

Brackett

Independent School District



District of Innovation Plan

July 2022 – July 2027

BISD DISTRICT GOALS

- **The board supports the use of technology upgrades and staff development for teachers, administrators and technology personnel to meet the needs of the 21st Century Learner.**
- **Improve Communication between the district, community, and other stakeholders through engagement in support of the BISD Vision, Values, and Excellence in Education.**
- **The Board of Trustees will support all safety measures in an effort to secure a safe learning environment for all students.**
- **Recruit and Retain highly qualified teachers.**
- **Attendance rate will be at 96% or better at each campus.**

MISSION STATEMENT

- **The mission of the District, in partnership with parents and the community, is to enable all students to be safe and obtain the knowledge, desire, and integrity to pursue meaningful and productive lives.**

VISION STATEMENT

- **The District ensures graduates have diverse learning experiences, creating confidence to reach their full potential, and the honesty to own mistakes and the integrity to start again and achieve goals.**

The District in conjunction with our goals, mission, and vision shall strive to:

- **Balance the semesters for the students to have more instructional time before mandated testing.**
- **Recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified individuals to educate our students.**
- **Maintain adequate instructional days/minutes to ensure students are learning effectively.**
- **Maintain staff contracted number of days to line up more adequately with student days without changing any roles or responsibilities of staff members.**
- **Provide professional development opportunities for staff that allows adequate time for completion.**

***Brackett ISD District of
Innovation Plan***

Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in the Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Term

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective beginning with the 2022- 2023 school year and will remain in effect for five years, concluding the end of the 2026-2027 school year. unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. Any amendment to the Innovation Plan must follow the same process as the plan development. The District of Innovation Committee would consider any proposed amendment/s. Any amendment/s would require majority approval of the District of Innovation Committee, a majority approval of the District Site-Based Committee, and posting on the district website for 30 days. A 2/3 vote by the Board of Trustees would be required for final approval of any amendment/s.

Due to the passage of legislation from the 89th Regular Legislative Session which impacted areas of exemption under the Plan, the District 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 July, 2022, and ending July, 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 the District 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.

Beginning July of 2022, the DOI committee will include a minimum of:

- **2 business/community members**
- **2 campus administrators, at least 1 per campus**
- **4 teachers/staff members, 2 from each campus**

Brackett ISD Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task
November 30, 2021	<i>BISD District Leadership Team met to discuss District of Innovation opportunity</i>
December 12, 2021	<i>District of Innovation Information Item-Board Meeting</i>
January 3, 2022	<i>1st Meeting of DOI Committee to discuss Renewal of the District of Innovation Plan</i>
January 27, 2022	<i>2nd Meeting of DOI Committee to Finalize Renewal of the District of Innovation Plan</i>
March 7, 2022	<i>Board of Trustees held public hearing regarding District of Innovation (DOI)</i>
March 8, 2022	<i>Plan posted on BISD website for 30 days prior to final board vote</i>
March 8, 2022	<i>Plan sent to Commissioner for notification of intent for renewal Board will vote next board meeting</i>
April 28, 2022	<i>Board vote on final plan</i>
April 29, 2022	<i>Final plan sent to commissioner</i>

- **Oct 17/20, 2025** *DOI member review*
- **Oct 20, 2025** *Review and Approved by Board*

District of Innovation Planning Committee

Member Name	District/Community Role
Christy Price	<i>Brackett Secondary Principal</i>
Gralin Vinning	<i>Brackett Secondary Vice Principal</i>
Eliza Diaz	<i>Jones Elementary Principal/Interim Superintendent</i>
Melissa Neuman	<i>Special Programs</i>
Cindy Welch	<i>Brackett Secondary Counselor</i>
Kimberly Ilse	<i>Jones Elementary Counselor</i>
Liz Frerich	<i>Brackett Secondary Teacher</i>
Pedro Cardenas	<i>Brackett Secondary Teacher</i>
Tara Massingill	<i>Jones Elementary Teacher</i>
DeeAnn Paxton	<i>Jones Elementary Teacher</i>
YJ Jimenez	<i>Community Member</i>
Kim Kerby	<i>Community Member</i>
Cherrise Ducharme	<i>Parent</i>

Updated Committee for purpose of Revisions due to legislative session - October 2025

Member Name	District/Community Role
Sergio Jimenez	<i>Brackett Secondary Principal</i>
Kenneth Mueller	<i>Jones Elementary Principal</i>
Eliza Diaz	<i>Superintendent</i>
Gracie Gonzalez	<i>Staff Member - Jones Elementary</i>
Andrea Hyslop	<i>Staff Member - Jones elementary counselor</i>
Cindy Welch	<i>Staff Member - secondary counselor</i>
Gabby Garza	<i>Staff Member</i>
Norma Sandoval	<i>Business/Community - District Advisory</i>
Rosario Guzman	<i>Business/Community - District Advisory</i>

Proposed Exemptions

The following are the provisions of the Texas Education code that inhibit the goals of the district and from which the district seeks to exempt itself through adoption of the District of Innovation Plan.

