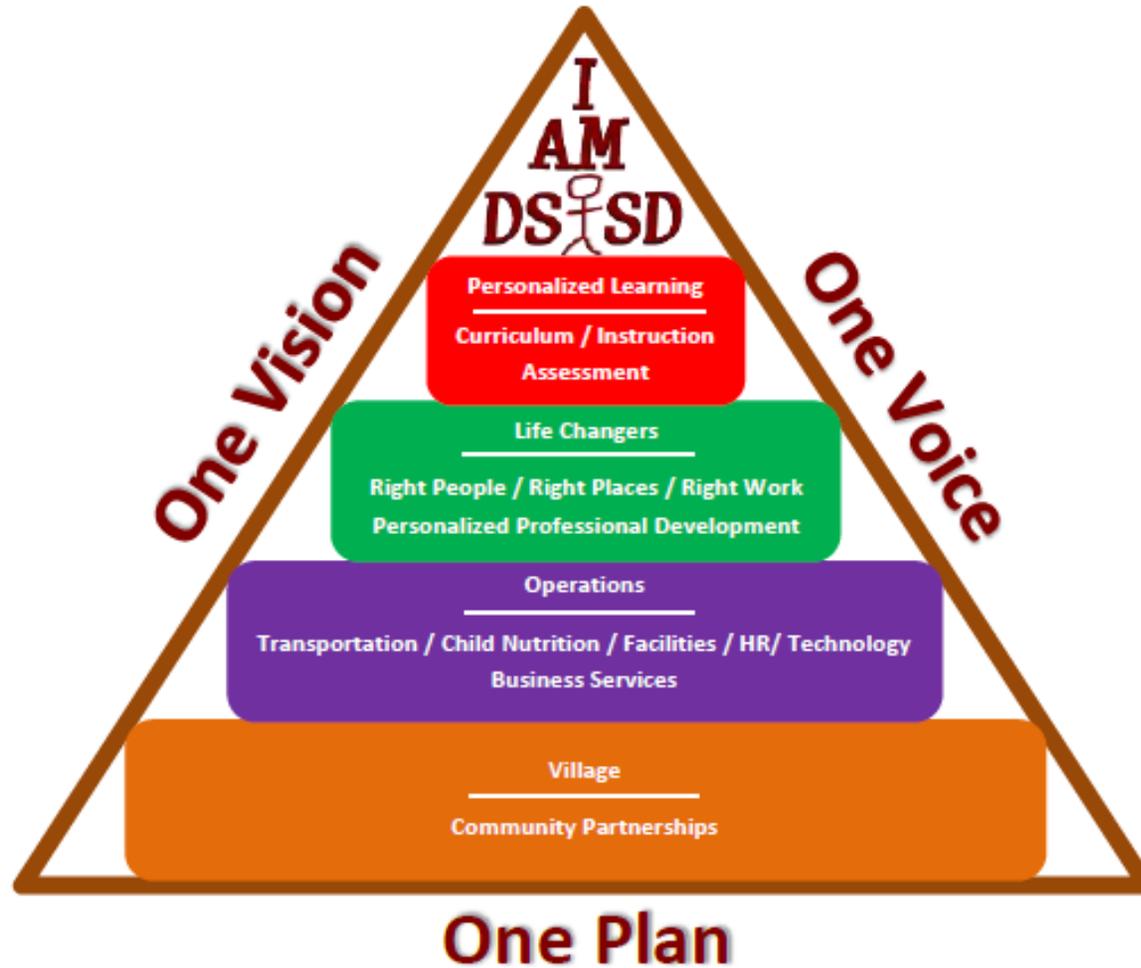


Dripping Springs ISD Strategic/Innovation Plan 2016-2021



District Vision

We inspire and equip students to be life-long learners and positive contributors to the world.

District Mission

We partner with students, parents, and the community to provide a personalized and exceptional education for every student.

Five-Year Vision

Dripping Springs ISD serves as a model 21st Century learning environment. Faculty and students are committed to life-long learning through creative and innovative thinking. Together they take risks and explore passions. Each student is part of a team focused on creating, implementing, assessing, and modifying a unique plan to maximize potential. These personalized plans have a global focus and create a growth mindset. Students develop a 21st Century skillset through the integration of curricular and extracurricular programs. The culture reflects a commitment to everyone's realization of maximum potential. The operation of the district is effective and efficient in the delivery of a safe, nurturing environment for all.

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021	
Goal 1: Village	Support the vision and mission of the district by building a culture where all members feel welcome and connected.
Goal 2: Operations	Support the vision and mission of the district by collaboratively providing effective, efficient, and innovative operations in a safe environment.
Goal 3: Life Changers	Support the vision and mission of the district by placing a Life Changer in every position.
Goal 4: Personalized Learning	Support the vision and mission of the district by creating and implementing Personalized Learning Plans that maximize each student's potential.

