

District of Innovation

Summary of November 3, 2016, meeting

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. with a very brief overview of where we are in the process by Leah Beard, Director of Organizational Improvement and Strategic Planning.

Each remaining subcommittee presented a summary of the work it undertook over the last couple months, including a description of the laws the subcommittee believes the District should be exempt from. The group was allowed to ask clarifying questions and make comments. If there was a consensus that individuals have enough information to vote, ballots for the law area were distributed. Ballots were anonymous but did request identification of stakeholder group (teacher, parent, administrator, community member, college/university representative) and then simply asked for a “yes” or “no” on exemption.

Superintendent Dr. Randy Reid started the evening by re-opening the conversation about exemption in the area of 22:1 class size ratios. At the last meeting the vote in this area was 45 yes votes and 7 no votes, but the teacher subgroup was split in this area. After more conversation it was determined that there was not consensus amongst the teachers and this area was eliminated from the plan. If there is a need and desire to do so, it can be taken up at a later time.

Over the next approximately three hours, the committee was able to hear from the remaining two subcommittees and voted on their law areas. The summary of each presentation as well as the vote result is as follows:

Requirement to have in school disciplinary placements for students including minimum academic requirements for disciplinary placements	
Texas Education Code §37.008, 37.0082, 37.027, 12.131	FOCA(Legal)
Rationale: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Currently states “a DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the students’ regular classroom. It may be located on or off a regular school campus.”○ Students occasionally need to stay connected to their courses such as choir, band, athletics, a dual credit course, CTE course, or AP course.○ There are barriers to learners always being able to take the course at the DAEP building.● Relief from this law would look at rewording the location section of the policy to provide some exceptions for learners to be able to continue in specific courses in their regular classroom while assigned to DAEP.	
Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees	
Exemption from this requirement will provide campus staff freedom in terms of choosing discipline techniques that best suit the situation and the student. This change will provide greater opportunities for academics (Extra-Curricular, Dual Credit, and Advance Placement Courses on Campus). It is the district’s desire to allow students to maintain rigorous coursework while in a disciplinary placement and this exemption will allow the district to think about academics and extracurricular opportunities in a disciplinary placement in new ways.	

47 yes votes and 1 no vote.

Three day limitation on suspensions	
Texas Education Code §37.005	FOB(Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently states “A suspension may not exceed three school days.” This exemption is desired to be change the maximum number of days of suspension allowed. • The law has been interpreted to apply to both in and out of school suspensions. This limitation minimizes the options a campus has for discipline without sending a student to DAEP. • Committee discussed additional days on campus in suspension could provide a way for a campus to avoid excessive discretionary DAEP placements. It is beneficial to allow students to stay on campus and closer to their normal educators and services. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees</p> <p>Because of the law’s three day limit for suspensions, campus staff is limited in the choices of discipline that can be applied to students for moderately serious offenses. Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses with the option of keeping students on campus and closer to their regular teachers during a disciplinary placement rather than always opting to send students to the disciplinary alternative educational placement. Providing a range of options for the campus is a new and innovative way of thinking about discipline and more fully meeting a student’s needs while they are being disciplined.</p>	

49 yes votes and zero no votes.

Campus Behavior Coordinator	
Texas Education Code §37.0012	FO (Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently legal policy states “A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC). The person may be the campus principal or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The CBC is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of education Code Chapter 37.” ○ On large campuses (high school - 2,900 students; middle school - 1,200 students) one individual is designated at CBC to manage discipline. ○ It is necessary to have additional administrators provide notice to parents about disciplinary incidents. ○ Exception to law sought to no longer require a single administrator, but allow multiple administrators. This would allow for CBCs to be used with fidelity. • The recommendation is to change wording in Campus Behavior Coordinator, Duties, and Notice to Parents section, and to change the number/who on each campus. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses the opportunity to allow campus administrators to fully understand and get to know the students in their caseload rather than sourcing all discipline matters to one employee designated as a campus behavior coordinator. While it is imperative that all employees work together and be informed as to the discipline that is occurring on a campus, it is just as crucial for students to depend on an administrator they know and trust in all facets of their education, including their discipline. Each campus should have the freedom to designate more than one campus behavior coordinator to best meet the needs of their students and teachers.</p>	

49 yes votes and zero no votes.

