

# Goodrich ISD District of Innovation Plan

## Introduction

House Bill 1842, created and passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session in Spring of 2015, provides a unique opportunity for Texas public school districts to exempt themselves from some parts of the Texas Education Code. In order to do this, a public school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12 A.

As a District of Innovation, Goodrich ISD may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

## District of Innovation Process and Timeline

Feb. 2017      At the Goodrich ISD Board meeting, the Board approved the Resolution to become designated as a District of Innovation and appointed the District Advisory Committee to develop the GISD District of Innovation Plan.

Public Hearing at the Goodrich ISD Board meeting to inform the public of plan for District of Innovation.

March 2017    District Advisory Committee met to discuss the District of Innovation Plan components.

May 2017      District Advisory Committee met to approve District of Innovation Plan.

During Goodrich ISD Board meeting, Trustees considered action to approve District of Innovation Plan.

## Flexible School Calendar

**Currently:** Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August.

**Proposed:** To allow for a school calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider a flexible calendar option which may include an early start date which also emphasizes the importance of quality instruction. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the 4th Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve quality instruction by

balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters allowing teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break. This change will also afford more time to teaching semester courses at the secondary level. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses and/or trade school courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. This flexibility would also allow the school year to end prior to June 1st which would allow for a longer summer school session for those students needing accelerated instruction prior to the third administration of STAAR and more instructional time for students seeking credit recovery in the summer. Finally, adjusting the start date will afford additional instruction days prior to Spring Assessments such as:

- State Mandated Testing
- Dual Credit Finals

### **Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size**

**Currently:** A 22 to 1 student/teacher ratio is required by State law for Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency, and the district must notify parents of waivers to class size limits.

**Proposed:** While the District intends to keep a 22 to 1 ratio for class size at the Elementary level, a class size waiver to TEA has been required. Based on our observations, we believe that a local solution to class size adjustments should be made without submitting waivers to TEA. Goodrich ISD will continuously monitor enrollment at the Elementary campus. In the event a class size exceeds the 22 to 1 ratio, a waiver will not be submitted; however, the Superintendent will provide the Board of Trustees with updated enrollment numbers and a plan of action to reduce class size.

### **Teacher Certification**

**Current:** In the event a certified teacher cannot be hired for a position or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside his/her certification, the district must submit an emergency certification/exception/waiver to TEA.

**Proposed:** The District will maintain its current expectation for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the vacant position.

Many of the career pathways set forth by HB 5 require very specialized certification. The current laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill, high-demand career and technical courses when quality certified teachers are not available.

Goodrich ISD principals will submit a written request for approval to fill a teaching position to the Superintendent or designee:

1. For a certified teacher to teach a subject area out of his/her certified field.
2. For a degreed, non-certified professional with career/industry experience to teach a CTE subject within his/her area of expertise.