

BOOKER ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Uniform Start Date

Uniform start and end date: TEC §25.0811 & 25.0812

Booker ISD wishes to no longer be required to start school on or after the fourth Monday of August or not to be permitted to conclude the school year prior to May 15. These requirements are primarily based on lobbying efforts conducted on behalf of non-educational groups. The requirements do not take into consideration the needs of the LEA (local education agency) and the needs of the LEA's students. Booker ISD seeks relief from Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 (4th Monday in August start date) and Texas Education Code 25.0812 (last day of instructions must not be before May 15).

Innovative Practice:

Booker ISD seeks local control over the start and end dates of a school year. The anticipated school year will start during August and will conclude in May. The primary goals of this change will be to 1) better match schedules with the LEA's families, 2) balance the days of instruction in each semester, 3) afford greater flexibility in calendar options, and 4) Alignment of the district calendar with dual credit classes, local universities and advanced placement exams. This will increase our college and career readiness.

Teacher Contract Days

Teacher Contracts: TEC § 21.401 Texas Education Code Section 21.401

TEC stipulates that a teacher must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. Booker ISD seeks to modify the days of service stipulation and instead move to a 10-month professional contract ranging from August-May. The length of service will follow the 75,600 instructional minute rules and include staff development time.

Innovative Practice:

Teacher contracts will more closely align with the 75,600 instructional minutes required for students and will also include staff development/workdays. This added flexibility will give Booker ISD teachers the opportunity to create a culture/climate that values an individual's time and will enable them to regulate that time in a manner that is focused on student outcomes. Professional employees will not receive a reduction in pay for any reduction in their days of service realized by this change. The increase in daily pay rate will serve as a recruitment incentive and put the district on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.

Teacher Certification

Teacher Certification: TEC § 21.055 and TAC Chapter 231

TEC stipulates that in the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside their certification, the district must submit a request to TEA for approval.

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Innovative Practice:

In order to best serve the students of Booker ISD, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a teacher to teach subject(s) out of his/her certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. An individual with an appropriate bachelor's degree or higher, but does not have a Texas teaching certificate could be eligible to teach in the subject of their degree. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses which would qualify this individual to teach this subject. Individuals certified in this manner will be considered at-will employees.
- c. 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. The employee will be an at-will employee. Individuals certified in this manner will be considered at-will employees.
- d. An individual with experience in classes not part of the core curriculum may be considered for a local teaching certificate. Examples included but are not limited to Physical Education, Dance, Fine Arts, etc... Individuals certified in this manner will be considered at-will employees.
- e. This plan will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.
- f. The district will send parent notification for all individuals teaching in an area that they do not have certification.
- g. The district will provide increased observations, professional development, and mentoring for all locally certified individuals.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

Appraisal system: TEC § 21.252, TEC § 21.353, & TEC § 21.354

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, 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.

Innovative Practice:

- a. Booker ISD will utilize a teacher appraisal system developed by a district advisory council. It is anticipated that components of T-TESS, PDAS, and other relevant best practices will be used in the adopted model.
- b. All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every other year.
- c. All teachers will receive multiple written walk-through evaluations yearly.
- d. Probationary and locally certified individuals will be evaluated yearly.

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- e. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals.
- f. A local plan will be developed to evaluate both certified and non-certified instructional staff, as well as non-instructional staff.
- g. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

DAEP and Alternative Campus Requirements

DAEP Teacher Certification Requirement *TEC §37.008(7)*

Sec. 37.008. DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. (a) 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;

Innovation Practice:

Booker ISD has a very limited number of students assigned to alternative education and often classes could be provided using computer based instruction and/or a blended model. The district has access to certified teachers to assist the education process when needed. However, Booker ISD is a small rural district and does not have access to the funds or certified personnel to comply fully with this requirement. Currently, we have a service agreement with a neighboring larger school district and students must transport themselves to that district. This places a financial strain on the LEA and the student.

Chapter 25 sets the instructional year for students at 75,600 minutes including intermissions and recess each year. TEC 25.081(e) defines a day of instruction to be 420 minutes while 25.082(a) requires a school day to be at least seven hours per day including intermissions and recess.

Innovative Practice:

Alternative Education Setting Exemption

A Booker ISD alternative education setting will offer an education program designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students. This program offers an opportunity for students to acquire credits at a faster rate and mitigate credit deficiencies. This provides an alternate route to graduation for students who require a more flexible educational setting. Being exempt from the minimum minute requirement will permit the District to offer alternative programming with fewer minutes that focuses on quality programming and cost savings to fit the needs of students.

Length of Instructional Day

Length of school day: TEC § 25.081 and TED § 25.082 The Texas Code 25.081 and TED 25.082

The instructional day is limited to “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.” While the intent of the Legislature was to standardized across all districts the amount of time students spent learning in a classroom, Booker ISD wishes to meet the goal of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year, but seeks an exemption from these statutes so that it may reach the 75,600 minutes’ total in a more creative manner without being limited to either 420 minutes or seven hours of instruction every day.

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Innovative Practice:

- a. Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow BISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year. 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.
- b. BISD PK Program: The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. For half-day programs such as PK and PPCD the required minute requirement would be 37,800 minutes. There is not enough time in the day to be able to accommodate 37,800 minutes for both a morning and afternoon group of students. We would like to request that we be allowed to offer a 180-minute half-day Pre K programs. This will allow each teacher to have a morning and an afternoon group of students along with their conference period and duty free lunch within the regular school day.

Campus and District Planning

Texas Education Code 11.253 requires the District to establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees as provided in by Sections 11.251(b)-(e). TEC § 28.004 requires a School Health Advisory Council

Booker ISD is a small rural town with about 1,500 residents. The District has an enrollment of 400 students. Resources for persons serving as members of the District Planning Committee and the Campus Planning Committees are limited without asking the same people to serve on several committees. The campuses are located on the same property and communication between the superintendent and principal of each campus occurs on a daily basis. The proposal to allow the Campus Planning Committee to become synonymous with the District Level Planning Committee to be known as the District of Innovation Committee with the same duties as required in law of the District Planning Committee. In addition, the functions of the SHAC will be incorporated with the DoI Committee. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community.