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021	
Vision 1: Village	<p>By 2021, Dripping Springs ISD will be viewed as the hub of the Dripping Springs community. DSISD will help new residents feel welcome, existing residents feel valued, and all members of the community feel connected to the district. DSISD will be seen as an open and caring organization that is committed to serving the children of the community.</p>
Vision 2: Operations	<p>By 2021, Dripping Springs ISD will operate effectively, efficiently, and innovatively to support the mission of the district through providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. District operations will function seamlessly to provide all facility, equipment, and material needs in a manner that addresses the ever-changing environment and anticipates continued district growth. District Operations will partner with campuses and departments to support daily educational and life-changing experiences for all students.</p>
Vision 3: Life Changers	<p>By 2021, every position in Dripping Springs ISD will be filled with someone who makes a difference in the lives of children. Employees will take risks and be allowed to explore passions and talents. Because of the equity of life changers in every classroom, parents will feel confident about the placement of their children with any teacher. Parents will have an assurance that children are cared for and well-educated. Teachers and district staff will advocate for every student. The culture of DSISD will support and enhance the personal and professional growth of employees through their Personalized Professional Learning Plans (PPLP).</p>
Vision 4: Personalized Learning	<p>By 2021, every student in Dripping Springs ISD will have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). The culture of DSISD will support and enhance the social, emotional, and academic growth of each student. Students will take ownership of learning through exploration of passions and talents. Students will view academic challenges as opportunities for growth. Parents and educators will partner with students to reach their full potential.</p>

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Village	
Goal 1	Support the vision and mission of the district by building a culture where all members feel welcome and connected.
Vision 1	By 2021, Dripping Springs ISD will be viewed as the hub of the Dripping Springs community. DSISD will help new residents feel welcome, existing residents feel valued, and all members of the community feel connected to the district. DSISD will be seen as an open and caring organization that is committed to serving the children of the community.
Objective 1.1	Build trust through meaningful and positive relationships.
Strategies	
1.1.1 Build trust with the community as a whole.	
1.1.2 Build trust with new residents with children enrolling in the district.	
1.1.3 Build trust among established residents with students in the district.	
1.1.4 Build trust among residents who do not have students in the district, including senior citizens.	
1.1.5 Build trust among staff.	
1.1.6 Build trust among alumni.	
Objective 1.2	Strengthen open and transparent two-way communication with all stakeholders using the most effective and appropriate methods.
Strategies	
1.2.1 Communicate the district’s vision and new five-year strategic plan, including the shift to personalized learning.	
1.2.2 Ensure that stakeholders have opportunities to provide ongoing feedback that will be considered in district decision-making.	
1.2.3 Maintain transparency as a district priority.	
1.2.4 Disseminate information using the most appropriate method.	
1.2.5 Develop an informational campaign for bond programs.	

Objective 1.3	Cultivate and manage community partnerships that are mutually beneficial.
Strategies	
1.3.1 Cultivate and manage partnerships with businesses.	
1.3.2 Cultivate and manage partnerships with community organizations.	
1.3.3 Cultivate and manage partnerships with retired/senior citizen community.	
Objective 1.4	Build systemic connections among campuses and departments that are sustainable as the district grows.
Strategies	
1.4.1 Seek opportunities to build connections among staff from different campuses (including administrative departments).	
1.4.2 Build connections among students from different campuses.	

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Operations	
Goal 2	Support the vision and mission of the district by collaboratively providing effective, efficient, and innovative operations in a safe environment.
Vision 2	By 2021, Dripping Springs ISD will operate effectively, efficiently, and innovatively to support the mission of the district through providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. District operations will function seamlessly to provide all facility, equipment, and material needs in a manner that addresses the ever-changing environment and anticipates continued district growth. District Operations will partner with campuses and departments to support daily educational and life-changing experiences for all students.
Objective 2.1	Provide resources to support district operations.
Strategies	
2.1.1. Continue current budgeting processes and modify as necessary.	
2.1.2. Continue to evaluate existing assets and prepare replacement plans.	
2.1.3. Evaluate facilities for adequacy, maintenance and safety.	
2.1.4. Develop a preventive maintenance program that addresses all major building components.	
Objective 2.2	Develop and formalize departmental operating procedures.
Strategies	
2.2.1. Develop and formalize departmental Standard Operating Procedures.	
2.2.2. Provide annual training on departmental procedures in order to educate new and existing staff on correct protocols.	
2.2.3. Monitor and revise departmental operating procedures.	

