

Bremond ISD
Proposed
Local District Of Innovation
Plan

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE

NAME

COMMITTEE POSITION

Daryl Stuard	Superintendent
Bev Swick	Instructional Technology
Rachel Workman	Business Manager
Stephen English	Principal, Bremond High School
John Burnett	Principal, Bremond Elementary/Middle School
Jordan Revill	High School Teacher
Becky Lee	Middle School Teacher
Casey Owens	Elementary Teacher
Lacey Buckner	Parent
Melanie Stellbauer	Parent

Committee Volunteers

Susan Brown	Special Education Teacher
Tina Smith	Middle School ELA Teacher
Anne Groholski	Elementary Teacher
Lisa Miller	Art Teacher
Brenna Yanowski	Technology Teacher
Charlotte Revill	Middle School Math Teacher
Kimberly Olson	High School Science Teacher
Callie Andreski	Elementary Teacher
Amber Fuller	Elementary Teacher
Paula Bodiford	High School English Teacher
Sarah Luce	High School Coach/Teacher
Stephen Reilly	High School Spanish Teacher
Rosemary Wilgaganowski	School Counselor

BREMOND ISD INNOVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On April 17, 2017, the Bremond Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On April 17, 2017, board held a public meeting to discuss the District of Innovation Plan and approved a Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on May 1, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). Based on the input received the Committee approved the plan by a unanimous vote. The Bremond Board of Trustees will consider the Plan at its meeting on June 19, 2017.

TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning August 1, 2017 and ending July 31, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and

propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

AREAS OF INNOVATION

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

Teacher Certification

Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.053; TEC §21.057

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL/LOCAL; DK LEGAL/LOCAL

Currently

TEC §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, nurse or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

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 request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC §21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed

a. Bremond ISD is a small rural district that continually has problems finding certified teachers in some content areas. Bremond ISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

b. For grades 5-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.

- c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed welder teaching a welding course, or a District RN teaching health science course.
- d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.
- e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.
- f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

Exemption From (*DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL*) (Ed. Code 21.203) (Ed. Code 21.352)

Currently

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, that will be called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). a

Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Bremond ISD teachers are formally evaluated annually.

Principals are evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

Proposed

A committee of administrators would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument and/or process that fits the needs and goals of BISD.

- a. Bremond ISD will utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.
- b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, and any other relevant best practice.
- c. All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every three years. Every teacher will receive a minimum of six, informal walk-throughs per year.
- d. Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year.
- e. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals unless they choose to opt out.
- f. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.
- g. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Bremond ISD.

Length (number of days) of Teacher Contracts

Exemption From: (DC Legal)(DEA Legal)(Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently

Under current education law, a teacher's contract is 10-months or more specifically, 187 days in length.

Proposed

BISD ISD would like to have the flexibility to set its teacher contract days from a range of 182 to 187 days with no negative effect on teacher salaries. This reduction in contract days of up to five days would make our salaries more competitive.

- a. This plan will increase the daily rate of district teachers.
- b. This plan should enhance our ability to recruit teachers to our district.
- c.
- d. This plan will provide our teachers more flexibility during the summer months to find professional development opportunities that, personally, benefits them.
- e. In each year of the plan, the exact number of days (up to 187) a teacher's contract may be will be determined by the calendar planning committee. The minimum number of days a 10-month teacher's contract will be is 182 days, and the maximum it will be is 187 days.

Professional Development / Mentor Teachers

Exemption from: TEC §21.451; TEC §21.458

Relevant Board Policies: DEAA LEGAL

Currently

TEC §21.451 prescribes staff development requirements for educators. These requirements impede the District's ability to provide timely professional development to employees based on newly emerging issues, data, and student needs.

TEC §21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the district may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, despite the fact that a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The District needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experienced teachers in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teachers, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers.

Proposed

- a. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff.
- b. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.

School Start and End Date

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Currently

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their 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

- a.** Relief from the statute will allow Bremond ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minute's requirement, rather than days.
- b.** Alignment of the district calendar with local universities, Community Colleges, TSTC, ACT/SAT exams, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
- c.** Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

Instructional Minutes / Length of Instructional Day / Early Release Days

Exemption from: TEC §25.081

Relevant Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Currently

TEC §25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.

TEC §25.081(e) references a day of instruction as 420 minutes

Proposed

- a. The district seeks relief from this section in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development.
- b. The district seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and district needs.

Site-based Decision Making

Exemption from: TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, and TEC §28.004 (d)

Currently

The BISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth by Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 and 28 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a BISD direction of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but a District Advisory Council that meets the needs of this district, schools and community as opposed to the one based on a broad brush and “one size fits all” model of statutory requirements detailed in TEC §11.251 and TEC §28.004. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community.

Proposed

In place of a Site-based Decision Making Committee and the School Health Advisory Council, a District Advisory Council (DAC) will be established to meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the District’s success and most importantly, students’ success. This Council will convene at least two times per year to guide the general direction of district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will yield an opportunity for one council to address multiple needs of the students served by the District as opposed to having multiple committees addressing a more narrow focus of needs. views this Council as a more efficient and effective way to serve our students, parents, and community.

Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

Exemption From: (FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (Ed. Code 37.0012)

Currently

Senate Bill 107 amended the Texas Education Code by adding Section 37.0012, which 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

The requirements in TEC 37.002 are redundant. BISD utilizes a multi administrator approach when necessary for student discipline. Campus principals assist each other and serve as the “behavior coordinator” and it is unnecessary to designate one of them as such.

Inter-District Transfers

Exemption From: FDA LOCAL, Texas Education Code 25.036

Currently

Currently, under Texas Education Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept students as transfers, even if they are not entitled to in the district. TEC 25.036, however, has been interpreted to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed

Bremont ISD student transfer policy FDA (Local) requires that all nonresident students who wish to transfer must 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. On the application, transfer students are informed that they are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district. In the past, the form has informed nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students that they may have their 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 who do not attend the state's minimum attendance standards of 90% of all classes in a semester/school year may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

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 be exempt from any one-year commitment that might be implied by the provisions of TEC 25.036 when accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants the kind of disciplinary consequences contemplated in the Bremond transfer agreement. Students who engage in this kind of misbehavior and students who do not attend school for 90% of all classes interferes with our school district's ability to educate our student body in a way that is effective, tailored to students who are at school consistently and ready to learn, and able to focus time and attention on preparing for work towards achievement on state assessments. When students are disruptive and/or excessively absent, our teachers must time correcting the behavior, catching those students up, and cannot adequately prepare the students who are behaving and want to learn. These teachers are hampered in their ability to have the time they need to implement any kind of truly innovative strategies, because they are spending their time disciplining students and catching up students who are falling being the 90% state requirement. For these cases, Bremond ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.