



Navarro ISD

# Board Report

## Human Resources and School Leadership

March 2025

### **Navarro ISD Priority 1**

*Recruiting, Hiring, Coaching, and Retaining High Quality Teachers and Staff to Support Student Outcomes*

### **Recruiting & Hiring**

**Vacancies.** As of March 5, we still had the same 5.5 vacancies districtwide as last month. I will be meeting with a staffing referral agency to explore cost-effective options for temporarily staffing our vacant positions while we search for permanent employees.

**Resignations/retirements.** We have seven official resignations/retirements effective at the end of the school year plus three teachers who indicated they do not plan to return next year. The resignations are all connected to family moves, not job dissatisfaction. I will be asking each to participate in an exit interview to dig deeper into their experience and their motivations in order better understand how we can improve as an employer. The deadline to resign penalty-free is June 30, 2025.

**25-27 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant.** We are exploring an opportunity from TEA that would provide \$80,000 and technical assistance over two years to design and implement a paid residency program for new teachers in partnership with a university educator preparation program. This model

- provides stronger preparation for new teachers
- brings in additional support for our current teachers and students, and
- provides our veteran teachers additional opportunities to apply their experience and expertise.

The district would need to commit to sustainable funding for the program after the grant period ends

**Aspiring educators.** Two additional aspiring educators recently requested a placement in Navarro ISD for their classroom observation hours. One will be at the Junior High and another at Elementary. Whenever we support students or career-changers as they pursue teacher certification, we are helping strengthen the future of public education while building a deeper pool of candidates for our future vacancies.

### **Coaching & Retaining**

**Compensation Task Force.** At its February 25 meeting, the Compensation Task Force addressed several items, including the 2025-26 budget forecast, the pay frequency for professional staff, and educational aides (paraprofessional) pay rates. The January 21st meeting was canceled due to weather. It was rescheduled for April 29, in anticipation that we will know by then what action the Legislature takes regarding school funding.

**Educational leadership master's degree cohort with Texas State University.** We will be inviting our teachers to apply to be part of a career development opportunity along with three other area districts. While the participants would pay their own tuition for the program, we are considering supporting them by 1) reimbursing their books and materials, which amount to \$400-\$500 per student, upon successful completion of the program and 2) providing two days of substitute coverage to engage in job shadowing or while they engage in their leadership project. This will provide professional growth opportunities for our teachers while also growing a leadership pipeline for future assistant principal and principal openings.



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**Stay Interviews.** Principals and Directors all participated in Stay Interviews to see the process modeled while also sharing how we can better support and retain them. Please see page 3 for a memo about Stay Interviews that principals and directors received.

**Substitutes.** Our substitute fill rate (the number of substitutes reporting divided by the number of absences requiring a substitute) was 82.9% in February 2025, which is slightly higher than 82.5% in February 2024, despite having 69 more absences to fill compared to last year. We hired three new substitutes in March. A 100% fill rate remains an elusive goal that will require new strategies to achieve. We will be looking at options to both increase substitute supply while also reducing demand by examining the reason for teacher absences.

## Improving Systems

**Contracts.** Renewal of administrative twelve-month contracts exempt will be on the March 24 board agenda. Renewal of teacher and all other chapter 21 contracts will be on the April 28 board agenda.

What is a Chapter 21 contract? Chapter 21, Subchapter E, of the Texas Education Code spells out the rules and responsibilities regarding contracts for all employees whose positions require a state-issued certificate, including teachers, principals, librarians, nurses, school counselors, and many district-level positions. These rules are summarized in Policy DCB(LEGAL & LOCAL).

The district may offer other exempt employees contracts, but is not legally required to. Policy DCE(LOCAL) is where districts designate which other positions would be associated with non-Chapter 21 contracts. We will be recommending revisions to district policy DCE(LOCAL) to ensure the list of positions is up-to-date.

**System integration for summer school staffing.** We are using our Frontline Recruiting and Hiring system for summer school staffing starting this year, which will improve system alignment and digital record-keeping.

Respectfully submitted,

David Kauffman, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and School Leadership



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## Stay Interviews

Navarro ISD has adopted “Stay Interviews” as a strategy for Priority 1 of the district’s Collaborative Vision and Strategic Plan: “Recruiting, Hiring, Coaching, and Retaining High Quality Teachers and Staff to Support Student Outcomes.”

### ***What is a Stay Interview?***

“A stay interview is a structured discussion a leader conducts with each individual employee to learn the specific actions she must take to strengthen the employee’s engagement and retention with the organization” (Finnegan 2018, pp. 4-5).

Stay interviews typically

- are conducted one-on-one by an employee’s direct supervisor,
- take 20 minutes or less,
- are separate from performance reviews, and
- focus mostly on the things the supervisor and employee can control, rather than broader district policies.

### ***Why Stay Interviews?***

Stay interviews are an important complement to employee surveys and exit interviews because they are:

- **Timely.** The information is available immediately to the supervisor, rather than delayed by processing time or conducted after the employee already left the district.
- **Targeted.** They generate personalized information about individual employees, rather than aggregate data for the whole group.
- **Actionable.** Supervisors are empowered to develop individual stay plans.

### ***Who will be conducting the Stay Interviews? With whom?***

Every principal and department director will begin conducting stay interviews with some team members during the 2024-25 school year. Human Resources has conducted stay interviews with 20 teachers and most supervisors and may conduct additional stay interviews. The district leadership team will reflect on this experience in planning for expansion of stay interviews in 2025-26.

### ***I want a Stay Interview!***

Any employee can request a stay interview with their supervisor or with Human Resources.

For more information, contact David Kauffman, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and School Leadership at [david.kauffman@nisd.us](mailto:david.kauffman@nisd.us) or 830-372-1930 #6100.

Source: Finnegan, Richard P. 2018. *The Power of Stay Interviews for Engagement and Retention*. Alexandria, Virginia: Society for Human Resource Management.