



Proposed Amendments to the Eanes ISD Plan for Innovation and Local Control

The District Leadership Team (DLT) in consultation with with the administration is reviewing possible ammendments to Eanes ISD's current Plan for Innovation and Local Control. DRAFT ammendments shown on the ensuing pages have been discussed with the DLT and subsets (including parents), and have been vetted and revised by the administration accordingly.

As a result of these ammendments, Eanes ISD will apply innovative governance guidelines to the unique, local and instructional needs of its students and community.

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code Rule §102.1307, this timeline is being followed for consideration and adoption of these ammendments:

Feb. 25 - Board of Trustees passed resolution to notify TEA of intent to amend plan

Feb. 28 - Amended plan is posted on the district website for at least 30 days

March 2 - DLT holds public meeting to review and recommend amended plan

March 10 - Board reviews amended plan as approved and recommended by the DLT

March 31 - Board of Trustees adopts amended plan by a minimum two-thirds vote

As a result of these amendments, Eanes ISD will apply the following innovative governance guidelines to the unique, local and instructional needs of its students and community.

1. LOCAL CONTROL OF CAMPUS AND DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

(Texas Education Code §11.251, 11.252, 11.253, 11.255) (Board Policies BQ(LEGAL) and (LOCAL), BQA(LEGAL) and (LOCAL), BQB(LEGAL) and (LOCAL))

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan:

The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making as described in Sections 11.251, 11.252, 11.253, and 11.255. Under these prescriptive laws, each school district appoints committees of stakeholders to engage in a defined process of developing, evaluating and revising District and Campus Improvement Plans annually, in accordance with district policy and state law.

This site-based decision-making requirement has existed in Texas for over 30 years. The original intent of the law (including the involvement of classroom teachers in the campus and district planning process) now consists of several compliance measures that affect the local meaning and relevance of the campus and district decision-making process. The bureaucratic requirements in content and format of the improvement plans shift an otherwise important planning initiative into a process that detracts from the importance of local design and meaningful implementation.

While Eanes ISD will continue to develop district and campus planning documents based on Board priorities and administrative goals, the content and format of such plans should be a local decision. Eanes ISD has a strong history of involving teachers, administrators, parents, community members and students in the decision-making process. Eanes ISD believes the process and membership of district and campus planning should be a local decision rather than a response to a state mandate.

Local Innovation Strategies:

- A. Increase local control over district planning to allow Eanes ISD to replace a prescriptive list of compliance requirements in Campus and District Improvement Plans with relevant strategic plan components, including action steps, resources, and metrics aligned with local Board priorities as well as administrative and campus goals. Required state and federal mandates will continue to be included in reporting documents but may no longer be represented in District and Campus Improvement Plans.
- B. Attempt to comply with requirements detailing the selection of representatives for the District and Campus Leadership Teams. Under this exemption, the duties, membership and frequency of such committees will align first with Board policies, administrative regulations, campus priorities and goals.

2. LOCAL CONTROL OF BENEFITS FOR STAFF

(Texas Education Code §22.004(i)) (Board Policies CRD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL))

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan:

Under Texas Education Code section 22.004, school districts must participate in TRS-ActiveCare (health insurance) in accordance with provisions of the Texas Insurance Code: "A district shall participate in the uniform group coverage program established under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, as provided by Subchapter D of that chapter." The Texas Education Code prohibits offering comparable group healthcare to employees through a self-funded plan once a district has elected to enter TRS-ActiveCare. A TRS rule prohibits discontinuation of TRS-ActiveCare unless a district is authorized by TRS.

The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all

Eanes ISD employees. This provision also prohibits a district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost.

Districts of Innovation (DOI) may seek an exemption from Texas Education Code section 22.004. Districts may not, however, use a DOI plan to seek an exemption from provisions in the Insurance Code. Even if a district is exempt from Section 22.004, Texas Insurance Code Chapter 1579 continues to apply. Consequently, even for a DOI, the Insurance Code does not permit a district to opt out of TRS-ActiveCare. However, for a DOI, the Insurance Code does not explicitly indicate a district is prohibited from offering an alternative health care plan. The statutory prohibition on offering an alternative health care plan is located in the Education Code.

Local Innovation Strategies:

- A. Increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the district to be responsive to employee and community needs.
- B. If feasible, the district will offer an alternative health plan option to district employees, in addition to TRS-ActiveCare.

3. PROBATIONARY CONTRACT TERM FOR CERTAIN TEACHERS

(Texas Education Code §21.102(b)) (Board Policies DCA(LEGAL) and (LOCAL))

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan:

The Texas Education Code requires that teachers newly-hired by the district who have five years of experience in public education within the last eight years can only be placed on a one-year probationary contract and, after the first year, must be placed on a term contract. In contrast, newly-hired teachers without the five to eight years of experience can be hired by the district on a one-year probationary contract for a total of three years. This law limits the district's ability to sufficiently assess and determine whether a newly-hired teacher is a good fit for the district. The one-year probationary period is insufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom because teacher contract renewal timelines require employment decisions to be made before the end of the school year.

Exemption from this requirement will provide campus administrators and hiring officials with the time needed to fully assess and support a teacher before making decisions to move the employee beyond a probationary contract when the employee has only been with the district one year.

Local Innovation Strategies:

- A. To create equity in new hires, to give Eanes ISD the opportunity to serve students better, to allow administrators time to evaluate performance, and to provide opportunities for improvement, growth and professional development, the district will implement the following contract requirements:
 - 1) Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, all teachers newly hired by Eanes ISD will be issued a one-year probationary contract for a total of three years, and may be issued a fourth year probationary contract under the same rules as applied in Texas Education Code 22.102(c).
- B. Teachers employed by Eanes ISD prior to the 2020-2021 school year are not subject to the proposed contract changes.

4. CREDIT BY EXAMINATION WITHOUT PRIOR INSTRUCTION

(Texas Education Code §28.023) (Board Policies EHDC(LEGAL) and (LOCAL))

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan:

Texas Education Code Section 28.023 allows an elementary student to skip a grade if he or she earns a score of 80 percent or above on an approved exam for acceleration. Similarly, a student in sixth grade and above must be given course credit if the student earns a score of 80 percent or above on an approved exam.

Prior to the 83rd Legislative Session (2013), the passing score for credit by exam without prior instruction was 90 percent, rather than 80 percent. Several districts comparable to Eanes ISD have returned to the 90 percent standard for student acceleration.

Local Innovation Strategies:

- A. Relief from this statute permits the district to increase the standard required to be eligible for acceleration from 80 percent to 90 percent.
- B. Requiring a higher passing score ensures a student who accelerates a grade or course has more thoroughly mastered the content and is prepared to succeed in the next grade or series of courses.
- C. This new passing standard is applicable beginning with credit by examinations administered after the start of the 2020-2021 school year.