Adopted 2-13-17

Friendswood
District of Innovation
Plan

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Friendswood Independent School District

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The Plan Description

Friendswood ISD is a district committed to preparing students for their futures. FISD has a comprehensive procedure for developing its multi-year strategic plan. Parents, teachers, auxiliary staff, administrators, and the elected Board members review data and jointly develop goals and action plans.

FISD has strong parental involvement with an average of 3,536 parent visitors on our six campuses each month. The Board has been designated the 2016 Region IV Distinguished School Board of the Year, and it has been six years since a sitting Board member drew an opponent. This is evidence of the community's support of the district's leadership and direction.

The District of Innovation Committee was comprised of 46 members, representing parents, teachers, administrators, and a Board designee. The DOI committee met five times over a 4 month period to consider the need for an innovation plan. The committee strongly believes that decisions involving student instruction and operations are best left to local districts and the communities they serve. Therefore, the Friendswood ISD seeks exemptions from the following provisions of the Texas Education Code. A brief rationale and description of an alternate practice if applicable is included for each exemption.

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning February 14, 2017, pending Board approval. Once the Board approval is granted, the FISD Board may amend or terminate it in accordance with the law. If within this five year term, other exemptions not stated in this plan are desired, the FISD Board will nominate a new committee and follow the original process.

Uniform School Start Date
Texas Education Code 25.0811
(EB Legal)

Current

The first day of school may not be held prior to the fourth Monday of August. Texas Education Code §25.0811 FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. A school district may: (1) begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August if the district operates a year-round system under Section 25.084; or (2) begin instruction for students for a school year on or after the first Monday in August at a campus or at not more than 20 percent of the campuses in the district if: (A) the district has a student enrollment of 190,000 or more; (B) the district at the beginning of the school year provides, financed with local funds, days of instruction for students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses, in addition to the minimum number of days of instruction required under Section 25.081; (C) the campus or each of the multiple campuses are undergoing comprehensive reform, as determined by the board of trustees of the district; and (D) a majority of the students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses are educationally disadvantaged. (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a school district that does not offer each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend school in another state for the grade levels the district does not offer may start school on any date permitted under Subsection (a) or the law of the other state

Proposed

The Friendswood ISD believes that the local community should set the calendar that best serves their students, families, and staff. FISD has been committed to study best practices and to form a culture where the staff and students see themselves as learners. The district embraces the philosophy that it is a learning community. Professional Learning Communities were established ten years ago to enable teachers and staff time to collaborate and learn.

Schedules were revised so that teachers at the high school and junior high school had 45 minutes together one day each week to meet as a professional learning community. Data analysis, effective teaching strategies, observations of others, round table discussions on particular students or issues, and digital integration are some of the areas of focus for the PLCs. It became very clear that 45 minutes once a week was not enough time for a group of teachers to clearly analyze and synthesize data, develop authentic assessments, collaboratively design engaging lessons, or research best practices. At the elementary level, teachers were asked to stay late one day each week in order to schedule time for their PLC. It was also discovered, but should have been obvious, that after teaching all day, after school was not the optimum time for adult learning to take place. The old model of staff development typically provided a one day format often in isolation or clustered together the week before the school year began, when there are many other preparatory things competing for teachers' time.

The research is clear that teachers need regular, ongoing support and time to monitor and alter instruction to fit the needs of today's learner. Survey after survey reflect teachers' frustration with the lack of time it takes to adequately address the needs of different groups of learners from year to year, as well as the constant changes to increasing rigorous standards.

A new calendar was developed with the goal of providing a block of time that would enable quality staff development for professional learning communities at every campus. The committee also looked at attendance patterns to see what the community was communicating as to their preference for holidays.

The new proposed calendar consists of the following:

- A start date in the middle of the week; August 16 for students
- Ending date of June 1 for students
- First semester ends at Winter Break for grades 6-12
- 174 Student Instructional Days
- 75,630 total minutes (including 4 staff development waiver days and 4 early dismissal waivers)

- Two bad weather make-up days (January 15 and February 19)
- 10 full day Professional/Work Days for Staff
- 6 half days committed to Professional Learning Communities

Each year a calendar will be developed with these factors taken into consideration. The proposed calendar for 2017-18 is attached as an example. It is pending Board approval.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction, School Day
Texas Education Code 25.081 and 25.082(a)
(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL)

Current

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amended the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by eliminating the required 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with the requirement that schools provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction annually and 420 minutes of instruction daily. While the bill allowed schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity; it eliminated any options to pursue state waivers to reduce the minimum number of minutes per day to provide teachers with professional learning time beyond an early release waiver currently used by the elementary schools and intermediate schools. Additionally, Texas Education Code §25.082(a) requires that each school day be at least seven hours long including intermissions.