TEACHER/STAFF CERTIFICATION

(DK LEGAL, LOCAL) (Texas Education Code 21.003)

Current Law

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

In order to best serve Brackett ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current school personnel shortage, this exemption from certification/permit requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would make it possible for the district to allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology; assist in staffing high need CORE/STEM courses; be able to offer out-of-state certified teachers positions; allow individuals with a **bachelor's degree** to transition into the teaching profession by working towards their teaching certification while being employed; allow for experienced certified teachers in our district to teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background, and/or experience; and allow for individuals to be hired without fully completing the required permit/certification prior to employment. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines

- a) The campus principal shall submit a request to the superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The certified teacher must show evidence of coursework and/or professional development for completing their certification in the course being taught.
- b) An individual with experience in a non-core field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work-related industry experience to work full-time or part-time in a designated area. The principal shall submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The individual must show evidence of being enrolled and working toward getting the proper teaching certification.
- c) An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state and be allowed to teach according to the out-of-state certification. The principal shall submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The individual must show evidence of being enrolled and working toward getting the proper Texas teaching certification.
- d) An individual may be hired for a position, due to personnel shortage, in non-teaching areas (paras, counselors, **diagnostician, etc...**) prior to holding the appropriate certification and/or permit as long as the individual shows evidence of enrollment and working towards getting the proper certification/permit. Any position requiring a master's degree or higher is expected to currently hold a **bachelor's degree**.
- e) A teacher hired, under local certification, to teach a core class, is expected to hold a degree, and show evidence of working towards fulfilling the requirements of teaching certification.
- f) Non-certified teachers hired to fill teaching positions will receive mentorship and additional training in pedagogy, instructional methods, and classroom management.
- g) The superintendent will approve, deny, or add stipulations to any requests for local certification.

SCHOOL START DATE

(EB LEGAL) (Texas Education Code 25.0811)

Current Law

25.0811 - Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August. For years, this was strictly a local decision. 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.

Proposed

This flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This flexibility of the start date also offers the following opportunities:

- a) This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- b) An early start date permits students additional days of instruction prior to state assessments in December.
- c) This would allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school.
- d) An early start date allows for more flexibility in meeting the 75,600 minutes within a 10 month period.

SITE BASED DECISION MAKING

Current Law

TEC Sec 11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process. (a) The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. (b) The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district – and campus level planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of a district, parents and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs....and TEC 28.004 Local School Health Advisory Council and Health Education Instruction.

Proposed

BISD would like to be exempt from the requirements set by the state for the site-based decision making and ~~school health advisory committee~~, as being separate entities. In its place, the recommendation is to combine the entities into one DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT TEAM. The district level team would be established in order to meet the requirements set for by the state for each of those committees BUT as one team for the district. This committee would also fulfill federal requirements for comprehensive needs assessments for each campus. It will also meet in order to discuss, review, evaluate and respond to needs for success at each campus. Reasoning behind the request was established due to BISD being a small, rural district it often falls under cumbersome requirements to meet the needs for all required committees by the state. The separation of committees often leads to misdirection of the focus for the district. Having one team that fulfills multiple requirements will not only be a better use of resources and better use of staff/committee members' time, but will focus on the development of goals, improvements and mastery of needs for the district as one entity. Often the same resources are used and the same people sit on the separate committees.

The District Improvement Team will:

- a) meet at minimum 3 times a year
- b) using the districts vision and mission statement and data from all entities the team will set the focus of district resources and needs in order for success at each campus and district wide
- c) help in the creation of the comprehensive needs assessments, campus improvement plans for each campus as well as the District Improvement Plan ~~and SHAC plan~~

LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY

(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081) (Ed. Code 25.082)

Current Law

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amended Texas Education Code TEC §25.081 by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring the District to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction (including intermissions and recess) each school year. Additionally, TEC §25.082(a) currently requires that a school day be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Both Texas Education Codes 25.081 and 25.082 address the length of the instructional day by defining it as “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.” BISD wishes to meet the goal of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year; however, the District seeks an exemption from these statutes so that it may reach the 75,600 minute total in a more creative manner without defining it as either 420 minutes or seven hours of instruction every day.

Proposed

Exempting the district calendar from the 420-minute daily requirement would give the District a significant amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements.

- a. BISD does not intend to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the Board-approved district calendar.
- b. An early out may be called as needed for specific purposes above and beyond the early outs already built in the adopted calendar. This will be done per all Administrators approval.

TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTED DAYS

(DC LEGAL)

Current Law

Minimum Length of Contract

A contract between a district and an educator must be for a minimum of ten months of service. An educator employed under a ten- month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. Education Code 21.401 (a) (b) Proportionate Reduction If a district anticipates providing less than 180 days of instruction for students during a school year, as indicated by the district’s academic calendar, the district may reduce the number of days of service proportionately. A reduction by the district does not reduce an educator’s salary. Education Code 21.401 (c-1)

Proposed

Exemption of the required 187 educator calendar days will allow BISD educators to follow a more consistent calendar schedule with the students. With the exception of including professional development days prior to the student’s first day of school.

