

# Nazareth ISD

## District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)

### 2021-2026

During of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled to. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2021-2026).

#### Timeline of Actions to Meet Requirements

Wednesday, May 19, 2021	SBDM and Assigned Committee meet to review Revised Innovation Plan for 2016-2021 to prepare a renewal plan
Tuesday, June 22, 2021	SBDM and Assigned Committee meet to develop renewal plan
Sunday, July 11, 2021	Revised Innovation Plan for 2021-2026 posted on district website for 30 days prior to BOE consideration of approval
Thursday, July 15, 2021	Board notification to the commissioner of education of the board's intention to vote on the renewal of the DOI plan with link to proposed plan
Wednesday, August 11, 2021	SBDM Public Meeting for consideration of approval of Renewal of District of Innovation Plan for 2021-2026 to recommend to BOE with SBDM's majority approval of final version
Wednesday, August 11, 2021	BOE review (1 <sup>st</sup> Reading) of proposed SBDM Renewal as District of Innovation Plan for 2021-2026
Wednesday, September 8, 2021	BOE review (2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading) and consider adoption of proposed SBDM Revised Innovation Plan for 2021-2026 and the continued designation of Nazareth ISD as District of Innovation.
By Thursday, September 23, 2021	Board notification to the commissioner of education of the board's renewal of the DOI Plan with a link to the approved plan.

**RED denotes updates and/or additions from previous DOI plan**

## 1. Teacher Contract Days

(DCB Legal, DCB Local) (Ed. Code 21.401)

### Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

### Plan

This plan reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. Due to low property values, it is difficult for Nazareth ISD to compete with area schools in the area of teacher salaries. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make our salaries more competitive.

- a. This plan will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- b. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.
- c. This plan will significantly improve teacher morale.
- d. This plan will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.
- e. In the four other plan years, it will be part of the calendar planning process to maintain the reduced number of teacher contract days.

## 2. Length of Instructional Day

(Ed. Code 25.081) (Ed. Code 25.082)

### Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 25 outlines that the district operate for a least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students each school year. Education Code 25.081(e) defines a day of instruction to mean 420 minutes of instruction while 25.082(a) requires a school day to be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

### Plan

This plan would increase each school day to 455 minutes to meet the 75,600 minutes in 172 days of instruction to reduce the number of teacher contract days to 182.

- a. This plan will increase the school day to 455 minutes to meet the 75,600 minutes in 172 days of instruction.
- b. During the 2021-2022 school year, the school calendar will offer 172 days of instruction.
  1. This plan would reduce the number of instructional days after STAAR and EOC testing in May maximizing instructional days prior to state testing.
  2. This plan would create more balanced days each semester with 83/89 for a total of 172 days.
- c. In the four other plan years this would be part of the calendar planning process to end school one week after the approved state testing calendar.

### **3. School Start Date/Last Day of School**

*(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)(Ed. Code 25.0812)*

#### Current Law

Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August. For years, school start date was a local decision. Once legislation moved to set a uniform start date, district could file a waiver through TEA for a few years to start earlier.

The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this local control stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and mandated that districts may not begin school prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August.

In Section 25.0812, the last day of school may not occur before May 15.

#### Plan

To meet local and community needs, this plan would allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and use more instructional prior to the state assessments given in early May. With minute requirement at 75,600 and the state assessment given in early May, it might be possible to finish the school year prior to May 15.

- a. Students will start school no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of August.
- b. Teachers will report for duty no earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of August.

#### **4. Teacher and Principal Evaluation**

*(DNA(LEGAL); DNA(LOCAL); DNB(LEGAL); DNB(LOCAL); (TEC 21.351; TEC 21.352) (Ed. Code 21.352) (Ed. Code 21.3541)*

##### Current Law

The state of Texas uses the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). 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. The state uses the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) to evaluate campus administrators.

Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Nazareth ISD term-contract teachers are formally evaluated every three years.

