MATHIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
"DISTRICT OF INNOVATION"
Originally Approved by Board of Trustees on May 15, 2017
Amended by the Board of Trustees on October 15, 2018
Renewed by Board of Trustees on January 31, 2022

WHAT IS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION?

During the 84th Legislative Session, House Bill 1842 was passed by the Legislature, giving traditional independent school districts flexibility through a concept known as "Districts of Innovation" (DOI). Essentially, an innovation plan allows the Mathis Independent School District the ability to exempt themselves from certain requirements of the Texas Education Code, thus gaining greater local control.

The Mathis Independent School District has been a "District of Innovation" since May of 2017. As a "District of Innovation" (DOI), MISD gained flexibility in the areas of district-level/site-based decision-making, teacher certification requirements, teacher contracts, teacher & principal appraisal instrument, school start date, minimum minutes of instruction, class size ratio, student attendance rules, teacher certification and employment contracts, teacher appraisal system, student discipline, depository contracts, and group health benefits for school employees. The District's innovation plan has been instrumental in addressing the values, needs, and goals that are essential for the success of the students at the Mathis independent School District.

A DOI designation is granted for five years provided all requirements are met and may be renewed at any time during the term of the plan. In doing so, the renewed plan (19 TAC §102.1311) takes effect only after the term of the district's current innovation plan expires. Since the district intends for the term of a renewed plan to begin prior to the expiration of its current plan (May 2017), the renewed plan supersedes the district's current plan at that time and the current plan is considered void.

TIMELINE

District of Innovation Renewal Plan - November 19, 2021
Final version of proposed DOI plan posted on District's website.

TEA Notification - November 19, 2021
Commissioner of Education notified of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed renewal plan.

Public Hearing - December 3, 2021
Public meeting held by the district-level committee to consider final version of proposed renewal plan and approve by majority vote of the committee members.

Board Approval of DOI Renewal Plan – January 24, 2022
The board of trustees adopts proposed renewal DOI plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.

TEA Notification of Approved DOI Renewal Plan – January 25, 2022
Commissioner of Education notified of the approved DOI renewal plan. Copy of the approved DOI plan posted on District's website in accordance with TEC, §12A.0071.

Proposed Amendment to DOI Renewal Plan – January 28, 2022
District-level committee convened to consider amendment to renewal plan and approve by majority vote of the committee members.

Board Approval of DOI Renewal Plan – January 31, 2022
The board of trustees at a called Special Meeting adopts proposed renewal DOI plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.

MATHIS ISD DOI DISTRICT-LEVEL COMMITTEE

NAME	CAMPUS
Lacy Brauchle	Principal – Early Scholars Academy (PreK-K)
Erica Vasquez	Teacher – Early Scholars Academy
Kate Jurecek	Teacher – Early Scholars Academy
Ashley Gonzales	Parent – Early Scholars Academy
Patricia Pittman	Principal – Mathis Elementary School (1st-3rd)
Cynthia Jimenez	Teacher – Mathis Elementary School
Miranda Montemayor	Teacher – Mathis Elementary School
Gilda Garcia	Parent – Mathis Elementary School
Cynthia Westbrook	Principal – Mathis Intermediate School (4th-5th)
Tammie Younts	Teacher – Mathis Intermediate School
Heather Anderson	Teacher – Mathis Intermediate School
Esmeralda Olivarez	Parent – Mathis Intermediate School
Randy Tiemann	Principal – Mathis Middle School (6th-8th)
Danika Maxwell	Teacher – Mathis Middle School
Rebecca Smith	Teacher – Mathis Middle School
Charlene Ramos	Parent – Mathis Middle School
Dr. Jesse Riojas	Principal – Mathis High School (9th-12th)
Walter Scott	Teacher – Mathis High School
Juan Guerra	Teacher – Mathis High School
Marissa Montemayor	Parent – Mathis High School
Dr. Jesse Dolin	Principal – Mathis Learning Center
Yvonne Koepsel	Teacher – Mathis Learning Center
Dr. Veronica Gutierrez	Curriculum Director
Christina Alvarado	Special Programs Director
Veronica Garza	Special Education Director
Benny P. Hernández	Superintendent of Schools