Proposed

There are many alternative delivery models for instruction. Sometimes these involve shorter days for some students and longer days or more days for others. Currently, the district educates at-risk students in grades K-4 for half days, three weeks before school starts. This is done totally without any ADA funding. Historically, the District received a waiver to exempt 10th-12th grade students

from the first half of the first day of school to allow freshmen the opportunity to run through their schedules and meet their teachers, find their classes, etc. before filling the entire campus with another 1,600 students. This has been very effective. There are other instances where the Principal, Superintendent, Site Based committees, Parents and Board members should be able to determine the hours in the day that best work for students. The District is considering an altered day for preschool and kindergarten in order to schedule time to meet with parents and plans to continue to provide a focused day for freshman on the first day of school.

Student/Teacher Ratios and Class Size
Texas Education Code 25.111, 25.112, and 25.113
(EEB Local)

Current

Based on current state law, classes in grades Kindergarten through 4th may not exceed a ratio of 22 students to 1 teacher. When an individual class exceeds this ratio, the District must either add a new teacher, reassign teachers from other schools with lower student enrollment, or submit a waiver request to the Texas Education Agency. These waivers requests have not been rejected by TEA. In addition to the waiver request, it is required that a letter be sent to each parent in the class that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted and the class exceeds the 22:1 ratio. Texas Education Code §25.111 STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS. Except as provided by Section 25.112, each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. Texas Education Code §25.112 CLASS SIZE. (a) 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. That limitation does not apply during: (1) any 12-week period of the school year selected by the district, in the case of a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 42.005(c); or (2) the last 12 weeks of

any school year in the case of any other district. (b) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of the 12-week period for which a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 42.005(c) is claiming an exemption under Subsection (a), the district shall notify the commissioner in writing that the district is claiming an exemption for the period stated in the notice. (c) In determining the number of students to enroll in any class, a school district shall consider the subject to be taught, the teaching methodology to be used, and any need for individual instruction. (d) On application of a school district, the commissioner may except the district from the limit in Subsection (a) if the commissioner finds the limit works an undue hardship on the district. An exception expires at the end of the school year for which it is granted. (e) A school district seeking an exception under Subsection (d) shall notify the commissioner and apply for the exception not later than the later of: (1) October 1; or (2) the 30th day after the first school day the district exceeds the limit in Subsection (a). (f) If a school district repeatedly fails to comply with this section, the commissioner may take any appropriate action authorized to be taken by the commissioner under Section 39.131. (g) Expired. Texas Education Code §25.113 NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE. (a) A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception. The notice must be in conspicuous bold or underlined print and: (1) specify the class for which an exception from the limit imposed by Section 25.112(a) was granted; 13 November 28, 2016 (2) state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted; and (3) be included in a regular mailing or other communication from the campus or district, such as information sent home with students. (b) The notice required by Subsection (a) must be provided not later than the 31st day after: (1) the first day of the school year; or (2) the date the exception is granted, if the exception is granted after the beginning of the school year.

Proposed

Although FISD is a stable growth district, occasionally late registrants have necessitated a request for waivers in K-4 for class size. The District has and will

make every effort to continue to have a smaller class size ratio than the state average and one that best meets the needs of our students.

Determining the best class size is another decision the District believes should be made at the local level. FISD is part of the statewide TASA Transformation Network and has been heavily invested in the Visioning Institute and work of transforming our schools to better meet students' needs for the 21st century.

There are different delivery models currently being considered in order to best meet our students' needs and the 22:1 mandate may prevent utilization of some of those models.

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade
Texas Education Code 25.083(b) and 25.092
(FEC LEGAL & FEC LOCAL)

Current

State law currently requires students attend class 90% of the school days the class is offered in order to earn credit. The law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on demonstrated mastery of the learning. Texas Education Code §25.083 SCHOOL DAY INTERRUPTIONS. (b) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring or test preparation. A district may not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent or another person standing in parental relation to the student provides to the district written consent for removal from class for such purpose. Texas Education Code §25.092 MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. (a-1) A student

