



District of Innovation Plan

Draft Date: March 8, 2017

**Final Board Approval and Plan Start Date:
May 17, 2017**



Local Innovation Committee Members:

Name	Title
Dr. Lourdes Alarcón	Director Federal, STEM, & Special Programs
Michele Gonzalez	Principal, O'Donnell Intermediate School
Rosa Garcia	Dean of Instruction-Fabens High School
Dr. Sam Hogue	Principal, Cotton Valley Early College High School
Patricia Ramos	Assistant Principal, Fabens Middle School
Richard Lopez	Principal, Fabens Elementary School
Julieta Bañuelas	Science Teacher, Fabens High School <i>2016 Secondary Teacher of the Year</i>
Rosemary Contreras	Bilingual Teacher, O'Donnell Intermediate School <i>2016 Elementary Teacher of the Year</i>
Dr. David J. Rueda	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Gilbert Alarcón	Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations
Connie Prieto	Human Resources
Jorge Saenz	Director, Special Education
Viola Hernandez	Parent
Armando Baca	Business & Community

INTRODUCTION

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members, Fabens ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the district increased local control over district operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

On January 18, 2017 an overview of the District of Innovation process was presented to the Fabens ISD Board of Trustees and audience in attendance. The Fabens ISD Board of Trustees passed a resolution allowing the district to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation. In addition, a public meeting was held on January 18, 2017 to allow comments and questions from district staff, campus staff, and community members in attendance. The Fabens ISD Board of Trustees then appointed the Local Innovation Committee (LIC) to draft a Local Innovation Plan (LIP) focused on seeking exemptions that would benefit the students of Fabens ISD. The committee included representation from district stakeholders.

TERM

Upon approval, the Fabens ISD Local Innovation Plan (LIP) will be in effect for five years. The Local Innovation Committee (LIC) will monitor the effectiveness of the LIP and provide progress updates to the Fabens ISD Board of Trustees.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mission Statement:

All students of Fabens Independent School District will be prepared to be successful, lifelong, global learners.

Fabens ISD has the following priority goals:

The District shall:

- develop and implement a well-balanced, sequential, integrated and coordinated instructional program.
- assure the community that schools are safe environments conducive to successful learning.
- promote self-worth and high expectations for all students and staff.
- involve families, communities, and service agencies in addressing needs unique to the rural, bi-cultural community.

Innovations:

In an effort to better serve the students of Fabens ISD and to prepare our students for success in college and careers of the future, Fabens ISD has implemented innovative programs that allow students to strengthen their abilities to compete, thrive, and allow them to reach their potential and serve their community. To date, Fabens ISD has the following innovations that will be supported by this plan:

- Dual Credit Opportunities at Fabens High School and Cotton Valley Early College High School
- Early College Associates degree opportunities
- T-STEM Academy (Grades 6-12)
- Dual Language Bilingual Program (Grades K-5)

Fabens High School and Early College Dual Credit Classes

In order to promote college readiness and encourage students to continue on to post-secondary education, Fabens ISD provides for dual credit classes in which students earn their high school and college credits simultaneously. These classes are offered at Fabens High School and Cotton Valley Early College High School. Some dual credit courses are taught by teachers with high school teaching certification as well as college credentials. Others are offered off site at EPPC and UTEP or online taught by college and university professors.

Cotton Valley Early College High School (CVECHS)

Cotton Valley Early College High School has been in operation since 2010 through a partnership with El Paso Community College serving as the Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner. Through this partnership, students enrolled at CVECHS have the opportunity to complete an Associate's Degree through dual credit coursework while they complete high school. In order to operate as an early college high school, the campus must receive an annual renewal of the Early College High School Designation through the Texas Education Agency. In order to be considered for ECHS designation, a campus must demonstrate an effective partnership with an IHE as well as an operational structure and recruiting process which targets students from underrepresented groups to include economically

disadvantaged, at-risk, and first generation college students. Through the ECHS scholarship, UTEP offers CVECHS students up to 18 additional college hours towards their Bachelor's degree while still enrolled in high school. The college and university partnerships are critical for the success of CVECHS as students are dual-enrolled. The staff at CVECHS and Fabens ISD work diligently to align schedules and calendars with the IHE partners as efficiently as possible to optimize student success. Students who graduate from high school with some college credits are more likely to continue on to obtain a bachelor's degree.

T-STEM Academy

In July of 2015, Fabens High School was designated a T-STEM Academy, expanding to a 6-12 T-STEM Academy in August of 2016. The T-STEM Academy exposes students to rigorous science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine curriculum. Furthermore, the collaboration and guidance from our T-STEM Advisory Board has opened additional doors that relate to internships, shadowing STEM professionals, and collaborating with other STEM schools and Higher Education Institutes. Students at Fabens ISD will benefit from these experiences as they seek out careers and educational pathways in the areas of STEM.

