

Lone Oak ISD

District of Innovation Plan



Plan Approved

District of Innovation Committee Meeting 1/7/2022

Board of Trustee Final Approval 3/8/2022

Renewed District of Innovation Effective Date 3/14/2022

I. Introduction

The 84th legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allowed traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas' open enrollment charter schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation." On Monday, December 5, 2016, the Lone Oak ISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation.

II. Mission

Lone Oak ISD will create a supportive learning environment that nurtures positive self-esteem and physical well-being while enabling students to reach their fullest academic and social potential. The district accepts the responsibilities for preparing students to be productive citizens and lifelong learners in our changing world.

III. Expectations

- Lone Oak ISD will achieve the highest accountability rating by TEA
- All students will experience highly engaging and rigorous lessons to help them attain their academic potential.
- Parent and community members will be partners with the Lone Oak ISD staff meeting the needs of our students.
- School facilities will be safe, well maintained and disciplined environments conducive to student learning.
- An appropriate overall financial condition of the district will be maintained through effective planning and efficient management of the budget.

IV. Process

On December 5, 2016, the LOISD Board of Trustees appointed a District of Innovation Committee which is comprised of administrators, teachers, parents and community members. The committee met on January 11, 2017 to discuss and draft a Local Innovation Plan (LIP). The committee researched Texas education codes in which the district could benefit from modifying in order to make the education process more effective/efficient for Lone Oak ISD. The committee discussed the codes and voted for those the committee wished to pursue as part of the LIP. The plan was posted on the District web page for public input on January 13, 2017 for 30 days before the Board of Trustees voted on the plan on April 17, 2017.

The District of Innovation Committee met again in January of 2022 to begin discussing the renewal of the LOISD Local Innovation Plan. After discussing and drafting additional codes, a final version of the proposed plan was added to the website, more than 30 days prior to the intended implementation of the renewed plan, in order to make the changes available for community review. The Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, March 8th to review the DOI renewal plan and voted in favor of the renewal. This plan will be effective from March 14, 2022 to March 2027.

V. Committee Members (Renewal 2022)

Janeé Carter	Superintendent
Jeff Hicks	Director of Academics and Accountability
Shannon Wilhite	Middle School Principal
Lisa Brannon	Elementary Assistant Principal
Dedi Boyer	Nurse
Kendra McGee	High School Teacher
Jessica Parker	High School Teacher
Elizabeth Hyatt	High School Teacher
Kyle McKinney	College Street Teacher
Lindsay Buhler	Middle School Teacher
Katherine Smith	Middle School Teacher
Kristi Hopkins	Middle School Teacher
Kelsi Patterson	Elementary Teacher
Mindy Hogue	Elementary Teacher
Haley Holder	Elementary Teacher
Jason Luhn	Community Member
Kyle Wilhite	Community Member
Dennis Carter	Community Member
Dana Hicks	Community Member

VI. District of Innovation Renewal Timeline

January 7, 2022

District of Innovation Committee Meeting to review current plan and consider changes and additions for renewal.

February 10, 2022

Post the final draft of the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for public input.

February 22, 2022

Notify the Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.

March 4, 2022

District of Innovation Committee Meeting to consider any changes based on community input. No community input has been given and no changes were made.

March 8, 2022

LOISD Board of Trustees approves the District of Innovation Renewal Plan.

March 14, 2022

The renewed DOI plan takes effect, superseding the previous plan.

VII. Term of Plan

As determined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the District of Innovation Plan is five years. Thus, the renewed plan will supersede the original plan for the remaining three weeks of the original term and take effect March 14, 2022 and end March 2027 unless terminated by the Board of Trustees. The District Improvement Committee will monitor the Local Innovation Plan annually and provide feedback to the Board in regards to the effectiveness of the plan.

VIII. Innovations

Calendar (EB LEGAL & LOCAL) (TEC §25.0811)

Under current Texas state law, “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

Innovation Strategy

School start dates is an area in which the district should be able to determine locally and on an annual basis to determine what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week.

Class Size Waiver (EEB LOCAL) (TEC §25.112, §25.113)

State law requires that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. If classes are going to exceed this cap, a waiver is required from the Texas Education Agency. If approved, the district must then notify parents by “specifying the class for which an exception from the limit imposed by Section 25.112(a) was granted; (2) state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted. (§25.113, 1-2). Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Innovation Strategy

Lone Oak ISD is a growing district with one elementary campus that has reached capacity. As we look to build a new facility, the number of students per class is anticipated to exceed the 22:1 ratio dictated by law. While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of students, but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

In the event the cap of 22:1 is exceeded in a K-4th classroom, the superintendent will report these findings to the board. If class sizes reach a 25:1 ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board and the district will notify parents. A waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1

ratio. This gives LOISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency. Lone Oak ISD is committed to keeping class sizes at or below the current 22:1 ratio. Therefore, we will continue to look at avenues to reduce class sizes, but need to have the flexibility to exceed this cap during the expansion process.

