POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation 2023-2028 Amended September 15, 2025

What is the District of Innovation?

The District of Innovation (DOI) process allows public school districts to exempt certain elements of the Texas Education Code (TEC) in order to meet innovation needs of students.

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed to grant greater local control in specific areas. This bill allows traditional public schools to take advantage of the exemptions in Education Law that are currently available to charter schools. We believe this presents an excellent opportunity for our local district to develop a plan tailored to the needs of our students and community

DOI Timeline

- **February 27, 2023** - School Board adopts resolution
- **February 27, 2023** -Public Hearing by School Board
- **February 27, 2023 –** School Board appoints the District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC) to develop a comprehensive educational program with innovations, and list of Education Code provisions to be exempt.
- **February 28, 2023**- DEIC meets to discuss and develop a new DOI plan within set parameters.
- **March 3, 2023 –** DEIC passes plan by majority vote.
- The District of Innovation plan is posted for 30 days. Plan is sent to commissioner (no approval required)
- **April 11,2023**- Board of Trustees approve final DOI plan by majority vote.
- **April 12, 2023** District notifies commissioner of approval of plan along with list of approved TEC exemptions by completing form, District posts and maintains plan online in prominent location, District sends a link to plan as posted within 15 days of adoption.

DOI Amendment

- **September 11, 2025** - Public Meeting to consider final version of proposed plan
- **September 11, 2025** - DEIC passes plan by majority vote
- **September 15, 2025** - Board of Trustees approves DOI amendment by majority vote.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District-Wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC)

District of Innovation Amendment Committee September, 2025

Committee Members	Role	Position
Billie Moody	Classroom Teacher	Elementary Teacher (1st Grade)
Valerie Menchaca	Classroom Teacher	Elementary/PIC Dyslexia Teacher
Sylvia Villarreal	Classroom Teacher	Elementary Dual Language Teacher
Tracy Dunn	Non-Classroom Professional	Elementary Instructional Specialist
Marie Guerra	Classroom Paraprofessional	Elementary Paraprofessional
Jamalyn Collins	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (4th Grade)
Leticia Garcia	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (5th Grade)
Deveney Rothenbach	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (3rd Grade)
Alexander Swan	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (4th Grade)
Carrie Brown	Non-Classroom Professional	Intermediate Instructional Specialist
Whitney Brown	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Special Education Teacher
Desiree Garza	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Teacher (7th Grade)
Andrea Altamira	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Teacher (8th Grade)
Kelly Murray	Non-Classroom Professional	Special Education Coordinator
Hope Tellez	Non-Classroom	Junior High Instructional Specialist
Toni Esquivel	Classroom Teacher	High School Algebra II Teacher
Anthony Machado	Classroom Teacher	High School SpEd Teacher
Rachel Sparks	Classroom Teacher	High School Biology Teacher
Monica Dwyer	Classroom Teacher	High School Spanish Teacher
Virginia Rodriguez	Non-Classroom Professional	High School Instructional Specialist
Henry Perez-Estrada	Classroom Paraprofessional	High School Paraprofessional
Donisha Miller	Campus-Based Non-teaching Professional	Elementary Principal
Amanda Garcia	Campus-Based Non-teaching Professional	Junior High Vice Principal
Julie Poth	District Level Professional Staff	McKinney-Vento
Jessica Hernandez	Non-Classroom Professional	SE Instructional Specialist
Kim Camarillo	Parent Representative	High School Parent
Rosario Oropeza	Parent Representative	High School Parent
Connie Waxler	Community Representative (non-parent)	Community Representative
Velma Martinez	Business Representative (non-parent)	Business Representative
Miranda Wiederhold	Business Representative (parent)	Business Representative

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amended September 15, 2025

Current Law:

TEC 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.

