Leggett Independent School District

Local District of Innovation Plan 2022-2027

Designed in accordance with Texas House Bill 1842 and the Texas Education Code §12A, which allows school districts to gain local control of designated operations that are under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency.

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Term of Plan

The term of the District of Innovation plan, as constituted by the Texas Education Agency, will be five years. Therefore, this plan will begin with the 2022-2023 school year and conclude at the end of the 2026-2027 school year unless terminated by the Board of Trustees. The District Site-Based Committee will annually monitor the District Innovation Plan and provide feedback to the Board on the effectiveness of the plan.

Innovations

1. Calendar

(EB Legal, Local) TEC §25.0811 & TEC §25.0812

Texas Education Code states that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August or schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Innovation Strategy

Leggett ISD will locally develop an annual instructional calendar that addresses student instructional needs, aligns with the schedules of local colleges, balances semester days, and provides for professional development in conjunction with the more innovative calendar based on instructional minutes, as passed by the legislature, rather than the traditional calendar based on instructional "days". This calendar may move the State mandated start date to an earlier date. Having this flexibility will allow the District to schedule instruction and professional development in the most effective ways for students and staff and will promote innovation in instructional strategies, scheduling, and professional development that the district believes will yield higher scores and a better all-around balanced education for our students.

The annual calendar will be submitted by the District Site-Based Committee and approved by the Board

2. Educator Certification

(DK Legal, Local, Exhibit) TEC §21.003 & TEC §21.057

Texas Education Code states that 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 the appropriate state agency.

Innovation Strategy

Leggett ISD will maintain its current expectations for educator 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. Leggett ISD would like the ability to locally certify educators, to better meet the educational needs of the district. These areas would include, but are not limited to administration, core subject teachers and CTE teachers.

The flexibility in allowing Leggett ISD to make local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer innovation in course selections for CTE courses as well as hard to fill, high-demand dual credit courses. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire professionals from diverse academic or vocational fields that qualify the candidate to teach a course they may not be certified to teach. Internal applicants seeking assignments outside their traditional certification area, as well as enrich applicant pools in specific content areas in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. At the same time, when best for the curriculum for our students, LISD will continue to seek and employ fully certified teachers. However, the exemption, when needed, will allow more flexibility and innovations in our scheduling and more options and innovative offerings for our students in class offerings.

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a locally certified educator to be employed. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified educator possesses that qualify the individual to teach the proposed subject.

Educator certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. Leggett ISD will ensure that all individuals have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

The superintendent will report any locally certified educators to the Board prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be hired on an at-will basis.

3. Class size ratio for Grades K-4

(EEB Legal] TEC §25.112-25.113

Texas Education Code 25.112 states that except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Innovation Strategy

Leggett 1SD believes in a low student to teacher ratio in all of its classrooms. The District has a goal of 22:1 or less in each K-4 class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the Superintendent will report this information to the Board. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.

A Texas Education Agency waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continued to be notified as per TEC 25.113.

4. Probationary Contracts

(DCA Legal) TEC §21.102(b)

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Innovation Strategy

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. Having this extra time with all new hires will give the district the time to invest in all teachers, in order to provide more targeted mentoring, professional development, and remedial assistance with performance issues that might be corrected if given the time. A principal would have more time to evaluate and mentor inexperienced teacher through their first year before making decision on the retention or removal of that teacher. This exemption will provide the time for those principals to use innovative strategies to coach and mentor those same teachers and take extra time to evaluate their effectiveness beyond the first year to determine if they will be a good fit for the

district's students. Teachers who are new to teaching (have taught less than five of the last eight years) that are hired in the District may continue to remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

5. Transfer Students (inter-district)

(FDA Local) TEC §25.036

Leggett 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, work habits, and attendance records are considered.

Innovation Strategy

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfers may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year under limited circumstances with this exemption. With this exemption, any student who is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion, or not meeting the district's 95% attendance standard or having a failing semester grade, may be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

On rare occasions, student behavior warrants the kind of consequences contemplated by this exemption. Students who engage in the kind of misbehavior described in the transfer agreement and students who do not attend school for 90% (state requirement) of all classes interfere 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 behind the 90% state requirement. For these cases, Leggett ISD seeks exemption from any kind of implied one-year transfer commitment.

6. Teacher Contract Days

(DC Legal) TEC §21.401

Texas Education Code 21 states that a contract between the district and educator must be for a minimum often months of service. An educator employed under a ten-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. The Commissioner may reduce the number of days of service, but such a reduction does not reduce an educator's salary.

Innovation Strategy

Leggett ISD will continue with a conservative practice regarding bad weather/emergency closures. In the event that inclement weather or emergencies arise requiring the closure of a campus or entire district, the Board shall have the option to reduce the required number of educator contract days by an amount less than or equal to the number of attendance days adjusted for student instruction. Such a reduction of days may not reduce an educator's salary.

7. Teacher and Principal Appraisal

(DNA Legal, Local) TEC §21.203,21.352 & 21.3541

The new Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are being introduced by the Texas Education Agency. While these systems are designed to meet the needs of the entire state, they do not completely align with the standards and expectations of Leggett ISD. Under current law, each teacher must be evaluated on an annual basis or more frequent intervals. These systems also require state standardized test scores be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators.

Innovation Strategy

Leggett ISD would have the option to develop a local instrument, determining a district process and a frequency to evaluate principals and teachers which meets the needs and goals of the district. After development of the local evaluation instrument, the Board will approve the instrument used for evaluation. This plan will allow local flexibility to evaluate various performance measures, including classroom observations, goal setting, tracking and collection of student growth/progress data. This exemption would also allow for a unique and tailored evaluation process that could be created by the local district stakeholders and could include and acknowledge innovative instructional strategies not necessarily recognized under the current appraisal system.