

Small District Superintendent Plan

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Advanced Composition

### Small District Superintendent Plan for Teachers

The dichotomy of leadership is fragile, and everyone plays a part. Arguably, one of the most important roles is the superintendent. It is her job to ensure that the principals are inspiring teachers and other staff. It is also her job to provide resources, training support systems, and strong processes to ensure that each school inside the district is running efficiently. One superintendent said, “Education is an endeavor that is about people —adults and students — but when it comes to education policy, students are often an afterthought” (Granados, 2021). At Brookewright ISD, the superintendent aims to provide teachers with a great experience so that they can provide students with a great experience. Many teachers have said that they wish things were different. A few things that the superintendent has implemented to ensure teachers have been heard include giving more help to teachers, mental health as a priority, an employee relations committee, a teacher development program, more paid time to plan, and incredible employee perks program.

Almost every teacher will tell you that they need more help. One teacher said, “Social worker, psychoeducator, and counselor represent only a few of the hats that teachers are expected to wear throughout the day” (Dussault, 2020). To try to eliminate this issue, Brookewright ISD gives each teacher an aide and every grade level has a counselor. This gives capacity back to the teachers and ensures that student needs are being met. Additionally, teachers are given access to free online resources to help build lesson plans. The district has teamed up with Chalk, Teacherly, and Canva to give teachers full access, at no cost of their own, to utilize as they build their unique content.

Another way that school faculty is supported is by making mental health a priority. “The stress and anxiety that often accompanies teachers' jobs has a hugely negative effect on teacher performance and personal life” (Smiley, 2020). If teachers are going to perform at their best, they must have the tools to keep their mental health strong. All faculty are given a free membership to use better help services where they can get help with grief, anger, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, eating disorders, and more. Additionally, all teachers are required to attend an introductory course to help them learn the art of work/life balance when getting started as a teacher. This course will provide teachers with an understanding of how to fit all the work in while still maintaining a life outside of school. By doing this, the school district ends up creating a space where teachers are excited to come to work and therefore excited to create meaningful content for students. Lastly, the school district has an onsite certified yoga instructor and meditation specialist to teach classes throughout the day so that staff can attend during their lunch breaks.

Another thing that we implement throughout our school districts is an employee relations committee. This committee, compiled of even more committees ran by passionate employees employed by the district is a way to incorporate diversity inclusion. Additionally, employee relations promote employee engagement, productivity, employee retention, advocacy for many civil rights movements, a better employee experience, and employee empowerment. The major committee is responsible for ensuring that the program is working meets together once a month. Committee members are paid for meeting attendance, separate from their salaries. Parents are held accountable for being active in at least one group of their choice, within the committee. Closed groups are created for first-year teachers, mental health awareness, women

empowerment, teachers of color, specific grade subjects, and more. Other neighboring school districts can participate in certain groups, which enables different communities to connect.

On top of employee relations committees, teachers are given an excellent development plan that they can utilize throughout their entire employment with Brookewright ISD. To start, teachers can take advantage of tuition reimbursement. The total disbursement amount is equal to 3,500 per year. This enables teachers to get their next-level degree and not have to pay out of pocket. Teachers are also given discounts for online continuing education programs on multiple sites that the ISD has partnered with, and partnerships are always growing. Furthermore, we host a series of workshops for first-year teachers to learn some of the things that aren't taught in a college classroom. Senior teachers run these mini courses. This gives experience to the senior teachers as well for their further development. "Ongoing professional development keeps teachers up-to-date on new research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources, and more. The best professional development is ongoing, experiential, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding their culture" (Edutopia, 2008).

Another thing that teachers have begged for is more paid time to plan. At Brookewright ISD, teachers are given several options for increasing their salaries. We have created a system in which teachers can be paid as part-time assistants to themselves. Additional hours worked as their assistant must be tracked without a new innovative system where lesson plans are submitted along with time tracked for planning outside of normal school hours. Teachers are only allowed five "assistant" hours each week and time theft are not tolerated. This gives teachers supplemental income for their additional time spent planning. One of the groups in the employee relations committee takes ownership of a paid tutoring program that generates enough revenue

for the school district to pay for the part-time self-assistant program. Furthermore, teachers are given yearly appraisals and are guaranteed a two percent increase on top of their yearly raise if they submit lesson plans a week ahead, follow a self-planned agenda (which must be submitted at the beginning of the year), and create a website platform for student to work virtually on assignments. The website builder is provided for teachers that wish to go this route.

Lastly, teachers are given an employee perks program. Some of these employee perks include teacher discounts at various stores around town and online, discounts on cell phone plans, electric companies, and more. Additionally, teachers are given fifty dollars a month to spend on materials for their classrooms. This is given to them in one lump sum, annually, at the beginning of each school year. Teachers must show proof that the money was used for school-related materials or forfeit the budgeted money. Teachers are also given free lunch at select restaurants around town and new employee perks are added consistently.

It is the superintendent's main role to ensure that principals are executing around employee programs and creating environments that are conducive to building strong relationships with students, parents, and all faculty. She or he must ensure that teachers and other faculty feel valued and are given the tools to create the best school for students to attend. "The role of the modern superintendent is often analogized with that of an orchestra conductor and for good administrative performance; facilitates the performance of all personnel; and responds to and persuades an audience with varying ideas about the performance and leadership of the district" (ECRA Group, 2010). At Brookewright ISD, the superintendent is constantly sharpening the skills it takes to be the best conductor and always remembers that the orchestra could not be great without those that play all the instruments.

## References

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