



## **Mansfield Independent School District**

### **Local Innovation Plan**

#### **I. Introduction**

The District of Innovation (DOI) is a concept passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature through House Bill (HB) 1842 that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools, including exemptions from many requirements mandated in the Texas Education Code.

As a District of Innovation, Mansfield ISD will have:

- greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming;
- power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow for exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

#### **II. Our Process**

On March 29, 2016, the MISD Board of Trustees (“Board”) passed a resolution to adopt a DOI Plan and appointed a District Advisory Committee (“Committee”) comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District’s stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The original Local Innovation Plan (“Plan”) was approved in May 2016. The term of the original Plan was for five years, beginning on July 1, 2016, and ending on June 30, 2021. The original Plan was amended on April 11, 2018, and renewed in June 2021, set to expire in June 2026.

On May 27, 2025, a presentation will be given to the Board to review the renewed Plan and to notify the board that the Plan would expire in May 27, 2030. A new Committee was formed to review and study the renewed Plan and any additional exemptions to consider.

Mansfield ISD’s District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members are as follows:

Name	Connection to MISD
Amado Flores	Community Member
Jill Horton	Teacher
Nigel Lewis	Community Member
Clayton Waters	Parent
Shonda Brown	Parent
Jonathan Miller	Parent
Dale Ramirez	Parent
Irving Romero	Parent
Cory Hoffman	Community Member
Jennifer Stoecker	District Staff
Matthew Brown	District Staff
LeighAnn Tamplen	District Staff
Georgie Swize	District Staff
Carson Gentry	Community Member / Teacher
Jennifer Griffith	Teacher
Allison Blackwell	Teacher
KaMesha Williams	Principal
Mico Rhines	Principal
Miriam Kagaso	Principal
Michael Thomas	Principal
Miguel Garza	Principal
Tara Taylor	UEA Representative
Nicole Canoe	ATPE Representative
Fernando Benavides	Committee Chair

The Committee met and approved the Local DOI Plan on April 23, 2025.

### III. TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning May 27, 2025, and ending May 27, 2030, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with the law. If, within the term of the Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the renewed Plan. The MISD may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

#### IV. INNOVATIONS

The District proposes flexibility and seeks an exemption in the following areas:

**A. Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)**

TEC 21.003 states that “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.” The current certification requirements inhibit the District’s ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career And Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM) courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. The District does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. Flexibility to establish its own teacher certification requirements affords the District the following advantages:

- Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.
- Greater number of CTE course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students.
- Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching.
- Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses.

**B. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)**

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break.
- Alignment of calendar with TCC, Advanced Placement Exams, and STAAR/EOC timelines.
- Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.
- Creates flexibility for the District to pursue year round school of choice for identified populations.

**C. Elementary Counselors (TEC 33.002(b)) (FFEA LEGAL)**

TEC 33.002(b) states that “A school district with 500 or more students enrolled in elementary school grades shall employ a school counselor certified under the rules of the State Board for Educator Certification for each elementary school in the district. A school district shall employ at least one school counselor for every 500 elementary school students in the district.” The flexibility created by opting out of TEC 33.002(b) affords the District the following advantages:

- The ability to employ a licensed social worker rather than a SBEC certified counselor in instances where the student populations and their families would be better served by the wrap around services provided by a licensed social worker.

**D. Campus Behavior Coordinator (TEC 37.0012) (FO LOCAL)**

TEC 37.0012 states that “a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.” Exemption from this requirement will provide the following advantages:

- Will provide campuses the opportunity to allow administrators to fully understand and get to know students in their caseload rather than sourcing all discipline matters to one designated campus behavior coordinator.
- Will allow campuses to use a collaborative approach to discipline.
- Will allow campuses the flexibility to best meet the needs of their students and their families.

**E. Minimum Attendance for Credit or a Final Grade (TEC 25.092) (FEC LOCAL)**

TEC 25.092 states that “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.” Exemption from this code would provide flexibility for students for which one or more of the following apply:

- Are unable to attend class in the traditional brick and mortar building because of illness or family concerns.
- Would benefit from a different time structure to the school day.
- Would benefit from virtual and online classes in addition to or in place of the traditional classroom setting.
- Have excused absences and have completed all makeup work.

Students taking traditional courses not impacted by this exemption would still be required to meet the 90% attendance requirement as it currently exists.

**F. Admissions: Interdistrict Transfers (TEC 25.036) (FDA LOCAL)**

TEC 25.036 states that “Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.”

Exemption from this code would afford the District the following advantages:

- Flexibility in Revoking Transfers: The district gains the authority to revoke a student's transfer during the academic year in response to disciplinary infractions, placements in the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), or expulsions.
- Upholding Accuracy: Misrepresentation of information on the transfer application or documentation may lead to the revocation of the student's transfer.
- Ensuring Attendance Standards: Transfers may be revoked if a student's attendance falls below the TEA 90% attendance standard.
- Ensuring Academic Standards: Transfers may be revoked if a student's academic performance falls below proficiency standards in any subject area.

**V. IMPLEMENTATION**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and departments. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.