



# Local Innovation Plan

Fabens ISD

DRAFT March 4, 2022





## **Fabens ISD Local Innovation Plan Amendment and Renewal **Draft 3/4/2022****

### **Fabens ISD Local Innovation Committee (LIC) Membership**

1. Michele Gonzalez - Assistant Superintendent - Returning member
2. Dr. Sam Hogue – Secondary Director - Returning Member
3. Julieta Bañuelas – T-Stem Teacher Leader - Returning Member
4. Karen Trautman - Teacher
5. Justin Stone - Teacher
6. Yvonne Munoz - Teacher
7. Martha Martinez - Teacher
8. Benita Chacon - Teacher Assistant
9. Guadalupe Varela - Teacher Assistant
10. Veronica Flores - Literacy Coach
11. Connie Delgado - Facilitator
12. Luis Carlos Estrada - Community Member
13. Edna Barraza - Community Member
14. Veronica Salcido - Community Member
15. Melissa Escobar - Community Member
16. Irais Alcantar - Community Member
17. Julieta Ramirez - Community Member/ Alternate

Teachers were selected by their peers as 2021 Teachers of the Year.  
Paraprofessionals are the 2021 Employees of the Year.

A two-thirds committee is sufficient for each meeting. Use of alternates will ensure membership needed as well as equitable campus representation.

## 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. To better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members, Fabens ISD sought to become a District of Innovation in 2017. Fabens ISD continues to review exemptions to amend and renew its plan to meet the changing needs of the district. This distinction allows the district increased local control over district operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

The Fabens ISD Board of Trustees then appointed the Local Innovation Committee (LIC) to review, revise, and renew its Local Innovation Plan (LIP). The committee included representation from district stakeholders. The plan will be posted on the district's website and a link sent out to all staff and parents to allow for at least 30 days of public review and input before final board approval. Approval of the District Improvement Team (DIT) will precede board approval. Both DIT and Board Meetings will be open to the public and comments will be encouraged.

## **TERM**

Upon final board approval, the Renewed and Amended Fabens ISD Local Innovation Plan (LIP) will be in effect for five years from the date of approval.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **Vision Statement:**

Working together, Fabens ISD creates a positive and lasting impact through multiple learning opportunities.

### **Mission Statement:**

All students of the District will be prepared to be successful, lifelong, global learners.

### **Fabens ISD has the following priority goals:**

The District will:

- Provide a safe and orderly school climate, conducive to learning.
- Increase student academic achievement while cultivating a growth mindset for all stakeholders.
- Recruit, develop, and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and support personnel to improve student academic excellence and ensure the postsecondary readiness of all students.
- Build strong partnerships with parents, community, and business members to promote a shared responsibility for student learning.
- Operate in a fiscally sound manner through financial transparency.



## **Innovative practices:**

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
- Early College Associates degree opportunities
- T-STEM Academy (Grades 6-12)
- P-TECH Academy (Diesel Technology Program)
- Dual Language Bilingual Program (Grades K-5)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) District and Campus Teams

## **Fabens High School Dual Credit Classes**

In order to promote college readiness and encourage students to continue on to post-secondary education, Fabens ISD provides dual credit classes in which students earn their high school and college credits simultaneously. These classes are offered at Fabens 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. The District of Innovation distinction allows Fabens ISD to recruit credentialed professors to teach at Fabens High School in person and expands the dual credit classes offered to students.

## **Cotton Valley Early College Program**

The Cotton Valley Early College Program 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 in Fabens High School's early college program have the opportunity to complete an associate degree through dual credit coursework while they complete high school. In order to operate an early college high school, Fabens High School 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 early college 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 early college program as students are dual-enrolled. The staff at Fabens High School 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. The Cotton Valley Early College program is now one on of three designations at Fabens High School.

### **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.

### **Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)**

Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) are innovative open-enrollment high schools that allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity to receive both a high school diploma and a credential and/or an associate degree. The hallmark of the P-TECH model is its career focus and the provision of work-based education. P-TECH programs: Enroll historically underserved students, targeting at-risk and economically disadvantaged, provide students grade 9 through 12 the opportunity to complete a course of study that combines high school and post-secondary courses, enable students to earn a high school diploma, along with an associate degree, Level 1 or Level 2 certificate, or industry-based certification within six years, offer age-appropriate work-based learning opportunity in every grade level, allow students to gain work experience through an internship, apprenticeship, or other job training program, align to

regional workforce needs, guiding students into high-demand, high-wage careers, and partner with Texas Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and regional businesses and industries, giving students access to post-secondary education and workforce training opportunities

The Fabens High School P-TECH program currently provides a pathway for students to obtain a Diesel Mechanic Assistant Certification, Diesel Mechanics Certification, or Associates of Applied Science in Diesel Technology.

### **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.

### **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) District and Campus Teams**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone – especially students with disabilities – to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful ([www.esc.net](http://www.esc.net)).

All Fabens ISD campuses have PBIS teams to develop, teach, model, and support school wide expectations for behavior and procedures leading to positive campus culture. Campus PBIS teams review campus data to target supports in areas of need and support a positive school climate where expectations are reinforced, and good character traits are rewarded. The district team ensures continuity of practice throughout the district and coordinates training district wide.

### **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.*

## Benefits 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 positions in grades 6-12. Additionally, this exemption may be used, with superintendent approval, for a teaching position posted for over two months with no qualified and hireable applicants found in any campus with the following limitation: This exemption does not apply to Special Education, Bilingual, and ESL certification areas.

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 teaching credentials. Furthermore, detailed job descriptions for hard to fill areas will outline preferred certification and experience based on the needs of the specific discipline. 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. Teachers will be required to obtain Texas Teaching Certification within two years of hiring date. That date will only be extended if no certified replacement can be found. 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.**

## **Attendance for Credit**

### **Exemption**

#### **Texas Education Code §25.092**

***MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.***

***Texas Education Code §25.083 SCHOOL DAY INTERRUPTIONS. (b) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring or test preparation.***

### **Benefits of Exemptions**

With these exemptions Fabens ISD will gain flexibility needed to design programs for students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and a more flexible, individualized pace not constrained by attendance rules. In addition, measuring mastery could be expanded to alternative educational methods that require students to demonstrate proficiency of course standards.

Additionally, this would allow the district to design programs for students to make accelerated learning gains needed to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 related to capturing course credit or grade level proficiency for on-track graduation. Guidance will be provided for campuses to design programs for students to regain class credit or get back on track academically. Fabens ISD will establish clear standards for accelerated learning and for student mastery of competencies to award credit. Programs and regulations developed under this exemption will not be permitted not interfere with compulsory attendance laws or negatively impact campus attendance rates.

**Local Innovation Committee Members:**

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Irais Alcatar

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Edna Barraza

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Julieta Banuelas

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Benita Chacón

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Concepción Delgado

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