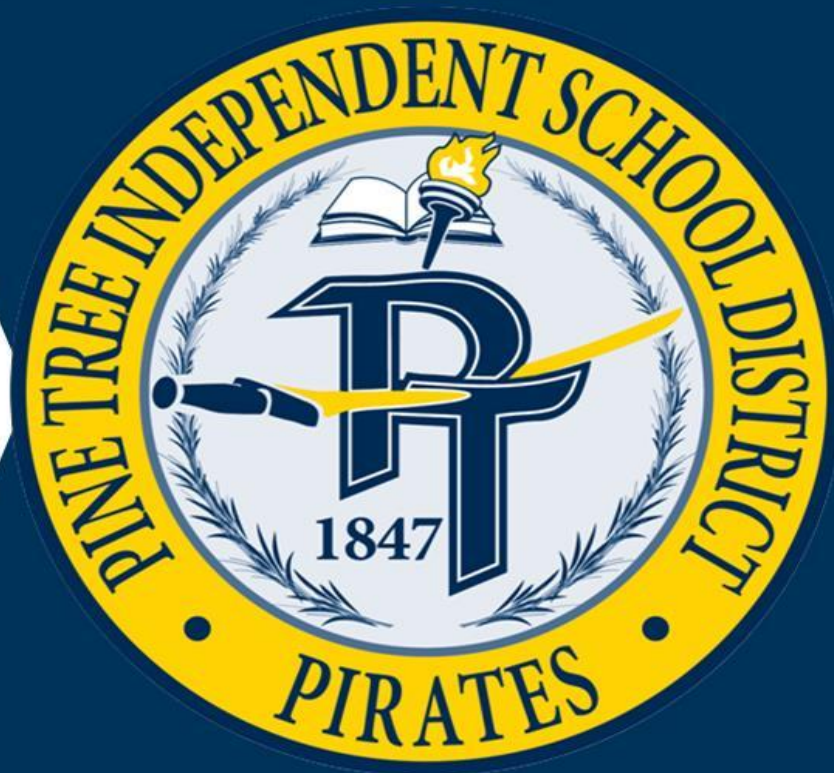


Pine Tree

Independent School District

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



District of Innovation Plan

January 2017 - December 2021

INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have the following benefits:

- 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
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

VISION

A Tradition of Excellence

MISSION

The Pine Tree family champions the relentless pursuit of excellence through a compassionate and safe learning environment empowering all students to develop their unique passions and to make a positive impact in a global society.

CORE VALUES

We believe in:

- Lifelong Learning—We are a learning organization, where students are engaged and leaders grow.
- Innovation Through Collaboration—We foster a culture of innovation: working together, adapting to change.
- Trust and Safety—We provide a trusting and safe environment accountable to the highest standards and most effective tools.
- Respect—We respect each other, embracing diversity and global awareness.

PTISD STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES

DISTRICT GOALS

Goal 1

All students will reach their full potential.

Goal 2

All students will thrive in a global society.

Goal 3

All students will discover and pursue their unique passions.

STRATEGIES

Strategy 1

We will create a customized learning environment that ensures a culture of innovation.

Strategy 2

We will maximize learning through the use of advanced resources and digital literacy.

Strategy 3

We will boldly support the social and emotional needs of all students.

Strategy 4

We will ensure student leadership is an integral part of our learning culture.

Strategy 5

We will recruit, develop, support, and retain the highest quality staff.

PROCESS

On February 13, 2017, the Pine Tree Independent School District's Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and improve student learning. On March 6, 2017, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees supported the plan to create a District of Innovation Committee to begin researching and recommending a plan for approval. This Pine Tree ISD District of Innovation committee will be considered for approval by the Board of Trustees at the May 8, 2017, at the regular board meeting. The committee represents various stakeholders across the district including teachers, instructional paraprofessionals, instructional coaches, parents, campus administration, district administration, local higher education, and community members. The committee met initially in March and April 2017 to discuss and develop a plan. The District of Innovation plan followed the development of the Pine Tree ISD

Strategic Plan. The options discussed and recommended for consideration in the District of Innovation plan support the goals and strategies of the Pine Tree ISD Strategic Plan.

The District notified Commissioner Morath of its intent to file a plan with the Texas Education Agency. The plan was posted on the District website for 30 days before being presented to the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees on May 8, 2017. Pine Tree ISD notified the Texas Commissioner of Education of the District's final District of Innovation Plan and the plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval on May 15, 2017.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION OF THE PINE TREE ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF DESIGNATION OF A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION UNDER HB 1842

WHEREAS, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees is committed to being intentionally responsive and providing students exceptional opportunities for learning; and,

WHEREAS, HB 1842 provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation; and,

WHEREAS, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees believes in supporting innovation; and,

WHEREAS, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees believes that it can be a better decision-making body for students when it has freedom to exercise local control over the decision-making process; and,

WHEREAS, HB 1842 requires districts seeking to be designated as Districts of Innovation to develop a local innovation plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees believes that a local innovation plan, if created, should be developed in conjunction with the District's strategic plan; and,

WHEREAS, before considering the creation of a local innovation plan, the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees will ensure that the District receives feedback from District stakeholders.