Objective 2.3	Implement innovative solutions to address operational challenges.
Strategies	
2.3.1. Seek alternative funding solutions.	
2.3.2. Create a culture of innovation and exploration.	
2.3.3. Research and implement, as appropriate, sustainable systems.	
Objective 2.4	Plan for growth.
Strategies	
2.4.1. Identify needs as a result of growth.	
2.4.2. Investigate solutions appropriate to a growing entity.	
2.4.3. Plan future bond programs.	

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Life Changers	
Goal 3	Support the vision and mission of the district by placing a Life Changer in every position.
Vision 3	By 2021, every position in Dripping Springs ISD will be filled with someone who makes a difference in the lives of children. Employees will take risks and be allowed to explore passions and talents. Because of the equity of life changers in every classroom, parents will feel confident about the placement of their children with any teacher. Parents will have an assurance that children are cared for and well-educated. Teachers and district staff will advocate for every student. The culture of DSISD will support and enhance the personal and professional growth of employees through their Personalized Professional Learning Plans (PPLP).
Objective 3.1	Develop, empower and sustain leaders who are committed to the vision and mission of the district.
Strategies	
3.1.1. Hire the right people for leadership roles.	
3.1.2. Support leaders in setting and reaching their goals.	
3.1.3. Promote communication and collaboration among leaders.	
3.1.4. Empower leaders to generate innovative solutions.	

Objective 3.2	Recruit and hire personnel who are committed to the vision and mission of the district.
Strategies	
3.2.1. Design and implement a fair, competitive compensation package.	
3.2.2. Actively recruit new employees.	
3.2.3. Make timely budgeting and staffing decisions to allow for earliest possible recruitment to fill open positions.	
3.2.4. Develop a standard hiring process that empowers leaders to place Life Changers in every position.	
Objective 3.3	Inspire and sustain personnel who are committed to the vision and mission of the district.
Strategies	
3.3.1. Create and maintain a culture and a climate that inspires employees to set and reach their goals.	
3.3.2. Celebrate and recognize Life Changers who show commitment to our vision, students, and the community as often as the opportunity arises.	
Objective 3.4	Develop and support Personalized Professional Learning Plans (PPLPs) aligned to the vision and mission of the district.
Strategies	
3.4.1. Cultivate professional growth for all district staff members.	
3.4.2. Connect staff with learning opportunities to meet Professional Personalized Learning Plans.	
3.4.3. Structure time for flexible scheduling of professional learning experiences.	
3.4.4. Model best-practice and innovative instructional methods in staff development.	

Dripping Springs Independent School District Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Personalized Learning	
Goal 4	Support the vision and mission of the district by creating and implementing Personalized Learning Plans (PLP) that maximize each student's potential.
Vision 4	By 2021, every student in Dripping Springs ISD will have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). The culture of DSISD will support and enhance the social, emotional, and academic growth of each student. Students will take ownership of learning through exploration of passions and talents. Students will view academic challenges as opportunities for growth. Parents and educators will partner with students to reach their full potential.
Objective 4.1	Implement personalized learning.
Strategies	
4.1.1. Develop a template for the Personalized Learning Plans.	
4.1.2. Pilot Personalized Learning Plans.	
4.1.3. Implement living Personalized Learning Plans.	
4.1.4. Mentor students to effectively and regularly use Personalized Learning Plan.	

Objective 4.2	Establish a culture where personalized learning drives all decision-making.
Strategies	
4.2.1. Develop curriculum at all levels that is flexible in addressing individual learning needs and passions of students while meeting standards.	
4.2.2. Implement instruction at all levels that is flexible and addresses the individual learning needs and passions of students, while meeting standards.	
4.2.3. Use assessments at all levels that are flexible and address the individual learning needs and passions of students, while measuring student academic growth.	

Dripping Springs ISD as a District of Innovation

Districts of Innovation and Exemptions from Provisions of the Texas Education Code under House Bill 1842

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district intends to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If at some point it is decided that changes or additional exemptions should be considered, as per the Districts of Innovation process, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Planning committee to explore the request.

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations, in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Dripping Springs ISD will be able to implement our Strategic Plan with the increased flexibility and freedom necessary to personalize learning experiences. An essential tenet of personalization is that every child experiences school differently. In a way, personalization provides a unique “school” for every child. Thus, we must have the ability to make important educational decisions for our students at the local level.

We must also be able to maximize our responsiveness to our district’s vision for the future. As we developed our Strategic Plan and this Innovation Plan, our community has been involved throughout the process, giving ongoing feedback on what they want for their children in order to prepare them to be positive contributors to the world, a world which is constantly changing. As we begin to transform our community’s dreams for their children into reality, we must be positioned to maximize the opportunities and minimize the barriers that could otherwise preclude us from doing our best work on their behalf.

