



**Burkburnett ISD**  
**District of Innovation Plan**  
**October 2021 – October 2026**

Adopted 10-21-21

## **I. What Is a District of Innovation?**

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 giving traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. Any district with an academic performance rating of at least Academically Acceptable is eligible.

The idea behind Districts of Innovation is that a local school district may want to pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other areas. An innovation plan allows a district to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements, thus gaining more local control. Each innovation plan is expected to be unique to each school district, allowing for local values and goals to be incorporated into the plan.

Burkburnett Independent School District (BISD) took the first step in exploring this opportunity when the Board approved a resolution initiating the process in October, 2016. The Board then held a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop an innovation plan, at which time the Board decided to move forward in the process. A committee was appointed to develop an innovation plan. The plan was posted online for at least 30 days and the District of Innovation Committee approved it before it gained final approval and adoption by the Board of Trustees.

Some areas where Districts of Innovation can gain flexibility include: school start date, minimum minutes of instruction, class size ratio, 90-percent attendance rule, teacher certification and contracts, and student discipline provision. Each district may identify different areas where their plans would take advantage of the flexibility that is available.

Requirements that Districts of Innovation cannot be exempted from are: elected Boards of Trustees, PEIMS reporting, criminal history checks, curriculum and graduation requirements, bilingual education, special education, pre-K programs, academic accountability including student assessments, financial accountability, open meetings and public records rules, and purchasing regulations.

As a District of Innovation, BISD will be able to implement the Burkburnett Independent School District Strategic Plan with the increased flexibility and the freedom necessary to personalize learning and ensure each student is prepared to assume the role as a productive citizen. The Burkburnett Independent School District Strategic Plan is focused on meeting the needs and aspirations of each student.

## II. TERM

The term of the renewal plan is for five years, beginning from the point of final board adoption (tentatively October 21, 2021) and ending five years from the date of adoption (tentatively October 21, 2026), unless terminated or amended earlier by the BISD 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. BISD will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

## III. COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by the Board's Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Core Beliefs, and Strategic Objectives and Strategies.

### Vision:

#### **Burkburnett ISD...**

Transforming learning to inspire **ALL** students in an ever changing world

### Mission:

#### **Burkburnett ISD...**

#### **WE WILL**

- Focus on purpose over programs
- Create passion for life-long learning
- Increase opportunities to maximize potential

### Beliefs:

#### **Students are our top priority.**

#### **Therefore, we believe:**

- Formal education is a beginning; a tool to be utilized as students endeavor to pursue their individual passions
- Everyone should be afforded the same educational opportunities dedicated to unlocking their unique purpose and potential
- All students can be inspired to become productive risk-takers and problem-solvers
- In attracting, retaining, developing, and empowering professionals who inspire and create a passion for lifelong learning in all students
- Education should occur in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment, conducive to learning
- Learning best occurs through effective collaboration among students, parents, guardians, educators, and the community as active, engaged participants
- Technology and next generation learning should be embraced and utilized appropriately

**Strategic Objectives:**

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1. As a learning community, we will develop and embrace a growth mindset that continuously stimulates collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication.
2. Create an environment to retain staff at all levels.
3. Transform learning spaces to optimize student learning in a safe and secure environment.
4. The district will create parent/community partnerships to promote opportunity, innovation, and growth for all learners.

## IV. INNOVATIONS

To achieve the District's Vision and Mission, to align the District's practices and operations with the District's goals and core beliefs, and to meet the Strategic Plan's goals, the District needs to have the flexibility to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels in the following areas:

### 90 Percent Attendance Rule

**Currently:**

***Sec. 25.092 MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE.***

*(a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.*

*(a-1) A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case.*

*(a-2) Subsection (a) does not apply to a student who receives credit by examination for a class as provided by Section 28.023.*

*(b) The board of trustees of each school district shall appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions for class credit or a final grade by students who are in attendance fewer than the number of days required under Subsection (a) and have not earned class credit or a final grade under Subsection (a-1). Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the membership of the committee. A committee may give class credit or a final grade to a student because of extenuating circumstances. Each board of trustees shall establish guidelines to determine what constitutes extenuating circumstances and shall adopt policies establishing alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. The alternative ways must include at least one option that does not require a student to pay a fee authorized under Section 11.158(a)(15). A certified public school employee may not be assigned additional instructional duties as a result of this section outside of the regular workday unless the employee is compensated for the duties at a reasonable rate of pay.*

