

# GODLEY ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

- Adopted 9-21-21
- Effective September 26, 2021 until September 26, 2026

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 that allows school districts greater local control and flexibility regarding certain state-level regulations in an effort to utilize the designation to better serve students.

The plan will remain in effect for the next five years (2021-2026). The plan may be amended at any time by the District of Innovation Committee with the approval of the school board.

## **Original District of Innovation Committee**

|                   |                |                    |               |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Jeanne Cobb       | Administration | Kim Gissell        | Intermediate  |
| Bryan Myres       | Administration | David Williams     | Middle School |
| Karen Spottswood  | Administration | Tom Frazier        | Middle School |
| Cheryl Villanueva | Administration | Leigh Brown        | High School   |
| Mindi Reynolds    | Elementary     | Shonda Christenson | High School   |
| Michelle Bell     | Elementary     | Nicole Lowe        | High School   |

|               |              |                  |           |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|
| Ben Causey    | Elementary   | Loretta Marable  | Parent    |
| Jason Karnes  | Intermediate | Dora Narvaiz     | Parent    |
| Kasie Welborn | Intermediate | Jennifer Miller  | Parent    |
| Nicole Reuter | Intermediate | Sonda McLellan   | Community |
| Keri Grimsley | Intermediate | Cheri Littlejohn | Community |

## Statutes include:

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### School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 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.

#### Proposed

Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to develop a calendar that better fits the needs of the community should the committee choose to. Having greater flexibility in this area would allow the District Committee to better balance the first and second semesters and provide more instructional days prior to state testing.

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### School Day Interruptions

(EC Local) (Ed. Code 25.083)

SCHOOL DAY INTERRUPTIONS. (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements to once during the school day except in the case of an emergency.

Proposed

Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to make announcements as needed during picture days and other days that are not routine for greater efficiency.

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**Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade**

(FEC Legal & Local) (Ed. Code 25.092)

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade from k-12 may not be given credit unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered.

Proposed

Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to make course credit decisions on a case-by-case basis, for example, in such an instance where a student is involved in numerous UIL academic, athletics and Ag competitions, the Campus Attendance Committee would consider students' grades, absences, and all pertinent information and make a decision.

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**Appraisals and Incentives**

(DNA Legal & Local) (Ed. Code 21.352)

LOCAL ROLE. (c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, an appraisal must be done at least once during each school year.

Proposed

Considering the comprehensive nature of the newly adopted Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to develop a local plan and schedule regarding teacher evaluations.

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## **Teacher Employment Contracts**

(DCB Legal)

Education Code Chapter 21 Teacher Contracts defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.

### *Proposed*

Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align with the 75,600 minutes required of students.

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## **Certification Required (Amended October 6, 2023)**

(DK Legal) (Ed. Code 21.003)

CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

### **Innovative Plan**

Godley ISD would like to make decisions regarding certifications locally and based on the needs of the campus and students. In the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, GISD would like to be afforded the flexibility to consider entering into at-will employment agreements with non-certified individuals that have field experience in a foreign language, CTE field or a vocational skill that would provide more options for students and flexibility in scheduling.

### **Proposed Amendment:**

Godley ISD would like to make decisions regarding certifications locally and based on the needs of the campus and students. In the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, GISD would like to be afforded the flexibility to consider entering into at-will employment agreements with non-certified individuals including, but not limited to, non-certified individuals that have field experience in a foreign language, CTE field, or a vocational skill that would provide more options for students and flexibility in

scheduling. Teachers with industry certifications/experience and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification that would provide more options for students and flexibility in scheduling.

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### **Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade**

(EEB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.112)

Class Size. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth-grade class.

### **Notice of Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade**

(Ed. Code 25.112 & 25.113)

Notice of Class Size. (a) A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or a person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

### **Proposed**

By gaining exemption from these statutes, Godley ISD would no longer have to submit redundant class size waivers that are continuously approved by TEA and prevent multiple communications to parents each time a new student enrolls. The district is experiencing steady growth; students continue to enroll after school has started and it is impossible to predict class size. GISD will continue to keep class sizes within the 22-1 limits but will seek relief on paperwork.

