Stanton Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan
(June 12, 2017)
Overview

During the 84th Texas Legislative Session, House Bill 1842 was passed providing public school districts the opportunity to seek a District of Innovation (DOI) designation. This designation allows eligible districts the flexibility to exempt certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) in an effort to allow for additional local oversight for up to five years. On February 13, 2017, the Stanton Independent School District’s Board of Trustees adopted a resolution initiating the process of becoming a District of Innovation.

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING THE OPTION OF DESIGNATING STANTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

WHEREAS, the Stanton ISD Board of Trustees is committed to the success of every child, and,

WHEREAS, HB 1842 provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation, and,

WHEREAS, Texas districts designated as Districts of Innovation may be exempt from a number of state statutes which affords traditional public schools with many of the same freedoms that apply to open-enrollment charter schools; and,

WHEREAS, the mission of the Stanton Independent School District is to “provide all students with appropriate opportunities to become informed, productive, and contributing members of society” and this legislation empowers local communities to be creative and innovative, while also providing greater local control in the decision-making process; and,

WHEREAS, Stanton ISD Board of Trustees has a long-standing practice of supporting innovation for the benefit of students; and,

WHEREAS, Stanton ISD Board of Trustees believes it can be a better decision-making body for students when it has freedom to exercise local control over the decision-making process; and,

WHEREAS, HB 1842 requires districts seeking to be designated as Districts of Innovation to develop a local innovation plan that allows for increased freedom and flexibility from certain state mandates; and,

WHEREAS, the Stanton ISD Board of Trustees believes that a local innovation plan, if created, should be developed in conjunction with the District’s Improvement Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Stanton ISD Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing and receive feedback from stakeholders to consider the development of a local innovation plan; following the public hearing, the Board may decline to pursue the designation or may appoint a committee to develop a plan in accordance with Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Stanton Independent School District Board of Trustees on February 13, 2017, initiates the process of exploring and considering designation of the Stanton ISD as a District of Innovation under HB 1842.

[Signatures]

Reggie Franklin, President

Jeremy Loozer, Secretary

Marty Graham

Ramiro Reyes, Vice President

Edward Armandez

Tiffany Carson
District of Innovation Public Hearings

Date: February 13, March 6, and May 9, 2017
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Stanton ISD Administration Building
200 N. College Street
Stanton, TX 79782

District of Innovation Committee Members

On March 6, 2017, the Board of Trustees appointed the following DOI Committee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Merl Brandon</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Snellgrove</td>
<td>Federal Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan McCown</td>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stacey Cornett</td>
<td>Elem Special Education Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelby Gordon</td>
<td>Kindergarten Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamar Flores</td>
<td>1st Grade Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica Brown</td>
<td>4th Grade Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leah Mitchell</td>
<td>Elem Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta Kreis</td>
<td>Elem/MS Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Karvonen</td>
<td>MS Reading Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail Bullard</td>
<td>MS Math Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Myrick</td>
<td>HS Science Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melinda Smith</td>
<td>HS Computer Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Griffin</td>
<td>HS Science Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyan Hale</td>
<td>HS Counselor</td>
</tr>
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District of Innovation Committee Meetings

Date: March 29, 2017
Time: 3:45 pm
Location: Stanton Elementary

Date: April 4, 2017
Time: 3:45 pm
Location: Stanton Elementary

Date: April 18, 2017
Time: 3:45 pm
Location: Stanton Elementary

District Leadership Team Committee Meetings

Date: April 7, 2017
Time: 12:15 pm
Location: Stanton High School

Date: May 5, 2017
Time: 1:15 pm
Location: Stanton High School

District Goals

All campuses in Stanton ISD will increase student academic achievement on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

Stanton ISD will implement and monitor well-designed processes, including long-range planning and budgeting, to address future growth, changing student needs, and the maintenance of effective and efficient operations.

Stanton ISD will provide a safe and secure system throughout the district for staff, students, and community to provide the best possible environment for learning.

Stanton ISD will promote shared partnerships of students, parents, schools, community, and business.

Stanton ISD will develop and implement a plan to increase the instructional use of mobile technology
Term

As outlined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the Innovation Plan is five years. The plan will commence with the adoption at the June 12, 2017, Board of Trustees Regular meeting and conclude June 12, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Leadership Team (DLT) in conjunction with the DOI Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications as needed.

