



Spring Hill ISD  
District of Innovation Plan  
2017

## **District of Innovation Overview:**

The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open enrollment charter schools.

### **Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:**

**Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.

**Customization:** Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g., only high schools), grade level, or a single campus.

**Autonomy:** Districts must submit a District of Innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

**Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:

- School start date
- 90% attendance rule
- Class-size ratios
- Site-based decision-making processes
- Certain student discipline provisions
- Use of planning and preparation periods
- Teacher appraisal requirements

## **SHISD District of Innovation (DOI) Timeline:**

### **September 2016**

- Administration begins exploration of SHISD becoming a District of Innovation

### **November 2016**

- Presentations to the Spring Hill Board of Trustees at the November 28, 2016 board meeting
- Board of Trustees approves resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation pursuant to HB 1842 [TEC § 12A.001(c)(1)]
- District Site Based Committee – Discussed the DOI process

### **January 2017**

- District of Innovation Committee Meeting #1 open to public
- January 16, 2017 Board Meeting: Public Hearing to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for designation of the District as a District of Innovation [TEC §§ 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003]
- Board approval to pursue the designation of District of Innovation, and Board appoints Innovation Plan Committee [TEC §§ 12A.002(b)(2)]
- Board of Trustees approves the District of Innovation Committee

### **February 2017**

- February 20, 2017 District of Innovation Committee Meeting #2 open to public

### **March 2017**

- DOI Update at March 20, 2017 Board Meeting

### **April 2017**

- April 7, 2017 District of Innovation Committee Meeting #3 – John Grubbs facilitator
- April 12, 2017 District of Innovation Committee Meeting #4 – Final draft of plan
- April 17, 2017 Present final draft to Board of Trustees for approval
- Pending Approval, April 18, 2017 SHISD District of Innovation Plan posted to District website [TEC § 12A.005(a)(1)]; notice to Commissioner of intention to vote on local innovation plan in May sent [TEC § 12A.005(a)(2)]

### **May 2017**

- Board meeting-review board policies that would be impacted by DOI plan
- DOI Committee will host a public meeting to consider the final version for the proposed DOI plan for SHISD [TEC § 12A.005(a)(3)]
- Site Based Committee needs to approve DOI plan by majority vote [TEC § 12A.005(a)(3)]

## District of Innovation Committee Members

Janet Albright	Administration - Director of Food Service
Susan Baker	Junior High Teacher
Larry Baker	Community Member
Susan Bilnoski	Intermediate Teacher
Renee Chapman	Primary Teacher
Francine Colbert	Primary - Community Member, Classroom Aide, Parent
Amy Doron	Intermediate Principal
Torrie Fiscus	Primary Teacher
Penny Fleet	Administration - Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Melissa Haney	Junior High Teacher
Becky Jones	Junior High / High School Librarian
Jami Jones	Primary Teacher
Laura Jordan	High School Teacher
John Kachmar	District Technology Director
Wendy Kaufman	High School Teacher
David Lynch	Junior High Assistant Principal
Michelle Malloy	Primary / Intermediate Instructional Technologist
Chenena Martin	Administration – PEIMS Coordinator
Amy McFatrige	High School Teacher
Natalie Mercer	Intermediate Assistant Principal
Billy Miller	District Maintenance Director
Dana Robertson	Administration - District Testing Coordinator
Becky Smith	High School Teacher
Steven Snell	Administration - Superintendent
Deanna Turner	Primary Principal
Cara Whedbee	Parent
Tony White	Transportation Director / Secondary Instructional Technologist
Jennifer White	High School Teacher
Rianna Williams	Primary Assistant Principal
Annette Wolverton	Junior High Receptionist

## **District of Innovation Plan:**

**SPRING HILL VISION:** Our vision is to be a premier school district focused on engaged learning and student success.

**SPRING HILL MISSION:** As the center of our community, Spring Hill ISD is committed to the fulfillment of each learner's intellectual, creative and physical potential through the collaborative efforts of exceptional educators, dedicated parents and integrated rigorous instruction provided in a safe environment.

