

# Palmer ISD

## District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)

### 2016-2017

During of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled to. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2016-2021).

#### **1. School start date**

*(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)*

##### Current Law

*Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August. For years, this was strictly a local decision.*

*The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, with no exceptions.*

##### Proposed

To develop a calendar that fits the needs of the community of Palmer. We have developed a calendar that we fill meets the students, community, and staff needs.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of August.
- b. This start date will provide more educational days prior to state testing.
- c. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- d. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

## **2. Teacher and Principal Evaluation**

*(DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL) (Ed. Code 21.203) (Ed. Code 21.352)*

### Current Law

*The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, that will be called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).*

*Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Palmer ISD teachers are formally evaluated annually.*

*Principals are evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.*

### Proposed

A committee of administrators would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument and/or process that fits the needs and goals of PISD.

- a. Palmer ISD will utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.
- b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, and any other relevant best practice.
- c. All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every three years. Every teacher will receive a minimum of six, informal walk-throughs per year.
- d. Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year.
- d. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals unless they choose to opt out.
- e. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.
- f. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Palmer ISD.

### **3. Teacher certification**

*(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)(Ed. Code 21.352, 21.354)*

#### Current Law

*In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.*

#### Proposed

In order to best serve PISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses in which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.
- c. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

## **4. Teacher Contract Days**

*(DCB Legal, DCB Local)(Ed. Code 21.401)*

### Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

### Proposed

This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This somewhat makes an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- a. This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- b. This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.
- c. This proposal will significantly improve teacher morale.
- d. This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.