*(c) A member of an attendance committee is not personally liable for any act or omission arising out of duties as a member of an attendance committee.*

*(d) If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the board of trustees. The decision of the board may be appealed by trial de novo to the district court of the county in which the school district's central administrative office is located.*

*(e) This section does not affect the provision of Section 25.087(b) regarding a student's excused absence from school to observe religious holy days.*

*(f) The availability of the option developed under Subsection (b) must be substantially the same as the availability of the educational program developed under Section 11.158(a)(15).*

State law currently requires students to attend class 90 percent of the school days the class is offered in order to earn credit or a final grade. The law currently translates into requiring the District to award class credit or a final grade to students based on "seat time" rather than on content mastery.

**Proposed:**

Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. BISD will also explore other innovative ways on a case-by-case basis to demonstrate mastery, given this exemption. This exemption supports the vision of BISD to transform learning to inspire ALL students and implement tools, resources, and training that support personalized learning for both students and teachers. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

## **Behavior Management, Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator**

**Currently:**

*Sec. 37.0012. DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR. (a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.*

*(b) The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of this subchapter.*

*(c) Except as provided by this chapter, the specific duties of the campus behavior coordinator may be established by campus or district policy. Unless otherwise provided by campus or district policy:*

*(1) a duty imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter shall be performed by the campus behavior coordinator; and*

*(2) a power granted to a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter may be exercised by the campus behavior coordinator.*

*(d) The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent or guardian as provided by this subsection if under this subchapter the student is placed into in-school or out-of-school suspension, placed in a disciplinary alternative education program, expelled, or placed in a juvenile justice alternative education program or is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer. A campus behavior coordinator must comply with this subsection by:*

*(1) promptly contacting the parent or guardian by telephone or in person; and*

*(2) making a good faith effort to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action is taken, for delivery to the student's parent or guardian.*

*(e) If a parent or guardian entitled to notice under Subsection (d) has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action is taken, a campus behavior coordinator shall mail written notice of the action to the parent or*

*guardian at the parent's or guardian's last known address.*

*(f) If a campus behavior coordinator is unable or not available to promptly provide notice under Subsection (d), the principal or other designee shall provide the notice.*

**Proposed:**

This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the District's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program in which schools provide social and emotional supports to students. By obtaining exemption from Section 37.0012, the District will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavior interventions, and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibilities toward the community. It is the intent of the District to continue with parent notification procedures as described within the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. However, the responsibility to make the parent notifications will be determined by the campus principal based on the administrator designated to handle each individual situation. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

## **Uniform School Start Date and End Date**

**Currently:**

***Sec. 25.0811. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION.*** (a) *Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.*

***Sec. 25.0812. LAST DAY OF SCHOOL.*** (a) *Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.*

**Proposed:**

The flexibility of start and end date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. The district calendar is created and approved by a district committee consisting of parents, community representatives, teachers, and administrators. The district approved calendar is then approved by the school board and distributed to the staff via email and put on the district's website. This empowers BISD to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. Exemption from the uniform start date allows for the flexibility of starting classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering elementary school, middle school, and high school. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. This will also allow for more embedded professional/staff development opportunities throughout the year. It is not the intent of the District to start the school year before the first week of August. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

## **Probationary Contracts**

**Currently:**

***Sec. 21.102. PROBATIONARY CONTRACT.*** b) *A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school*

*years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.*

**Proposed:**

Rather than being limited to only one school year on a probationary contract for experienced teachers, nurses, counselors, and other certified positions requiring Chapter 21 contracts who are new to the District but who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, BISD proposes to extend by one year the ability to place an employee on a subsequent probationary contract. Their probationary contracts may be renewed for one additional period for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of two full school years. If an employee is hired after the first day of instruction, that year will not count toward the full school year requirement. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness and provide additional professional growth opportunities as appropriate. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

## **Teacher Certifications**

**Currently:**

**Sec. 21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.** *(a) 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. {referring to Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Texas Education Code}*

**Sec. 21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES.** *(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.*

