

April 22, 2020



Richland Springs ISD District Innovation Plan

Amended Plan



Drafted May 9, 2017

Revised May 26, 2017

Strategic Planning Team Adoption on May 26, 2017

Finalized at Richland Springs ISD Board Meeting on July 24, 2017

District Level Committee approved Amended Plan on April 22, 2020

Amended Plan approved at Richland Springs ISD Board Meeting on April 27, 2020

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Background

In the summer of 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature passed HB 1842, allowing public schools to apply to become Districts of Innovation and to gain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The Richland Springs Independent School District Trustees made a provision on April 17, 2017 to pursue strategic planning to become a District of Innovation. Richland Springs wishes to create learning opportunities that benefit all students and promote the community of Richland Springs. Being able to grow students in career and technical fields as well as enhancing literacy skills in all learners is a priority.

On May 09, 2017, Richland Springs ISD hosted a public hearing to discuss the direction of Richland Springs ISD's movement on developing a plan for pursuing a District of Innovation designation. A committee was approved on May 09, 2017 and will meet on May 26, 2017 to formulate a plan for implementing strategies for the Strategic Planning Document.

RICHLAND SPRINGS ISD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Richland Springs Independent School District is to provide an educational environment that will enable all students to develop essential academic skills for a lifetime of learning and to prepare students to be responsible, contributing citizens in a diverse and changing world. The District is committed to maintaining high expectations of students as well as staff by demonstrating professional behavior and by supporting all students and school programs.

“Attitude is a Choice”

Richland Springs ISD is committed to personalizing the educational experience for each student.

INNOVATION PLAN BASED ON NEEDS

Richland Springs ISD serves a rural community of around 1,000. The school district enrolls approximately 120 students grade Pk-12. The demographics in Richland Springs comprise a district that hosts 64% Economically Disadvantaged, 25% Hispanic, 73% White, 2% English Language Learners, and 16% Special Education students. The resources to provide a multilingual learning environment and bridge any learning barriers for students is a high priority in the district. Priorities center around providing opportunities for students to compete for global postsecondary opportunities and for all students to be productive members of a community. The Richland Springs Board of Trustees identified areas of need at a fall 2016 goal setting meeting.

The goals can be broken down in four areas:

1. Recruit and Retain Quality Staff
2. Address Aging Facilities
3. Parent Involvement

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Richland Springs ISD's Innovation Plan will address ways to provide the flexibility to better address these goals. The plan will also focus on providing community needs by better communicating the needs of a rural community.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Don Fowler	Superintendent
Rhonda Wyatt	Principal
Jason Lewis	Board President
Rennie Mann	Board Vice President
Tana Lusty	Board Member
Johnny Reeves	Richland Springs Mayor
Randy Robinson	San Saba County Attorney
Pam Starr	Career/Tech. Representative-RSISD Staff
Dr. J.D. Sheffield	House Representative for District
Bill Slaymaker	Local Youth Coordinator
Barbara Fowler	Community Member
Sherri Ashworth	Richland Springs ISD Faculty
Elisabeth Johnson	Richland Springs ISD Faculty
Bonnie Burkhart	Richland Springs ISD Faculty
Chad Ashworth	Richland Springs ISD Staff
Michelle Bryant	Parent
Stacy Kubin	Parent

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AREAS OF INNOVATION

- *Professional Development
- *Instructional Strategies
- *Appraisal and Teacher Contracts
- * Parental Involvement

INNOVATIONS

Innovation Goal #1

School Start Date
(TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)
Current Law

State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless districts are year-round districts.

Proposed Innovation Strategy

Flexibility in the school calendar will provide more opportunities to engage students in meaningful learning opportunities. Richland Springs looks for strategies to increase academic achievement.

1. Richland Springs ISD proposes to begin instruction no earlier than the 1st Monday of August. This change will create better flexibility in the creation of the district calendar; as well as allowing more opportunities for scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.
2. The start date will allow the district to provide more instructional days before state assessment.
3. The start date will mitigate “summer slide”, a negative event related to academic achievement, as students return to the classroom earlier in the school year.
4. This strategy will provide for more concentrated professional development in key areas during the academic year of instruction.

