

# GARRISON ISD

## District of Innovation Plan

### *INTRODUCTION*

During the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, House Bill 1842 passed that allows Texas public schools the opportunity to pursue exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Chapter 12A of the TEC permits a traditional public school the authority to exercise greater local control, and utilize the exemptions in Education law that charter schools are currently entitled too. To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District, and the benefits expected from the exemption to the district. The Garrison ISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution on November 26, 2018 to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation.

### *RENEWAL TERM*

Garrison ISD's Innovation Plan will begin with the 2024-2025 school year and terminate at the end of the 2029-2030 school year, unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by the Innovation Plan committee and the Board of Trustees.

### *INNOVATION COMMITTEE*

|                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Reid Spivey      | Superintendent           |
| Scott Tyler      | Director of Instruction  |
| Mike Compton     | High School Principal    |
| Chaye Massey     | Middle School Principal  |
| Jana White       | Elementary Principal     |
| Monica Land      | Behavior Interventionist |
| Christy Huggins  | Teacher                  |
| Jackie Prince    | Teacher                  |
| Heidi Lawrence   | Trustee                  |
| Justin Shull     | Trustee                  |
| Chelsea Brewer   | Parent                   |
| Lorna DeSha      | Parent                   |
| Brandice Parrish | Community Member         |
| Sarah Feldman    | Community Member         |

### *TIMELINE OF EVENTS*

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|------------------|---|
| October 23, 2023 | Preliminary discussion of Renewal DOI Plan with Board of Trustees |
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*TIMELINE OF EVENTS—cont.*

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| January 8, 2024   | DOI plan was posted on the district webpage for public input for 30 days                            |
| January 17, 2024  | DOI committee meets to develop strategies and approves the plan for community and board review      |
| February 27, 2024 | GISD Board of Trustees approve the DOI plan   |
| February 28, 2024 | GISD Notifies the commissioner of approval, posts plan on GISD website, and provide TEA with a link |

*DISTRICT OF INNOVATION INITIATIVES*

**Student/Teacher Ratios and Submitting Waivers for Kindergarten---Grade 4 Class Size**  
(TEC 25.112, TEC 25.113)

TEC 25.112 requires grades Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> to not exceed a 22:1 ratio of students to teachers. When an individual class exceeds this ratio, the District must add a new teacher, reassign a teacher from another class, or submit a waiver request to the Texas Education Agency. These waiver requests are normally approved by TEA. In addition, the District must notify each parent who has a child in the class that a waiver has been submitted and the class exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Garrison ISD has always maintained a low student to teacher ratio and remains committed to meeting the needs of each student. GISD will continue to make decisions in the best interest of the students but also must consider assignment of teachers, staffing ratios, student enrollment, and the financial capacity of the District. In the event a class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio in Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, a TEA waiver will not be required and the Superintendent will submit a request to the Board of Trustees for approval. Additionally, parents will be informed of the Districts actions and the subsequent class size.

**Probationary Contracts**  
(TEC 21.102)

TEC 21.102 states that a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five

### **Probationary Contracts—cont.**

of the previous eight years preceding employment by the district.

Garrison ISD remains committed to employing highly skilled, dedicated individuals who deliver quality instructional to our students. However, for a new employee who has worked in public education for at least five of the last eight years, serving on a one-year probationary contract is not a sufficient amount of time for an administrator to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Therefore, for experienced teachers, counselors, or librarians who are new to the District that have been employed in public education for at least five of the last eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two additional years from the first day of employment for a total of three years.

### **Transfer Students**

(TEC 25.036)

Texas Education Code 25.036 states that a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Garrison ISD accepts transfer students according to policy under FDA (Local), requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer into the District to file an application each school year. Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time. In approving transfers, the District shall consider availability of space, instructional staff, and the student's disciplinary history and attendance records. However, GISD may revoke the transfer of a nonresident student at any time during the school year if the student's behavior warrants 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 their transfer status.

