

ALVARADO ISD INNOVATION PLAN

This five-year District of Innovation Plan, in effect from March 25, 2022 till March 25, 2027 provides flexibility to incorporate innovative ideas to help us reach our mission of Inspiring and Empowering Learners. The plan allows for certain decisions to be made at the local level so Alvarado ISD can best serve its students and community.

EXEMPTIONS

- I. First Day of Instruction
- II. Class Size
- III. Probationary Contracts
- IV. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
- V. Certification Required
- VI. Bank Depository Contract
- VII. Unauthorized Persons
- VIII. Exemption from Future TEC Mandates
- IX. Revocation of Out of District Transfer

I. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION (TEC 25.0811)

Current: Students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. In the past districts could apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier to meet the needs of the local community. This waiver opportunity was met with resistance from the Texas tourism groups who lobbied to have the practice ended, because they believed it was detrimental to the Texas tourism business. Therefore, several years ago, the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that district's may not begin until the fourth Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed: This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Flexibility to start earlier in August would help our district plan for more balanced instructional time in the semesters that would support semester course curriculum. In addition, flexibility in the start and end of the school year would allow students to enroll in college courses that begin in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

II. CLASS SIZE (TEC 25.112)

Current : Kindergarten-Fourth Grade class sizes are to remain at or below a 22 student to one teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are completed at the start of a school year as well as any time a child enrolls in an elementary school at a grade level where the ratio is already maintained according to staffing projections from the previous year.

Proposed: This flexibility allows Alvarado ISD the time to staff campuses with effective teachers by granting local control over class size ratios. Small class sizes enable effective teachers to

provide more individualized attention to each student. Having the latitude and time to seek and hire teachers enables us to best serve students with an effective student-teacher ratio. Our vision is to have the timing and latitude to hire the right teacher for kids and not just any teacher to fulfill a mandate.

III. PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS (TEC 21.102)

Current: Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Proposed: Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for certified educators. This will allow Alvarado ISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.

IV. DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR (TEC 37.0012)

Current: Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 27, Subchapter A.

Proposed: The proposal is for the district to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. Alvarado ISD's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person through our efforts with PBIS and restorative discipline. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the Alvarado ISD Student Code of Conduct. The district will designate all campus principals, assistant principals and discipline coordinators to fulfill discipline and behavior duties.

V. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED (TEC 21.003)

Current: In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a single subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Proposed: This exception will allow Alvarado ISD to establish local qualification and training requirements to hire teachers for hard-to-fill teaching positions. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Alvarado ISD will have the flexibility to hire external or internal applicants that do not have traditional state certifications. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of

those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

VI. BANK DEPOSITORY CONTRACT (TEC 45.205, 45.206)

Current: Currently, each district must renew its depository contract every two years. The two-year contract term begins and ends in odd-numbered years. In accordance with the Texas Education Code the school district must use a uniform bid or proposal blank in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Proposed: This exception is to allow the district to allow the district's banking contract to be extended beyond the allowable contract term if the district determines contract-pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the district's business.

VII. UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS (TEC 37.105)

Current: A district must maintain a record of each verbal warning issued under Section 37.105 (a)(2)(A), including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of issuance. At the time a person is refused entry to or ejected from a school district's property under Section 37.105, the district must provide the person a written information explaining how to appeal. Each school board must adopt a policy that uses the district's existing grievance process to permit a person ejected or denied entry to address the Board of Trustees in person within 90 days of the commencement of the appeal, unless the appeal is granted sooner.

Proposed: The District will not be required to maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from district property/facilities, nor will the district be required to provide written information explaining the appeal process to those who have been refused entry to district property/facilities or removed from district property/facilities. The District currently attempts to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities. Should an exemption from TEC 37.105 be granted, the District shall continue to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities in situations where the administrator on site feels it is reasonable and safe to do so. Campus and District administrators, as well as District police officers, may refuse to allow a person to enter or may eject a person from property under the District's control in accordance with law. An appeal notice must be filed with the Superintendent, in writing, and submitted to the Administration Office for review.

VIII. EXEMPTION FROM FUTURE TEC MANDATES

Alvarado ISD hereby includes a provision in our Innovation Plan for the District to maintain control over any future, eligible Texas Education Code mandates, which may be exempted by a

majority vote of the District Site Based Decision Making Committee at a public meeting and a 2/3 majority vote of adoption by the Board of Trustees.

IX. REVOCATION OF OUT OF DISTRICT TRANSFER (TEC 25.036)

Current: It has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the District.

Proposed: Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard or are not successful in academic courses may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.