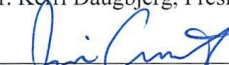
NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

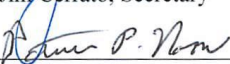
The Board of Trustees of Pine Tree ISD on February 13, 2017 initiates the process of exploring and considering designation of the District as a District of Innovation under HB 1842.

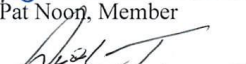
ADOPTED THIS 13TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2017.

PINE TREE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT


By: 
Dr. Kerri Daugbjerg, President


Jim Cerrato, Secretary


Pat Noon, Member


Anthony Tanner, Member


Amy Brown, Vice President


Adam Graves, Member


Frank Richards, Member

TIMELINE

Date	Activity/Task
February 13, 2017	Board of Trustees passed the resolution to research the District of Innovation process
March 6, 2017	Board of Trustees conducts a public hearing to discuss the District of Innovation process and possible options
March 2017	District of Innovation Committee formed
March 29, 2017	First District of Innovation Committee meeting
April 3, 2017	Draft of District of Innovation Plan discussed and revisions made
April 6, 2017	Posting of the District of Innovation Plan for Pine Tree ISD on the District website and notification of the Board of Trustees intent to consider and adopt a District of Innovation plan sent to TEA
April 10, 2017	Discussion of the District of Innovation draft plan with the Pine Tree ISD Board of Trustees
April 26, 2017	District of Innovation committee reviews the final plan and comments provided from the staff or public
May 8, 2017	Board of Trustees consider approval of the District of Innovation plan for Pine Tree ISD and approved plan is submitted to Commissioner Morath at TEA

TERM

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in May 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through May 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Improvement Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Role
Eneatra Anderson	Parent/District Strategic Planning
Courtney Armstrong	Parent/Community/Community U
David Blazek	Community/Community U/District Strategic Planning
Ami Haygood	Parent/Community U
Matthew Henry	Community/District Strategic Planning
Ashley Johnson	Community/Community U

Cheryl Parr	Community/Community U
Tessa Stinnett	Parent
David Wong	Community
Shalonda Adams	Principal/PACE
Rebekah Alexander	Teacher/PACE
Sherrill Ballard	Elementary Math/Science Coordinator
Sarah Barnett	Counselor/Primary
Tyrance Barnett	Principal/ExCEL
Dr. Valerie Baxter	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services
Jody Berryhill	Athletic Director/District Strategic Planning
Caci Brinkley	Teacher/ExCEL
Hannah Brooks	Assistant Principal/PTJH
Denise Calixto	Receptionist/Birch
Randy Castleberry	Teacher/PACE
Carrie Chandler	Assistant Principal/PTHS
Rena Christian	Classroom Paraprofessional/Primary
Meredith Clay	Teacher/Parkway
Ursula Coleman	Teacher/Bilingual/Primary
Laura Cranford	Teacher/MS
Judy Downing	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance
Stephanie Downs	Teacher/Birch
Wanda Eastin	Teacher/PTJH
Candace Edwards	Teacher/Parkway
Sandie Fauss	Human Resources Coordinator
Stacey Glosson	Director of Special Education
Shanna Graves	Teacher/Parkway
Mitzi Willis	Teacher/MS
Diana Hernandez	Instructional Paraprofessional/MS
Dr. Daya Hill	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Tony Hollins	Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Facilities

Bill Irvine	Lead Counselor for PTISD/PTHS
Laura Johns	Teacher/Primary
Laura Kirby	Teacher/MS
Marianne McBride	Teacher/Birch
Stasha McKinney	Educational Diagnostician
Lisa Manning	Instructional Paraprofessional/Primary
Francetta McGowen	Instructional Paraprofessional/PTJH
Jennifer Mitchell	Teacher/PTJH
Clay Nyvall	Teacher/PTJS
Cyndi Nyvall	ELAR/GT Advanced Academics Coordinator
Cristi Parsons	Principal/Primary
Jon Pollard	Director of Technology
Teresa Rau	PTA/Admin Assistant to the Superintendent
Vanessa Robinson	Principal/PTJH
Sarah Sage	Instructional Coach/Primary
Josh White	Assistant Principal/PTJH
Robin White	Instructional Technology Coordinator
Mary Whitton	Director of Communications/Public Information

EXEMPTIONS

§25.0811 Uniform School Start Date

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed

This flexibility of an earlier start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Having the flexibility to establish an earlier start date will enable the District to balance the amount of instructional time available in each semester, providing classroom teachers the opportunity to deliver more equitable learning experiences for students in the fall and spring semesters. Additional benefits are listed below:

- An improved balanced instructional calendar - Under the current law, the fall is generally shortened due the semester ending prior to the Winter/Christmas Break. In the District's 2017-18 calendar, there are 73 days in the fall semester and 98 days in the spring semester. By adjusting the school start day in August, our semesters will become more balanced.

- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will follow a calendar more closely aligned to the local college calendar including the number of days in both the fall and spring semester.
- An early start date permits students an additional week or more of instruction prior to state assessments.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well. This is a result of the spring semester ending in late May or very early June.
- Flexibility creates opportunities for District to pursue other calendar options for identified populations.