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Innovation Goal #2

Teacher Certification
(TEC 21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)

TEC 21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

Proposed Innovation Strategy

The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification that will allow the certified teacher to teach in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing for the request and document what credential the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teacher the course.

The current certification rules limit the districts options to hire professionals with work related experience. A rural community can benefit from many qualified professionals within its community. There are a variety of STEM and CATE related courses that professionals can provide valuable work information and experience. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements in TEC 21.0003(a). The exemption will allow the district to:

1. Provide more variety for CATE and STEM classes
2. Provide valuable work related experience to be communicated to students

The superintendent will report the qualifications to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.

Innovation Goal #3

Extension or Probationary Contracts
(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (TEC 21.102) (Supports RSISD Board Goal #1)

Texas Education Codes states that “The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that probationary period 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 by the district.” This provides that teachers with over five years of experience must be given term contracts their second year in the district. The plan would make it possible to provide probationary contracts for any new teacher in the district for up to three years.

This would help the district promote an environment and ensure an environment of learning and professional development for teachers on probationary contracts. Teachers with probationary contracts could be provided mentors.

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Innovation Goal #4

Teacher Contract Days

(DCB (LEGAL), DCB (LOCAL); TEC §21.401)

Currently Texas Education Code § 21.401 currently requires a contract between the District and an educator to be for a minimum 10 months. Additionally, an educator employed under a 10- month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Rationale for Exemption

Richland Springs ISD has developed and implemented a four-day week school calendar. Due to the shortened workweek, teachers will not meet the minimum number of days of service.

Innovation Strategy

Richland Springs ISD will reduce teacher contract days from 187 with no effect on teacher salaries. This stems from an attempt to provide flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days; 75,600 required minutes of instruction per year.

This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.

This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a level playing field with larger districts with regard to teacher contracts.

This proposal will improve teacher morale.

This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

This proposal will allow for more teacher collaboration for planning, needs assessment, and other duties related to increase student academic achievement.

RICHLAND SPRINGS ISD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PROCESSES

Board Goals 2017

1. Recruit and Retain Qualified Staff
 - a. Goal – RSISD will promote an environment that ensures support and development that will lead to the retention of highly qualified staff.
 - b. Indicators of Success
 - i. Cohesiveness of staff with administrators and peers.
 - ii. Competitive salaries are used to retain and recruit highly qualified staff.

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- iii. RSISD will provide higher education opportunities to all staff interested in furthering their educational career.
- 2. Aging Facilities
 - a. Goal – RSISD will provide facilities that meet the needs of school based activities in a safe and secure environment which encourages participation and pride.
 - b. Indicators of Success
 - i. Adequate space for existing population and space for potential growth.
 - ii. Environmentally safe facilities.
 - iii. Increase participation in activities.
- 3. Parent Involvement
 - a. Goals – RSISD will provide an inclusive process for parents that incorporates all stake holders in supporting success.
 - b. Indicators of Success
 - i. Opportunities for parent involvement
 - ii. Participation of parents in school events
 - iii. Community Involvement
 - i. Continue school supply giveaway
 - ii. Training programs/ certificates for students to break the cycle of poverty

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TIMELINE FOR RICHLAND SPRINGS DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN		
DATE	ACTION	NOTES
April 17, 2017	Board Approval of Resolution	
May 09, 2017	Public Hearing to consider pursuing DOI Plan	
May 9, 2017	Board Approval of DOI Committee	
May 26, 2017	SBDM/DOI Committee Meeting	
May 26, 2017	Post DOI final Plan for 30 Days	
June 28, 2017	Notification to TEA	
July 24, 2017	DOI Committee Public Meeting and Approval of DOI	
July 24, 2017	Board Approval of DOI	
July 27, 2017	Final Notification to TEA	
April 22, 2020	Site Base Committee Approval of Amended DOI	
April 27, 2020	Board Approval of Amended DOI	
May 12, 2020	Post Amended Plan on District website	
May 12, 2020	Notification to TEA	