Dual Language Program

The district has implemented a 50/50, one way dual language program to help bilingual students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade achieve higher literacy levels in English and Spanish. This replaced the transitional model. Students in this program, which is in every bilingual classroom, learn to read and write in English and Spanish and work through all academic subjects in both languages. Instruction is closely aligned with non-bilingual classes. The purpose of this program is to promote earlier English proficiency, high levels of literacy in English and Spanish, increase success during transition to all-English classes at the secondary levels, and promote college readiness for all students. Literacy in two languages will provide long term career advantages.

STATUTES IN THE TEXAS EDUCATION CODE WHICH INHIBIT THE GOALS OF THIS PLAN:

First Day of Instruction

TEC Sec. 25.0811. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption

Fabens ISD actively focuses on students reaching their full potential of academic student success. Currently, Texas Education Code 25.0811 inhibits the flexibility needed when developing the instructional calendars. Freedom from this constraint will allow the district to design a calendar that better supports the innovations currently in place. Local control over the school start date for students will allow the district to balance out the semesters, more closely align the semesters with courses from EPCC and UTEP, provide for sufficient instructional time before state testing and allow sufficient time for summer courses, district offered camps, and summer school.

Balancing instructional days in each semester will ensure students have sufficient instructional time to successfully complete coursework. Furthermore, students who attend classes on site or online with EPCC and UTEP need to complete the school year in time to take advantage of summer courses. Currently, there is an overlap between the end of the school year and the start of summer session courses offered at EPCC and UTEP. Consequently, this affects students taking summer courses, recent graduates who want to start college courses right away and staff members who plan to continue their education in the summer. A well designed and balanced calendar will maximize instructional time and opportunities for higher education. Fabens ISD also provides for summer remediation and enrichment. The instructional calendar will have the flexibility to allow more time for students to benefit from summer school before summer STAAR testing dates, summer enrichment classes, and credit recovery opportunities.

Teacher Certification

TEC Sec. 21.003 CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (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.

TEC Sec. 21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES. (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.

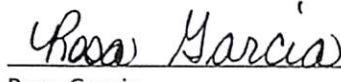
Benefit of Exemption

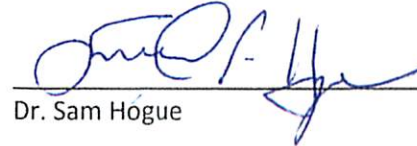
In order to promote college and career readiness, the district seeks to expand dual credit programs, career and technology, and possibly fine arts course offerings and find qualified personnel to fill current and future vacancies in these areas. Exemption from this code would increase the ability of the district to offer dual credit courses on site, without having to rely as heavily on distance learning options. Use of this exemption would be limited to hard to fill CTE/STEM, Dual Credit, and Fine Arts classes in grades 6-12 only. This exemption will not be applied to grades PreK-5. Locally developed criteria will ensure these teachers have the appropriate qualifications in their field of expertise and, in the case of dual credit, college level credentials. Furthermore, detailed job descriptions for hard to fill areas will outline preferred certification and experience based on the needs of the specific discipline. Obtaining this exemption would further allow Fabens ISD to have the flexibility to hire community college instructors or university professors in specific content areas to provide students the opportunity to benefit from expanded dual credit course offerings. Teachers who do not possess a Texas Teacher Certificate would be hired as full or part time employees with at-will contracts. These teachers will be supported through ongoing quality staff development and evaluated for high quality instruction. This will allow Fabens ISD to remain competitive when recruiting instructors and expand course offerings for students. **This exemption will not change current teacher contracts or displace current employees.**


Local Innovation Committee Members:

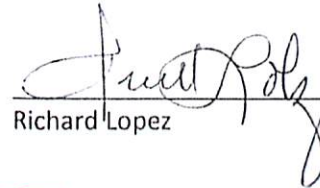

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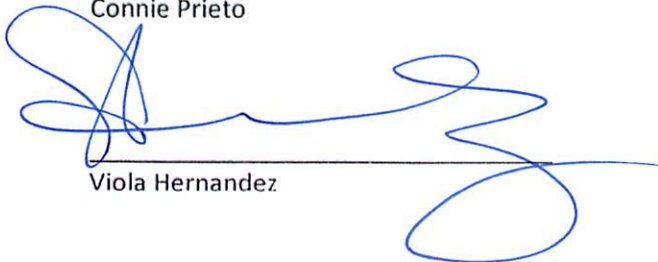

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