Innovation Plan

Uniform School Start Date (TEC 25.0811a)

Currently
TEC 25.0811a requires that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Rationale for Exemption
Stanton ISD teachers and administrators prefer to end the semester before the winter break and provide a similar number of days of instruction in each semester. A late start date causes the first semester of the school year to have much fewer instructional days than the second semester. The state required uniform school start date also pushes the end of the school year into June, which affects students enrolling in college classes during the first summer term. A later school start date causes the majority of professional development to be held in August and Stanton ISD teachers and administrators would prefer to provide professional development opportunities throughout the school year. An earlier school start date helps maximize the number of instructional days before administering state assessments.

Innovation Strategies
Stanton ISD will begin classes no earlier than the second Monday in August and will plan to end in May in order to balance semesters and allow for meaningful staff development throughout the school year. This flexibility will provide more instructional days before scheduled state assessments, more closely align with the fall, spring, and summer semesters of local colleges and universities, and will better meet the needs of our local community.

Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003)

Currently
State law states that a person may not be employed as a teacher 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 of Educator Certification. (TEC 21.003).

**Rationale for Exemption**
Current law inhibits the District's ability to hire teachers in hard to fill positions as well as elective positions. It does not take into account the unique instructional, geographical, or financial needs of our district. The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for positions in question. However, when 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. Stanton ISD would like the ability to issue District Teaching Permits (local certification) in high need areas to better meet the educational needs of our students.

**Innovation Strategies**
- The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject(s) out of his or her certified teaching field. The principal will provide reasoning for the request and document the credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify the individual to teach the additional subject(s). Upon approval, the superintendent will notify the Board of Trustees of this action at the first board meeting following the assignment.
- An individual with a college degree, certification in a trade, or experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach courses related to his or her expertise or experience through local certification. The principal will submit the reasoning for the request and document the individual's qualifications. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to; professional work experience, formal training and education, active professional relevant industry certification, a combination of work experience, training, and education, and/or demonstration of successful experience working with students. Upon approval, the superintendent will notify the Board of Trustees of the intent to hire individual prior to the individual being employed.
- District Teaching Permits will require an employment agreement rather than a professional contract. The agreement will be for one school year. The agreement may be renewed if recommended by the superintendent and approved by the school board.
- Employees teaching under a District Teaching Permit will follow the same pay scale as other District teachers but years of experience will be determined on a case by case basis by the superintendent.
- An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
- An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will be appraised with the TTESS appraisal system.
- Stanton ISD will notify parents if a teacher working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) is employed for their child's class.
- An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will attend professional development in the areas of classroom management, ethics, pedagogy, instructional techniques, and TEKS Resource.
- Employees working under a District Teaching Permit will be provided a campus mentor.

**Student Transfers (TEC 25.036)**

**Currently**
Under TEC 25.036 a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

**Rationale for Exemption**
Stanton 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, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. 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. Because of these situations, Stanton ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

**Innovation**
Stanton ISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer 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. Students not meeting the required 90 percent attendance standard or unsatisfactory academic performance may also be subject to revocation of their transfer status. Students receiving a failing grade (below 70 average) in any class in a six-week period will be placed on academic probation. If a student on academic probation receives a second failing grade in any subsequent six-week grading period, the principal may deny the students transfer. Revocation based on academic performance will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the campus principal.

**Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC 25.092)**

**Currently**
Texas Education Code 25.092 restricts school districts from issuing class credit or a final grade if a student is not in attendance the required “seat time”, referred to as the 90% rule.

**Rationale for Exemption**
Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to Stanton ISD students through innovation in the method, location, and times instruction may be delivered to students.

**Innovation**
Stanton ISD will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements with post-secondary institutions who offer onsite, hybrid, or other dual-credit learning opportunities. The District will develop methods of accounting for student attendance in blended learning, where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online.
Adoption of Innovation Plan

Stanton ISD has met all of the process requirements outlined by the TEA and the Commissioner of Education to receive the designation as a District of Innovation. The local Innovation Plan was developed and approved by both the DOI Committee and District Leadership Team. In addition, public hearings were conducted on February 13, March 6, and May 9, 2017. The plan was then posted on the District’s website for the required 30 days after being reviewed by the Board of Trustees on May 9, 2017.

Approved by the DOI Committee on the 18th day of April, 2017.

Approved by the District Leadership Team on the 5th day of May, 2017.

Approved by the Stanton ISD Board of Trustees on the 12th day of June, 2017.

Mr. Reggie Franklin, President

Mr. Jeremy Louder, Secretary