

Sabinal Independent School District

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN



April 11, 2022 - April 11, 2027

- **Board Approved Revision May 12, 2025**
- **Board Approved Revision October 14, 2025**

Local Innovation Committee & Timeline

Administration

Dr. Edgar B. Camacho, Superintendent

Richard Grill, Former Superintendent

Rebecca Melton, Director of Curriculum & School Improvement and Committee

Chair Amanda Dean, Secondary Principal

Jean Ann Chisum, Elementary Principal

_____, Assistant Principal

Howard Karre, Technology Director

Committee Members

Lizzette McCleery, Amanda Tyk, Norma Ruiz, Maricela Zamora, Connie Hohon, Jacqueline Innanen, Rodger Clark, Jill Beard, Dawn Henry, Kimberly Stewart, Cecilia Reyes, Monica DeLeon, David Sprott, Amanda Torres, Victor Alvarado, Jill Beard, Nikki Rodriguez

Timeline November 17, 2021

January 10, 2022

February 1, 2022 February 7, 2022

February 7, 2022 March 7, 2022

March 22, 2022

March 13, 2025

May 12, 2025

Review District of Innovation (DOI) renewal process with the District Improvement Team (DIT) District Improvement Team provide feedback on the DOI plan
DIT public meeting to review proposed DOI plan
DIT public meeting and vote to adopt DOI plan
DOI plan posted on the district website
School Board approves DOI plan for 2022-2027
Notification letter sent to the TEA Commissioner of Education of board approval of 2022-2027 DOI plan
DIT Revision of Transfer Policy
DIT Transfer revision approved by School Board

October 3, 2025

DIT Revision to Grievance Policy

October 14, 2025

Amended to include the passage of legislation from the 89th Regular Legislative Session: Grievance Policies per Senate Bill 12

Making Excellence an Everyday Event!

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INTRODUCTION



Working together to ensure one becomes what one
has the potential to be.

In Sabinal, we want more than smart kids. We need and want good kids. We want positive and productive kids. We want happy kids. We want kids who are both confident and humble. We want kids who are kind, courageous, and hard working. In Sabinal, there is a sense of community pride that goes beyond the classroom, beyond the school walls, and beyond the success of Sabinal ISD. Our district mission is “Making Excellence an Everyday Event.” American football player Ralph Marston once said, “Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude”. We set out to do the best we can, to give students the best possible experiences, delivering great teaching and learning opportunities. It's our attitude that makes these special moments happen.

SISD

GOALS

This innovation plan has been created in an effort to accomplish the mission, vision, and goals of Sabinal ISD.

Learning



Sabinal ISD will promote student-centered lessons utilizing active and engaging learning to maximize student achievement and individual academic success.

Academic & Social Challenges



Sabinal ISD will empower students to respond appropriately to academic and social challenges faced in our schools and in our community.

College & Career



Sabinal ISD will prepare all students for post-secondary engagement: college, trade school, military, or workforce.

Community



Sabinal ISD will cultivate opportunities for student participation that extends beyond the classroom.

INNOVATION PLAN

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

TEC 21.052 & 21.057 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds the appropriate certification or permit issued by the State Board of Educator Certification.

Rationale for Exemption:

With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need.

Local Guidelines:

The district will maintain high standards for teacher qualification by making every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for open positions in Sabinal ISD. The district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who they believe are knowledgeable in the subject area and are believed to be equipped to perform the duties of the respective courses that will be taught. This may include allowances in areas such as CTE courses, industry-based courses, and allowances to teachers with content area certifications outside their certification area, and/or above or below assigned grade levels. In accordance with federal guidelines, our Special Education and English Language Learner teachers will need to be SBEC certified and are not applicable to this plan.

Teachers hired under this provision will be provided with district-identified or district-developed training, resources, and support.

Sabinal ISD may issue a local permit:

- A. When the principal lacks a “highly qualified” candidate pool of a professional educator vacancy, or professional support personnel who possess an SBEC certification in another professional area and are believed to have the ability to provide students the appropriate level of service will be issued a local permit as long as they possess an SBEC certification.
 - a. Locally permitted candidates may be issued a probationary contract for up to 5 years or be served a non-chapter 21 contract until certified in the position employed.
 - b. Out-of-state certified teacher candidates that are certified in the current instructional vacancy may be employed under a local permit and will be

issued a probationary contract for up to 5 years or be served a non-chapter 21 contract until SBEC certified in the position employed.

- B. Dual-Credit Instructors that do not possess the appropriate SBEC certification, but do possess the level of education required by the cooperating college or university will be considered "Adjunct Instructors." Adjunct Instructors will be issued a "Work Agreement," however they are considered "At-Will" and are not subject to any provisions set in TEC Chapter 21.
- C. Adjunct Instructors who are employed "Part-time" (defined as not to exceed 19 hours per week), will be issued a "Work Agreement". They will be considered "At-Will" and are not subject to any provisions set in TEC Chapter 21.
- D. Adjunct Instructors to be employed in certain Career and Technology (CTE) positions who possess the appropriate professional licensure and 3-years or more experience in the related trade, will be employed in lieu of an SBEC certification.

INNOVATION PLAN

FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION

TEC 25.0811 states that students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August.

Rationale for Exemption:

Sabinal ISD emphasizes the importance of an innovative learning environment, college and career readiness, along with leadership, & social and emotional development. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 prohibits the district from beginning before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters. This will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Starting the school year earlier for students transitioning among campuses will foster social and emotional stability.

