



Karnes City

Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

The KCISD Board of Trustees renewed the District of Innovation Plan on March 21, 2022 for 5 years, through March 2027. The District of Innovation Plan was Amended on August 27, 2025.

Innovations

Karnes City ISD proposes the following flexibilities with the Texas Education Code to provide the best educational opportunities for students of KCISD. Due to the passage of legislation from the 89th Regular Legislative Session which impacted areas of exemption under the Plan, the District determined that it was necessary to amend the Plan. The amendments will not extend the current term of the Plan which is for five (5) years, beginning March 21, 2022, and ending March 21, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. If within the term of this Plan, other areas of operation are to be considered for flexibility the District will initiate the amendment process in accordance with law and TEA requirements. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan

1. First and Last Day of Instruction

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811

TEC §25.0812

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule. However, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August.
- TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community.

Proposal: The district will develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in KCISD by incorporating the flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June.



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By ending the school year earlier, KCISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade schools. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

2. Teacher Certification Requirements

Exemption from: TEC §21.003(a)

TEC §21.053

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher or other certified position unless the person holds an appropriate certificate.
- TEC §21.053(b) states that an educator may not be paid for teaching or work done before the issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. When that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

Karnes City ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to, CTE and languages other than English. Special Education teachers will continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Additionally, Karnes City ISD will notify parents of a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

3. Minimum Minutes of Instruction per Day

Exemption from: TEC §25.081

TEC §25.082



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Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §25.081 requires that each school day must be 420 minutes long in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes and to accumulate instructional minutes toward the 75,600 minutes of instruction required for students annually.
- TEC §25.082(a) provides that a school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Proposal: The district will consider altering the length of an instructional day on a limited basis when it is locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. Karnes City ISD does not have any intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis or without specific purpose (i.e. bad weather, professional development, early dismissal for events of community interest, etc).

To the greatest extent possible, shortened days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

4. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract 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 with the district.
- Due to the unique nature of KCISD, including our initiatives and processes, this period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.

Proposal: Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract certified employees subject to TEC Chapter 21, will be subject to a two-year probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

5. Minimum Service Required

Exemption from: TEC §21.401(a)



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TEC §21.401(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.401(a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months service.
- TEC §21.401(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposal: KCISD seeks the freedom to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days and move to a 10-month contract for teachers from August-May, with a focus on minutes of instruction, instead of days of instruction; without an anticipated reduction in salary. The move to minutes of instruction will better align teacher contracts to the minutes of instruction requirement.

The teachers will fulfill the required 75,600 minutes of instruction and additional minutes and staff development as determined locally by the KCISD Board. This strategy will provide opportunities for teachers to seek out beneficial content area staff development during summer months and may improve teacher morale.

6. Transfer Policy (FDA Local) (TEC 25.036)

Current: A district may choose to accept students as transfers, even if they are not entitled to admission in district, however, has been interpreted to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed: A student's enrollment status may be revoked at any time of the year when the Superintendent determines that the student is assigned discipline consequences (in or out of school), has excessive attendance issues, or whose behavior interferes with the school district's ability to educate the student body. The decision to revoke a transfer student's enrollment can be made at any time of the instructional calendar. Students are able to reapply for transfer admission after one full school year following dismissal.

Justification: Karnes City ISD transfer policy requires that all non-resident students who wish to transfer must file a transfer application each year and complete the transfer process in its entirety. Approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. The ability to revoke a transfer at any time allows the school to take action should a student not meet the expectations outlined in the transfer process.



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7. Bank Depository Bid (TEC 45.206)

Current: At least 60 days before the end of the current depository contract the school must decide to use either competitive bidding or a request for proposal to choose a new depository.

Proposed: Karnes City ISD would like to renew the depository contract with the current depository entity if the relationship is currently positive without going out for competitive bids or requests for proposal at the conclusion of a contract.

Justification : Karnes City is a rural community located in Karnes City Texas. There is only one bank in the school district. Going out for bid or requesting proposals is a time-consuming processes that add bureaucracy and paperwork to a process with little to no choice.

8. Grievance Policies

Current: According to Texas Education Codes 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003, the Texas Education Code requires the Board of trustees of each school district to adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Chapter 26A under which the board shall address each grievance that the board receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by this chapter, of a board of trustees policy, or of a provision of this title.

