



Magnolia ISD District of Innovation Plan

Approved by the MISD Board of Trustees May 16, 2022



Background

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, authorizes Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation (DOI) and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). As a DOI, school districts increase local control over operations and support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes. Taking advantage of some of the flexibilities allowed within DOI status allows Magnolia ISD to provide more opportunities for students to be successful, as well as more opportunities to be competitive in hiring and retaining staff.

Magnolia ISD first became a District of Innovation in February 2018. The district's DOI Plan initially had only one area of innovation: allowing flexibility to start the first day of school before the fourth Monday in August. The district later modified the DOI Plan by adding the ability to offer alternative health plans for employees.

In response to the post-COVID employment market during the 2021-22 academic year, the district began exploring ideas to be more competitive in attracting, hiring, and retaining qualified staff for teaching positions. In response to these demands, the District of Innovation Committee began meeting in the fall of 2021 to review district needs and consider renewing and expanding on MISD's current DOI plan. The committee developed a new DOI Plan. The new plan incorporated the provisions of the district's original DOI Plan while adding a few new areas of flexibility.

A public hearing on the proposed District of Innovation plan was held at the DOI Committee's April 28 meeting. The DOI Committee then voted to approve the proposed DOI Plan and recommended the plan to the Magnolia ISD Board of Trustees for consideration at their regularly scheduled May Board Meeting. On May 16, 2022, the MISD School Board renewed and approved the District's DOI Plan through May 2027.



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2021-22 Committee Members

Name	Title
Dr. Todd Stephens	Superintendent
Dr. Jason Bullock	Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Brandon Garza	Chief Academic Officer
Robert Stewart	Executive Director
Denise Meyers	Executive Director
Sarah Wright	Executive Director
Brad Raphelt	Director
Lisa Bertrand	Secondary Principal
Dion Rivera	Elementary Principal
Jaclyn Finke	Elem. Advanced Academics
Tamalyn Hellums	Campus Rep - WES
Kelli Clough	Campus Rep - NSES
Catherine Page	Campus Rep - MWHS
Karen Coldwell	Campus Rep - MJH
John Hawthorn	Campus Rep - MIS
Matthew Finley	Campus Rep - MHS
Rachel Adams	Campus Rep - MES
Kristen Roden	Campus Rep - LES
Courtney Flores	Campus Rep - EES
Jessica Keith-Risner	Campus Rep - BBJH
Regina Hinkelman	Campus Rep - MPES
Sonia Wolfrom	Campus Rep - BBIS
Lindsey Garrison	Campus Rep - BBES
Kelly Sullivan Harsch	Campus Rep - Alpha
Chopin Kiang	Community Member
Gary Hefner	Community Member
Sandy Barton	Business Member
Omar Ibrahim	Business Member
Stacia Norris	Parent
Tina Messina	Parent



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Magnolia ISD District of Innovation Plan Areas of Innovation

Area of Innovation: Modification to the School Year Calendar

Under Texas Education Code § 25.0811, a school district cannot begin instruction for a school year before the fourth Monday in August, which complicates the school year calendar. In addition to a compressed calendar, this creates a sizable imbalance in the fall and spring semesters and limits the number of instructional days prior to state and national exams.

Proposed Solution: Allow for a calendar that fits within the needs of the community, as well as providing students with more opportunities for educational success. Students will be able to begin classes before the fourth Monday of August. Under the DOI Plan, Magnolia ISD is exempt from Texas Education Code § 25.0811.

Area of Innovation: Flexibility to Offer Additional Health Insurance Plans for Employees

Under Texas Education Code § 22.004(i) school districts are precluded from offering alternative health insurance plans. Under this section of the Texas Education Code, since opting in to TRS Active Care Plan in 2001, MISD would be unable to pursue other health care options for our employees.

Proposed Solution: MISD has the opportunity to offer an alternative medical (health) insurance plan for our employees. This will offer our employees more plan options customized for individual needs and in many cases allow for substantial savings on premiums and/or deductibles, office visits, etc. Under the DOI Plan, Magnolia ISD is exempt from Texas Education Code § 22.004(i).

Area of Innovation: Flexibility with Class Size Ratios

Magnolia ISD is a fast growth district with such growth difficulties arise in consistently maintaining class size ratios of 22 to 1 as required under section 25.112 and 25.111 of the Texas Education Code, with any ratios exceeding 22 to 1 requiring an approved waiver from the Texas Education Agency. Additionally, section 25.113 requires the District to provide notification to parents when class size exceeds 22 to 1 pursuant to a TEA waiver. This exemption would allow Magnolia ISD flexibility and not require the District to seek class size waivers from the Texas Education Agency. Additionally it would not require parental notifications when class size exceeds 22 to 1.

Proposed Solution: Under the DOI Plan, Magnolia ISD is exempt from the class size ratios and TEA waiver requirements found in sections 25.112 and 25.111 of the Texas Education Code and the parental notification requirements of section 25.113 to provide the District with flexibility in staffing campuses.



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Area of Innovation: Educator Instructional Assignments

TEC Sections 21.003 and 21.044 limit the school district's ability to make teaching assignments based on the needs of the Magnolia ISD in hard to fill positions. In the post-COVID pandemic hiring environment, these limitations have made filling some teaching positions increasingly difficult. Following locally developed guidelines, the district would be able to accommodate otherwise qualified applicants who may not be certified to teach, internal applicants seeking assignments outside their traditional certification area, as well as enrich applicant pools in specific content areas. Magnolia ISD will continue to first seek out and employ quality certified educators for each particular assignment.

Proposed Solution: Magnolia ISD will continue to employ certified educators. In the case that an appropriately certified teacher cannot be hired for a particular instructional assignment, the Magnolia ISD will follow locally developed guidelines to determine when a candidate holds appropriate credentials for an instructional assignment. Under the DOI Plan, Magnolia ISD is exempt from the requirements of sections 21.003 and 21.044 of the Texas Education Code and their corresponding regulations.

Area of Innovation: Out of School Suspension of Students in 2nd Grade and Below

TEC Section 37.005 limits campus administration from assigning out-of-school suspension to students in Grade 2 and below. This limitation prohibits campus administrators from using their professional judgment and removing a student for their own safety or the safety of others when necessary.

Proposed Solution: In the event that a student, regardless of age, poses a safety threat to themselves or others, or it is necessary due to a disruption of the learning environment, the campus administrator, following the Student Code of Conduct, may place a student in out-of-school suspension. The Executive Director of Special Services will be consulted prior to a student in Grade 2 or below being considered for out-of-school suspension and may deny or approve such suspension. Under the DOI Plan, the District is exempt from section 37.005(b) of the Texas Education Code.

Area of Innovation: Out-of-District Transfer Flexibility

Texas Education Code § 25.036 authorizes students to transfer between school districts annually as long as the receiving district approves of the transfer. The statute requires that a student transfer be approved for a full school year. In rare instances, it is in the interest of the school district to rescind the transfer before the end of the school year.

Proposed Solution: Under the DOI Plan, the District is exempt from section 25.036 of the Texas Education Code. The district is not held to the provision of a one-year commitment to out-of-district transfer students under the following conditions: the student's behavior warrants suspension (in school or out-of-school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion; or the student has 3 or more unexcused absences in a four-week period, or 10 or more unexcused absences in a six-month period.