Local Guidelines

The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

§25.001, 25.036 Inter-district Transfers

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed

Pine Tree ISD implements an inter-district transfer process via the approved District 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 academic history, the student's disciplinary history records, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard or students may fail courses. In these rare cases, Pine Tree ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

Local Guidelines

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard or who fail two or more classes for two consecutive six weeks may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

§21.002 Probationary Contracts

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.

Proposed

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Pine Tree ISD.

Local Guidelines

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the District, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the District, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

§21.003, 21.0031, 21.053 Teacher Certification

TEC 21.003(a) states 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. TEC21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

TEC 21.0031 (a) An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee: (1) does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification; (2) fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend the employee's temporary, probationary, or emergency certificate or any other certificate or permit issued under Subchapter B; or (3) fails to comply with any requirement under Subchapter Chapter 22, if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate under Section 22.0831(f)(2). TEC 21.053 (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposed

With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. Exemption from TEC 21.003, 21.0031, and 21.053 will provide much needed flexibility to hire the most qualified candidate for teaching positions. With an increasing number of innovative courses created after implementation of HB5, finding exceptionally qualified applicants in specific fields who are also certified teachers is increasingly more difficult. This flexibility will allow the District to hire individuals who best meet the needs of the students and provide the content knowledge our students need to enter an increasingly innovative world.

Although it is the District's intent to limit the use of this exemption, the current statute inhibits the District's ability to recruit and employ highly qualified professionals.

The District is seeking flexibility in three areas:

- A. Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Foreign Language certifications at the secondary level and Bilingual Teacher Certification K - 6. Teachers in these areas will be provided one additional year to obtain the appropriate certification.
- B. Career and Technical - Qualified professionals with industry and field experience to successfully teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.
- C. Dual Credit Teacher Certifications - Credentialed community college instructors or university professors, in specific content areas, may be employed to teach courses in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available.

Local Guidelines:

- a) The campus principal may submit a request to the Superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of his/her certification area while working on proper certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject and to initiate the request. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.
- b) An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area. The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.
- c) The principal may submit a request to the Superintendent to allow a credentialed community college instructor or university professor to teach courses in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.
- d) The Superintendent, after consultation with campus leadership and the Human Resources leadership, will certify candidates that meet local credential guidelines. The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to the individual beginning employment. Exemption from the Texas Education Code §21.003 will require the District to review its policies at DBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) as well as the policies at DK (LEGAL) and (LOCAL). The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

§21.451 Required Professional Development

TEC states a) The staff development provided by a school district to an educator other than a principal must be: (1) conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district; and (2) designed to improve education in the district.

Proposed

Each year more mandatory trainings are put into place without the addition of hours or funding to implement them. Pine Tree ISD agrees with the importance of each of these areas of training such as sexual harassment, bullying, suicide prevention, FERPA, etc.). However, the District needs the flexibility

to allow our faculty and staff to implement the knowledge they have been given through these repeated trainings. This will also allow more time for implementation of the trainings on each campus and allow time for assessing the effectiveness of local plans or preventive programs. It is with that understanding that the District seeks exemption from annual compliance retraining in the areas listed below. Instead, these trainings will occur during new teacher orientation for new staff to the district as well as a refresher occurring in a preset three-year cycle for all staff, as determined by the district. Future mandatory trainings that are assigned will be handled in a similar fashion.

Local Guidelines

- a) The District will set up and maintain a database for all employees. Employees will participate in formal training every three years in the following areas as mandated by law:
 1. Sexual harassment
 2. Bullying prevention for teachers, administrators, and staff
 3. Child abuse, sexual abuse, and other maltreatment of children
 4. FERPA (student privacy)
 5. Suicide prevention
 6. Anaphylaxis and Auto-Injectors
 7. Blood Borne Pathogens
 8. Diabetes Overview
 9. Illegal Steroid Use
 10. Concussions - except for teachers, administrators and staff who are required to have annual training per UIL rules
- b) All teachers, faculty, and staff new to the district will complete the compliance training during the first year of employment in the district.
- c) District and campus administrators may assign compliance training to an employee or group of employees as needed during the three year cycle.

§21.404 Teacher Planning and Preparation

TEC 21.404 states each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Proposed

By exempting the District from this law, the District will have flexibility for special events/days on campus (state testing, field trips, etc.), will have flexibility for more collaboration during the school day, and will allow for administrative flexibility based on student needs by campus.

Local Guidelines

The number of minutes that a teacher receives for planning and preparation over a two-week period (450 minutes) must not be reduced but flexibility to provide less than 45 minutes per day, due to special events or scheduling, may be implemented. Any schedule designed with less than 45 minutes per day for teachers must be approved the Superintendent or his/her designee prior to implementation.

Summary of the District of Innovation Plan

The direction provided by this local Innovation Plan is a culmination of collaboration among community members, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators. This plan was designed to facilitate the implementation of the District's strategic plan which was adopted in April 2017. This plan provides an opportunity for the Pine Tree community to make local decisions on the best ways to educate our children.