Probationary Contracts (DCA Legal) (TEC §21.102)

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one-year probationary period is not a sufficient amount of time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Currently, contracts for Lone Oak ISD employees occur in March which demands that employment decisions must be made with very little time for evaluating teacher effectiveness and prior to state assessment results.

Innovation Strategy

For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the first day of employment with Lone Oak ISD.

Teacher Certification (DBA LEGAL & LOCAL, DK LEGAL & LOCAL, Exhibit) (TEC §21.003)

As a small school district, it is sometimes difficult to find qualified applicants for certain fields. When an applicant is unavailable it occasionally becomes necessary for a teacher to teach outside their certified teaching field. In order for a teacher to teach outside their teaching field, the district is required to submit a request to TEA. TEA then approves or denies this request.

The following Texas Education Code requirements are requested for exemption as they limit the district's ability to effectively recruit, employ, and retain persons who have appropriate expertise, experience, and/or industry certifications that render them qualified to fill such positions. §21.003(a): 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. §21.053(a): A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. §21.053(b): An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate. §21.057(a): A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. §21.057(b): The superintendent of the school district shall provide the notice required by Subsection (a) not later than the 30th instructional day after the date of the assignment of the inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. This system does not take into account the unique instructional and/or financial needs of the district. These statutes limit the flexibility a district may have to recruit, employ, and retain persons who have appropriate expertise, experience, and/or industry certifications that render them qualified to fill such positions. Lone Oak ISD will continue to seek highly effective, certified educators for all teaching positions. However, where that is

not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to issue a local teaching permit known as the District of Innovation Permit, to hire individuals or to reassign employees 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 permit or waiver from the Texas Education Agency.

Another area in which flexibility would benefit Lone Oak ISD would be the ability to hire employees, with industry experience, for innovative, dual credit, or new classes in which we are unable to find certified teachers for a position.

Innovative Strategy

In order to best serve Lone Oak ISD students by allowing more flexibility in scheduling and more course offerings, decisions on certification will be handled locally. For grades 6-12, in all subjects except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual*:

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one or more courses in a field for which s/he is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify him or her to teach the proposed courses.
2. An individual with college teaching or industry experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certificate. The campus principal would make a request to the superintendent and make all credentials available. The superintendent would have the capability to hire this person on a local certification and the employee would obtain an at-will contract.
3. A person seeking a District of Innovation Permit must have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - a. Professional work experience.
 - b. Formal training and education, including an Associate's Degree (CTE) and Bachelors/Masters/Doctoral Degrees.
 - c. Active/Relevant industry certification or registration.
 - d. Combination of work experience, training, and education.
4. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.

Under the Lone Oak ISD DOI Plan exemption, individuals will be issued a District of Innovation Permit and will be appraised using the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers. To ensure high quality instruction, LOISD will support these individuals through a Personal Professional Development Plan which includes support for classroom management and Mentor Teacher Support in lesson planning, content and classroom management. Under this exemption, certification waiver or state permit applications will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. Additionally, the district will not be required to provide parental notification as long as the individual meets the requirements for a DOI Permit. This permit would allow these qualified individuals to teach in the hard to fill positions including, but not limited to: Career and Technology Education, Dual Credit, Languages other than English, Math, and Science.

For candidates seeking employment with Lone Oak ISD, the principal will consider the candidate's credentials, qualifications and fit for campus instructional needs. If the principal determines the candidate is best for the campus teaching assignment, he/she will submit to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's Designee, a request for a District of Innovation Permit outlining all of the individual's credentials and qualifications. Additionally, the principal must submit a summary outlining efforts made to secure a qualified and appropriately certified teacher.

The Superintendent will then consider the request if he/she believes that the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required for the position and believes that the possessed knowledge, skills and experience could be an asset to our students. If approved by the Superintendent, the candidate will be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration, unless the Board of Trustees has delegated that authority to the Superintendent without need of Board consideration.

*Special Education and bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

Inter-District Transfers (FDA LOCAL) (TEC §25.036)

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Lone Oak ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring non-resident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District.

TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Lone Oak ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Innovative Strategy

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 may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Campus behavior Coordinator (FO Series LEGAL & LOCAL) (TEC §37.0012)

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.

Innovation Strategy

The proposal is for the district to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator.

Local Guidelines:

1. The district's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from the requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the District's Student Code of Conduct. The district will designate all campus principals, assistant principals and discipline coordinators to fulfill discipline and behavior duties.

Student Discipline – Students below Grade (FOB LEGAL) (TEC §37.005)

Currently a student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property, the student engages in:

Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related:

1. Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05;
2. Conduct that contains the elements of a violent offense related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.011, 22.02, 22.021; or
3. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of: a. 1. Marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.’ 2. A dangerous drug as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483; or 3. An alcoholic beverage, as defined by Alcoholic Beverage Code 1.04. c.

Innovation Strategy

Lone Oak ISD would have the option to place a student in ISS or OSS for ‘persistent misconduct’. This will be determined by a Student Assistance Team based on previous documented interventions and office referrals.

90 Percent Attendance Rule Exemption (FEC LOCAL & LEGAL) (TEC §25.092)

Texas Education Code 25.092 required students to attend class for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered in order to earn class credit or be given a final grade for the class. The 90 Percent Rule is an arbitrary standard, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery.

Innovation Strategy

1. LOISD will no longer be required to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. This exemption will allow the district to promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities.
2. LOISD administrators will be able to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts and have mastered the required content, rather than because they have attended a certain number of school days. The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum.
3. Flexibility from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the district by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates.
4. LOISD will also explore other innovative ways to demonstrate content mastery, given this exemption. This exemption supports the district’s overarching goals and provides the flexibility needed to implement tools, resources, and training that support personalized learning for both students and teachers. Exempting the district from the 90 Percent Rule does not, in any way, impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (“UIL”) rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher’s right

to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with a district grading policy adopted pursuant to Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

Removal of Unwanted Visitors (GKA LEGAL) (TEC §37.105)

Texas Education Code Section 37.105 applies to rejecting unruly guests from campuses and school events. In 2017, the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he can appeal the ejection.

Innovation Strategy

Lone Oak ISD will allow designated staff members the authority to remove parents or visitors whose behavior is deemed inappropriate without warning or written notice.

School Day Interruptions (EC LEGAL) (TEC §25.083)

Under current Texas law, a board of trustees must develop a policy that must limit announcements other than emergency announcements to once during the school day. In addition, the district may not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent or another person standing in parental relation to the student provides to the district written consent for removal from class for such purpose.

Innovation Strategy

For greater flexibility and opportunities to make decisions on how best to structure school days and individualize instruction, LOISD seeks to award this discretion to campus and district administration in an effort to ensure that decision points put students' and campus needs first. LOISD seeks to provide settings where student growth can occur in an innovative environment. To accomplish this expectation, the committee seeks opportunities to provide altered instructional days and to create flexible scheduling opportunities. Both results allow instructional decisions to be made in response to current student performance data; therefore, reducing learning gaps.

Teacher Appraisal Process (DNA LEGAL) (TEC §21.352)

Current Texas law requires the commissioner to adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including: (1) teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures; and (2) the performance of teachers' students. In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner.

Innovation Strategy

The district is seeking flexibility within the recommended appraisal process and performance criteria for teachers and staff evaluated using the appraisal system Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The district seeks to continue to utilize T-TESS as the teacher appraisal instrument, while seeking exemption from the Student Growth Measure. Data provided from district and campus local assessments will continue to be utilized following the current district assessment model.

Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary (DEA Legal) (TEC §21.002, 21.402, 21.415)

Currently, all districts, when hiring a retired educator, must pay them their salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale; in addition, the districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge.

Innovation Strategy

Lone Oak ISD would like the opportunity to hire an eligible retired educator and pay them below the TEA minimum pay scale while also paying the required TRS surcharge. We believe that by hiring an eligible retired educator our students, campuses, and district will reap the rewards of having a veteran educator who is still involved and passionate in the education process. In addition, the district will be able to have an experienced educator at a significantly lower cost than had we paid them based upon the TEA minimum pay scale plus the TRS surcharge. Thus, by hiring an eligible retired educator, LOISD will be adding value in the schools and will be making sound fiscal decisions for our district's stakeholders.

Staff Development (DMA LEGAL) (TEC §21.451)

Districts are currently mandated staff development requirements at the campus level.

Innovation Strategy

LOISD will have the flexibility to develop a staff development plan that is responsive to campus needs and data with the goal of improving student success in all areas.

Depositories Contract (BDAE LEGAL) (TEC §45.205)

Current statute requires school districts to enter into a two-year contract with a depository bank. This two-year agreement does not provide stability which in term can cause depository banks to limit options of service, interest rates, and fees. In addition to costs and time involved in the request for proposal process, a district incurs additional costs for printing checks should the district be forced to change depositories.

Innovation Strategy

Relief from this mandate would allow the District to continue with a depository bank as long as it is beneficial to the District.

Site-Based Decision Making (BQB LEGAL & LOCAL) (TEC §11.251, 11.252, 11.253)

Currently, the statutory requirements as set forth by Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 and 28 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students.

Lone Oak ISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of this district, school, and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one size fits all approach as detailed in the TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, and TEC §11.253. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community.

Innovation Strategy

In place of the district and campus level planning and decision making processes outlined in TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, and TEC §11.253, a Superintendent's Advisory Council (SAC) will be established, meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district's success and most importantly, students' success. The Site-Based Decision Making Committees at the campus level will still be used as a necessary part of the SAC, but will coordinate decision making at the district level. This council will convene at least two times per year and generate the general direction of district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will yield greater opportunity for one council to address a multitude of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

IX. Summary

The Local Innovation Plan results from the collaboration between multiple stakeholders. The needs of the District were investigated, and the plan created allows Lone Oak ISD the flexibility to make local decisions to best educate our students.