

Hutto ISD

District of Innovation Plan

I. Strategic Commitments, Priorities, and Process

Hutto ISD has embarked on a year-long strategic planning process, which developed our future goals and established the steps to achieve them.

The process began nearly three years ago with identifying Hutto ISD's beliefs and values, all of which come from our culture and educational philosophy. Actualizing our beliefs on paper is vital to the success of the final plan, as those beliefs guide every future decision the district makes. Creating this plan within the framework of our beliefs, mission, vision and educational philosophy ensures the district crafts and follows a forward-looking path that champions our past and our culture.

The first step in developing our strategic plan, which has evolved into nearly a dozen specific goals for administration, involved the Board of Trustees and top leadership answering four questions:

- 1) What do you really value about Hutto ISD that we have now?
- 2) What do you really want for the students of Hutto ISD?
- 3) What makes Hutto ISD unique or distinctive?
- 4) What would Hutto ISD like to become or develop into over the next 3 to 5 years?

The board expected that the district would become the district of choice in the state and was proud of its rich history, its safety record, its community support and culture of service and character in our students.

Following that, the board and district leadership met in a workshop setting to identify the beliefs that represent Hutto ISD. Beliefs are the district's fundamental values and deep and abiding convictions. They include the non-negotiable ethical principles, moral imperatives and the character of Hutto ISD. They are the "why" behind every action, and therefore, should be the basis for the strategic plan that will guide the district for the next three to five years.

In Hutto ISD, we believe:

- Every decision is truly made in the best interest of students
- Every student is important.
- All students are of value and should be given the opportunity to succeed in life.
- In recruiting and retaining the best staff.

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- All staff are of value and should be given the opportunity to contribute and succeed.
- All students will be well-balanced and taught the value of hard work
- Embracing diversity is a strength.
- In good stewardship of the taxpayer's dollars.
- The educational needs of all students must be met.
- Parents are our most valuable partners in student success.
- Communication will move our district forward.
- Character is as important as academics.
- We can accomplish more together than on our own.

From the beliefs, the Board endorsed the district's vision and turned the work over to the "Team of 30" – a group of 30 teachers, administrators, community members, parents, business leaders and city officials – who wrote the district's mission. The mission defines the future Hutto ISD wants to create. It is a dynamic statement designed to unleash the organization's energy. It bridges the present with the future and answers the question: "What would the world look like if our beliefs were fully realized?"

Once the team answered that question, developing the strategic objectives and strategies that would provide the framework for the entire plan came very easily. The Six critical areas of focus, each with an objective, which arose from this work are:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Create a culture of excellence to address the academic, economic, and social challenges of the future.
- **Human Resources:** Develop a recruitment and retention process that provides quality staff for all Hutto ISD students.
- **Funding and Finance:** Develop a comprehensive plan that will achieve financial stability.
- **Facilities:** Create innovative ways to address our facility needs inspiring learning through flexible, state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Community/Parent Partnerships:** Create community partnerships that encourage participation in Hutto ISD's commitment to inspiring excellence.
- **Communications:** Create a system and processes that generate two-way external/internal communications.

From there, another 100 community members, parents, business leaders, civic representatives and school personnel were organized into 12 Action Teams – led by various levels of staff – to make the strategic plan operational. The teams met three to five times over two months to write action plans and provide cost analysis and benefits for each plan that district staff could follow to actualize each goal.

Each year, the plan is analyzed, updated and implemented. The district's goals are developed based on the progress and strategies identified in the strategic plan, keeping the district on the track that parents, the community, teachers and administrators would like to see. Just like Hutto ISD focuses on preparing students for life after their educational career, for their future, through our strategic plan, we are preparing the district for its future, too.

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II. Hutto ISD as a District of Innovation

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an unprecedented opportunity for Texas public school districts to challenge the status quo. As a District of Innovation, Hutto ISD will be able to implement our Strategic Plan with the increased flexibility and freedom necessary to personalize learning experiences and inspire excellence in academics, character, and community.

Our Strategic priorities will require Hutto ISD to evolve, to think fundamentally differently about such critical systemic components as how we are organized, how we deliver instruction, how we recruit and retain top talent, how we engage and support our families, what experiences we provide and how we grow continually as a learning organization. To think differently, we must be able to respond differently.

Leveraging the freedom and flexibility afforded as a District of Innovation will assure we are empowered to do so. Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) “that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . .” Because Hutto ISD’s Strategic Plan sets forth specific goals under the initiative to improve college and career options and because Hutto ISD seeks to maximize local control of educational decisions for students, Hutto ISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC §25.092)

Texas Education Code Section 25.092 restricts the District from issuing class credit or a final grade if a student is not in attendance the required “seat time, referred to as the 90% rule. This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of the learning. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to Hutto ISD students through innovation in the method, location, and times instruction may be delivered to students.

Hutto ISD will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility. The District pilot under this exemption will be the partnership with Temple College, Texas State Technical College, or another post-secondary institute in the area of dual credit instruction who offer onsite, hybrid or distance learning options. Blended learning, where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online, is one example where exemption from Section 25.092 will likely foster greater innovation to promote and increase college and career readiness options.

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This exemption will also allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities. Relief granted from Section 25.092 does not constitute any substantive exemption from compulsory attendance or UIL rules, nor does it limit or modify a teacher's ability to assign or determine grades in accordance with Texas Education Code 28.0214 and 28.0216.

Teacher Certification for Dual Credit, Career and Technical Education Instructors, and Hard-to-Fill Areas (TEC §21.003)

Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.044, 21.053, and 21.055 , as well as 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231, limits the ability to hire teachers in highly specialized or hard-to-fill areas. Through an exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual and career/technical credit teachers, Hutto ISD will be granted the flexibility to hire professionals in specialized trades and vocations to teach identified career and technical courses if certified teachers are not available.

This exemption permits these professionals to meet the Highly Qualified designation for the State and permits the District to obtain the same weighted funding as would be available should the professional hold a traditional teaching certification for the course. The District will also have the flexibility to hire credentialed community or university college instructors in specific content areas to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefits of such dual credit and career and technical/STEM course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualifications requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

It is the desire of the District Advisory Committee and District of Innovation committee that local qualification requirements include timelines and professional development above and beyond what the State recommends.

By obtaining an exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit and career and technical/STEM teachers, the District will have the flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors or university professors in specified 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. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach crafts of trades and vocations (such as welding, fine arts, etc.) in career and technical/STEM courses if teachers are not available to teach these courses.

At the present time, Hutto ISD would focus on academic and non-academic CTE courses. However, in the future, the District may choose to exercise this option in other hard-to-fill courses.

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Teacher Employment Contracts (TEC §21.002 and §21.102)

Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that 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. This time period is not sufficient to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Hutto ISD would like the flexibility to extend the continuation of probationary contract status at the discretion of administration beyond what is allowed if it is in the best interest of the learners involving innovation with Subchapter A and C, TEC's 21.002 and 21.102.

Specifically, Hutto ISD teachers that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the last date of district employment. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.

Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service. Hutto ISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align with the 75,600 minutes required of students, with no effect on teacher salaries.

This proposal may enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts. This proposal may also significantly improve teacher morale and will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Uniform School Start Date (TEC 25.0811)

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday of August. The Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of active learning, college and career readiness, and social and emotional learning. The Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday of August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break.

In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also let Hutto ISD start classes as a short week, easing

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the transition for students entering Kindergarten, middle school, and high school, This will also allow for more flexible professional learning opportunities for our staff.

Length of Instructional Day (TEC 25.081 and TEC 25.082a)

Both Texas Education Codes 25.081 and 25.082 address the length of the instructional day by limiting it to “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.” While the intent of the Legislature was to standardize across all districts the amount of time students spent learning in a classroom, Hutto ISD wishes to meet the goal of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year, but seeks an exemption from these statutes so that it may reach the 75,600 minute total in a more creative manner without being limited to either 420 minutes or seven hours of instruction every day. The length of the instructional day cannot be changed absent the District becoming a District of Innovation.

The current rules allows no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules. Exempting from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Hutto ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the District and its stakeholders. While there is already a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year.

Exempting completely from the 420-minute requirement would give the District a significant amount of local control over scheduling (above and beyond the 6-day maximum as needed) without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements.

The opportunity to be exempt from the 7-hour day requirement will allow the district to provide teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.

Hutto ISD does not intend to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published/distributed to district stakeholders in advance of the school year. The district would not schedule early release days under this exemption that were shorter than 240 minutes (4 hours).

III. Term

The term of this plan is for five years, beginning Jan 12, 2017 and ending January 12, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with the law. The District of

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Innovation committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan.

Hutto ISD's District of Innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251, or a comparable committee if the district is exempt from that section, and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption of a local innovation plan under Section 12A.005.

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 this 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 one time.

The commissioner may terminate a district's designation as a district of innovation if the district receives for two consecutive school years:

- an unacceptable academic performance rating under Section 39.054;
- an unacceptable financial accountability rating under Section 39.082; or
- an unacceptable academic performance rating under Section 39.054 for one of the school years and an unacceptable financial accountability rating under Section 39.082 for the other school year.

