

Introduction: House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 12th, 2017, the Board of Trustees, after a public hearing, adopted a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation. That same evening they appointed our local District Improvement Committee to be the Local Innovation Committee appointed to draft the Princeton ISD local innovation plan.

On February 6, 2017, the District Improvement Committee/Local Innovation Committee met for the purpose of educating the committee about HB 1842 and Districts of Innovation. The committee discussed possible exemptions and decided which exemptions to pursue and include in the Local Innovation Plan for Princeton ISD. On February 13, 2017, the committee met and based on direction provided by the Board and input from a public meeting of stakeholders, the Committee voted unanimously to propose this plan to the Board of Trustees for final approval at the March 20, 2017, regular Board Meeting. Final approval by the Board came after the plan was posted on the District Website for no less than 30 days for further public input.

Timeline for renewal

On February 16, 2022, senior administration staff met to review the district's current innovation plan and research additional exemptions that might be beneficial.

On February 28, 2022, Recommendations for renewal were presented to a public meeting of the District Improvement Committee. The committee discussed the recommendations, proposed changes, and voted to adopt the resulting plan. The adopted plan adds an additional exemption to TEC 21.202 (b) which would allow the district to extend the probationary contract period of an employee covered by this section to two years and expands the exemption from TEC 21.003 to include TEC 21.044, 21.053, 21.056, 21.053 and 19 TAC 231. This exemption will allow the district to continue to hire Career and Technical Education instructors with field experience, experienced community college instructors to serve as dual credit teachers, and certified teachers to teach one subject out of their certification field with annual approval from the superintendent. The exemption from TEC 25.0811 (a) relating to beginning instruction prior to the 4th Monday in August was left unchanged.

On February 28, 2022, the proposed renewal plan was presented to the Board of Trustees in a regularly scheduled meeting. Upon review of the proposal, the board voted unanimously to begin the process of renewing the district's innovation plan.

On March 3, 2022, the final version of the proposed renewal plan was posted to the district's website at this [link](#).

On March 14, 2022, Commissioner of Education notified of the board's intent to renew.

On June 20, 2022, the board approved the plan for implementation.

Prerequisite: A district must receive a “met standard” rating to be eligible to become a District of Innovation. Princeton ISD meets this standard.

Term: The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as outlined by the Texas Education Agency, is five years; therefore, the plan commenced with the 2022-2023 academic year and will conclude at the end of the 2026-2027 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees or the Commissioner of Education in accordance with the law. The Local Innovation Team will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications as needed.

Mission Statement: The mission of Princeton Independent School District is to inspire and enable each student to achieve his or her full potential.

District Goals:

- Provide child-centered campuses that encourage all students to experience success
- Recruit, challenge, develop and retain qualified and productive staff that is supportive in all areas
- Foster Community Involvement
- Provide for the growth and ever-changing demographics of Princeton ISD

It has been determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code currently inhibit the pursuit of the mission and goals of Princeton Independent School District in meeting the needs of students.

First Day of Instruction

Innovation Plan Exemption from TEC 25.0811 (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.

Benefit of Exemption: To best serve the students of Princeton ISD, we propose to create a school calendar which serves the needs of our local community. We propose moving the mandatory start date earlier than the fourth Monday in August. Waiting to start classes until the fourth Monday in August forces semesters to be significantly unequal in length. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable our district to better balance instruction time in each semester as well as making an effort to end our first semester prior to Winter Break.

Teacher Certification for Career and Technical Education and Hard to Fill Positions

Innovation Plan Exemption from TEC §21.003, §21.053, and §21.057.

These codes limit the District's ability to hire instructors in highly specialized and hard to fill positions when high quality, State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) certified teachers are not available.

Benefit of Exemption: While this exemption would be exercised in a limited way for specific situations, it would allow the District to recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real-world experience. In addition, this would potentially allow us to offer more dual credit opportunities in CTE courses, and hire experienced community college instructors in these areas as well. This also allows Princeton ISD to utilize certified teachers to teach one subject out of their field with annual approval of the superintendent.

Extension of Probationary Contracts

Innovation Plan Exemption from TEC 21.102 (b). ...that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired contract employees who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the employee's effectiveness in the position. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a second-year probationary contract for a total probationary period of up to two years for experienced administrators, teachers, counselors, or nurses newly hired in Princeton ISD. A change in contract type also constitutes newly hired.

Evaluation of Local Plan: It is noted that through the annual review process, further innovations and exemptions may be needed to advance the work of the District in meeting the needs of students, and amendments may be necessary. As other districts across the state pursue this process and implement plans through this provision for additional flexibilities and more local control, new ideas for innovation may emerge that have great applicability for PISD. It is fully understood that the renewal process or amendment process must be in compliance with all sections of the adoption process. The District also shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind, or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemption and local approval dates. It is further understood the Board may convene the Local Innovation Plan Committee prior to the annual review process if deemed necessary.