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### **School District Depositories Contract**

(BDAE Legal & Local) (Ed. Code Subchapter G. 45.206)

TERM OF CONTRACT. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified.

(b) 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.

(c) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

### Proposed

By gaining exemption from these statutes, GISD would be able to allow 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 and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district's business. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter their direct deposit instructions and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships.

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## **Probationary Contract**

(DCA Legal) (Ed. Code Subchapter C. 21.102.)

PROBATIONARY CONTRACT. (a) Except as provided by Section 21.202(b), a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28, 1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract. A person who previously was employed as a teacher by a district and, after at least a two-year lapse in district employment returns to district employment, may be employed under a probationary contract.

(a-1) A person who voluntarily accepts an assignment in a new professional capacity that requires a different class of certificate under Subchapter B than the class of certificate held by the person in the professional capacity in which the person was previously employed may be employed under a probationary contract. This subsection does not apply to a person who is returned by a school district to a professional capacity in which the person was employed by the district before the district employed the person in the new professional capacity as described by this subsection. A person described by this subsection who is returned to a previous professional capacity is

entitled to be employed in the original professional capacity under the same contractual status as the status held by the person during the previous employment by the district in that capacity.

(b) 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.

(c) An employment contract may not extend the probationary contract period beyond the end of the third consecutive school year of the teacher's employment by the school district unless, during the third year of a teacher's probationary contract, the board of trustees determines that it is doubtful whether the teacher should be given a continuing contract or a term contract. If the board makes that determination, the district may make a probationary contract with the teacher for a term ending with the fourth consecutive school year of the teacher's employment with the district, at which time the district shall:

(1) terminate the employment of the teacher; or

(2) employ the teacher under a continuing contract or a term contract as provided by Subchapter D or E, according to district policy.

### Proposed

The exemption is requested to address experienced teachers that have taught at least 5 out of the 8 years in public education. In addition to a one-year probationary contract, the district may recommend a probationary contract for a period for up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses and other certified employees who are experienced but newly hired in GISD. Having this extra time will give the district the time to invest in these more experienced teachers in order to provide targeted mentoring, professional development, and remedial assistance with performance issues, if present, that might be corrected if given the time. A one-year probationary period is not enough time for a newly hired individual to be completely evaluated by the campus principal by mid-term of their first year. The ability to extend the probationary period on the contract, if needed, would afford the campus principal the necessary time needed to determine the professional's capacity and effectiveness beyond the first year to determine if the individual is a good fit for the district's students.

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## **Appraisals and Incentives (THIS PORTION OF THE PLAN HAS BEEN RESCINDED)**

~~(DNA Legal & Local) (Ed. Code 21.352)~~

~~LOCAL ROLE. (c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, an appraisal must be done at least once during each school year.~~

### *Proposed*

~~Considering the comprehensive nature of the newly adopted Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), Godley ISD would like to have the freedom to develop a local plan and schedule regarding teacher evaluations.~~

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## **Transfer Students**

TEC §25.001 §25.036(a)

(Proposed)

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student fails to meet and maintain standards of academic achievement, attendance, or conduct as outlined in the GISD Transfer Agreement.

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## **Nicotine e-Cigarettes (Approved November 27, 2023) (THIS PORTION OF THE PLAN HAS BEEN RESCINDED)**

~~(Ed. Code 37.006 (C-2))~~

### **STATUTORY PROVISION**

~~Texas Education Code §37.006 (C-2) requires districts to remove a student from class and place in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) provided by Section 37.008 if the student possesses, uses, sells, gives, or delivers to another person an e-cigarette, as defined by Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code.~~

### **INNOVATIVE PLAN**

~~Godley ISD would like to make decisions regarding possession of nicotine e-cigarettes locally and based on the needs of the campus and students.~~



~~The district seeks to prioritize student education in all subject areas and provide instruction on the harmful effects of nicotine and general wellness. Under the provisions of the statute, students would be mandatorily placed at the DAEP for possessing an e-cigarette (vape) containing nicotine. However, a student possessing an actual cigarette containing nicotine would face other, lesser consequences under the student code of conduct.~~

