



## **District of Innovation Plan**

### **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. On July 28, 2016, the Kennedale Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation to increase local control over District operations as well as to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. The plan was approved unanimously by the Board on February 16, 2017.

### **II. Term**

The district's original Local Innovation Plan was approved by the Kennedale ISD Board of Trustees for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2017, and ending June 30, 2022. The updated Plan was presented to the Board of Trustees and approved on January 27, 2022, for another five-year term. This new five-year term begins on February 1, 2022, and ends on January 30, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The district-level committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications.

If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the district-level committee (TEC § 11.251) will develop and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment for consideration by the Board. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

### **III. District of Innovation Amendment Timeline**

10/13/21	District Leadership Team, comprised of representatives from all schools and departments within the District, identified existing areas of opportunity for revisions to current DOI plan based on updated needs assessment.
11/15/21	District Leadership Team cohort met to discuss current plan and draft revised DOI plan that addressed identified needs for exemptions from specific provisions of the Texas Education Code as outlined in TEC Chapter 12A.
11/16/21	Superintendent's Cabinet met to review current plan and discuss proposed revisions.

12/1/21	District Leadership Team cohort met to review and discuss draft of updated DOI plan.
12/2/21	District-level committee (TEC § 11.251) met to review and discuss current and revised drafts of DOI plan.
12/9/21	District-level committee (TEC § 11.251) held a public meeting to consider and vote on the updated Plan as required by TEC 12A.005. The voting members of the District Advisory Committee approved the plan.
12/17/21	Board of Trustees notified commissioner of education of the Board's intention to vote on adoption of proposed plan. Final version of proposed plan is made available on the District's website.
1/27/22	Board of Trustees adopts the proposed plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board.

#### **IV. Proposed Alignment of the Plan**

The Plan is in alignment with the Board's adopted mission, vision, and goals for the upcoming school year.

##### **Mission**

The mission of the Kennedale Independent School District is to provide a diverse, engaging, and safe environment where all stakeholders are responsible and accountable for student success.

##### **Vision**

Engage, Enrich, Equip, Excel

##### **Goals**

1. We will provide an exceptional learning experience to promote high levels of achievement and postsecondary readiness for all students.
2. We will engage students, families, and community stakeholders to foster shared responsibility for student success.
3. We will ensure that all students and staff learn and work in a safe environment that is responsive to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our stakeholders.
4. The district will establish systemic and systematic operational processes to align resources with its mission, vision, and goals.

## V. Innovations

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

1. **Certification Required** (TEC 21.003 & 21.057) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)  
Texas Education Code 21.003 and 21.057 outlines state certification and notification standards for teachers. An exemption from these requirements allows Kennedale ISD to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate, but whom the District deems best to teach in a particular area (with the exception of special education, bilingual, and ESL). Kennedale ISD prides itself in hiring the highest quality teaching staff for the benefit of all learners. Occasionally, teachers are needed for positions that are difficult to fill because of the lack of certified applicants. After the required posting period and candidate interviews, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what specific credentials (i.e., experiences and expertise) the prospective teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach that subject(s). This exemption excludes positions that require SBEC certification for teachers of special education, bilingual, and ESL. The District and local campus will assess appropriate training needs for any teacher hired under this exemption. Finally, this is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district.

Non-certified teachers hired under a local teaching certificate shall receive a non-Chapter 21 contract for the first year of KISD employment in a teaching position. A non-certified teacher will be eligible to receive a probationary contract under TEC Chapter 21 after the completion of one school year or upon receiving his/her teaching certificate, whichever occurs first.

2. **Uniform School Calendar** (TEC 25.0811) (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)  
Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:
  - Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break.
  - Alignment of calendar with TCC, Advanced Placement Exams, and STAAR/EOC timelines.
  - Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.
  - Creates flexibility for the District to pursue year round school of choice for identified populations.
3. **Probationary Contracts** (TEC 21.102) (DCA LEGAL)  
Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers, supervisors, counselors, principals, assistant principals, diagnosticians, nurses and other educators entitled to a Chapter 21 contract under state law (“covered educators”) who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period of time is insufficient in some

cases to fully determine the employee's effectiveness in their current role. 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 experienced covered educators who are newly hired in Kennedale ISD.

4. **Teacher Mentors (TEC 21.458) (DEAA LEGAL)**

TEC 21.458 lays out several requirements for teacher mentors. An exemption from these requirements would allow for any teacher in need of mentor assistance or support to be assigned a mentor. In addition, mentors would be exempt from the qualifications described in Subsection (b), thus increasing the pool of teachers from which the district could draw for these targeted mentoring programs.

5. **Transfer Students (TEC 25.036)**

TEC 25.036(a) states that any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. The Commissioner of Education has interpreted this statute to prohibit mid-year student transfer revocation except in the case of failure to pay tuition.

The District seeks exemption from TEC 25.036(a) and the interpretation of the Commissioner of Education. Status as a transfer student in KISD is a privilege and not a right, and the District seeks exemption from this provision, and the related Commissioner interpretation, in order to ensure that transfer students fulfill their responsibilities in order to maintain that privilege. A transfer student shall be notified in the written transfer agreement that he or she must follow all rules and regulations of the District. Non-resident students who have been accepted as a District transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent or designee at any time during the academic year if the student fails to meet and maintain standards of academic, attendance or conduct as outlined in the KISD Transfer form. Additionally, violation of the terms of the transfer agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year.

## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and departments. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.

## 2021-2022 District of Innovation Committee Members

[Laura Adams](#) | District Wide Behavior Interventionist  
[Patricia Arnold](#) | Teacher  
[Sandra Baugh](#) | Teacher  
[Timothy Bullus](#) | Teacher  
[Cheryl Burke](#) | Teacher  
[Michael Cagle](#) | Principal  
[Cari Clark](#) | Principal  
[Charles Creasy](#) | Teacher  
[Carolyn Cullum](#) | Teacher  
[Dr. Stephanie Devlin](#) | Director of Counseling  
[Denell Dickey](#) | Instructional Programs Coordinator  
[Russell Dickinson](#) | Community Member  
[Connie Dorosky](#) | Teacher  
[Tammy Dwommo](#) | Assistant Principal  
[Wendy Gerstenkorn](#) | Lead Diagnostician  
[Mary Harrod](#) | Teacher  
[Deborah Hicks](#) | Teacher  
[Janis Howell](#) | Teacher  
[Brad Horton](#) | Business Representative  
[Dr. Toya Keas](#) | Instructional Programs Coordinator  
[Debbie Lavadour](#) | Teacher  
[Lauren Long](#) | Teacher

[Darin Luman](#) | Intern for Assistant Principal  
[Melanie MacDonald](#) | Parent  
[Sheri Mahanay](#) | Teacher  
[Andrew Malkowski](#) | Parent  
[Jennifer McCoy](#) | Teacher  
[Linda Medrano](#) | Teacher  
[Eileen Mode](#) | Director of Facilities  
[Shana Mode](#) | Data Analyst  
[Miranda Montiel](#) | Teacher  
[Rachael Parker](#) | Teacher  
[Kari Pride](#) | Principal  
[Monica Rawls](#) | Director of Special Student Services  
[Reggie Rhines](#) | Principal  
[Stacey Scaief](#) | Community Member  
[Robyn Shaw](#) | Parent  
[Rhonda Smith](#) | Teacher  
[Courtney Spitzer](#) | Principal  
[Monica Stephens](#) | Teacher  
[Nanette Tate](#) | Intern for Assistant Principal  
[Andrea Volding](#) | Teacher  
[Laura Wells](#) | Teacher  
[Dr. Julie Vu](#) | Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Student Services