who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case. (a-2) Subsection (a) does not apply to a student who receives credit by examination for a class as provided by Section 28.023. (b) The board of trustees of each school district shall appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions for class credit or a final grade by students who are in attendance fewer than the number of days required under Subsection (a) and have not earned class credit or a final grade under Subsection (a-1). Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the membership of the committee. A committee may give class credit or a final grade to a student because of extenuating circumstances. Each board of trustees shall establish guidelines to determine what constitutes extenuating circumstances and shall adopt policies establishing alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. The alternative ways must include at least one option that does not require a student to pay a fee authorized under Section 11.158(a)(15). A certified public school employee may not be assigned additional instructional duties as a result of this section outside of the regular workday unless the employee is compensated for the duties at a reasonable rate of pay. (c) A member of an attendance committee is not personally liable for any act or omission arising out of duties as a member of an attendance committee. (d) If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the board of trustees. The decision of the board may be appealed by trial de novo to the district court of the county in which the school district's central administrative office is located. (e) This section does not affect the provision of Section 25.087(b) regarding a student's excused absence from school to observe religious holy days,The State requires a student to be in attendance 90% of the instructional days in a given school’s calendar.

<u>Proposed</u>

Counselors, administrators, and teachers will continue to work with parents and students to assure that students are attending school and adhering to Compulsory Attendance requirements. The District of Innovation Committee believes that students should be awarded credit when mastery of content has been achieved. There are extenuating circumstances when students need to miss school but are keeping up with work. There are also at-risk students who miss for a variety of reasons; being required to make up hours via seat time at a place that they have difficulty attending for various reasons is counter productive. There is no direct instruction. This appears to be more of a punishment than something of educational benefit. The District would like to work with these students in innovative ways so that learning and mastery is connected to real world application. An attendance committee would still convene on an individual basis to determine an appropriate response for each student.

Flexibility in this area does not alter a teacher's right to assign a student's final grade or exempt a student from any UIL rules.

Teacher Appraisal System
Texas Education Code 21.353 and 21.352
(DNA Legal, DNA Local)

<u>Current</u>

The State of Texas has mandated the use of the Texas Teacher Evaluation And Support System. The State also allows districts to develop their own evaluation system with specific components and by following certain rules. Texas Education Code 21.203 (a) Except as provided by Section 21.352 (c) the employment policies adopted by a board of trustees must require a written evaluation of each teacher at annual or more frequent intervals. Texas Education Code 21.352 specifies the process to be used for the selection of the appraisal process for teachers. Texas Education Code 21.352 (a) In appraising teachers, each school district shall use : (1) the appraisal process and performance criteria

developed by the commissioner; or (2) an appraisal process and performance criteria (A) developed by the district and campus level committees established under Section 11.251 (B) containing the items described by Sections 21.351 (a) (1) and (2) and (C) adopted by the board of trustees. Texas Education Code 21.351 (a) specifies the components required in all appraisal systems, even those developed locally. Texas Education Code 21.351 (a) the commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The Criteria must be based on observable, job related behavior, including: (1) teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures; and (2) the performance of teachers' students.

Proposed

The District wishes to treat distinguished and accomplished teachers as professionals and have them develop their own personal staff development plan and appraisal based on individualized needs to effectively teach students. Instead of being held to the criteria the mandated in Texas Education Code 21.351 (a) (1) and (2), the appraisal and professional development criteria would be created collaboratively by teachers and principals within a District framework. This framework and guidelines for application will be designed collaboratively by teachers, principals, District leadership staff, and the Board of Trustees to match the needs of the District as well as the individualized needs of teachers participating in this professional development plan and appraisal system. Because of the time and research needed to create the framework and guidelines for application of this innovative and individualized professional development system, this step will not be implemented until a later date.

Using the process identified in Texas Education Code 21.352 (2)(A) , the District presented an alternative appraisal system to the BOE which was adopted and implemented in August, 2016. It is a modified version of T-TESS that include all of the mandated elements found in Texas Education Code 21.351 (a) (1) and (2) as required. Teachers are scheduled for a full lesson observation once every three years as allowed through the process specified in Texas Education Code 21.352 (c) . . . a teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and

the teacher's most recent evaluation rated the teacher as at least proficient, or the equivalent, and did not identify any area of deficiency. On the years when there is not a full evaluation of a lesson, the District conducts multiple, unannounced "walk through" or informal visits. These visits can be 5 minutes or 50 minutes, as determined by the principal. The walk through visits are purposeful. They are meant to provide feedback to the teacher and for the instructional leader to closely monitor what is happening in the classrooms.
For the past several years, FISD has been training all of its appraisers in coaching. Training in goal setting was also provided to all professional staff.

This past year, FISD has been the recipient of a grant through the Houston Endowment to receive specific training in identifying and developing quality staff development through Learning Forward. The problem of practice identified by the District involved developing quality staff development that was personalized for each learner and that would create a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Teacher Certification
Texas Education Code 21.003
(DK Legal, DK Local, DK EXHIBIT)

<u>Current</u>
The State Board of Educator Certification, SBOE and the Texas Education Code define the educational requirements for teacher state certification. Texas Education Code 21.003 (a) 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 Subchapter B.