##### Plan

A committee of district and campus administrators would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument and/or process that fits the needs and goals of NISD. This locally developed teacher evaluation system may, or may not, include student growth measures and/or student learning objectives:

- a. Nazareth ISD will utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.
- b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, and any other relevant best practices.
- c. All teachers will be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every three years. Every teacher will receive a minimum of six, informal walk-throughs per year.
- d. Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year.
- e. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals.
- f. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan including P-TESS and any other relevant best practices.
- g. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Nazareth ISD.

## **5. Teacher Certification**

*(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)(Ed. Code 21.003)(Ed. Code 21.055)(Ed. Code 21.056)*

### Current Law

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. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

### Plan

In order to best serve NISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses in which would 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 teaching certificate. 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. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.
- c. This plan will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

## **6. School Health Advisory Council**

*(BFDLEGAL, (Ed. Code 28.004)*

### Current Law

A board shall establish a local school health advisory council (SHAC) to assist a district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction. The SHAC shall meet at least four times each year.

### Plan

The SHAC shall meet at least one time each year and jointly with SBDM as needed.

As a small school district, council members are intimately aware of the needs of District and District students. We believe that one meeting and joint meetings with SBDM as needed should be sufficient to review and revise the District's Wellness Plan and develop annual report. The SHAC will meet more often than the one required meeting throughout the year if needed.

## **7. Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs**

*(Ed. Code 37.008)*

### Current Law

TEC 37.008 states that each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21

### Plan

Nazareth ISD seldom needs the existence of a DAEP and it is a usually short term requirement since a very limited number of students are assigned to DAEP. Since most of the classes will be provided using computer/Chromebook based instruction, it is not necessary to have certified teachers monitoring DAEP. The Campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certifications as needed.

## **8. Inter-District Transfers**

*(FDA(LOCAL), TEC 25.036)*

### Current Law

TEC 25.036 states that inter-district transfers are for an entire school year.

### Plan

Nazareth ISD would follow FDA(LOCAL) policy requiring nonresident students to file a transfer application each school year:

- a. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary record, academic record, attendance record, work habits and character will be evaluated.
- b. Transfer students are required to follow the attendance requirements, as well as rules and regulations of the district.
- c. Transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent at any time during the school year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to, suspension in or out of school, placement in DAEP or expulsion for serious and/or pervasive and persistent misbehavior in violation of the student code of conduct. In addition, students not meeting the state's attendance standards may also be subject to immediate revocation of the student's transfer status.

This will allow Nazareth ISD the flexibility to revoke transfer students, who on rare occasions, violate the transfer policy. It will also allow Nazareth ISD to better utilize school resources and personnel for the benefit of the district.

## **9. Class Size Ratios**

*(EEB(LEGAL); TEC 25.111; TEC 25.112; TEC 25.113)*

### Current Law

TEX 25.111 states that each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 22 students in average daily attendance. TEC 25.112 states a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. TEC 25.113 states that a campus or district that is granted a waiver exception under Section 25.112 from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

### Plan

Nazareth ISD is a small school with one classroom per grade level at the elementary level. We firmly believe that small class size is a vital part of maximizing student success, and the district seeks to establish its own local ratio requirements. Nazareth ISD will continue to strive to maintain class ratios below the 22-1 threshold. Nazareth ISD will only use this exemption when all other options have been exhausted.

- a. If a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22-1 ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

## **10. School District Depositories Contract**

*(BDAE(LEGAL), TEC 45.205)*

### Current Law

TEC 45.205 states that the term of a bank's depository contract will be for a term of two years. A district and bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms.

### Plan

Small schools in small communities do not have many choices in banks or financial institutes that are near to the school or in the school district. By gaining exemptions from these statutes, throughout the term of the District of Innovation Plan, Nazareth ISD would have the flexibility to allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 6-year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is not operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district's business. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter their district deposit instructions and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships.