



MARLIN

District of
Innovation
Plan

2023-2028

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District of Innovation Advisory Committee

Committee Member Name	Position
Marquita McCullum, Chairman	Director of Elementary Education
Tamika Washington	Principal
William Ealy	Dean of Instruction
Tonya Garcia Arnold	Dean of Instruction
Nicola Gardere	Associate Principal
Darius Kelley	Dean of Instruction
Ortega McDavid	Dean of Students
Rhonda Milton	Dean of Students
Cyrus Evans	Teacher
Dietra Harris	Teacher
Eula Mae Jones	Teacher
Connie Massington	Teacher
Leslie Thiele	Teacher
Alfonso Weems	Teacher
Gabriella Becerra	Parent

I. Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Becoming a District of Innovation provides an opportunity for more local control and autonomy as districts seek to meet the needs of the students, staff, and communities they serve.

On March 20, 2023, Marlin Independent School District's Board of Managers passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation (DOI).

II. Comprehensive Educational Program

The plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision 2025 Strategic Plan that includes our mission, key influencers, core values, and guiding statements for the District.

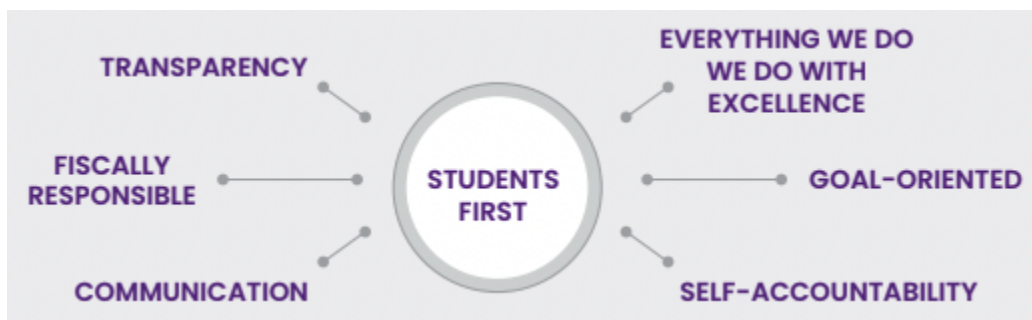
Mission

Marlin ISD will prepare students with the academic and life skills necessary to ensure that their potential turns into performance.

Key Influencers

- Students' Expectations of Themselves
- Teacher-Student Relationships
- Feedback
- Individualized Instruction
- Community Collaboration
- Quality of Instruction
- Championship Mentality

Core Values



Guiding Statements

1. Early Literacy. Students will read on level or higher by the end of second grade.
2. Middle Math. Students will demonstrate proficiency of Algebra I by the end of the ninth grade.
3. CCMR. Students will graduate college, career, or military ready by demonstrating academic proficiency in English and mathematics or by earning an industry based certification.
4. Co-Curricular. Students will participate in a variety of academic, athletics, and/or fine arts activities.

III. Term

The term of the DOI Plan is five years, beginning at the start of the 2023–2024 school year and concluding at the end of the 2027–2028 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Managers in accordance with the law. The DOI Advisory Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

IV. Timeline

The following timeline was followed by Marlin ISD as required by House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permitting Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the TEC:

- October 2022: Research of the DOI process commenced by the Director of Elementary Education.
- October 2022: An initial meeting to discuss the DOI process with the Superintendent occurred.
- January 2023: A virtual meeting occurred with the Region 12 Education Service Center to provide additional insight and resources regarding the DOI process.
- January 2023: Information regarding the DOI process was presented at a Board of Managers meeting.
- February 2023: A briefing occurred with the Superintendent to discuss tentative timelines and the flow of the process.
- March 20, 2023: The Board of Managers passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation.

- April 3, 2023: A public hearing took place that provided information regarding the process to the community and afforded the opportunity for questions to be posed.
- April 3, 2023: The District of Innovation Advisory Committee was appointed by the Board of Managers.
- April 6, 2023: The District of Innovation Advisory Committee had an introductory meeting to discuss the process and the role of the committee.
- April 11, 2023: The District of Innovation Advisory Committee met to discuss benefits/concerns of the DOI process and decide on exemptions to pursue.
- April 2023: A draft of the DOI plan was shared with the District of Innovation Advisory Committee.
- May 1, 2023: An update on the DOI process was provided to the Board of Managers by the District of Innovation Advisory Committee Chairman.
- May 3, 2023: Department leaders shared input with the District of Innovation Advisory Committee Chairman regarding proposed exemptions that fall underneath their respective areas.
- May 4, 2023: The District of Innovation Advisory Committee met to discuss plan guidelines for each proposed exemption and selected the format of the overall plan. Executive Cabinet members were invited and participated during the planning session.
- May 8, 2023: The proposed plan was posted on the Marlin ISD website.

V. Requirements of the Education Code that the Local Innovation Plan Exempts the District From (Upon Adoption of The Plan)

First Day of Instruction	
Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §25.0811
Rationale	Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to be more responsive. Starting early will also allow the district to consider various calendar options that could appeal to families and current and potential qualified educators.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	With input from all stakeholders, the District Calendar Committee will develop its annual calendar recommendation for approval by the Board of Managers. Through the exemption, the first day of instruction can begin prior to the fourth Monday in August.

Class Size in Grades PreKindergarten - 4

Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §25.112 TEC §25.113
Rationale	<p>Plan Rationale: The TEC currently requires the District to maintain a class size of 22 students or less in each prekindergarten through fourth grade class. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). These waivers are rarely rejected by the TEA, making the process of applying for a waiver no more than an administrative step of putting the TEA on notice. Along with the waiver, the District is required to notify parents of the waiver or exception to the class size limit. Many times, soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the District and the class returns to a size at or below 22 students, thus negating the need for the waiver or notification to parents.</p>
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	<p>The district fully intends to continue its practice of maintaining reasonable class sizes in pre-kindergarten through grade four. Flexibility from these statutes will allow the district to make decisions about reasonable class sizes based on local factors such as the needs and interactions of the particular students involved, the age of the students, the subjects to be taught, and the teacher's skill and experience. The administration will continue to consider the timing in the school year, available space, and the need for another teacher or teacher aide to ensure that decisions about class size continue to be made in the right interest of the students should the ratio go above 25:1. This exemption would provide relief from the reporting encumbrances currently required by state law.</p>

Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §37.0012
Rationale	<p>This code requires one individual be named on each campus as the campus behavior coordinator.</p> <p>Campuses typically aim to allow different campus administrators to be assigned to certain grade levels or student populations by last name. Allowing for more than one administrator to serve in this capacity allows relationships to be built and cultivated over time.</p>
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	<p>Campus administrative teams meet and discuss various topics during those meetings, so all have an invested interest in matters on the campus.</p> <p>Administrators will be assigned discipline referrals based on the needs of the campus (i.e., by grade level(s) or by the last name of students). This exemption will allow for continued collaboration to support students and handle disciplinary matters as needed.</p>

Teacher Certification	
Statutory Citation(s)	<p>TEC §21.003(a)</p> <p>TEC §21.057</p> <p>TEC §21.0031</p> <p>TEC §21.053</p>
Rationale	<p>TEC §21.003 states that “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.” In the event an appropriately certified teacher cannot be found, the District must request an emergency certification from TEA and SBEC. There are certain subject areas that are difficult to recruit and hire qualified and trained staff. PreKindergarten, Bilingual, and Special Education are areas that would be excluded from this exemption.</p>
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	<p>The district fully intends to maintain its commitment to hire certified professionals and will continue to seek employees with appropriate certifications. However, when that is not reasonably possible, this exemption will allow the district to have the flexibility to issue a local teaching permit and hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and are fully equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question based on local certification criteria without requesting a waiver from the Texas Education Agency.</p>

Probationary Contracts	
Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §21.102 (b)
Rationale	Under current guidelines, probationary periods cannot exceed one year for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. The District will have the flexibility of hiring a probationary teacher for a second year to provide for more growth and coaching when the teacher is hired under the five-of-eight rule.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	Exemption from this statute will better permit administrators the time necessary to evaluate a teacher's performance and provide opportunities for additional improvement and growth. This change in the probationary contract from one year to two years will be available as an option for teachers newly hired by Marlin ISD or rehired after a break in service. Such recommendation will be in collaboration between the Principal and Human Resources Department.