Proposed: Karnes City ISD has and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines as outlined in its local Board's policies DGBA, FNG and GF. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provide adequate time for complaints to be filed, and for complaints to be heard. All records related to grievances, including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. The District is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Karnes City ISD's long-standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Justification: Karnes City ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26.002 and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within



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15 district business days from the date the grievant either knows, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance ensures prompt attention and resolution of concerns. In cases where the grievant does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district-provided form, within ten (10) district business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level. The District's current grievance policies also provide for a Level Three grievance to the board of trustees, except for grievances related to extracurricular activities. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response.

Karnes City therefore requests relief from the timelines, processes and procedures imposed by **26.011**, **26A.001**, **26A.002**, **26A.003** and will maintain its current grievance forms, processes and procedures for all grievants including parents and students.

9. Local School Library Advisory Council (TEC § 33.025(b))

Current: Current law requires the school district to establish a School Library Advisory Council at any campus where either 10% of parents or 50 parents (whichever is fewer) submit a written request for such a council. The council must include at least five members, with a majority being parents of currently enrolled students who are not employed by the district. The council is tasked with reviewing library materials, providing input on the selection and removal of resources, making recommendations to ensure materials are age-appropriate and aligned with community values, reviewing all books and other material objected to by any District parent, and advising on such objections. The law also requires that a council established under this law may not be abolished until the third anniversary of the date on which the council was established.

Proposed: Karnes City ISD requests to be exempted from Texas Education Code §33.025(b), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until such a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Karnes City ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.025, which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents.

Justification: Karnes City ISD encourages and supports all campus efforts to involve District parents and community members as active participants in the education of its students. Karnes City ISD already has



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strong, board-approved procedures in place for selecting, reviewing, and reconsidering library materials—led by certified librarians and educators and aligned with state-mandated requirements and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. Creating such advisory councils risks undermining the professional judgment of educators and librarians, introduces the judgment of non-certified individuals, introduces potential for politicization of instructional resources, and could very easily lead to inconsistency across campuses. Furthermore, the statute presents an administrative burden, requiring staff time and resources that would be better directed toward student learning and support. Karnes City ISD’s existing processes already allow for meaningful parental review and involvement, including access to their child’s library checkout records if requested, formal challenge procedures, and transparency in material selection. In addition, concerned individuals may also speak with teachers, administration, and/or the school board through District complaint processes and/or during the open forum of any regularly scheduled board meeting. The District remains committed to ensuring age-appropriate and educationally sound resources while maintaining an efficient and effective oversight structure that includes educator expertise and parent input, without the disruption and/or duplication caused by the statutory requirements in §33.025(b).

10. Acquisition of Library Materials (TEC § 33.026)

Current: Current law outlines specific procedures school districts must follow before acquiring library materials. The law requires that materials be reviewed and approved in advance by a certified school librarian and be verified for compliance with age-appropriateness, educational suitability, and community standards. Additionally, it mandates a multi-step vetting process, documentation of acquisition decisions, and the public posting of selected materials before they are made available to students.

Proposed: Karnes City ISD requests to be exempt from TEC §33.026 because the District already has robust, board-approved policies, implemented by certified librarians in place that govern the acquisition of library materials in a manner that ensures transparency, appropriateness, and educational value. These policies and procedures are fully compliant with the standards required by Texas law and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until such a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Karnes City ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.026(d), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents.

Justification: The statutory process under §33.026 introduces redundant and restrictive requirements that may delay access to timely instructional and enrichment resources. It also places bureaucratic barriers in front of trained library professionals who are certified to select age-appropriate, curriculum-



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aligned materials, that are consistent with standards set by Texas law. Additionally, the public pre-approval requirement undermines the expertise of certified school educators and creates delay and roadblocks in getting library materials to students who benefit from them. Furthermore, the mandated documentation process creates an administrative burden that consumes time and resources better allocated to instructional support. While Karnes City ISD fully supports transparency and parental engagement in the school library process, the rigid requirements of TEC §33.026 are unnecessary and duplicative of local safeguards already in place. This exemption allows Karnes City ISD to preserve instructional flexibility, uphold librarian professionalism, and provide students with timely access to enriching and appropriate materials—without compromising accountability or community trust.

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