Innovation Strategy:

The District's decisions on certification will be handled locally. Poteet ISD will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate credentials for the position in question. When that is not reasonably possible, exemption from TEC 21.003 allows the district to draw from a larger pool of applicants such as industry professionals, out of state certified teachers, and specialized areas. The district will carefully review the candidates' experience, education, and credentials to fill positions of need that would best benefit students. Special Education, Bilingual/ESL and Prekindergarten teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

New Restrictions on DOI Plans Regarding Certifications:

Academic Year	DOI Restrictions
2025-2026	District maintains currently approved DOI plan which may include exemptions from 21.003
2026-2027	District can no longer include K-5 reading and mathematics teachers in DOI plan exemptions from 21.003
2027-2028	District can no longer include all foundational subject teachers (i.e., reading/English language arts, math, science, and social studies) in any grade level in DOI plan exemptions from 21.003

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amended September 15, 2025

Current Law:

TEC 21.003 CERTIFICATION REQUIRED (CTE)

- (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.

Innovation Strategy:

The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefits of specialized CTE course offerings, the District will establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of certification requirements set forth in law. To teach a CTE course, an employee must have a certification in the grade span they will be teaching or have an Industry-Based Certification in the course taught. A list of these courses is available upon request.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amended September 15, 2025

Current Law:

TEC 45.205, 45.206 BANK DEPOSITORY CONTRACT

- The depository shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year.

Innovation Strategy:

The district is seeking an exemption to allow the District's banking contract to be extended beyond the 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 of bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the District;s business. The District will only go out for bid if it is determined that contract-pricing is not competitive and there is an operational or financial reason to send the District's banking services out for bid. The District will continue with two year contracts for our banking depository.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amended September 15, 2025

Current Law:

TEC 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003 HANDLING GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

- 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 trustee policy, or of a provision of this title.

Innovation Strategy:

Poteet ISD adheres to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines outlined in local Board policies DGBA, FNG, and GF. These policies ensure thorough documentation, adequate filing time, and proper review of complaints. All grievance records—forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and corrective actions—are 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 all decisions and actions, reviewing and resolving complaints, and taking corrective measures when needed. Poteet ISD's grievance policies align with state and federal regulations and local board policies.

The district follows established procedures for filing appeals within timelines consistent with Texas Education Code §26.002. Complaints must be submitted within 15 district business days from when the grievant knew or should have known of the issue to ensure timely resolution. If relief is not granted at an initial level or no response is received by the deadline, an appeal may be submitted in writing within 10 district business days to the Superintendent or designee, using district forms. A Level Three grievance to the board is also available, except for extracurricular-related grievances. Timely filing is critical, as information accuracy and access to involved parties may diminish after 60 to 90 days.

Therefore, Poteet ISD requests relief from the timelines and procedures imposed by Texas Education Code sections 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, and 26A.003, maintaining its current grievance forms, processes, and procedures for all grievants, including parents, students, employees, and the public.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation 2023-2028

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DOI Timeline

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POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District-Wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC)
District of Innovation Committee 2022-2023

Committee Members	Role	Position
Angela Hammonds	Administrator	Assistant Principal
Bernie Batto	Non Classroom Professional	Special Programs Director
Sheryl Mills	Executive Director of C&I	District Level Representative
Hope Tellez	Non-Classroom Professional	Instructional Specialist
Virginia Rodriguez	Non-Classroom Professional	Instructional Specialist
Samantha White	Non-Classroom Professional	Instructional Specialist
Jessica Bartlett	Non-Classroom Professional	Instructional Specialist
Millie Lawhon	Classroom Teacher	Elementary Teacher (2nd grade)
Michele Gallegos	Classroom Teacher	Elementary Teacher (1st grade)
Erica Nevarez	Classroom Teacher	Elementary Teacher (2nd grade)
Karleen Olle	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (4th grade)
Phylicia Zepeda	Classroom Teacher	IntermediateTeacher (4th grade)
Leticia Garcia	Classroom Teacher	Intermediate Teacher (5th grade)
Amanda Carrasco	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Teacher (6th grade)
Robert Hilburn	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Teacher (8th grade)
Wendi Trevino	Classroom Teacher	Junior High Teacher (7th grade)
Michael Calabro	Classroom Teacher	High School Teacher (History)
Kimberly Rader	Classroom Teacher	High School Teacher (CTE)
Johnny Stevens	Classroom Teacher	High School Teacher (CTE)
Kim Camarillo	Parent Representative	High School/Junior High Parent
Rosario Oropeza	Parent Representative	Junior High Parent
Lisa Burbridge	Community Representative (non-parent)	Community Representative
Connie Waxler	Community Representative (non-parent)	Community Representative
Martha Contreras	Business Representative (non-parent)	Business Representative
Michelle Ramos	Business Representative (non-parent)	Business Representative