Transfer of Student	
Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §25.036
Rationale	Currently, under TEC §25.036 a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the District. The transfer policy for non-resident students must be a one-year commitment on the part of the District. Requiring a one-year commitment does not factor in student misbehavior or truancy concerns that impact the district.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	Under this exemption, the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants will be eliminated. The District may immediately revoke a student's transfer for any lawful reason and provide reasonable notification to the Parent/Guardian. Reasons could include low attendance, repeated failing grades, or documented disciplinary issues.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings	
Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §28.004
Rationale	Texas Education Code Section 28.004 requires the school board of each school district to establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district’s health education instruction. Further, the law requires the health advisory council to meet at least four times each year.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	Due to the size of the District, Marlin ISD seeks exemption from the statutory provision requiring the SHAC to meet at least four times each year. The SHAC will meet twice per year (once in the Fall and once in the Spring), and the Board will be informed following each SHAC meeting. This exemption would support Marlin ISD’s commitment to health education and instruction without overburdening designated council members.

Teacher Appraisal System	
Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §21.352(c)
Rationale	The state currently requires use of a teacher appraisal system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). Marlin ISD is currently using T-TESS as its teacher appraisal system. While this system is designed to meet the needs of the entire state, Marlin ISD seeks to customize certain aspects of the system to better meet the needs of its teachers and campus administrators.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	The District seeks to allow teachers who have demonstrated high-quality performance the opportunity to be exempt from an annual, full appraisal under certain circumstances that are established locally. A non-probationary teacher may only be exempt if the teacher consistently meets the local criteria; however, if the need occurs, a non-probationary teacher who fails to consistently meet the established criteria would be required to have a full appraisal during the respective school year. This flexibility will increase an administrator's ability to focus on struggling or new teachers and will continue to allow administrators to have meaningful professional interactions with all campus staff.

Ejection of Individuals from Facilities

Statutory Citation(s)	TEC §37.105
Rationale	<p>The TEC allows a school administrator, school resource officer, or school district peace officer to refuse to allow a person to enter on or may eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and either the person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person or the person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior despite being given a verbal warning. Under current law, the administrator, resource officer, or peace officer must maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from a school facility that is issued, 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, the district shall provide to the person written information explaining the appeal process, and, under the commissioner's rules adopted under the authority granted in the TEC, the person refused entry or ejected from the facility must be given the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Board of Managers within 90 calendar days. These additional, administratively burdensome requirements, are impractical and potentially impossible to fulfill when an individual is dealing with an unruly individual. It is reasonable to believe that requesting such information could also escalate a situation that is already proving to be disruptive. Further, it is impractical to provide written notice of an appeal process at many events like athletic events or public meetings when the removal is at the immediate event and there are no forms or printer accessible. Furthermore, the District already has</p>

	<p>a process for taking grievances to the Board of Managers and there is not a justified need for a unique process or timeline.</p>
<p>Proposed Plan/Guidelines</p>	<p>Marlin ISD administrators, school resource officers, or school peace officers will retain their authority to refuse to allow a person to enter on or may eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and either (1) the person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person or (2) the person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior despite being given a verbal warning. However, under the exemption, the following requirements will no longer be applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining a written log of verbal warnings; • providing written notice of the appeal process at the time of ejection; <p>The district will keep a record following each occurrence for tracking purposes, and information regarding the appeal process will be accessible on the district website.</p>

School District Depositories Contract

Statutory Citation(s)	TEC Subchapter G. 45.205, 45.206, 45.207
Rationale	The TEC provides information regarding the depository bank for a district.
Proposed Plan/Guidelines	<p>By gaining exemption from these statutes, Marlin ISD would be able to allow the district’s existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 8 year 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 to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is/are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district’s business. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter their direct deposit instructions and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships.</p>