



BROWNWOOD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
2707 Southside Drive
Brownwood, Texas 76801

The District of Innovation (DOI) opportunity to shift control of schools from the state to local communities is a powerful mechanism. Brownwood ISD is intensely focused on improving the education of students with these flexibilities.

Mandatory Start Date

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Brownwood Proposal

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also let Brownwood ISD start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider moving the mandatory start date back one week which would better benefit our students. Students will begin no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August. The process for deciding a yearly calendar through the district site-based committee will continue to be used.

CTE Teacher Certification

Currently

Prior to 2013, students were expected to graduate under the “4x4” which required such courses as physics and Algebra II. With the adoption of House Bill 5 by the Texas Legislature in 2013, the state’s graduation requirements moved to a more personalized graduation plan that allowed students to earn endorsements in specific areas of study, including STEM, business and industry, public services, etc. Many of the career pathways that fall under the endorsements, such as health services or engineering, require very specialized certification in that particular field. 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 to hire without certification, with requirement to obtain certification in a specified time.

Brownwood Proposal

The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In order to enable more



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students to obtain the educational benefit of specialized CTE course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the certification requirements set forth in law.

Before examining the employment of non-certified personnel, all efforts will be made to hire state certified teachers. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction, the District will have the flexibility to hire professionals in trades, community college instructors, university professors, business professionals or certified teaching professionals seeking assignments outside of their certification area. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools in specialized CTE course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

In order to best serve our students, decisions on teacher certification in these specialized areas will be handled locally.

- The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a CTE subject out of his/her certified field.
- An individual with experience in a CTE field may 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 principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the person possesses qualifying this individual to teach this course.
 - Included in this request must be a summary of all the steps taken to find a state-certified educator for the position.
- The superintendent will then submit this action to the Board of Trustees for Board approval prior to the individual beginning any employment.
 - Local teaching certificates will be for one year.
 - The employee will be at-will.
 - This local certificate option is not available for any course below 7th grade.
 - Parental notification to those parents who have a student enrolled in a course with a locally-certified teacher will continue as currently required by law.
 - Locally-certified teachers must complete district-led classroom management training along with any other continuing education requirement determined by the Board of Trustees, and will be assigned a state certified teacher as a mentor.

Mandatory Start Date and CTE Teacher Certification are the only components addressed in this DOI plan. No amendments, further rule adjustments, or law exemptions will be added or modified at any time during the term of the current DOI plan. An active DOI plan cannot be amended. Any additions or modifications require a completely new DOI plan that must go through the full DOI process as required by law.

Plan effective dates: February 14, 2022 – February 14, 2027