### **Board Goals Connected to DOI:**

- **Goal 2** Attract and retain the best possible employees and celebrate their accomplishments and effort.
- **Goal 3** Enhance and support a culture of high expectations for all students, faculty, and staff that produces measurable increases in student performance.
- **Goal 4** Highlight the positives of the district to unify all stakeholders and celebrate SHISD students and successes.
- **Goal 5** Pursue a forward thinking, creative vision for student success with an emphasis on offering courses in each endorsement pathway that benefits the students of SHISD.
- **Goal 6** Provide excellent athletic, fine arts, and extra curriculum programs to afford a maximum number of students with an opportunity for a great experience.

The Spring Hill Independent School District recognizes that we are a district with high academic expectations. Although historically, Spring Hill shows academic progress and success, we are not satisfied with the status quo. We are constantly researching ways to remain the premier school district and stay on the cutting edge of academic excellence and opportunities.

Changes in student demographics and shifting pedagogical frameworks require a paradigm shift for all school districts across Texas and across our country. As an organization, we must all confront areas in which we can grow so that we may better serve our students. We must also model collaboration with our school community and demonstrate actions for what it means to be ambitious.

The District of Innovation designation serves as a rallying call for our community to have freedom to exercise local control over the decision-making process and policies that govern us. Spring Hill is a proud school district with a long standing tradition that has been in place for over 100 years. Our work will require SHISD to evolve, to think differently about critical systemic components, how we evaluate our staff, how we spend our time with students and staff, how we recruit and retain top talent, and how we grow continually as a learning organization. To think differently, we must respond differently.

Leveraging the freedom and flexibility afforded as a District of Innovation will assure we are empowered to do so.

## **Exemption: School Calendar**

***Exemption from:*** TEC § TEC 25.0811 (1st Day of Instruction)

***Related Board Policies:*** EB (Legal) school year, EB (Local) school day

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the District:*** The Texas Education Code requires that students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin school earlier.

### ***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:***

The waiver process was eliminated several years ago, mandating that all schools begin school no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. This requirement inhibits the District's flexibility to develop a calendar that best meets students', staff, and community needs. Research has found that a catalyst to accelerating student learning and improving teacher practice is allowing for structured time for educators to prepare, lesson plan, and receive professional development. Other benefits of this flexibility include having balanced semesters that allow for finals prior to the Christmas break and for the completion of the K-12 school year that allows high school students the ability to attend summer college courses.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** The school calendar will be designed so that the semesters are balanced, with the first semester ending at Christmas break. The school calendar will allow for timely and meaningful staff development. Before the school year begins, teachers will have ample professional development and teacher preparation and planning time. The calendar will provide for designated time after the first quarter for professional development and possible flex time to make up for professional development attended during the summer months and /or Saturday professional development.

## **Exemption: Teacher Certification**

***Exemption from:*** TEC §§ 21.003 (Certification Requirements), 21.051 (Rules regarding field-based experience), 21.053 (Presentation of certificates), 21.057 (Parent Notification)

***Related Board Policies:*** DBA (Legal), DK (Legal), DK (Local), DK (Exhibit)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** Current statute requires that all teachers be fully certified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), regardless of previous work experience and/or demonstrated knowledge and skills in their area of specialty. Although, it is possible to seek an emergency certificate, certification is dependent upon TEA approving the request. This process is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

- TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.
- TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

SHISD needs the ability to make a local decision regarding who is best-suited to teach our children. While the District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and make attempts to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question, when that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. SHISD needs flexibility in order to hire for "hard to fill" positions at all levels, PreK-12. SHISD aspires to continue growing programs offering students career and technology industry certifications. In order to position our students for the most opportunities, at times, it may be appropriate to be flexible with teaching candidates who possess the knowledge and skills that would benefit the students of SHISD, but who do not possess a Texas teaching certification.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** SHISD is seeking flexibility with certification requirements for all courses excluding core courses, i.e.: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. To bolster classroom management skills of non-SBEC certified teachers, SHISD shall implement a mentorship and intensive training program for all new hires lacking SBEC certification that must be no less than one year in length. New hires must have proper industry certification or comparable industry experience. Administration/hiring panels may determine what level of education, certification, or industry experience must be present.