Mathis Independent School District DOI Plan

Chapter 11 TEC §11.251, §11.252, §11.253, §11.255 – School Districts *"Requirements and Configuration of the District/Site Based Management Committee"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
"Site-based decision making is a process for improving the educational outcomes at the campus and district level. Through a collaborative effort of a team of principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives, educational outcomes are reviewed and evaluate to determine goals, strategies, and interventions to ensure improvement in student achievement. The education code and board policy require members to address areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, school organization as well as a host of other responsibilities identified in additional sections of the education code.	Mathis ISD shall determine the processes and membershi of its site-based management committees. Mathis ISD acknowledges the importance of developing district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment. The district feels that claiming exemption from the specific mandates of these sections is local issue and not a state mandate. The district also feels that it will provide for greater parental involvement and better-informed parents.
Chapter 21 TEC §21.003, §21.051, §21.053, §21.057 – Educators *"State Certification Requirements for Teachers and Other Educators"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
These provisions of the Texas Education Code Section dictate that all district teachers be certified in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC).	This will allow Mathis ISD the opportunity to hire nontraditional candidates who bring specific field experience, knowledge, and skills which would provide students with unparalleled learning experiences. It will allow flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts which are more beneficial to our students than what a standard teaching certificate could accomplish. The flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors will expand the opportunity for the dual credit courses outside of the norm. As a rural district, it will allow teachers to teach outside of their field/grade level in situation where vacancies are not filled. Although it is the District's intent to limit the use of this exemption, the District will always seek to hire certified and highly qualified teachers. All special education and bilingual teachers will continue to be SBEC certified. The District will move to establish its own local criteria/qualifications for hard to fill positions.

Chapter 21 TEC §21.102 – Educators "*Certified Employee Contract Rights" (specifically second probationary year for teachers hired under 5 of 8 rule)*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except 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.	The exemption will allow the opportunity for administrators to perform a fair and thorough evaluation of the employee prior to deciding on a probationary contract. A year is not sufficient time to properly evaluate a teacher and does not allow for teacher improvement as well. It will also allow the District to make employment and financial decisions that are in the best interest of the district when an employee is alleged to have violated serious provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics or law, including crimes against children. Allows for the flexibility to best meet the needs of the district and to take immediate action to protect our students when deemed necessary.
Chapter 21 TEC §21.352, §21.3541– Educators *"T-TESS & T-PESS Appraisal Instrument"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner or an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251; containing the items described by Sections 21.351(a)(1) and (2); and adopted by the board of trustees.	While the district intends to use both the T-TESS and T-PESS for the coming school years, the district would like the option to exercise local control of decisions regarding certain criteria within the appraisal instrument for teachers and administrators.

Chapter 21 TEC §21.404 – Educators *"450 Minutes Within Each Two-Week Period for Planning/Preparation"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
Classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes and a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.	Will allow for local control to determine how best to use staff time for collaborative planning and professional development in order to best meet the needs of the students. It allows the flexibility surrounding days such as student educational trips, student field days, state testing, etc. The intent is not to reduce the time but to effectively utilize the time when deemed necessary for student/teacher benefit.

Chapter 25 TEC §25.0811 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance *"First Day of Instruction"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.	Having the flexibility to establish an earlier start date will enable the District to better balance the amount of instructional time available in each semester, providing classroom teachers the opportunity to deliver more equitable learning experiences for students in the fall and spring semesters. Opportunity for continuous effective horizontal/vertical planning and professional development among the campuses. It allows the opportunity to attend college classes during the summer and prevents summer student regression. It allows for more instructional days prior to state assessment.

Chapter 25 TEC §25.092– Admission, Transfer, and Attendance *"Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
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.	The exemption will eliminate large student classes and potential discipline problems due to students re-taking the class. It allows flexibility for accommodating scheduling conflicts and provides opportunities for different time structures. It also allows for additional avenues in assistance working student or students who are parents. The exemption will be another factor to assist in the reduction of the drop-out rate.