Local Guidelines:

The district will locally establish the earliest possible start date so that the calendar can be designed to promote what is best for student and staff learning while taking into consideration local events and community impact of district calendar decisions.

INNOVATION PLAN

Transfer Students

Exemption from: TEC 25.036

Relevant Board Policies: FDA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)

Current statute: Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

A district may choose to accept students in the TEC and Board Policy FDA. The transfer time frame has been interpreted to be a period of one school year.

Innovation Strategies

The district will be able to revoke a student's transfer during the academic year based on disciplinary infractions, Disciplinary placement, including placement in DAEP or expulsions, and for attendance or other reasons as outlined in District policies and procedures. Further if any information is misrepresented in the transfer application or any transfer documentation, the student transfer may also be revoked.

Revision Approved by the SISD Board of Trustees on May 12, 2025

The district will be able to revoke a student's transfer during the academic year based on disciplinary infractions, Disciplinary placement, including placement in DAEP or expulsions, and for attendance or other reasons as outlined in District policies and procedures. Further if any information is misrepresented in the transfer application or any transfer documentation, the student transfer may also be revoked. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in revocation of the agreement during the school year or a transfer request not being approved the following year.

CLASS SIZE RATIOS

TEC 25.111, 25.112, 25.113, & 25.114 Establish the requirement of Kindergarten - 4th Grade classes to be kept as a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio, otherwise requiring the District to seek a waiver from the Texas Education Agency.

Rationale for Exemption:

While we believe that in certain circumstances small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, in many cases master teachers, who are highly trained in student engagement strategies, are equally effective with larger class size environments. Often it is not the number of students but the classroom environment that influences student learning outcomes. Sabinal ISD will attempt to keep all the core K-4 classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report this to the Board of Trustees. The superintendent will make recommendations at that time whether Sabinal ISD will look to add another teacher or use other resources available to the district at that time. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Local Guidelines:

Any instance that places a K-4 classroom in the position of being beyond the 22:1 ratio will be based on staff input and administrative recommendations, taking into account what is best for all students impacted by the decisions made.

INNOVATION PLAN

DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING & MAKING + CAMPUS LEVEL PLANNING & SITE-BASED DECISION MAKING

TEC 11.251, 11.252, & 11.253 requires set ratios for various site-based decision-making boards including other required site-based decision-making committees. Ratios often require a majority parent-based representation.

Rationale for Exemption:

As a small district and small community, committee members are intimately aware of the needs of the district's students, as well as the values that are to be promoted within the community. With the limited number of stakeholders and the likelihood that community members that are actively involved serve the school in many ways and often serve on more than one committee or group, it is recommended that the committees may meet at the same time, location, or date to complete duties and business.

Local Guidelines:

In place of the Campus Improvement Teams and other required site-based decision-making committees, a single District Improvement Team committee will be established that will meet, review, and analyze the district/campus' needs for students' success. This committee will fulfill all the federal requirements for comprehensive needs assessments for each campus but will do it as a district committee. The committee will convene at least three times per year and generate direction of the district resources and efforts. The consolidation of committees will yield greater opportunity for one council to address a multitude of needs, as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

INNOVATION PLAN

PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS

TEC 21.102 States that a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. 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 the 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.

Rationale for Exemption:

The exemption from probationary contracts being limited to one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher or administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district will allow Sabinal ISD extended time for the evaluation and training of new personnel. Sabinal ISD is committed to effectively managing contracts, and this exemption will provide the district with the flexibility to keep all professional employees new to the district on probationary contracts for a maximum permissible period of three school years.

Local Guidelines:

New professional positions such as teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses or administrators may be issued a probationary contract for up to three school years. Furthermore, current professional staff that seek or are re-assigned to a position that requires different certification or licensure or an additional level of education may be issued a probationary contract for up to three school years.

INNOVATION PLAN

Grievances

Due to the passage of legislation from the 89th Regular Legislative Session which impacted areas of exemption under the Plan, Sabinal ISD determined that it was necessary to amend the Plan. The amendments will not extend the current term of the Plan which is for five (5) years, beginning April 2022, and ending April 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. If within the term of this Plan, other areas of operation are to be considered for flexibility, Sabinal ISD will initiate the amendment process in accordance with law and TEA requirements. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan.

Rationale for Exemption:

According to Texas Education Codes 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003, the Texas Education Code requires the Board of trustees of each school district to adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Chapter 26A under which the board shall address each grievance that the board receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by this chapter, of a board of trustees policy, or of a provision of this title.

Local Guidelines:

Sabinal ISD has and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines as outlined in its local Board policies DGBA, FNG and GF. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provide adequate time for complaints to be filed, and for complaints to be heard. All records related to grievances, including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. Sabinal ISD is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. Sabinal ISD is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Sabinal ISD's long-standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Sabinal ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26.002 and for hearing such complaints. Sabinal ISD believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within fifteen (15) district business days ensures prompt attention and resolution of concerns. In cases where the grievant does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district-provided form, within ten (10) district business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level. Sabinal ISD's current grievance policies also provide for a Level Three grievance to the Board of Trustees. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after sixty (60) to ninety (90) days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best

prompt response.

Sabinal ISD therefore requests relief from the timelines, processes and procedures imposed by **26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003** and will maintain its current grievance forms, processes and procedures for all grievants including parents and students.

“School culture is not created by a mission statement on a wall, but it is created and lived out daily by the ACTIONS of everyone in the school building.”

-Dr. Brad Johnson