- a. BISD does not intend to shorten the educator calendar below the number of student school days, plus professional development days needed.
- b. Shortening the educator calendar days does not affect the 10 month educator contract, nor does it affect the educator or paraprofessional pay scale.
- c. Educator responsibilities and requirements will not change with exemption of 187 day requirement. Educators will still be responsible for the same duties as they worked 187 days.

GRIEVANCE POLICIES

(Ed. Code 26.011) (Ed. Code 26A.001) (Ed. Code 26A.002) (Ed. Code 26A.003) (DGBA LEGAL AND LOCAL) (FNG LEGAL AND LOCAL) (GF LEGAL AND LOCAL)

Current Law:

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.

Proposed:

Brackett ISD has and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines as outlined in its local Board's 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. The District is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to corrective action, where appropriate. Brackett ISD's long standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that the District responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Brackett 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. The District believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within 15 business days from the date the grievant either knows, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance 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. The District's current grievance policies also provide for a Level Three grievance to the Board of Trustees, except for grievances related to extracurricular activities. Accuracy of information and access to individuals are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response.

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

Chapter 33: Local School Library Advisory Council

(Ed Code 33.025(b)) (EFB)

"Local School Library Advisory Council"

Current Law:

Current law requires the school district to establish a School Library Advisory Council at any campus where either 10% of parents or 50 parents (whichever is fewer) submit a written request for such a council. The council must include at least five members, with a majority being parents of currently enrolled students who are not employed by the district. The council is tasked with reviewing library materials, providing input on the selection and removal of resources, making recommendations to ensure materials are age-appropriate and aligned with community values, reviewing all books and other material objected to by any District parent, and advising on such objections. The law also requires that a council established under this law may not be abolished until the third anniversary of the date on which the council was established.

Proposed:

Brackett ISD requests to be exempted from Texas Education Code §33.025(b), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until such a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Brackett ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.025, which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents.

Brackett ISD encourages and supports all campus efforts to involve District parents and community members as active participants in the education of its students. Brackett ISD already has strong, board-approved procedures in place for selecting, reviewing, and reconsidering library materials—led by certified librarians and educators and aligned with state-mandated requirements and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. Creating such advisory councils risks undermining the professional judgment of educators and librarians, introduces the judgment of non-certified individuals, introduces potential for politicization of instructional resources, and could very easily lead to inconsistency across campuses. Furthermore, the statute presents an administrative burden, requiring staff time and resources that would be better directed toward student learning and support. Brackett ISD's existing processes already allow for meaningful parental review and involvement, including access to their child's library checkout records if requested, formal challenge procedures, and transparency in material selection. In addition, concerned individuals may also speak with teachers, administration, and/or the school board through District complaint processes and/or during the open forum of any regularly scheduled board meeting. The District remains committed to ensuring age-appropriate and educationally sound resources while maintaining an efficient and effective oversight structure that includes educator expertise and parent input, without the disruption and/or duplication caused by the statutory requirements in §33.025(b).

Chapter 33: Acquisition of Library Materials
(Ed. Code 33.026(a), (c)) (EFB LEGAL AND LOCAL)
“Acquisition of Library Materials”

Current Law:

Current law outlines specific procedures school districts must follow before acquiring library materials. The law requires that materials be reviewed and approved in advance by a certified school librarian and be verified for compliance with age-appropriateness, educational suitability, and community standards. Additionally, it mandates a multi-step vetting process, documentation of acquisition decisions, and the public posting of selected materials before they are made available to students.

Proposed:

Brackett ISD requests to be exempt from TEC §33.026(a), (c) because the District already has robust, board-approved policies, implemented by designated staff in place that govern the acquisition of library materials in a manner that ensures transparency, appropriateness, and educational value. These policies and procedures are fully compliant with the standards required by Texas law and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until such a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Brackett ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.026(d), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents.

The statutory process under §33.026(a) and (c) introduces redundant and restrictive requirements that may delay access to timely instructional and enrichment resources. It also places bureaucratic barriers in front of trained library professionals who are certified to select age-appropriate, curriculum-aligned materials, that are consistent with standards set by Texas law. Additionally, the public pre-approval requirement undermines the expertise of certified school educators and creates delay and roadblocks in getting library materials to students who benefit from them. Furthermore, the mandated documentation process creates an administrative burden that consumes time and resources better allocated to instructional support. While Brackett ISD fully supports transparency and parental engagement in the school library process, the rigid requirements of TEC §33.026 are unnecessary and duplicative of local safeguards already in place. This exemption allows Brackett ISD to preserve instructional flexibility, uphold librarian professionalism, and provide students with timely access to enriching and appropriate materials—without compromising accountability or community trust.

Any amendment to this plan must be reviewed by the DOI committee and be data driven and/or changes based on new legislation. It will then be approved by the Board of Trustees and submitted to TEA.