

# Jonesboro ISD

## District of Innovation

### **Introduction**

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation, which would allow them to obtain flexibilities with certain provisions of the Texas Education code, most of which are available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools. Jonesboro ISD is exercising this opportunity of becoming a District of Innovation to obtain more flexibility in order to better meet the unique needs of our district, students and community.

### **Committee Members:**

Matt Dossey-Superintendent

Kendra Gustin-Principal

Matt Massingill – Assistant Principal

Joe Foote-School Board Member

Bobby Buster-School Board Member

Ramey Barnett-Counselor

Chris Ashby-CATE Teacher

Chris Simon- SpEd Teacher

Nathan Kuehler-Teacher

Whitney Buster-Paraprofessional

JC Buster – Chief of Police/Parent

Emily Dossey- Parent

Ashley Suggs-Parent

### **Timeline:**

July 18, 2023-DOI Team met at 12:00 PM in JISD Library to formulate DOI Plan.

July 18, 2023 -DOI Plan posted on JISD Website, Commissioner of Education is notified of intention to vote on proposed plan, District Advisory Committee sets date for public meeting to vote on plan presented (July 18, 2023 at 2 PM)

August 15, 2023-JISD Board approves final plan by 2/3 vote

**Plan goes into effect for 5 years**

**Kindergarten-4th grade Class Size (TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL):**

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. TEC 25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

Benefit: Allows JISD the flexibility to address the issue locally, if a class size grows beyond the 22 to 1 ratio, without having to file a waiver with the Commissioner.

**School start date (TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)**

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Benefit: Allows JISD the flexibility to adjust the start date to equalize the number of days from the first semester to the second semester. Currently, there is an 18-day difference between Semesters. Also, it could allow for significant calendar adjustment flexibility.

**Length of School Day (TEC §25.082a) (SAAH 3.8.1)**

TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions. SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement. The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.

Benefit: JISD would have local flexibility with school day length without TEA approval. Example: Hosting JH UIL or other event, bad weather day, electrical outage, etc... We would still be required a set amount of minutes through the year but can adjust it locally as needed.

**Certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)**

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan 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.

Benefit: JISD would be allowed to locally control an extenuating circumstance where an employee is needed, who may not be certified, but has experience in a needed area. Example: Nurse or Career and Tech.

### **Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)**

Currently State law states that 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 two years 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.

Benefit: By extending probationary contracts to 2 years for those employees with 5 to 8 years' experience, this would allow JISD the opportunity to evaluate teacher effectiveness and growth for an additional year which may be needed in some cases. This would be utilized only on an as needed basis.

### **90% Attendance Rule (TEC 25.092)**

State law mandates students may not receive credit for a class unless the student is in attendance 90% of the days the class is offered. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75% and less than 90% and completes required course work, campus administrators may award credit.

Benefit: The 90% rule in most cases is an accurate percent. However, if JISD would like to implement a student work program, off-campus dual credit, service learning opportunities, or other beneficial academic activities for students, under current law, we would need exemption from the 90% rule.

### **School District Depositories Contract (TEC Subchapter G. 45.205, 45.206, 45.207)**

Currently State Law states with regards to Bank Depository Contracts: TERM OF CONTRACT. (A) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. (B) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year-terms. An extension

under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. (C) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Jonesboro ISD will be exempt from the contract requirements for a bank depository contract.

Benefit: By gaining exemption from these statutes, Jonesboro ISD would be able to allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 8 year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is/ are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district's business. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter their direct deposit instructions and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationship