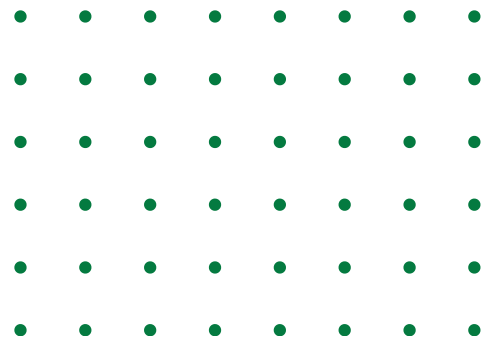




KENNEDALE ISD

District of Innovation

FEBRUARY 1, 2022 - JANUARY 30, 2027



Board of Trustees

Sean Glover, President

Darryl Owens, Vice President

Debbie Villagomez, Secretary

Esteban Cerda

Felicia Moody

Natalie McKay

Maria Douglas, PhD

Original Local Innovation Plan Adopted

February 16, 2017

Local Innovation Plan Renewed/Adopted

January 27, 2022

Local Innovation Plan Amended

September 19, 2024

Local Innovation Plan Amended

December 18, 2025

Administration

Chad Gee, EdD
Superintendent

Julie Vu, PhD
Deputy Superintendent



OUR VISION



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Kennedale Independent School District is to provide a diverse, engaging, and safe environment where all stakeholders are responsible and accountable for student success.

OUR GOALS

We will provide an exceptional learning experience to promote high levels of achievement and postsecondary readiness for all students.

Parents and families should be active essential partners who work together with mutual respect and trust for the benefit of students and staff.

We will ensure that all students and staff learn & work in a safe environment that is responsive to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our stakeholders.

The district will establish systemic and systematic operational processes to align resources with its mission, vision, and goals.

I. Innovations

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

1. Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)

Texas Education Code 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern, or teacher trainee, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by Subchapter B. An exemption from these requirements allows Kennedale ISD to hire individuals for hard to fill certification areas in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. The District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth by law.

Non-certified teachers employed under this DOI will receive a locally approved teaching certificate and shall receive a non-Chapter 21 contract until the appropriate certification is obtained for the assignment.

2. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Kennedale ISD shall be exempt from this requirement in order to offer its own modified school calendar. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

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

3. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102) (DCA LEGAL)

Texas Education Code 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. 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 the year classroom and student data. Exemption from Texas Education Code 21.102(b) allows Kennedale ISD to offer an additional probationary year contract to those who have been employed for at least five of the eight previous years.

4. Teacher Mentors (TEC 21.458) (DEAA LEGAL)

TEC 21.458 lays out several requirements for teacher mentors. An exemption from these requirements would allow for any teacher in need of mentor assistance or support to be assigned a mentor. In addition, mentors would be exempt from the qualifications described in Subsection (b), thus increasing the pool of teachers from which the district could draw for these targeted mentoring programs.

5. Transfer Students (TEC 25.036)

TEC 25.036(a) 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. The Commissioner of Education has interpreted this statute to prohibit mid-year student transfer revocation except in the case of failure to pay tuition.

The District seeks exemption from TEC 25.036(a) and the interpretation of the Commissioner of Education. Status as a transfer student in KISD is a privilege and not a right, and the District seeks exemption from this provision, and the related Commissioner interpretation, in order to ensure that transfer students fulfill their responsibilities in order to maintain that privilege. A transfer student shall be notified in the written transfer agreement that he or she must follow all rules and regulations of the District. Non- resident students who have been accepted as a District transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent or designee at any time during the academic year if the student fails to meet and maintain standards of academic, attendance or conduct as outlined in the KISD Transfer form. Additionally, violation of the terms of the transfer agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year.

6. Class Size Waivers (TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (EEB LEGAL)

K-4 classrooms currently must meet a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 according to state law. If a class exceeds this 22:1 ratio, then the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. Waivers are always approved. In addition, a letter must be sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them that the waiver has been submitted.

- Kennedale ISD believes that class size plays a significant role in instruction but also acknowledges that other factors impact the ability of the district to ensure this ratio. It is possible that class sizes may by necessity be slightly larger. District resources can be used more wisely by not having to continually notify TEA each time a class exceeds 22:1. Therefore, the District seeks exemption from the statutory requirement and shall adhere to the following:
 - KISD will make every effort to begin each school year with the 22:1 ratio except for unique and extenuating circumstances.
 - In the event that a class size rises above the required ratio, a waiver will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
 - In the event that a class size exceeds 22:1, the parents of the classroom affected will be notified.
 - In the event that a K-2 class size exceeds 24:1, or a 3rd or 4th grade class exceeds 25:1, it will be reviewed to determine appropriate outcomes, and the school board will be notified by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.
 - A teacher will be hired at any point during the school year if the superintendent deems it in the best interest of the students.