Our Strategic Plan requires DSISD to evolve and think radically differently about such critical systemic components as how we are organized, how we deliver instruction, how we recruit and retain top talent, how we engage and support our families, what experiences we provide, and how we grow continually as a learning organization. To think differently, we must be able to respond differently. Leveraging the limited freedom and flexibility afforded by the Districts of Innovation designation will assure we are empowered to do so.

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) “that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . .” Because DSISD’s Strategic Plan and its local

Innovation Plan are comprehensive and touch numerous areas in the TEC, and because DSISD seeks to maximize local control of educational decisions for students, DSISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin school 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. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. 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.

Proposed

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. 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. Removing the uniform start date could also let the DSISD start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction

(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081)

Currently

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction (including intermissions and recess). The bill also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

Proposed

The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include, for example, a later start/early release time which will accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities for life-changers in our district.

Class Size Ratio

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

Currently

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed

As a fast growth district it has become a yearly need to apply for a class size waiver. While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, this must be balanced with the logistics of the timing of adding staff, and the best teacher to student ratio that can be achieved given the total number of students. We do not believe it has a negative effect when a district adds only one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment. Most importantly, research clearly shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning, not absolute class size. In the event the class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio for Kindergarten – 4th grade classes, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees for approval. This exemption only allows DSISD the local control over class size ratios, not a disregard for the intent of the ratio requirements.

This plan also emphasizes the importance of flexible learning environments and student learning based upon student driven passions and needs. This grants flexibility in class size at all times-regrouping for success, small groups, large groups, etc. It also works to minimize paperwork requirements in order to free up time to place additional focus on student success. An exemption in

meeting Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.112, will allow the ability to group students based upon academic, social, and emotional needs without adding ongoing filings of waivers when the need arises.

90 Percent Attendance Rule

(FEC LOCAL) (Ed. Code 25.092)

Currently

State law currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn credit. The law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on content mastery.

Proposed

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. This exemption will allow the District to promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities. It will also allow DSISD administrators to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts, rather than because they've attended a certain number of school days.

The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum. 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. DSISD will also explore other innovative ways to demonstrate mastery, given this exemption. This exemption supports overarching goals in the strategic plan to implement tools, resources, and training that support personalized learning for both students and teachers.

Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

Student Discipline Provisions

(FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (Ed. Code 37.0012)

Currently

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. DSISD's approach to discipline is becoming more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the DSISD Student Code of Conduct.

Teacher Certification

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.044, 21.003)

Currently

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed

DSISD is committed to placing a life changer in every classroom. In order to best serve DSISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit, and career and technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area.

This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Teacher Appraisal System

(DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL) (Ed. Code 21.203) (Ed. Code 21.352)

Currently

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). The domains within these systems are developed by the State to meet the needs of the entire State of Texas. These systems require that state standardized test scores be used as one of the evaluation measures for teachers and administrators.

Proposed

A committee of district and campus administrators and teachers from DSISD has already developed a teacher evaluation system, principal evaluation system, and a system of evaluation for non-certified instructional staff, as well as non-instructional staff. This new appraisal system is aligned with the four broad goals from the strategic plan (see page 5) and focuses on local areas emphasis. From the results of staff appraisals, Personalized Professional Learning Plans (PPLPs) will be developed. In order to promote professional development that focuses on individual growth, the District needs to maintain local flexibility to continue its current practice of using various measures, including multiple observations, goal setting and tracking, and student growth progress toward learning objectives, as evaluation measures on teacher and administrator appraisals.

Summary:

The direction provided by this District of Innovation Plan is an important step forward to ensure DSISD develops and supports our students, employees and families in a more personalized, more effective and strategically aligned way. Moving our system toward the more personalized environment our students deserve will enable us to better prepare them according to their individualized needs and their unique passions, gifts, and talents. Through HB 1842, DSISD will be positioned to leverage increased flexibility to make the best decisions for our children because we will be able to make them locally.

In most cases, activation of exemptions from the TEC will require the revision of DSISD policies. DSISD will implement an enhanced local policy development process that is rigorous, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholder input through the District Advisory Council. The district has developed and communicated a detailed implementation plan for the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. This District of Innovation Plan will be seamlessly implemented as part of the Strategic Plan.

We are grateful to the legislators who championed Districts of Innovation through HB 1842 and to Commissioner Morath and his team for expediting rules to help implementation. We are committed to the children of our community and pledge to implement this plan with their best interests at heart.