Chapter 25 TEC §25.112, §25.113 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance *"Class Size, Notice of Class Size"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
Each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. Granted class size limits will provide written notice to parents.	The exemption will allow flexibility for smaller class size in efforts to better meet the needs of our struggling students. Should the situation arise where the classes get over the 22:1 ratio, it will allow the flexibility for adjustments within the campus. It alleviates the issue of finding quality teachers during the school year. The intent is to maintain a maximum of 24:1 for K-4. The exemption will also help by eliminating the "notice of class size: paperwork requirements.
Chapter 29 TEC §29.153, §29.151 – Kindergarten and Prekindergarten Programs "Free Prekindergarten for Certain Children" and "Free Kindergarten"	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
Under Section 29.153, prekindergarten class are offered to children who are at least 3 years of age and meet certain criteria such as (1) unable to speak and comprehend the English language; (2) educationally disadvantaged; (3) a homeless child; (4) the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States; (5) the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States; (6) been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services or (7) the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award. To be eligible for public Prekindergarten, children residing in the district must be at least 4 years of age on October 1st of the school year. Children missing the October 1st deadline are therefore delayed a school year or enrolled in other programs outside the educational realm. The Mathis Independent School District's has an economically disadvantaged population greater than 85% and is 96% Hispanic. Most of our student are low-income and dual-language speakers and most often underdeveloped in pre-literacy and pre-math skills.	The exemption will allow the flexibility to enroll students and immerse them in an academic, social, and emotional learning environment. A strong foundation in literacy and numeracy growth and development will combat potential gaps in achievement and accelerate their learning. The District will develop a local readiness criterion to determine eligibility of students for the Prekindergarten and Kindergarten programs. The goal is to improve the early readiness and enrichment of our young learners at a young age through developmentally appropriate and academically rich learning environments. This will provide increased equity for every student by building a strong foundation and the provision of a quality learning environment.

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Chapter 37 TEC §37.0012 – Discipline; Law and Order *"Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of this subchapter.	An exemption from this requirement will provide campuses the opportunity to allow campus administrators to share in the workload and get to know their students instead of one employee handling the entire campus discipline. This will allow for better communication between the administrators, parents, and students and assist in building better relationships. Each campus should have the freedom to designate more than one campus behavior coordinator to best meet the needs of their students and teachers.

Chapter 37 TEC §37.005 – Discipline; Law and Order *"Suspension"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
The principal or other appropriate administrator may suspend a student who engages in conduct identified in the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 as conduct for which a student may be suspended. A suspension under this section may not exceed three school days.	Exemption from this requirement will avoid excessive discretionary DAEP placements and provide campuses with the option of keeping students on campus. This will allow the opportunity to provide direct instruction from the teacher for all core classes. This will help in meeting the academic needs and services of our students.

Chapter 37 TEC §37.007(c) - Discipline; Law and Order *"Expulsions for Serious Offenses"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
A student may be expelled if the student, while placed in a disciplinary alternative education program, engages in documented serious misbehavior while on the program campus despite documented behavioral interventions. For purposes of this subsection, "serious misbehavior" means: (1) deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; (2) extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat; (3) conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or (4) conduct that constitutes the offense of: (A) public lewdness under Section 21.07, Penal Code; (B) indecent exposure under Section 21.08, Penal Code; (C) criminal mischief under Section 28.03, Penal Code; (D) personal hazing under Section 37.152; or (E) harassment under Section 42.07(a)(1), Penal Code, of a student or district employee.	The exemption will allow the removal of students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction and is detrimental to the educational environment. Learning will never occur without discipline.

Chapter 37 TEC §37.008 – Discipline, Law, and Order *"Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that provides a setting other than a student's regular classroom. It is located off the regular campus and separated from those students not assigned to the DAEP.	By allowing the exemption it will provide the opportunity for learners to be able to continue in core classes while assigned to DAEP. It will provide the opportunity to maintain rigorous coursework and not lose touch with the day to day routine. The District views this opportunity as a means to keep our discipline students from regressing academically.

Chapter 45 TEC §45.205 – School District Funds *"Term of Contract"*	
Current Status	**Benefit of Exemption**
The depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.	The depository provision allows the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 6-year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive. It alleviates the administrative burden related of preparing and reviewing Request for Proposals. It allows Mathis ISD to continue its strong relations with the only bank in Mathis.