Waivers are granted by the TEA and Superintendents/Districts have the authority to grant local waivers for certifications of teachers teaching CTE classes.

Proposed

Friendswood ISD is in close proximity to the Johnson Space Center and is in a geographical area with many scientists and a highly educated workforce. The District has been fortunate to have several scientists mentor students who have achieved national recognition for their projects. Several retired scientists also substitute teach in the schools. Various medical professionals and other highly qualified engineers and mathematicians reside in close proximity to the District. The Houston area also has a very rich arts and performance community that could provide experienced people interested in working with students in a school setting. It would be advantageous to tap from this pool of experts who have shown the ability to work with students effectively and have expertise in certain subject areas. Under certain circumstances, it may be that one of these highly qualified individuals with a wide range of experience would provide the best teacher for FISD students. The District would like to keep this option open for consideration by principals during the hiring process. It is anticipated that this would take place mainly at the secondary schools. Specific procedures for approval of teachers and other certified employees under this local methodology will be developed by the Superintendent.

District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
Texas Education Code 11.252
(BQB Legal, BQB Local)

Current

Texas Education Code § 11.252 DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING. (a) Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Sections 39.053(c)(1)-(4). The district improvement plan

must include provisions for: (1) a comprehensive needs assessment addressing district student performance on the achievement indicators, and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29; (2) measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate achievement indicators for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment; (3) strategies for improvement of student performance that include: (A) instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving their full potential; (B) methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, including: (i) suicide prevention programs, in accordance with Subchapter O-1, Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, which includes a parental or guardian notification procedure; (ii) conflict resolution programs; (iii) violence prevention programs; and (iv) dyslexia treatment programs; (C) dropout reduction; (D) integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs; (E) discipline management; (F) staff development for professional staff of the district; (G) career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities; and (H) accelerated education; (4) strategies for providing to middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students' teachers and school counselors, and those students' parents information (A) higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities; (B) the TEXAS grant program and the Teach for Texas grant program established under Chapter 56; (C) the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school; and (D) sources of information on higher education admissions and financial aid; (5) resources needed to implement identified strategies; (6) staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy; (7) timelines for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of each improvement strategy; (8) formative evaluation criteria for determining periodically whether strategies are resulting in intended improvement of student performance; and (9) the policy under Section 38.0041 addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment

of children. (b) A district's plan for the improvement of student performance is not filed with the agency, but the district must make the plan available to the agency on request. (c) In a district that has only one campus, the district- and campus-level committees may be one committee and the district and campus plans may be one plan. (d) At least every two years, each district shall evaluate the effectiveness of the district's decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district- and campus-level decision-making and planning to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance. (d-1) Expired. (e) The district-level committee established under Section 11.251 shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives. District policy and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee. This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining. (f) A superintendent shall regularly consult the district-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the district educational program.Site Based Decision Making

Proposed

Return Site Based Decision Making back to the local district by allowing the local district to determine the makeup of the committee and which decisions will be referred to the committee, except those prescribed by law.

Student Discipline - Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
Texas Education Code 37.0012
(FO Legal and Local)

Current

Texas Education Code 37.0012 (a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the

principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. (b) The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of this subchapter. (c) Except as provided by this chapter, the specific duties of the campus behavior coordinator may be established by campus or district policy. Unless otherwise provided by campus or district policy. (1) a duty imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter shall be performed by the campus behavior coordinator; and (2) a power granted to a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter may be exercised by the campus behavior coordinator. (d) The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent or guardian as provided by this subsection if under this subchapter the student is placed into in-school or out-of-school suspension, place in a disciplinary alternative education program, expelled, or placed in a juvenile justice alternative education program or is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer. A campus behavior coordinator must comply with this subsection by: (1) promptly contacting the parent or guardian by telephone or in person; and (2) making a good faith effort to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action is taken, for delivery to the student's parent or guardian. (e) If a parent or guardian entitled to notice under Subsection (d) has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action is taken, a campus behavior coordinator shall mail written notice of the parent's or guardian's last known address. (f) If a campus behavior coordinator is unable or not available to promptly provide notice under Subsection (d), the principal or other designee shall provide the notice.

Proposed

FISD charges each principal with being responsible for discipline on his/her respective campus. All campuses have at least one Assistant Principal, counselor, and School Psychologist for each campus. Discipline will be handled by principals as well as any assistant principal. The District believes that a collaborative approach with those responsible for a smaller group of students is more advantageous for students and provides more support for the students and their families.