Instead of terminating a district's designation, the commissioner may permit the district to amend the district's local innovation plan to address concerns specified by the commissioner.

The commissioner shall terminate a district's designation as a district of innovation if the district receives for three consecutive school years:

- an unacceptable academic performance rating under Section 39.054;
- an unacceptable financial accountability rating under Section 39.082; or
- any combination of one or more unacceptable ratings under Subdivision (1) and one or more unacceptable ratings under Subdivision (2).

A decision by the commissioner under this section is final and may not be appealed.

IV. Implementation

Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and departments; and approved by the Superintendent.

Implementation plans will be presented to the District Advisory Committee for feedback and recommendations.

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Adjustments to Board Policy will be reviewed by school attorneys and adopted where appropriate.

Hutto ISD District of Innovation Committee

Dr. Douglas Killian	SUPERINTENDENT
Brandy Baker	CHAIRPERSON, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT SCHOOL SUPPORT
Ed Ramos	DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
Lisa Patterson	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT HR
Shirley Reich	COLLEGE AND CAREER COORDINATOR
Chris Christian	HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
Travis Clark	DISTRICT CTE
Travis Brown	DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY
Michele Simcik	DISTRICT SPED
Anna Moreno	DISTRICT BILINGUAL/ ESL
Shirley Reich	DISTRICT GUIDANCE & COUNSELING
Nicole Shannon	DISTRICT GT
Jorge Franco	DISTRICT SEC. NON-TEACHING
Rebecca Franks	DISTRICT PARENT/BUS/COMM REPRESENTATIVE
Jill Touchstone	CCES REPRESENTATIVE
Bob Poe	CCES ALTERNATE
Elda Rendon	CCES P/B/C REPRESENTATIVE
Amber Reinecke	HES REPRESENTATIVE
Michelle Lindsey	HES ALTERNATE
Tamara Mangum	HES PARENT REPRESENTATIVE
Cari Edelson	HNES REPRESENTATIVE
Gabrielle Sweetland	HNES ALTERNATE
Elizabeth Willi	HNES P/B/C REPRESENTATIVE
Bridget Valdez	NJES REPRESENTATIVE
Dior Edison	NJES ALTERNATE
Dana Lively	NJES P/B/C/ REPRESENTATIVE
Misty Patureau	RES REPRESENTATIVE
Shellea Griner	RES ALTERNATE
Kylee Jeffers	RES ALTERNATE
Jennifer Hart	RES P/B/C/REPRESENTATIVE
Jennifer Norwood	VHES REPRESENTATIVE
Karlyle Resurreccion	VHES ALTERNATE
Melissa Terry	VHES P/B/C REPRESENTATIVE
Lisa Parker	FMS REPRESENTATIVE
Jillian Edwards	FMS ALTERNATE
Angela Bujnoch	FMS P/B/C REPRESENTATIVE

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Erica Griffin	FMS P/B/C REPRESENTATIVE
Jo Ann Champion	HMS REPRESENTATIVE
Sandeep Chandran	HMS ALTERNATE
Kimberly McAuliffe	HMS P/B/C/REPRESENTATIVE
Josue Flores	HHS REPRESENTATIVE
Casie Hardt	HHS ALTERNATE
James Garrett	HHS PARENT REPRESENTATIVE
Jill Rydell	<u>HHS BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE</u>
Emily Delgado	HHS PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

V. Timeline

May 12, 2016

- Board of Trustees approve resolution to hold public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation

June 9, 2016

- Public Meeting to explain and discuss possibility of becoming a District of Innovation
- Board of Trustees approve a motion to pursue local District of Innovation plan
- Board of Trustees approve the District of Innovation Committee

November 1, 2016

- Initial meeting of District of Innovation Committee

November 15, 2016

- Second meeting of District of Innovation Committee
- AFT and ATPE representative invited to attend, AFT participated

November 17, 2016

- Principals share District of Innovation plan with teachers and staff.
- Teachers, Staff and Community members are invited to attend public District of Innovation meeting.

December 7, 2016

- Third District of Innovation meeting to discuss and vote on proposed District of Innovation Plan; approved unanimously by DAC

December 8, 2016

- Proposed District of Innovation plan posted to Hutto ISD website

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December 13, 2016

- TEA notified of Hutto ISD proposed District of Innovation plan and the Board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan
- District of Innovation plan shared with entire District and through multiple social media sites

Jan 12, 2017

- Public Meeting to review District of Innovation Plan
- Proposed Hutto ISD District of Innovation plan reviewed by Hutto ISD Board of Trustees; approved

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