***Note:*** Special Education and bilingual teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

## **Exemption: Teacher and Principal Evaluations**

***Exemption from:*** TEC §§ 21.352 (local role), 21.354 (administrator appraisals), 21.3541

***Related Board Policies:*** DNA (Legal), DNA (Local), DNB (Legal), DNB (Local)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** SHISD believes that all staff members can and must continually improve in their role of supporting student achievement. In fact, SHISD goal #3 states that we *enhance and support a culture of high expectations for all students, faculty, and staff that produces measurable increases in student performance*. Teachers and principals should be evaluated fairly and assessed on the entire scope of their job functions.

While student learning is the ultimate measure of teacher and principal effectiveness, multiple metrics should be utilized. We believe that our current state-required evaluation tool, T-TESS, places too heavy an emphasis on STAAR scores. We are equally concerned that our current systems will require the district to give additional assessments in subject areas that do not have a STAAR test simply for the sake of testing to use on a teacher's evaluation. Further, evaluations should target progress made on reaching local goals and aspirations identified by individual faculty.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** SHISD intends to use the T-TESS and T-PESS for the 2017-2018 school year, removing the portion of the evaluation related to only using STAAR scores and/or STAAR growth to rate the teacher's role in student achievement. In subsequent school years, a new appraisal systems may be developed by a committee consisting of but not limited to teachers and administrators.



## **Exemption: Miscellaneous**

***Exemption from:*** TEC §§ 21.352, 21.354, 21.3541

***Related Board Policies:*** DNA (Legal), DNA (Local), DNB (Legal), DNB (Local)

***Exemption from:*** Spring Hill ISD seeks exemption from all permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed by HB 1842, 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, excluding TEC 25.112 and TEC 25.113, regarding maximum class size.

***Related Board Policies:*** All SHISD Legal and Local Board Policies, excluding those policies which specifically address the provision of the Texas Education Code for which a District of Innovation Plan may not provide for an exemption under § 12A.004(a).

***Manner in which statutes inhibit the goals of the plan:*** It is in the best interest of Spring Hill ISD to maximize our adaptability in meeting the needs of our ever-changing demographics. In order to adapt in a timely manner, we also need the flexibility to minimize barriers that preclude us from the necessary adaptations. The provisions of the Texas Education Code, which the Texas Legislature considered and did not limit for exemption, all place additional burdens on SHISD and prevent quick adaptation by the District to implement the District's goals.

Requesting full local control by relieving the District from the encumbrances of all permissible statutes, places the responsibility for improvements into the hands and minds of our local educators and community members. Indeed, these stakeholders have the most to gain from our improvement efforts as they pinpoint and strategically act upon the immediate needs of our students each and every year. SHISD will phase in implementation of the Local Innovation Plan, beginning with exemption from TEC §§ 21.352, 21.354, 21.3541, 25.0811, 21.053, 21.057, and 21.003, as discussed above.

***Local Guidelines and Innovation Strategies:*** SHISD will phase in implementation of the Local Innovation Plan, beginning with specific exemptions addressed in this plan above, i.e., TEC §§ 21.352 (local role regarding appraisals), 21.3541 (appraisal and professional development system for principals), 25.0811 (first day of instruction), and 21.003 (certification).

SHISD will implement an enhanced local policy development process that is rigorous, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholder input when seeking any further exemptions and changes to the District of Innovation Plan. The process for approving future changes to the District of Innovation Plan shall include a committee made up of teachers, district staff, and community members. Any new changes would be presented by this committee, to the Site-Based Committee and then to the Board of Trustees. Future policy changes that require an exemption from a provision in the Texas Education Code must be approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the membership of the Board of Trustees.

