District of Innovation Plan
2017-2018 to 2021-2022
Buffalo ISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community.

**District of Innovation Committee Members**

- Board Member: Jennifer Humphries
- Superintendent of Schools: Lacy Freeman
- Assistant Superintendent of School: Dr. Georgeanna Adams-Molina
- Business Manager: Courtney Rodell
- Athletic Director: Gary Grubbs
- Technology Director: Terri Frazee
- High School Principal: Tracy Gleghorn
- High School Assistant Principal: Jozette Jenkins
- High School Counselor: Debbie Read
- Junior High School Principal: Greg Kennedy
- Junior High Assistant Principal: Susan Shelton
- Junior High Academic Coordinator: Dana Morris
- Elementary School Principal: Lisa Boudiette
- Elementary School Academic Coordinator: Karey Reeder
- Elementary Teacher: Carla Henson
- Junior High Teacher: Daniel Roberts
- Junior High Teacher: Ruth Rodell
- Junior High Teacher: Gloria Roberts
- Junior High Teacher: Trena Bing
- Junior High Teacher: Teresa MacNabb
- Junior High Teacher: Nan Grisham
- Junior High Teacher: Leslie Mormon
- High School Teacher: Melonee Menefee
- High School Teacher: Jill Henson
- Community Member: Ken Jones
- Community Member: Gary Danford
- Business Representative: Dianne Ryder
The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort...
to transform systemic improvement to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members, Buffalo ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders. A resolution to hold a Public Hearing to initiate the process of Buffalo ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 14, 2016. The Public Hearing was held on December 12, 2016 followed by the Board of Trustees approving a resolution to establish a District of Innovation Team (DIT). The District of Innovation Team is charged with crafting a cohesive local innovative plan to improve the outcomes of all stakeholders. The DIT met on December 13, 2016 to discuss and craft the plan.

The District of Innovation Plan is for five years yet may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The DIT will monitor the effectiveness of the DOI plan and provide updates and/or necessary modifications to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

**Goal 1:** The Buffalo ISD Board of Trustees and Buffalo ISD Administration will make governance decisions based on the unique needs of the district’s students and community.

1.1 School Start Date (TEC §25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

*Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan*

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. 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 4th Monday, with no exceptions. 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.

**Innovation Strategies**

Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year, the 3rd Monday in August, will:

A. Enable the District to balance the amount of instructional time in each grading period, which will allow students more time to accumulate test and assignment grades

B. Enable the District to balance the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break

C. Enable teachers to invest more instructional time with students prior to high-stakes STAAR & EOC State assessments

D. Enable the District to begin Summer School intervention earlier for students who need to retest in SSI grades or retest in EOC assessments for graduation purposes
**Goal 2:** The Buffalo ISD Board of Trustees and Buffalo ISD Administration will make teacher certification decisions based on district qualifications that meet the unique needs of the district’s students and community.

Teacher certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DK LEGAL)

*Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan*

TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate 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. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

By claiming exemption from TEC §21.003(a), the district shall have the right to recruit individuals from certain trades, industries, and vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience and consider qualifications based on experience, industry certification, etc. District leadership including the superintendent, principals, CTE administrators, human resource department, etc. shall determine whether it is in the best interest of its students to certify individuals based on these factors rather than appeal to the Commissioner of Education as stated in Sec. 21.055.

By claiming exemption from TEC §21.003(a), the district will be able to increase the amount of course offerings and utilize creative instructional methods, the district will need flexibility in the area of teacher certification requirements, which are governed by §21.003, §21.044, and §21.053. In lieu of these requirements, the district will establish its own local qualification procedures. Freedom from the latter requirements will make it possible to hire industry experts and post-secondary instructors to teach CTE courses, thereby increasing the number of students able to receive such instruction.

**Innovation Strategies**

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 which 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 certification**. 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. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. This person will be considered an “at-will” employee of the district.