7. Minimum Attendance for Credit or 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 for 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 the class in the traditional brick and mortar building due to illness or family concerns
- Would benefit from a different time structure to the school day. Would benefit from virtual and online classes in addition 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 provided by Chapter 25 of the Texas Education Code.

8. Professional Development (TEC 21.451) (DMA LEGAL) (DMA LOCAL)

Under current state guidelines, the district is required to implement numerous annual state-mandated professional development trainings that puts undue stress and time constraints on our faculty and staff.

The District seeks exemption from state-mandated professional development that does not reflect the needs of our teachers and other school personnel. This will allow the district to remain flexible and responsive to newly emerging data and trends within our own student population.

All new to district employees will complete specified compliance training during the first year of employment within the district. Employees may be assigned training to an employee or group of employees as needed within a five-year cycle. Those who in specified groups, such as coaches and those who handle food or bodily fluids, are not exempt from annual trainings mandated for their specific job type, roles, responsibilities, and duties.

The District will maintain an updated professional development list for all employees with a 2024-2025 baseline. Employees will participate in formal Statutory Compliance Training every five years.

9. Bank Depository Bids (TEC 45.205, 45.206, 45.207) (BDAE LEGAL) (BDAE LOCAL)

Under current guidelines the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. 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.

Kennedale ISD seeks exemption from the contract requirements for a bank depository contract. By gaining exemption from these requirements, the District would be able to allow the District's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 8-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 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 response to local banking relationships.

10. Number of Teacher Conferences (TEC §28.022)

Senate Bill 12 of the 89th Legislative Session amended Section 28.022 of the Texas Education Code to require two in-person parent-teacher conferences each school year. The new requirement creates a burden for District personnel that does not inherently enhance meaningful opportunities for parents to engage with educators or lead to performance improvements of students served. Kennedale ISD shall be exempt from this requirement. Its staff will continue to provide one (1) parent-conference per

academic year. Additionally, the District staff accommodate as many meetings as necessary to support family schedules and ensure open, ongoing communication.

11. GPA Calculation (TEC §28.0252)

Senate Bill 1191 of the 89th Legislative Session amended Chapter 28 of the Texas Education Code and now requires the Commissioner of Education to develop a standardized method for calculating high school grade point averages (GPAs). Under this law, all public schools in Texas must give equal additional weight to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), OnRamps dual enrollment, and other dual credit courses. The intent of the bill is to create a fair and consistent statewide system for recognizing advanced coursework, ultimately promoting greater equity in college admissions and scholarship opportunities for students across districts. School districts are required to use the standard method developed by the Commissioner. Kennedale ISD will continue to follow its current GPA calculation methods under existing district policies and procedures. Once state requirements are finalized by the Commissioner, the District will carefully review the guidance, determine any necessary changes, and ensure implementation is both fair and effective make further assessment on whether to implement the Commissioner's standards or continue with its then existing district policies and procedures.

12. Acquisition of Library Materials (TEC §33.026)

Senate Bill 13 of the 89th Legislative Session amended the Texas Education Code and requires school boards to adopt a library acquisition policy that includes 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, the public posting of selected materials before they are made available to students, and Board approval.

Kennedale ISD will be exempt from the requirement of public posting of selected materials and Board approval before materials are made available to students. The District already has robust procedures implemented by a certified librarian in place that govern the acquisition of library materials in a manner that ensures transparency, appropriateness, and educational value. 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-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 Kennedale 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 Kennedale 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. Thus, the District shall maintain its practices as it relates to the acquisition of library materials, which shall include the input and review of the district librarian and Superintendent of Schools.

13. Local School Library Advisory Council (TEC § 33.025)

Senate Bill 13 of the 89th Legislative Session amended the Texas Education Code and now requires school districts to establish a School Library Advisory Council at any district 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 districts to notify parents of their right to request council formation and to maintain transparency through open meetings, public records, and timely reporting of council activities and decisions.

Kennedale ISD will be exempted from this requirement, which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. Kennedale ISD already has strong, board-approved procedures in place for selecting, reviewing, and reconsidering library materials, which is led by the District's certified librarian and educators. Creating an advisory council risks undermining the professional judgment of educators and librarians, introduces the judgment of non-certified individuals, introduces potential for politicization of library materials, 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.

