

# Gruver Independent School District

## Local Innovation Plan

June 16, 2016

### District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members:

Troy Seagler – Superintendent  
Nita Hudson – High School Principal  
Wade Callaway – Junior High Principal  
Amber Holland – Elementary Principal  
Matt Messer – Business Manager

### I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Codes. On June 15, 2016, the Gruver Independent School Districts' Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and the community.

### II. TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning August 1, 2016 and ending July 31, 2021, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

### III. INNOVATIONS

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

#### A. Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local)

TEC 21.003 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 Subchapter b." The current certification requirements inhibit the District from hiring professionals with industry experience to teach Career and

Technology Education (CATE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) and foreign language courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain possible professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. The District does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. Flexibility to establish its own teacher certification requirements affords the District the following advantages:

- Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses
- Greater number of CATE courses offerings resulting in more opportunity for students
- Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching
- Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses
- Allows the school district to utilize technology to implement on-line courses (CTE, foreign languages, general courses)

**B. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB Legal) (EB Local)**

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break.
- Alignment of calendar with Advanced Placement Exams and STAAR/EOC timelines
- Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.
- Creates flexibility for the District to pursue year round school of choice for identified populations.

**C. Class Size Ratio (TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (EEB Legal)**

Texas Education Code 25.111 states that each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ration of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance.

Texas Education Code 25.112 state that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. The District seeks to establish its own local ratio requirements and provides the following advantages:

- More flexibility when teaching
- Creative ways of delivering instruction
- Ability to manage increases in class sizes

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and principals. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.