

# Gold-Burg Independent School District

## District of Innovation Plan

Utilizing HB 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, Gold-Burg ISD will gain more local control in several areas outlined in this plan. HB 1842 allows traditional public schools to have some of the same flexibility that public open enrollment charter schools have through local decision-making. Gold-Burg ISD will use this opportunity to design plans based on the needs of our students and community.

The GBISD District of Innovation plan will span five years, beginning July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2023. The plan may be amended at any time as recommended by the committee and approved by the GBISD Board of Trustees.

The District of Innovation Committee includes the following:

Roger Ellis, Superintendent  
Lou Ann Shipley, Front Office  
Kim Williams, Principal  
Charlotte Haley, Teacher  
Jalaina Garcia, Teacher  
Randy Offield, Teacher  
Leah Mervyn, Parent  
Marilyn Clark, Parent

The District of Innovation Plan provides an avenue for the Gold-Burg ISD to make decisions in certain areas that will ultimately have a positive and lasting effect on the students and serve the best interests of the community.

Areas addressed in the plan on the following pages include:

- I. **Educator Certification**
- II. **Teacher Contracts**
- III. **First and Last Day of School**
- IV. **Transfer Students**
- V. **Length of School Day**

## **Gold-Burg ISD DOI Timeline**

### **Monday, November 13, 2017, Library**

- ✓ 7:00pm Board Meeting
- ✓ Board of Trustees consider resolution to hold a public meeting to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to develop a District of Innovation plan
  
- 7:10pm Public Hearing
- ✓ Public hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation
  
- 7:30pm Regular Board Meeting
- ✓ Consider the pursuit of a District of Innovation plan
- ✓ Name the District of Innovation plan committee

### **Monday, December 18, 2017, Library**

- ✓ 3:30pm, Initial meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

### **Thursday, January 18, 2018, Library**

- ✓ 3:30pm, 2nd meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

### **Monday, January 22, 2018, Library**

- 7:00pm, Regular Board Meeting
- ✓ Announce posting and discuss District of Innovation plan

### **Tuesday, January 23, 2018 – February 22, 2018**

- ✓ 8:00am, Post the District of Innovation plan on district website (minimum 30 days)

### **Thursday, February 22, 2018, Library**

- 3:30pm, 3rd meeting of the DOI Committee including Public Meeting on DOI plan
- 4:00pm, District Site Base Committee Meeting

### **Thursday, February 22, 2018, Library**

- 7:00pm, Regular Board Meeting
- Consider action on the District of Innovation plan

### **Friday, February 23, 2018**

- Notification to Commissioner of Education by letter

# Gold-Burg ISD's DOI Plan

## I. Educator Certification

(TEC 21.002, TEC 21.003, TEC 21.053, TEC 21.057, DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)

### Challenge #1

Gold-Burg ISD works to deliver scheduling and course offerings that provide variety as well as college and career preparation. In doing so, as a small district, there are struggles with budgetary limitations and locating educators who are certified in enough areas to provide the variety of course offerings our students deserve.

### TEC Code Implications

TEC 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

### Innovative Strategy

Decisions of certification will be handled locally. For grades 6-12, in all subjects except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for a local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. For non-Career and Technology (CTE) courses, the standard by which subjects are considered "related" to the teachers' field of certification are outlined below. This list is taken from Federal law that was enacted by NCLB.

Related Field Standard:

- **English** – Reading, Speech, Journalism, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in English
- **Reading/Language Arts** – English, Speech, and Journalism
- **History** – Geography, Government, Economics, Political Science, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in History.
- **Economics** – Government, History, Geography, Political Science, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in Economics.
- **Geography** – History, Economics, Government, Political Science, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in Geography.
- **Civics and Government** – History, Economics, Geography, Political Science, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in Civics or Government.
- **Science** – Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Biology, Earth Science, Life/Earth Science, Physics, Chemistry, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in Science.
- **Arts** – Art, Music, Theatre Arts, Dance, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit in Fine Arts.
- **Mathematics** – Engineering, Statistics, Accounting, and any other course accepted by SBOE for graduation credit.

### Challenge #2

A large number of individuals experienced in CTE areas have the knowledge and experience to teach high school students in particular trades. However, it is often difficult to find these individuals who are also certified educators. Gold-Burg ISD desires to offer a variety of opportunities for students to gain career ready skills through Career and Technical Education course work leading to certifications and employment.

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEM) courses.

The district will establish local qualification requirements for CTE and STEM courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. Flexibility to establish its own CTE and STEM certification requirements affords the district the following advantages: 1) Industry professionals to teach specialized courses, 2) Greater number of CTE and STEM course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students, 3) Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching, and 4) Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach CTE and STEM courses. Individuals seeking local certification in CTE and/or STEM subject areas will be required to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in the subject areas of interest. Knowledge and proficiency may be demonstrated by documenting industry/professional certifications and/or successful industry work experience.