### **Teacher Certification Requirements**

(TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.057)

Texas Education Code 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or 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. In order for a teacher to provide instruction for a course that is outside of their teaching field, the District is required to submit a request to TEA. An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate. Also, TEC 21.057 requires the District to notify the parent/guardian of each student in a classroom if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

### **Teacher Certification Requirements—cont.**

Garrison ISD will continue to recruit and hire qualified individuals with appropriate certifications for all positions. However, as Districts become more competitive in relation to hiring practices and the number of certified applicants decline, having the flexibility to hire an educator who does not meet the criteria of TEC 21.003 would allow Garrison ISD to better meet the educational needs of our students, allow flexibility in scheduling, and provide more options for our students in relation to House Bill 5. Garrison ISD would like to implement a local certification program for the following initiatives:

- Individuals with industry certifications and/or background, experience, skills, or work related experience could become eligible to teach a Career and Technology course. The employee would be considered at-will and may be employed on a part or full time basis.
- A certified teacher, currently employed by the District, could teach one subject out of their certified field.
- Individuals with a minimum of a bachelor's degree with experience, education, and/or knowledge of a subject would be eligible to teach provided they enroll in a Texas Alternative Certification program. The individual would be hired under a probationary contract and could serve in that capacity for two years provided they meet Garrison ISD evaluation and performance standards.

Campus principals will make a recommendation to the Superintendent to hire an individual under the local certification plan. The Superintendent will review the request and if appropriate, recommend the individual for hire to the Board of Trustees. Garrison ISD will continue to comply with TEC 21.057 and with all certification requirements and regulations related to Special Education and Bilingual programs.

### **First Day of Instruction (School Start Date)**

(TEC 25.0811)

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

Garrison ISD believes a flexible school start date should be determined locally and on an annual basis to best meet the needs of our students and community. Beginning school earlier than the fourth Monday in August will provide the District the opportunity to balance the number of days in each semester, allow for more instructional time prior to state mandated tests, provide for staff development during the school year, and improve the District attendance rate. Garrison ISD will determine on an annual basis the local starting date of the first semester, not to precede the second Monday in August of any year. The Superintendent will submit the annual school calendar to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### **Local School Health Advisory Council**

(TEC 28.004)

TEC 28.004 requires that the SHAC committee meet four times per year to assist the district in ensuring the local community values are reflected in the districts health education instruction while designating who must participate and following procedures set forth similar to the open meetings act.

Garrison ISD believes the SHAC should meet at least one time per year and could be in conjunction with the District Educational Improvement Committee as needed.

- a. As a small district, committee members are intimately aware of the needs of the District's students, as well as the values that are to be promoted within the community.
- b. With the limited number of stakeholders and likelihood that community members that are actively involved serve the school in many ways and often serve on more than one committee or group, it is recommended that the committees may meet at the same time, location or date to complete duties and business of the committee.

This would eliminate the need to post video/audio recordings of the meetings while also allowing additional voting participants and allow items to be discussed as the need arises.

### **Allow Flexibility for School Counselors**

(TEC 33.006)

TEC 33.006 states that a school counselor must spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005. Further, time spent in administering assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments, except time spent in interpreting data from assessment instruments, is not considered time spent on counseling.

The requirements set by the Texas Education Code eliminates Garrison ISD's counselors the ability to fulfill other important roles throughout the District that counselors have historically performed with little to no impact on their counseling duties. While Garrison ISD still has the primary goal of counselors focusing on the school counseling program, the District would like the ability to use its counseling staff more flexibly in order to best serve the needs of Garrison ISD students and community.

- a. Garrison ISD will determine the additional duties fulfilled by school counselors in the District by considering each counselor's professional education, certifications, experience, and knowledge as well as the specific needs of the students and staff on each campus.
- b. Garrison ISD will determine how school counselors allocate their work time to perform all duties to enable the District to meet student needs and address local challenges as they arise.