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in the Spring 2015 and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from several state statutes and 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;
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

Current Law:

TEC 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.

Innovation Strategy:

A school calendar that offers the option to begin the first day of instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August (as currently required by the TEC) will provide the District the ability to effectively meet the instructional needs of all students. Such a calendar will prepare our students for college and career readiness by aligning start/end dates with local colleges and allow more instructional time for students prior to state assessments. Also, the calendar will balance grading periods for more equity in instruction between the first and second semester and prevent loss of instructional time while providing more days for teachers to plan and prepare instruction during the school year.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Current Law:

TEC 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.

Innovation Strategy:

The District's decisions on certification will be handled locally. Poteet ISD will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate credentials for the position in question. When that is not reasonably possible, exemption from TEC 21.003 allows the district to draw from a larger pool of applicants such as industry professionals, out of state certified teachers, and specialized areas. The district will carefully review the candidates' experience, education, and credentials to fill positions of need that would best benefit students. Special Education, Bilingual/ESL and Prekindergarten teachers must continue to be SBEC certified**.**

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Current Law:

TEC 21.002 TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

- After any applicable probationary contract period required by the District, term contracts governed by Chapter 21 of the Education Code (educator term contracts) shall be provided to:
    - Any employees in positions required by statute to receive such contracts, including SBEC-certified employees serving full-time as principals, assistant principals, teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, librarians, and athletic directors;
    - Full-time professional employees in other positions for which the District requires current SBEC certification; and
    - Full-time nurses.

For purposes of this policy, the District shall consider only full-time registered nurses to be eligible for educator term contracts.

Innovation Strategy:

Permit the district to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years to experienced teachers with 5 or more years who are newly hired in the district.

- Leads to better evaluation of a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom as critical data is not available for Principals to make informed employment decisions during the contract renewal period.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Current Law:
TEC 25.112 CLASS SIZE

- (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. That limitation does not apply during:
    - (1) any 12-week period of the school year selected by the district, in the case of a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 48.005(c);
    - or (2) the last 12 weeks of any school year in the case of any other district.

Innovation Strategy:
Our goal is to remain within the current education guidelines. The district would have the flexibility to manage class sizes in the event that a K-4th core classroom is not able to sustain the 22:1 ratio and would not require a waiver to be sent to TEA.

Current Law:
TEC 33.006 SCHOOL COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Requires school districts to adopt a policy that requires school counselors to allocate at least 80 percent of their total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under TEC 33.005. According to this provision, the administration of assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments is not considered as time spent on counseling.

Innovation Strategy:
To best serve our Poteet ISD students, the decision on counseling services and allocation of duties will be locally determined based on the needs of our students. This exemption will grant Poteet ISD to provide resources and services to our students so that they are successful in and out of the classroom.

POTEET INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Current Law:

TEC 21.102 PROBATIONARY CONTRACT

- (a) a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time. (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 except 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.

Innovation Strategy:

A probationary contract provided to newly hired first year teachers should not exceed three years. However, if unforeseen circumstances arise within this probationary period, and additional time is needed to fairly and thoroughly evaluate, the option to add one additional year may be enforced.