



FORT WORTH ISD MISSION:
PREPARING ^{all} STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN
COLLEGE, CAREER AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP.

District of Innovation Fort Worth ISD Local Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed in 2015 in the 84th Legislative Session of the Texas Legislature, in part amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the TEC, providing more flexibilities and local control to meet the needs of students and the communities served.

On September 28, 2021, the Fort Worth ISD Board of Trustees (Board) adopted a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation (DOI). On November 9, 2021, the Board held a public hearing on considering designation of the District as a DOI and approved the formation of a DOI Committee.

The Committee is comprised of the members of the District Advisory Council and Senior Leadership Staff.

Terms

By law, the term of the designation as a DOI may not exceed five years. The term of the Fort Worth ISD Local Innovation Plan begins on June 28, 2022, and ends on June 28, 2027, unless rescinded or renewed by the Board in accordance with law, or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the district-level committee established under TEC 11.251 (District Advisory Committee) along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An **amendment** to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an Innovation District; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify the Texas Education Association (TEA) within five business days of **rescission** of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During **renewal**, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind, or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates. The Committee will annually review the Plan, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the Fort Worth ISD (FWISD) Plan efforts.

As part of the annual review process, the membership of the Committee will be modified according to the rules governing the District Advisory Committee or the makeup of the District Leadership Team, if needed.



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The Board has ultimate authority in determining the membership of the Committee; the intent of the Board is to use the District Advisory Council, since it is a balanced representation of community members, business members, and staff.

Innovation Plan

It has been determined that the following requirements of the TEC inhibit the pursuit of the goals of FWISD in meeting the needs of students at this time.

Innovation Plan Exemption #1 required to prepare all students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

Texas Education Code 25.0811 (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.

(EB LEGAL Policy)

Plan Rationale

When the state moved from mandating the number of days of instruction to a number of minutes, FWISD took the opportunity to revisit the school calendar. This has resulted in a calendar that allowed for a more targeted approach to professional learning and provided for strategic breaks for staff and students that is believed to help with the overall well-being of both, while also providing for extended family time throughout the year.

In addition, this calendar allowed FWISD to balance the days in each semester which is best for students and teachers, particularly at the secondary level when participating in a one-semester course, and in all courses relative to the pacing of lessons and learning.

A school year beginning on the fourth Monday of August will also lead to a late ending. This late ending negatively impacts additional opportunities for students in relation to summer school at the high school and college levels, other camps and enrichment programs, as well as job opportunities for students. This flexibility also allows us to mirror practices by local charters that are already afforded this flexibility. This is beyond the concerns related to the District's inability to provide the other benefits of the calendar as outlined above.

Local Innovation Plan Guideline

The first day of instruction will be scheduled in a manner that best meets the needs of FWISD and its students, staff, and community in furthering the educational program. The development of the calendar will be executed through the District Calendar Committee and reviewed by the District Advisory Committee (DAC), the District Employee Relations Council (DERC), and other stakeholder groups.



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Innovation Plan Exemption #2 required to prepare all students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

Texas Education Code 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.

Texas Education Code 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.

(b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231: Criteria for Assignment of Public School Personnel.

Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.053, and 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231 limit the District's ability to hire instructors for hard-to-fill and high-demand courses when high quality, State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) certified teachers are not available.

Plan Rationale

The District seeks flexibility to recruit, select, and place instructors who do not hold teaching credentials required by these statutes when high quality, certified teachers are not available in hard-to-fill and high-demand positions. The District seeks approval to hire instructors with industry experience that align to career and technical pathways offered to District students in grades 7 through 12;

Local Innovation Plan Guidelines

When developing parameters for hiring instructors in the areas of Career and Technical Education who do not have the requisite certificate, the District shall ensure the following:

- The District will first consider high quality, certified teachers.
- The District will establish criteria for selection of high quality, non-certified candidates and must implement a rigorous on-boarding and training program for newly hired, non-certified instructors. The program must emphasize support in classroom management and effective instructional practice.



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Innovation Plan Exemption #3 required to prepare all students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

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.

Plan Rationale

First and foremost, this exemption would allow our District to use the mastery of content, not bound by attendance rules, to counteract the negative impacts of COVID-19 related to earning course credit or grade level proficiency for on-track graduation.

Secondly, this exemption allows the District flexibility for students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative program, alternative academic settings, dropout recovery settings, and a more flexible, individualized pace not constrained by attendance rules.

Local Innovation Plan Guidelines

- The District may allow the exemption in five settings:
 1. As an acceleration strategy, for all students, for credit recovery or to accelerate academically as part of a student's approved 4-year plan.
 2. As strategy to keep students on-track, in a District Alternative Education Program.
 3. As strategy to keep students on-track in a Dropout Recovery School/Program.
 4. As a means for students to gain high school credit, when participating in the District's Early College settings, that may not match the traditional school year calendars.
 5. Should a District virtual school be established at any point during the life of this DOI plan.
- The District will convene a cross-functional team, led by School Leadership, to create the standards, practices, and training plans for this effort. The standards must be presented to the DERC and DAC for feedback. The final standards and practices for this effort must be approved by the District Leadership Team and Superintendent.

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 in FWISD. We hope that through the natural course of having more autonomy and freedom to think innovatively that all students across the state will be able to take advantage of these key learnings.

Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

Kent P. Scribner	Superintendent of Schools
Karen Molinar	Deputy Superintendent
Sherry Breed	Chief of Equity & Excellence
Marcey Sorensen	Chief Academic Officer
Cherie Washington	Chief of Student Support Services
Jerry Moore	Chief of Schools
David Saenz	Chief Innovation Officer
Carmen Arrieta-Candelaria	Chief Financial Officer
Cynthia Rincón	Chief of Risk, Ethics & Compliance Management
Raúl Peña	Chief Talent Officer
Vicki Burris	Chief of Capital Improvement Program
Marlon Shears	Chief Information Officer
Joseph Coburn	Chief of Operations
Barbara Griffith	Senior Communications Officer
Rachel Madison	Elementary School Classroom Teacher, Carroll Peak ES
Emily Isaac	Elementary School Classroom Teacher, Location – Phillips ES
Amanda Saenz	Elementary School Classroom Teacher, Washington Heights ES
Stephanie Plotner	Elementary School Classroom Teacher, Tanglewood ES
Mahika Jhangiani	Middle School Classroom Teacher, International Newcomer Academy
Lisa McGlothlin	Middle School Classroom Teacher, Rosemont ES
Faith Simon	High School Classroom Teacher, Polytechnic HS
Dalynn Cross	High School Classroom Teacher, Diamond Hill-Jarvis HS
Melody Ellison	At-large, non-teaching Position, Young Women’s Leadership Academy
Kelli Taulton	Elementary School Administrator Principal, Hazel Harvey Peace ES
Mandi Murphy	Middle School Administrator Principal, Leonard MS
Tracy Smith	High School Administrator Assistant Principal, Paschal HS
Makenzie Carpenter	Elementary School Parent
Dr. Hana Dobrovolny	Middle School Parent
Bret Helmer	High School Parent
Joy Schwartz	High School Parent
Jason Amon	Special Education Parent
Chandra Riccetti	Program of Choice/School of Choice Parent
Jennifer Ledbetter	Program of Choice/School of Choice Parent
Alexandra Thurston	Community Representative
Steven Poole	Community Representative
Steve Gay	Business Representative
Estrus Tucker	Business Representative