~~The district believes that students possessing a nicotine e-cigarette (vape) would be best served by providing educational support regarding nicotine's harmful effects and appropriate consequences rather than removing the student to the DAEP. The removal of students to the DAEP, a much more restrictive setting, is done cautiously. Our primary goal is to keep students at their assigned campuses with the teachers and staff who know them best and provide the necessary support.~~

#### ~~PROPOSED AMENDMENT~~

~~Godley ISD wholly supports efforts to fight the rising use of e-cigarettes and vapes. However, we believe the District can more effectively combat these habits through proactive educational techniques and disciplinary options other than mandatory DAEP placements.~~

~~The district believes students possessing e-cigarettes containing nicotine would be best supported by providing additional wellness education and remaining on the campus with appropriate consequences. The district is not requesting exempt provisions under Section 37.006, which require mandatory removal to DAEP for possessing controlled substances such as marijuana and THC.~~

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#### **UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS: REFUSAL OF ENTRY, EJECTION, IDENTIFICATION (Approved February 21, 2024) (THIS PORTION OF THE PLAN HAS BEEN RESCINDED)**

~~GKA(LEGAL); Texas Education Code §37.105(f)~~

#### ~~STATUTORY PROVISION~~

~~Texas Education Code §37.105(f) requires that the term of a person's refusal of entry to or ejection from a school district's property under this section may not exceed two years.~~

#### ~~INNOVATIVE PLAN~~

~~Godley ISD would like to make decisions regarding the length of denied entry locally and based on the needs of the district, students, staff, and visitors. The district seeks to prioritize the physical and mental well-being of students, staff, and visitors.~~

~~The district believes that if a person continues to pose a substantial risk of harm, or the person continues to behave in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting, the district may extend the term of denied entry beyond two years.~~

~~The district would reevaluate an individual's status annually to determine if the denial should remain in effect or be revoked.~~

#### ~~PROPOSED AMENDMENT~~

~~Godley ISD prioritizes the physical and mental well-being of students, staff, and visitors.~~

~~Godley ISD believes in second chances. However, if after two years an individual continues to pose a substantial risk of harm, or the person continues to behave in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting, the District should be able to determine whether that person should be granted entry to its property.~~

~~If a person is denied entry beyond two years, the safety and security committee will reevaluate the status annually.~~

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#### **RETIRE/REHIRE MINIMUM SALARY**

**(Approved December 16, 2024)**

DEA(LEGAL); Texas Education Code § 21.002, §21.402, §21.415

#### **STATUTORY PROVISION**

Currently, all districts, when hiring a retired teacher, must pay their salary based on the TEA minimum salary pay scale; additionally, districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge and, if applicable, a TRS Care surcharge.

“Teacher” refers to classroom teacher, full-time speech pathologist, full-time librarian, full-time school counselor, and full-time school nurse.

**RATIONALE:**

Godley ISD believes that by hiring an eligible retired teacher our students, campuses, and district will reap the reward of having a veteran educator who is still involved and passionate in the education process.

The district will be able to have an experienced educator at a significantly lower cost than paying the statutory minimum, plus the TRS surcharge(s).

Besides adding value to our schools, this would be a sound fiscal decision for our district's stakeholders.

#### INNOVATION:

Godley ISD would like the opportunity to hire an eligible retired teacher and pay them a negotiated salary that may drop below the TEA minimum pay scale while also paying the required TRS surcharge(s).

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#### **EJECTION OF INDIVIDUALS FROM FACILITIES (THIS PORTION OF THE PLAN HAS BEEN RESCINDED)**

**~~Approved December 16, 2024~~**

**~~GKA(LEGAL), TEC §37.105~~**

#### **STATUTORY PROVISION**

~~The Texas Education Code allows a school administrator, school resource officer, or school district peace officer to refuse to allow a person to enter on or may eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and either the person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person or the person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior despite being given a verbal warning. Under current law, the administrator, resource officer, or peace officer must maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from a school facility that is issued, including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of issuance. At the time a person is refused entry to or ejected from a school district's property, the district shall provide to the person written information explaining the appeal process. And, under the commissioner's rules adopted under the authority granted in the Education Code, the person refused entry or ejected from the facility must be given the opportunity to appeal the decision to the board of trustees within 90 calendar days.~~

