



# Runge Independent School District

## *District of Innovation Plan*

### ***Introduction***

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1842 which gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. HB 1842 provides Runge ISD an opportunity to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of our student population, in order to prepare them for success and life- long learning.

Runge ISD Board of Trustees met on March 18, 2019, in a regular scheduled board meeting to consider and approve a resolution initiating the process. The Board then held a public meeting to consider if the district should develop an innovation plan or not.

### ***Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:***

#### *Exemption from:*

*TEC §25.0811*

*TEC §25.0812*

#### ***Currently:***

- TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in August.
- TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

#### ***Proposal:***

This law restricts flexibility in the design of yearly calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community. Runge ISD would like to incorporate flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August. Runge ISD is looking to partner with Karnes City ISD in order for students to have access to a variety of CTE classes as well as additional dual credit classes.

## ***Teacher Certification Requirements***

*Exemption from:*

*TEC §21.003(a)*

*TEC§21.053*

### ***Currently:***

- TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher or other certified position unless the person holds an appropriate certificate.
- TEC §21.053(b) states that an educator may not be paid for teaching or work done before the issuance of a valid certificate.

### ***Proposal:***

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications. When that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and qualified to perform the duties of the position.

Runge ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to, CTE classes. Special Education teachers and ESL/ bilingual teachers will continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate. Also, Runge ISD will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class.

## ***Probationary Contracts***

*Exemption from:*

*TEC §21.102(b)*

### ***Currently:***

- TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

### ***Proposal:***

Due to the small rural environment of Runge ISD, this may not be sufficient time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Contract timelines demand that employment decisions be made before the availability of student data. With the exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract certified employees subject to Chapter 21, will be subject to a two year probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c). This will allow more time for the district to thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

## ***Minimum Service Required***

*Exemption from:*

*TEC §21.401(a)*

*TEC §21.401(b)*

### ***Currently:***

- TEC §21.401(a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service.
- TEC §21.401(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

### ***Proposal:***

Runge ISD would like to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days and move to a 10 month contract for teachers from August-May, with a focus on minutes of instruction, instead of days of instruction; without an anticipated reduction in salary. This move will better align teacher contracts to the minutes of instruction requirement.

Teachers will fulfill the required 75, 600 minutes of instruction and additional minutes and staff development as determined locally by the Runge ISD Board. This strategy will provide opportunities for teachers to seek out beneficial content area staff development during summer months and may improve teacher morale.