The principal will specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses that would qualify the individual to teach the proposed subject. The superintendent will act on each request and report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the approved assignment.

### **Innovation Strategies**

- Recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience.
- Allow consideration of part-time professionals to teach courses – specifically trade professionals the ability to teach related courses to their field.
- The superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The superintendent will notify the school board.
- Allow experienced teachers to pick up an elective in an area they are qualified to teach. The principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified.

Gold-Burg ISD will exhaust all available means to hire a certified teacher first.

### **Activities for Success**

To assist the teacher that holds the enacted local certificate, lesson plans for the uncertified teacher will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field, whenever possible. Said teachers will have access to Education Service Center Curriculum Specialist for planning assistance. The educators holding local certifications will also be encouraged and offered opportunities to network with teachers in other districts for the purpose of planning.

Locally certified CTE and STEM teachers, who are otherwise not certified teachers, will be provided training in instructional delivery methods, classroom management, meeting the needs of special needs students, lesson planning, and understanding the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Non-Certified instructors may be hired as “at will” employees.

## **II. Teacher Contracts**

(TEC 21.102(b), DCA LEGAL)

### **Challenge**

Teacher quality is a direct reflection of student success. Student performance on required assessments is not always available until after the district makes recommendations for teacher contract renewals. The law, TEC 21.102(b), does not allow sufficient time to evaluate a teacher’s effectiveness as related to student outcomes on state assessments.

### **TEC Code Implications**

TEC 21.102(b) specifies that an experienced teacher new to a district cannot have a probationary contract period that exceeds one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. In TEC Subchapter C Probationary Contracts, Section 21.101, “teacher” is defined as a “principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other

full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under Subchapter B, or a nurse.”

### **Innovative Strategy**

Gold-Burg ISD will offer one year probationary contracts for up to two years for experienced teachers, new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the last eight years. Most commonly for Gold-Burg ISD, “teachers” will encompass the positions of principal, classroom teacher, school counselor, and school nurse.

### **Activities for Success**

Gold-Burg ISD will notify educators new to the district, with experience as described above, that they will be on a probationary contract for up to two years. They will be aware that student performance will be reviewed when the Board of Trustees is considering contract renewals. Supervisors will have the option to request the “experienced teacher” be offered a term contract after only one year on a probationary contract.

## **III. First and Last Day of School**

(TEC 25.0811, EB LEGAL)

### **Challenge**

Gold-Burg ISD allows the District Site Based Decision Making Committee to make suggestions for planning the annual school calendar and recommendations for calendar choices on which the district staff votes. Historically, the preference has been for the calendar to be set for the first semester to be completed prior to the Christmas break. It is desirable for the fall and spring semesters to be as equal in length as possible, allowing semester-long or one-half credit courses to have ample time for students to master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Without the ability to start school earlier than allowable by law, the public school year often overlaps with the beginning of the college summer session. Students desiring to enroll in summer college courses, which begin in early June, would have that ability. Maximizing instructional time prior to state assessments, allocating time for appropriate planning, and managing student focus and behavior are each affected by the school calendar.

### **TEC Code Implications**

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. The TEC allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Site Based Decision Making Committee and local Board of Trustees, both comprised of local citizens and representing the interests of the community.

### **Innovation Strategy**

Gold-Burg ISD, with input from the Site Based Decision Making Committee and approval of the Board of Trustees, will set the school start date in a manner that is considered best for students and preferred by stakeholders, with a starting date no earlier than the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August.

As long as the state requires a defined number of minutes of instruction for the year, Gold-Burg ISD will measure the daily instructional time from the first bell to the last bell, which is currently 455 minutes during a full day and 290 minutes per day on early release days.

### **Activities for Success**

The following will be considered annually when setting the school calendar: aligning the start date with community and parent needs, increasing student attendance, balancing instructional time between the semesters, maximizing instructional time prior to state assessments, aligning with college semesters, and meeting community needs and wishes.

## **IV. Transfer Students**

Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

### **Innovation Strategies:**

Gold-Burg ISD maintains a transfer 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 disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the 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 applications for the following circumstances:

- Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion;
- Unacceptable academic performance; Students must maintain a passing average of 70 in each class.
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard.

## **V. Length of School Day**

Currently 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", totaling 75,600 minutes for the year.

### **Innovation Strategies:**

Gold-Burg ISD would like to be exempt from the 420 minute day requirement and have the flexibility to alter the length of the school day on selected days whenever it is determined to be necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders.

- The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide our campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers in our district.
- This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
- This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current waiver system.