Once District of Innovation status is achieved, SHISD will voluntarily continue to comply with all current provisions of the Texas Education Code and related regulations, as well as all current District legal and local policies that are not specifically addressed in this plan. Unless and until the SHISD Board of Trustees takes action to enact a particular exemption from the Texas Education Code and related regulations, there will be no change in the District's compliance with state laws and local policies. If and when, during implementation of this Local Innovation Plan, the Board of Trustees takes action to activate an exemption under HB 1842, the fact that SHISD is enacting an exemption as a District of Innovation will be clearly noted in the legal and local policies affected. A list or index of exemptions enacted as a District of Innovation will be kept in Policy AF (LOCAL) – INNOVATION DISTRICTS.

## Appendix 1: Minutes from DOI Meeting #1

### Parameters Chosen

- **Attendance 90%** (\*\*Dots: 3 green, 1 pink, 1 orange)
    - Address kids missing school
  - **Class size** (\*\*Dots: 1 green, 7 pink, 2 orange)
    - Avoid overloading classes to save money
  - **Teachers**
    - Contracts (\*\*Dots: 0 green, 4 pink, 4 orange)
      - Teacher protections via contract
      - How might this affect contracts?
      - Eliminate...become at-will employees?
    - Benefits (\*\*Dots: 0 green, 0 pink, 7 orange)
      - How might benefits be affected?
      - Will we become responsible locally especially regarding health insurance?
    - Appraisal system (\*\*Dots: 12 green, 0 pink, 0 orange)
  - **Teacher certification - secondary** (\*\*Dots: 1 green, 0 pink, 6 orange)
    - Offer new electives and not have to hire certified teachers
  - **Calendar** (\*\*Dots: 5 green, 0 pink, 1 orange)
    - Flexible
    - Start date
    - Minutes of instruction
    - Week off in the fall
    - Parent / teacher conference day
    - Adjust school day for special events
- \*\*Dots:**
- *Green = interested*
  - *Pink = not interested*
  - *Orange = have questions*
- **Innovative curriculum, programs, and instructional practices (see below)**

### High School Area of focus (What if...)

- AP environmental science
- Service hour for graduation
- Improve welding facilities
- Computer science class
- Change classroom furniture and redesign normal classroom in SH
- ACT, PSAT, SAT, prep class, TSI (district pays for college entrance exams)
- More focus on dual credit (district pays for courses and textbooks)
- AP Psychology
- Flexible schedule for special events
- AP Chemistry
- Business English class for seniors
- Chromebooks in every class
- American sign language
- More CTE offerings (welding, electrical, automotive, construction, ag)
- TV, Radio, Media Packages

### Technology (What if...)

- Tech labs in each campus
- Chromebook for each secondary student
- Model Google school
- Bus wifi
- Touchscreen monitors in each classroom

### **Jr. High School Area of focus (What if...)**

- More field trips
- Take students to visit colleges
- Assemblies
- 1:1 Chromebooks
- More Google training on Google classrooms
- Digital textbooks
- Bathroom facility on math end
- Picnic tables for kids to eat outside
- More teachers
- More aides
- More bus routes and drivers
- Improved Wi-Fi
- Provide internet access to students at home
- Bring in retired teachers/military
- Facelift, no paneling
- Job exploration with real business people
- More electives drama, home ec, welding
- Contest with science tech and art robotics
- New carpet new paint
- New desks or small tables
- Big TV in cafeteria with news and updates
- Mini-mester electives
- Small group counseling
- Better scheduling
- Make space in library, remodel, update
- Online classes
- A large place for students to be addressed in an auditorium type setting more conducive to speakers

### **Intermediate (what if....)**

- Spanish instruction/ Art
- Science lab with full time teacher
- Flexible seating
- Foreign languages
- Interactive touchscreens for teachers
- Indoor playground
- Cafeteria style seating
- iPads for students
- Larger classrooms, more space

### **Primary (what if...)**

- Spanish or other foreign language
- Transitional classes for kids that need it, not retain (kinder-1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Flexible seating
- More time and opportunities for parent involvement
- Google campus
- Outdoor classroom
- Study hall
- Study lab
- Tech in the hands of each child
- Technology lab
- Science lab
- Integrated learning
- More fine arts
- Clubs or organizations

## Community Members to Solicit for Input

- Kristen Croom
- Kim Droege
- David Moore
- Aaron McFatridge
- Bodenheimer
- Brookshire's
- Hometown Hardware
- Jay Dean
- Forestry Service
- LeTourneau
- Joyce Crane
- Carmela Davis
- John Merkel
- Neal McCoy
- Mindy Scott
- Wayne Noon
- Jeff Ramsey
- Walmart
- Spring Hill Bank
- ETPCU
- Home Depot
- Lowe's
- Target
- Andy Mack
- Eastman
- Junior League (Natalie Lynch)
- Eagle Scouts
- Janet Rowan
- Bowles
- La Tech
- Eric Joseph
- Fred Hakim
- David Magee
- Richard Manley
- Randy Akin
- Tim Womack
- David wright
- Gary Lawrence
- Ronnie McKinney
- Troy Dasonville
- Capacity
- Master of Audio Visual

## Appendix 2: Minutes from DOI Meeting #2

### FEBRUARY 20, 2017

The following committees were formed

1. Calendar Committee
2. Education Committee
3. Human Resources Committee

The **Calendar Committee** consists of:

- Annette Wolverson Junior High
- Susan Baker Junior High
- Torrie Fiscus Primary
- Renee Chapman Primary
- Deanna Turner Primary
- Dana Robertson Administration
- Tony White Technology / Transportation
- Janet Albright Food Service
- Chenena Martin Administration
- Amy McFatridge High School
- Amy Doron Intermediate
- Cara Whedbee Community

This Committee was led by Penny Fleet. They discussed the prospective calendar for the **2017-18** school year. Items discussed were:

- Beginning Date
- Ending Date
- # of days teachers required to work == > 187 days
- HB2610 requirement of # minutes required for student instruction
  - 75,600 minutes / year
  - 420 minutes / day == > 7 hour day
- Bank of minutes and waiver days

Committee members made suggestions and provided feedback for consideration. Some of the suggestions were:

- Beginning school year on a partial week rather than a full week
- Christmas break days off since Christmas day falls on a Monday
- Teacher Work day before students come back after Christmas holiday break
- Last day of school prior to graduation day – w/ teacher work day on Graduation day
- Short Fall semester break (October)

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Tony White and Penny Fleet reviewed the suggestions after the meeting and prepared 4 samples to be presented for review and consideration by committee.

A final calendar to be agreed upon at a later date.

**The Education Committee consists of:**

- Michelle Malloy District
- Becky Smith High School
- Jami Jones Primary
- Jennifer White High School
- Natalie Mercer Intermediate
- Wendy Kaufman High School

This committee met and discussed areas to address at each campus.

Primary areas to address

- Transitional classes – These classes would be created in order to refrain from retaining students in kindergarten and first grade. In place of retaining, these students would be placed in transitional classes for the first semester of the following year. Students would receive instruction on a lower level than the customary first or second grade classrooms and would have smaller number of students in each classroom.  
Primary also wanted to add beginner foundational Spanish classes, focusing on vocabulary.

Intermediate would like to add:

- Additional science teachers for grades 3 and 4
- Art class
- Leveled classes
- Computer classes / Google
- Beginner Spanish classes

Junior High would like to add the following electives for 6<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Art
- Home economics
- Robotics
- Computer
- Media
- Study skills

High School would like to add the following:

- Test prep classes
- Dual credit / AP (Environmental science, psychology, chemistry)
- Increase amount of local credit
- American Sign Language
- Distance learning
- Alternative high school

**The Human Resources Committee consists of:**

- Becky Jones Junior High / High School
- Melissa Haney Junior High
- Larry Baker Community
- Susan Bilnoski Intermediate
- Laura Jordan High School
- Francine Colbert Intermediate / Community

This committee focused on teacher contracts, highly qualified teachers and employee benefits. Recommendation was to issue full-time teachers a contract. At-will employees would be for administration consideration and up to principals on each campus. Recommendation was for the district to define highly qualified by job experience and not just certifications. (To be defined by Spring Hill ISD profile of educators)

Recommendation was that teachers are paid for days they do not use to avoid students being caught at the end of a retiree's tenure with the teacher leaving those students multiple days a week with a substitute.

## **Appendix 3: Minutes from DOI Meeting #3**

### **Change and Innovation Workshop**

The Spring Hill ISD District of Innovation committee met on Friday, April 7, 2017 from 8:30am – 3:00pm in the high school library. The meeting was led by John Grubbs with GCI.

The notes below are from group activities that were part of the training.

1. What do you think Spring Hill ISD's values are?
  - Students first
  - Goal oriented (students)
  - Creativity
  - Committed
  - Positive
  - Risk taking
  - Open-minded
  - Team player
  - Open communication (SHISD buy in)
  - Loyal to process
  - Follow through
2. What are the characteristics of the best schools in Texas?
  - Equip them with tools to help them be better citizens
  - By providing opportunities for all academic levels and interests
  - Student focused at all times
  - Top team for outstanding leadership and clear information / expectations and unwavering commitment stability / productivity and success for all students
  - Make coming to school fun and productive
3. If we say 100% of students attend college, what does that mean to you?
  - Forced into one plan
  - We get to put a check in the box
  - Students were motivated to have post-secondary (life) plan
  - Great goal
  - We aren't considering the giftedness of some that may not be academic
4. What are the characteristics of an ideal classroom?
  - Curriculum that transfers to the workforce
  - Applying and solving real world problems
  - Interactive
  - Prepares students for their future
  - Engaged and productive

5. What is the relationship between Spring Hill ISD and local businesses?
  - They help us get students workforce ready
  - Job fair – ways to earn a living
  - More money for innovative programs
  - Partnerships for CTE (resources, internships and instructors)
  - Expectations for future employees (partnerships)
  
6. What are Spring Hill ISD's BHAGs (Big Hairy Aspiring Goals)?
  - Break out of silos and have district unity
  - Place you don't want to leave
  - Parents, students, and teachers educated for a real world with a diverse educational experience
  - Alternative learning academy
  - Allure and retain quality teachers
  - Create environment where all students are engaged, productive, fee valued, successful and graduate on a post-secondary plan
  
7. How do you think Spring Hill ISD could show appreciation to their teachers?
  - Increase salaries and pats on the back (example: 2015 teacher pay - \$50K other North Texas schools and Spring Hill starting pay is \$31,436)
  - Positive feedback / communication
  - Prioritize time
  - Ask for our opinions and value them
  - Trust me to do my job
  - Support us with discipline
  - Sincere notes of appreciation
  
8. What are some innovative strategies?
  - Spanish instruction early
  - Formal art early
  - Student recruitment video
  - More family activity - Family modeling – reading
  - Transition classes
  - Enrichment for average students
  - Stem tech room
  - Partnership with tech / vocation
  - Scout great teachers
  - Actual counselors
  - Inside classroom
  - More elective choices
  - More comfortable settings
  - Flexible school setting
  - More flipped classroom
  - Positive customer service
  - School (inside) alternative
  - Restructure on college model
  - Restructure class experience
  - Maker space



9. Questions?

- How do we communicate
- Becky to P/R
- Break down walls

**Sherwood's Role Re-negotiation Model**  
Remember "Fuzzy Expectations equals Fuzzy Commitment"

