

Fredericksburg Independent School District- *Inspiring Excellence!*

District Goals:

- 1- Fredericksburg ISD will educate, excite, and empower EVERY student to achieve their full educational potential.
- 2- Fredericksburg ISD will exercise fiscal and operational responsibility.
- 3- Fredericksburg ISD will recruit and support a quality, caring and ethical staff.
- 4- Fredericksburg ISD encourages our parents and community to be full partners in the educational process.

Proposed Innovations:

Teacher Certification

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §21.003: Requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).

Innovation for FISD:

District Goal 3

FISD seeks to hire certified and highly qualified individuals for every teaching position. Currently, in the event the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a CTE position, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA will then either approve or deny the request. At this time, non-certified professionals cannot be hired or paid without SBEC certification on file.

Because of the nature of Career and Technical Education courses at Fredericksburg High School, the current certification requirements restrict the district's ability to hire CTE professionals with the most applicable experience and qualifications. Flexibility to establish local teacher certification requirements when hiring CTE teachers will allow the district to:

- select from a larger and more experienced candidate pool for CTE courses
- establish requirements for professionals transitioning to CTE education from other careers

- hire CTE teaching staff with industry-standard professional certifications, or those not currently certified in accordance with TEA standards
- Utilize the talents and skills of those in our community who would benefit the CTE needs of our students.

Implementation Considerations:

- Exemption from TEC 21.003 is limited to provide hiring flexibility in the specific instructional area of Career and Technical Education only. All other instructional staff are required to hold valid SBEC certificates and will receive Chapter 21 contracts in accordance with policy and law.
- FISD will develop minimum required qualifications for individuals hired for such positions and will outline required professional development in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and parent engagement.
- Parents will be notified when students are instructed by personnel without SBEC certification. Notification will include industry certifications held by the CTE instructor.

First Day of Instruction

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Innovation for FISD:

District Goals 1 and 3

An exemption to this statute will provide the opportunity to develop a school calendar that positively impacts students by:

- Balancing the disparity in the number of instructional days in each semester
- Ending the first semester by Christmas break so that final exams for high school students do not extend beyond the break
- Matching FISD semesters to coincide with the calendar of colleges from which students are taking dual credit courses
- Providing flexibility for students to enroll in summer school, internships, employment, and professional certification experiences
- Allowing for more instruction time prior to state-mandated testing and retesting, as well as AP and SAT testing

This exemption will also support teacher growth by:

- Supporting the adult learning model by providing ongoing professional development throughout the year
- Allowing staff to prepare for the school year by decreasing the amount of professional development in August

Implementation Considerations:

- The FISD calendar committee will convene annually to collaboratively develop and recommend a district calendar that is designed to promote the effective delivery of classroom instruction and school/district operations.
- Teacher contracts will remain at 187 days.

Probationary Contracts

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §21.102: Probationary contracts may not exceed one year for an employee new to the district but who has been employed for at least five of the previous eight years in public education.

Innovation for FISD:

District Goal 3

To employees new to the district but who have been employed for at least five of the previous eight years in public education, FISD will offer a two-year probationary contract. This will give FISD more than one year to support and develop teachers before determining whether or not to award a term contract. This flexibility provides several important benefits:

- Adequate time for teachers new to the district to participate in meaningful professional development.
- Extended support for teachers new to the district to ensure growth and retention.
- Additional opportunities for a campus administrator to observe the teacher, provide support, and more fully develop the staff member's effectiveness.

Implementation Considerations:

- After a period of two years, probationary teachers who demonstrate proficiency may be awarded a term contract.
- FISD will develop criteria for documenting growth for a teacher on a probationary contract.

Transfer Student Timeframe

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §25.001: A district may choose to accept students who are not entitled to enroll in the district through the student transfer process.

TEC §25.036: The transfer timeframe is interpreted to be a period of one school year.

Innovation for FISD:

District Goal 2

FISD accepts transfer requests from students outside the district. Current law requires FISD to enroll the student until the end of the school year. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and all rules and regulations of the District. In cases where the student does not meet minimum attendance requirements, FISD loses funding.

In order to maintain fiscal and operational responsibility, FISD will be able to revoke a K-11th grade student's transfer at any time during the academic year based on disciplinary suspensions, DAEP placements, expulsions, attendance, and/or if the transfer student is in need of special services which exceed the state funding for that student.

Implementation Considerations:

- FISD will maintain its current transfer policy requiring nonresident students to file a transfer application each school year.
- In approving transfer requests, the availability of space, instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits and attendance records will be evaluated.
- FISD will monitor the attendance and behavior of transfer students and evaluate the impact on district resources.

Group Health Insurance

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §22.004(i): a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code.

Innovation for FISD:

District Goal 2

FISD will be able to exercise better operational responsibility by exempting from TEC §22.004(i). Currently, districts in Texas must provide group health insurance through TRS Active-care only. Exemption from the current policy will provide several important benefits:

- flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all Fredericksburg ISD employees.
- ability to provide more than one option for group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost
- increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the district to be responsive to employee and community needs

Implementation Considerations:

The intention of this exemption is to allow FISD to work with third party benefits administrators to offer group health insurance provider choices to employees in addition to TRS Active-care, which is the only plan we are able to provide under the current code.