## RATIONALE

~~These additional, administratively burdensome requirements are impractical and potentially impossible to fulfill when an individual is dealing with an unruly individual. It is reasonable to believe that requesting such information could also escalate a situation that is already proving to be disruptive. Further, it is impractical to provide written notice of an appeal process at many events, like athletic events or public meetings, when the removal is only for the immediate event and there is not ready access to forms or a computer or printer. Furthermore, the district already has a process for taking grievances to the board of trustees and there is no justified need for a unique process or timeline.~~

## INNOVATION

~~GISD administrators, school resource officers, or school peace officers will retain their authority to refuse to allow a person to enter on or may eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and either (1) the person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person or (2) the person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior despite being given a verbal warning. However, the following requirements will no longer be applicable: \*maintaining a written log of verbal warnings; providing written notice of the appeal process at the time of ejection; internet posting of the requirements and appeal process; and the ability to appeal the decision to the board of trustees within 90 calendar days.~~

~~\*When practical, GISD officials will make their best effort to keep a written record of an ejection.~~

~~Exemption from these requirements will allow the district to exercise appropriate authority and processes related to unruly individuals on campuses and at other facilities in an effective and efficient manner, but do so without conducting the unnecessary and administratively burdensome requirements and avoiding potential escalation of already difficult situations. If an individual is banned from returning to GISD property for an extended period of time, the individual will receive written notification.~~

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## **District of Innovation Timeline**

- January 18, 2016 School Board Meeting  
GISD Board of Trustees voted to adopt a Resolution to explore the designation of a District of Innovation
- January 20, 2016 District Improvement Committee Meeting  
Districts of Innovation was an agenda item and discussed with the committee. The committee agreed that this is definitely an idea worth exploring.
- January - March 2016  
Window for Districts of Innovation to be discussed during all campuses at staff meetings
- February 29, 2016 Innovation Night at Godley High School  
Districts of Innovation was an agenda item discussed with the public.
- May 16, 2016 ESC Region 11 Instructional Leaders' Meeting  
Mark Baxter with TEA presented a PowerPoint presentation to explain the process and guidelines regarding Districts of Innovation.
- May 23, 2016 GISD Districts of Innovation Steering Committee Meeting  
Steering committee met and discussed probable statutes and process involved in writing a plan.
- June 27, 2016 School Board Meeting  
Board of Trustees appointed a Districts of Innovation Committee to develop a plan.
- July 14, 2016 Districts of Innovation Committee Meeting  
The appointed Committee met and drafted a plan to present to the Board of Trustees.
- July 21, 2016 School Board Meeting  
GISD proposed Districts of Innovation plan was presented to the Board and date was set for the public meeting prior to a special board meeting on August 9, 2016.
- August 9, 2016 Public Hearing 6:15 pm  
GISD District of Innovation plan discussed and available for public comment
- August 10, 2016 GISD District of Innovation Plan posted on GISD Website for 30 day period
- September 26, 2016 GISD School Board Meeting  
Board of Trustees adopted the proposed District of Innovation plan
- October 3, 2016 GISD District of Innovation plan filed with the Commissioner of Education

- March 23, 2017 District of Innovation Committee Meeting  
The appointed Committee met and proposed amending the current plan
- March 27, 2017 The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan
- March 28, 2017 The commissioner was notified that the plan was amended
- March 20, 2019 The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan
- March 21, 2019 The commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided
- September 30, 2019 The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan
- November 12, 2019 The commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided
- September 21, 2021- The Board of Trustees voted to renew the plan
- September 29, 2021 - The commissioner was notified that the plan was renewed
- October 6, 2023 - The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan; the commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided (Teacher Certification)
- November 27, 2023 - The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan; the commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided (e-cigarettes)
- February 21, 2024 - The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan; the commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided (Unauthorized Persons)
- December 16, 2024 - The Board of Trustees voted to amend the current plan; the commissioner was notified that the plan was amended and a checklist was provided (Retire/Rehire, Ejection From Facilities)
- August 12, 2025 - Amendments for TEC §37 have been rescinded following directives from the 89th Legislature