The District shall continue to allow meaningful parental review and involvement, including access to their child's library checkout records, 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.

14. Local Grievance Procedures

(TEC Chapter 26A) Senate Bill 12 of the 89th Legislative Session amended the Texas Education Code by adding Sections 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003, which 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.

Kennedale ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in local district policies DGBA, FNG and GF, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within 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) district business 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 following an event that a parent wishes to grieve. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best and most prompt response.

Kennedale ISD 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 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. Kennedale 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.

15. Teacher Planning Period (TEC 21.404)

TEC §21.404 guarantees each classroom teacher a planning period. Specifically, each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Based upon Commissioner of Education interpretation, all planning period assignments must take place when the students are in instructional attendance. For example, an instructional day of 7:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. cannot have a teacher conference/planning time of 3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Kennedale ISD adopted a hybrid 4-day school calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. TEC §21.404 was developed based on a 5-day school calendar and planning period time was calculated as 10 days * 45 minutes per day = 450 minutes over a two-week span.

Kennedale ISD and its teachers place high value on teacher planning, teacher effectiveness and collaboration. In order to maintain compliance, Kennedale ISD teachers must voluntarily choose to utilize their planning period to engage in Professional Learning Community (PLC) activities. If any members of the PLC do not participate, the collaboration of the entire group is jeopardized and causes the entire group of teachers to sacrifice time after school in order to engage in PLC collaboration. This after school meeting time creates a hardship for teachers that otherwise prefer utilizing their conference period to collaborate with their teams and work toward campus goals.

It is the philosophy of Kennedale ISD that teachers become more effective educators when they collaborate and share ideas together on a regular and consistent basis and that a teacher is the most important school-related factor impacting student achievement gains. High quality instruction in the classrooms is expected to lead to greater student achievement gains.

Kennedale ISD will be exempt from the requirement of providing teachers at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. When operating under a 4-day work calendar, planning periods will equate to 360 minutes within each two-week period. Teachers may be assigned a conference period that is at the beginning or end of their scheduled workday, regardless of the students' instructional day schedule.

To reduce the amount of extended day planning for teachers, Kennedale ISD may utilize up to one planning period per week for the purpose of group planning and collaboration (PLC). Because teachers vary in effectiveness, collaboration and sharing of ideas among colleagues and teammates is essential to the success of the students.

The District will continue the TEA allowable practice of being allowed to ask teachers to engage in group-planning during conference periods when a teacher has more than the statutory minimum conference time required. Administration may require participation in group planning for the excess time allowed (i.e., teacher receives 55 minutes of conference instead of 45, producing 10 minutes daily excess/ 80 minutes over the course of two weeks on a 4-day calendar).

This exemption will help in the development of highly effective teachers, ensure continuity of curriculum application in the classroom, and allow for mentoring of new/struggling teachers. Time to collaborate within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is a priority to provide innovative curriculum, support instructional methods, and personalization for each student.

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.

2025 District of Innovation Committee Members

Chelsea Allison, Ph D | Assistant Principal KHS

Angela Bruce | Principal KJHS

Mimi Bumpas | Parent

Michael Cagle | Principal KHS

Cari Clark | Principal RFP

Jeff Davis | Director of School Safety and Discipline

Stephanie Devlin, PhD | Director of Counseling Services

Denell Dickey | Instructional Programs Coordinator

Jordan Dunlap | Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Tammy Dwomo | Director of Student Support Services

Holly Gannaway | Teacher Special Programs JFD

Wendy Gerstenkorn | Lead Diagnostician

Tracie Gray | Director of Special Programs

Dede Grimes | Business Owner

Shana Herigon | Parent

Erin Hitt | Teacher JAA ECC

Laurie Humiston | Director of Food Service

Toya Keas, Ph D | Instructional Programs Coordinator

Brandy King | Director of Human Resources

Chase Lampley | Instructional Technology Facilitator

Debbie Lavadour | Teacher RFP

Rachel Lomax, Ph D | CCMR Coordinator

Darin Luman | Assistant Principal JFD

Eileen Mode | Director of Facilities and Operations

Rachael Parker | Assistant Principal RFP

Trisha Poore | Principal JFD

Brooke Rhodes | Teacher JFD

Jacques Robinson, Ed D | Assistant Principal KHS

Carrie Shue | Community Member

Nanette Tate | Assistant Principal JAA

Julie Vu, PhD | Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum & Student Services

Laura Wells | Principal JAA

Tanya Widner | Teacher RFP

Tracy Williams | Director of Administrative Services

Donna Winn | Teacher of Special Programs RFP