Planning and preparation periods	
Texas Education Code §21.404	DL (Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>By exempting the District from this law, the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will have flexibility for special days on campus (state testing, field trips, etc.). • will have flexibility in time for more collaboration during the school day. • will allow for administrative flexibility based on student needs by campus. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, <i>campus governance</i>, and parental involvement</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide each campus with the local control needed to determine how best to use staff time, especially as it pertains to collaborative planning and best meeting the needs of the students. The number of minutes that a teacher receives for planning and preparation must not be reduced but the committee discussed the possibility of 900 minutes over a 20 day period. The committee did emphasize a minimum increment of no less than 30 minutes per day. The recommendation is that the amount and increment of time is to be consistently implemented throughout the district.</p>	

45 yes votes and 4 no votes.

Duty-free lunch	
Texas Education Code §21.405	DL (Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>By exempting the District from this law, the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will have flexibility for special days on campus (state testing, field trips, etc.) • will have the opportunity to build relationships with students and offer tutorials, club meetings, etc. during lunch. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, <i>campus governance</i>, and parental involvement</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide each campus with the local control needed to manage specially scheduled days and provide unique opportunities for building student-teacher relationships that will increase student engagement and performance.</p>	

38 yes votes and 9 no votes. It was determined that there was not sufficient consensus amongst the teacher group to move forward with this area and it will be removed from the plan.

State certification requirements for teachers and other educators	
Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.053	DBA (Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>By exempting the District from this law, the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will have the flexibility to hire experts in their field even if they don't yet have a teaching certificate. • will have the flexibility in hiring "hard to fill" positions. • will have the flexibility to hire those with industry expertise (e.g. HB 5 courses). 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide much needed flexibility to hire the most qualified candidate for teaching positions. With an increasing number of innovative courses created after implementation of HB5, finding exceptionally qualified applicants in specific fields who are also certified teachers is increasingly difficult if not impossible. This flexibility will allow the District to hire individuals who best meet the needs of the students and provide the content knowledge our students need to enter an increasingly innovative world.</p>	

45 yes votes and zero no votes.

Certified employee contract rights (specifically second probationary year for teachers hired under 5 of 8 rule and suspensions without pay)	
Texas Education Code §21.102(b), §21.211(b)	DCA (Legal)
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>By exempting the District from this law, the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will have the flexibility of hiring a probationary teacher for a second year to provide for more growth and coaching when the teacher is hired under the 5 of 8 rule. • will have the flexibility to suspend without pay when under allegation that is covered in Educator Code of Conduct. Any decisions made regarding suspension without pay would be open to appeal through the grievance process. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide campus administrators and hiring officials with the time needed to fully assess and support a teacher before making decisions regarding moving the employee from a probationary contract when that employee has only been with the district one year. This exemption will also allow the district to make employment and financial decisions that are in the best interest of the district when an employee is alleged to have violated serious provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics or law, including crimes against children. This flexibility from some of the provisions of Chapter 21 of the Education Code will allow the District to approach some employment issues in ways that best meet the needs of the district and take quick action to protect students when necessary.</p>	

41 yes votes and 4 no votes.

At the October 19, 2016, meeting it was determined that the District will be moving forward with exemptions in the areas of Ninety Percent Rules, Length of School Day, Earliest Possible School Start Date, and Minimum Days of Attendance. At the November 3, 2016, meeting it was determined that the District will move forward in the areas of disciplinary alternative educational placements, suspensions, campus behavior coordinators, teacher planning and preparation time, teacher certification requirements, and specific provisions relating to Chapter 21 teacher contract rights.

The committee-approved version of the Innovation Plan is posted online for at least 30 days for community review. The Innovation Plan will go to the Board for consideration at a future board meeting – most likely in December. The Board must consider the Plan as a whole and can only approve with a 2/3

vote. If the Board does not adopt the Plan then the Innovation Committee may come together again to reconsider its recommendation to the Board.

Assuming the Board adopts the Plan, adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board in the months after the Board approves the Plan. Policy development will take place with volunteers. Policy language coming from the Plan will be provided to the Committee for review and feedback before the policies are presented to the Board for consideration.