**Sec. 21.057. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.** *(a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom.*

**Proposed:**

BISD is committed to placing a life changer in every classroom and leadership position. In order to best serve BISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally based on the needs of the campus and students. All candidates will be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught. All candidates selected for employment will go through established hiring practices. The qualifications and/or certifications of applicants will be given equal consideration. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students opportunities. BISD will exercise local control and is limited to the following five areas:

**A – Industry Experts** – BISD is committed to expanding college and career opportunities for students. This commitment presents a challenge to school districts as they seek to find individuals with the education or work-related experience needed to adequately educate students

in specialized areas of instruction. An exemption from these statutes would allow the BISD Board of Trustees the ability to issue a local teaching permit and employ an individual to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations on a full or part-time basis. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credentials related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with 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.

**B – College Professors** – By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors and university professors. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses. 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 – Out of Content or Grade Level Certification** – By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to recognize certified out of content or out of grade level certifications. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The request will include the individual's credentials and consent. 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. (Special education and Bilingual/ESL teachers will continue to be SBEC certified.)

**D - Out of State Certifications** – Due to the geographic location of BISD and our connection with a military installation, exemption from existing teacher, counselor, and principal certification requirements by recognizing out of state certifications will enrich the applicant pool and provide additional opportunities for our students. (Special education and Bilingual/ESL teachers will continue to be SBEC certified.)

**E- Counselor Certification-** Due to the shortage of SBEC certified counselors, and the shortage of school counselor designated Master's Degree educator programs, the District will have the flexibility to recognize Master's Degree-educated counselors who do not have an emphasis on school counseling when making hiring decisions. BISD will establish training requirements for these individuals in order for them to gain any necessary knowledge needed to have comparable knowledge to SBEC certified counselors in the district. If a principal requests to hire a counselor without an SBEC Counselor Certification, the person must have a valid SBEC teacher certification, hold a Master's Degree in Counseling or Mental Health, and the superintendent must approve the applicant's credentials. The superintendent will approve the request if he feels the applicant will be an asset to our district counseling services and our students in BISD. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment.

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the District will ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. This would require the superintendent to certify to the Board of Trustees

that the individual has undergone a criminal history background check and is capable of proper classroom management and/or leadership training. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain classroom management training. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility. (Special education and Bilingual/ESL teachers will continue to be SBEC certified.)

## **District Improvement Team**

**Sec. 11.251. PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.** (a) *The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students.*

(b) *The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. The board shall establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, including, if practicable, at least one representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The committees shall include a business representative without regard to whether the representative resides in the district or whether the business the person represents is located in the district. The board, or the board's designee, shall periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations.*

(c) *For purposes of establishing the composition of committees under this section:*

(1) *a person who stands in parental relation to a student is considered a parent;*  
 (2) *a parent who is an employee of the school district is not considered a parent representative on the committee;*

(3) *a parent is not considered a representative of community members on the committee; and*  
 (4) *community members must reside in the district and must be at least 18 years of age.*

(d) *The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board shall ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee will be actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision-making at the district and campus levels.*

(e) *The board shall adopt a procedure, consistent with Section 21.407(a), for the professional staff in the district to nominate and elect the professional staff representatives who shall meet with the board or the board designee as required under this section. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. The remaining staff representatives shall include both campus- and district-level professional staff members. If practicable, the committee membership shall include at least one professional staff representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities. Board policy must provide procedures for:*

- (1) the selection of parents to the district-level and campus-level committees; and*
- (2) the selection of community members and business representatives to serve on the district-level committee in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity.*
- (f) The district policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district- and campus-level planning process.*

***Sec. 11.252. DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING.*** *(a) Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised*

*annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251.*

**Proposed:**

BISD is committed to collaborative decision making and the strategic planning process. Exemption from these statutes will allow the district to revise and develop the District Improvement Plan annually through the Strategic Planning Committee and District of Innovation Committee and not utilize or have a District Improvement Team. This will ensure the District Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan, and District of Innovation Plan serve as the foundation for the District moving forward. It is the intent of the District to utilize the Strategic Planning Committee to annually review the plans. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

**V. IMPLEMENTATION**

This District of 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 departments. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements to meet the growing and changing needs of each individual student.