan, current CFO

IV. Comprehensive Educational Program

The LIP's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned to the BSISD's vision and core principles.

a. Vision Statement: The ***Vision*** of Big Spring ISD is to instill respect and pride in all stakeholders by empowering our community of learners (staff, students, and parents/community members) to unite and commit to educational excellence.
b. Core Principles:
    i. Recruit and retain highly qualified staff.
    ii. Maintain integrity and professionalism at all times.
    iii. Provide a caring and safe environment.
    iv. Ensure instructional time is valued.
    v. Provide ongoing meaningful professional development.
    vi. Design and deliver relevant and engaging instruction.

V. Big Spring ISD District of Innovation District-Wide Focus Areas

EMPOWER…IMPROVE…ACHIEVE…INNOVATE

Preparing students to be college and career ready in the 21st century, at a time when academic standards are at an all-time high, is a challenge facing school districts in 2016. Complicating this issue is finding and retaining quality teachers to work in our district at a time when we face ever increasing financial woes. The DIT chose to focus our plan on innovative systemic changes that will yield results for all stakeholders: students, staff, parents and community members. The District of Innovation focus areas include, but are not limited to:

a. System-wide practices to support 21st century learners (list is not exhaustive)
    i. District Non-Negotiables for Consistency Across Campuses and Content/Grade levels
        1. Multi-tiered systems of support
        2. Specific district-wide educational programs
        3. Professional learning communities
        4. Strong literacy foundation
        5. High yield instructional strategies
        6. Vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum
    ii. Additional Components

1. Data driven decision making procedures through local data management system
2. Formative and summative assessments
3. Inclusion
4. Differentiated instruction
5. Sheltered instruction
6. Digital learning opportunities
7. College and career readiness opportunities
8. Diverse credit opportunities
9. Modified instructional calendar
10. Modified instructional day
11. Flex days

b. System-wide practices to support 21st century professional staff (list is not exhaustive)
   i. Two year mentoring program for new teachers
   ii. Local teacher evaluation method
   iii. Local principal evaluation method
   iv. Extended planning time
   v. Monthly staff meetings (campus and district level)
   vi. Professional learning communities across grade levels/disciplines
   vii. Monthly principal professional learning communities
   viii. Differentiated professional development opportunities
   ix. Job embedded professional development
   x. System walk through process with frequent feedback
   xi. Aligned technology services
   xii. Quality administrative services
   xiii. Innovative school calendar
      1. Flexible start/end date
      2. Professional development opportunities each six week period
      3. Flex days for student interventions and enrichment
   xiv. Five year technology plan

c. System-wide practices to support strong families and community relationships (list is not exhaustive)
   i. Parent advisory committees at the district and campus level
   ii. Parent education nights
   iii. Two- way communication tools, processes and procedures
   iv. Community partnerships
   v. Specialized programs for moms and dads
   vi. Service learning projects
   vii. Sound child nutrition programs

VI. Big Spring ISD Innovative Campus Specific Initiative

a. Opportunity Culture (OC) Big Spring- Big Spring ISD is entering year two of Opportunity Culture Big Spring, a joint effort between Big Spring ISD, the Texas Education Agency, ESC Region 20, Education First and Public Impact. The goal is to provide ALL students with excellent teaching and increase student achievement by building an opportunity culture for teachers that includes a teach career path for Big Spring ISD. OC offers

innovative new team-based roles that allows teachers to lead from the classroom, pursue teaching excellent together with additional team planning time, and be rewarded for their work.

b. Opportunity Culture Principles
    i. Reach more students with excellent teachers and their teams
    ii. Pay teachers more for extending their reach
    iii. Fund pay within regular budgets
    iv. Provide protected in-school time and clarity about how to use it for planning, collaboration and development
    v. Match authority and accountability to each person's responsibilities
c. Current Campus Participation
    i. Goliad Elementary- year 2 in 2016-2017
    ii. Moss Elementary- year 2 in 2016-2017
    iii. Washington Elementary- year 2 in 2016-2017
    iv. Big Spring Intermediate- year 1 in 2016-2017
d. Multi-Classroom Leaders (MCLs) numbers per campus
    i. Goliad Elementary- 2
    ii. Moss Elementary- 3
    iii. Washington Elementary- 3
    iv. Big Spring Intermediate- 1

VII. Exemptions Requested in the Texas Education Code to Benefit Identified Focus Areas and Big Spring ISD Opportunity Culture Initiative

a. §25.0811 <u>First Day of Instruction</u>- States that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.
    i. Innovation Strategy
        1. <u>Flexible Calendar</u>- Big Spring ISD will begin instruction no earlier than the third Monday of August in an effort to create greater flexibility in the school calendar. This flexibility will allow more opportunities to schedule timely and meaningful staff development throughout the calendar year. Additionally, this allows the district to incorporate flex days in the spring prior to state assessments. Subsequently, district staff and student attendance should improve with this flexibility.
b. §25.112 <u>Class Size</u>- Requires districts to maintain a class size of twenty-two students or less for kindergarten-fourth grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the agency. §25.113 Notice of Class Size- Requires districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.
    i. Innovation Strategy
        1. <u>Flexible Class Sizes</u>- the Opportunity Culture initiative allows MCLs to reach more students directly by working with small groups and more teachers by leading teaching teams. In order make this work viable and sustainable, OC grade levels typically have more than twenty-two students in grades kindergarten through four. Campuses not offering OC often struggle finding K-4 teachers and may require flexibility in class sizes, as well. Additionally, the district will not file a waiver to the TEA when class sized in kindergarten-fourth classrooms exceed the 22:1 ratio.

c. §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts- Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. This time period is not sufficient to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

i. Innovation Strategy

1. Probationary Contracts- Experienced teachers and counselors new to BSISD 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. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.
2. The Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system has been in place since 1997. The new state teacher appraisal system beginning in 2016-17 is called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The state has also developed a principal evaluation system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System. Currently, principals are evaluated on a locally developed plan.

d. §21.003(a) Teacher Certification – Currently, a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or 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 as provided by Subchapter B.

i. Innovation Strategy

1. Teacher Certification - The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

2. The current certification requirement severely limits the districts 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 maximum the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a). 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.

3. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.

4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

e. §21.352 and §21.3541- Local Role in Teacher and Principal Evaluations- The Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system has been in place since 1997. The new state teacher appraisal system beginning in 2016-17 is called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The state has also developed a principal evaluation system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System. Currently, principals are evaluated on a locally developed plan.
    i. Innovation Strategy
        1. District Designed Teacher and Continued District Designed Principal Appraisal System- While the district intends to use both the T-TESS and T-PESS in the 2016-2017 school year, the district would like the option to exercise local control of decisions regarding teacher and other administrative appraisals.

b. §21.404 Planning and Preparation Time- Currently, teachers are entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for preparing to teach, conducting parent conferences, and evaluating students' work.
    i. Innovation Strategy
        1. Flexible Planning and Preparation Time- In an effort implement Opportunity Culture in BSISD, flexible scheduling is a requirement. Having flexibility in planning and preparation time helps in creating schedules where select teachers can reach more students and have more planning time on teacher teams. All teachers will have planning and preparation time each month, but flexibility is requested. In addition to Opportunity Culture campuses, other campuses may choose to allow flexibility in planning and prep time.

f. §25.082 – Length of the School Day- Currently, a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions.
    i. Innovation Strategy
        1. Early Release for Teacher Planning - 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 unique Friday 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 provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
        3. The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff. This flexibility will be used to create a unique Friday bell schedule that will address student attendance, discipline, tutorials, and intervention as well as teacher planning and staff

development opportunities instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate.