

Kerrville Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Renewed: January 23, 2023



Introduction

District of Innovation is a provision passed during the 84th Legislative session in House Bill 1842 which allows traditional public-school systems most of the same flexibilities afforded to Public Charter Schools. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan as set forth in Texas Education Code, chapter 12A. To be eligible for designation as a district of innovation, a school district's most recent academic performance rating must be at least acceptable.

Once formally approved, an innovation plan is effective for five years. The plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed in the same way it was developed and approved at any time. Essentially, innovation plans are about local control. Each school district pursues designation as a District of Innovation for different reasons. Kerrville ISD's innovation plan has a strong focus on ensuring students are provided the very best instruction from the very best teachers in a safe and orderly environment.

Process

October 16, 2017 – Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees heard a presentation on District of Innovation.

KISD Administration presented and Trustees approved a resolution initiating the process to become a District of Innovation.

October 30, 2017 – Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees held a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop a local innovation plan. At this meeting the Board appointed a District-level Advisory Committee (DAC) to develop an innovation plan.

November 15, 2017 through January 17, 2018

The DAC worked to develop the plan which specified innovations and identified the Texas Education Code provisions from which the district should be exempted.

Meeting Dates were:

Wednesday, November 15, 2107

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

Wednesday December 20, 2017

Wednesday January 10, 2018

Wednesday January 17, 2018

January 19, 2018 – Posting of the Innovation Plan

The District Advisory Committee posted the proposed plan on the district web-site for 30 days.

The proposed plan was sent to the Texas Commissioner of Education with notification that the Board of Trustees intends to vote to approve an innovation plan.

February 21, 2018 – Meeting of the District Advisory Committee

The District Advisory Committee held a public meeting at which it unanimously voted to approve the plan.

February 26, 2018 – Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The innovation plan was presented to the Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees and was unanimously approved.

District Advisory Team Members

School Representatives

Tivy High School:

Shelby Balsler – Principal

Aaron “AJ” Johnson – Teacher

Hal Peterson Middle School:

Tamela Crawford – Principal

Pamela Nentwich - Teacher

B. T. Wilson:

Amy Waiser – Counselor

Daniels Elementary:

Monica Freeman – Teacher

Nimitz Elementary:

Carla Wedekind - Teacher

Starkey Elementary:

Amy Ahrens - Principal

Gena Robertson - Teacher

Tally Elementary:

Susan Witt - Teacher

Early Childhood:

Crystal Duffield - Teacher

Special Education:

Michele Gist-Barrow - Director

Gayla Fair - Supervisor

HCHS/Alternative Education:

Aaron Cook – Teacher

Community/Parent Representatives

Kim Clarkson

Rhonda Davison

Cayce McCormick

Greg Peschel

Lisa Thompson

Central Office Representatives

Mark J. Foust, Ed.D. – Superintendent

Heather Engstrom – Assistant Superintendent

Wade Ivy – Assistant Superintendent

Sylvia Flannery – Director of C&I

Charli Stehling – Director of Personnel

Lesle Stevens – Director of Special Programs

*Tana Althaus, Assistant Principal at Nimitz Elementary School, was a non-voting participant who served as a community liaison.

DOI Renewal Process Timeline – Fall 2022/Spring 2023

November 9, 2022 – Meeting with the Faculty Community Advisory Committee (FCAC)

Kerrville ISD Administration presented the process and timeline for amending and renewing the District of Innovation (DOI) plan. Committee members heard a review of the current plan and proposed draft amendments and additions to the plan.

November 28, 2022 – Texas Education Agency (TEA) notified

Administration notified TEA of the district's intent to renew the DOI plan.

December 7, 2022 – Meeting with the FCAC

Kerrville ISD Administration presented the proposed DOI plan and received feedback from the committee.

December 12, 2022 – Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees meeting

Board members heard a presentation on the proposed DOI plan and had the opportunity to ask questions and comment.

December 16, 2022 – DOI plan posted online

The DOI plan was posted on-line for 30 days.

January 18, 2023 – Meeting with the FCAC

The FCAC approved the DOI plan by majority vote in a formally posted, open meeting.

January 23, 2023 - Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees meeting

The Board of Trustees adopted the DOI plan by 2/3 majority vote.

December 18, 2023-Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees meeting

Board members heard a presentation on the proposed DOI amendment and had the opportunity to ask questions and comment.

January 22, 2024-Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees meeting

The Board of Trustees approved the DOI amendment by 2/3 majority vote.

August 12, 2025---Meeting with the FCAC

The FCAC approved the DOI plan by majority vote in a regular meeting.

August 18, 2025—Kerrville ISD Board of Trustees meeting

The Board of Trustees approved the DOI amendment by 2/3 majority vote.

Faculty Community Advisory Council Members: 2022-2023 School Year

Hunter Miller

School Representatives

Tivy High School

Kenneth Savage

Hill Country High School

Lyndsey McCoy

Hal Peterson Middle School

Katie Dalglish

Early Childhood Campus

Dana Dunagan

Daniels Elementary School

Melissa Martin

Nimitz Elementary School

Lydia Wagner

Starkey Elementary School

Mario Curra

Tally Elementary School

Special Education

Lindsay Conklin

Community/Parent Representatives

Josh Smithson

Keith Wilson

Stephanie Davis

Wayne Uecker

Virginia Graham

Kim Clarkson

Central Office Representatives

Mark J. Foust, Ed.D. – Superintendent

Wade Ivy – Assistant Superintendent

Heather Engstrom – Assistant Superintendent

Jarrett Jachade – Assistant Superintendent

Requested Exemptions

Teacher and Principal Evaluations

Texas Education Code (TEC) 21.352 and Texas Education Code (TEC) 21.3541

Kerrville ISD elected to use the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TTESS) and Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS) models for the annual appraisal of teachers and principals. Participants value the process and content of these models because they provide multiple opportunities for appraisers and appraisees to discuss goals for teaching and learning, offer a specific rubric which clearly outlines effective practices, and allow for specific goal setting and statements of action designed to improve instruction which are documented and monitored.

TEC 21.352 requires student growth be a component of the appraisal ratings of teachers. TEC 21.3541 requires that student growth be a component of the appraisal ratings of principals. Kerrville ISD believes assessing student growth within the context of specific goals for student learning and a specifically defined action plan is a highly valuable process that will increase teacher and principal effectiveness.

Kerrville ISD seeks to foster a culture of instructional innovation in an environment in which it is safe to implement new strategies and techniques and in which it is safe to learn from successes and failures. Assigning a specific rating for student growth has the potential to stifle that spirit.

Kerrville ISD will be exempt from the portions of TEC 21.352 and TEC 21.3541 that require student growth measures to be a component of the appraisal rating and will instead utilize student growth measure as a part of the yearly goal setting process that takes place with all teachers and administrators and will not assign a separate rating for student growth.

- *Student Growth will be considered by the TTESS appraiser as one piece of evidence among several when scoring **Dimension 4.2, Goal Setting: The teacher reflects on his/her practice.***
- *Student Growth will be considered by the TPESS appraisers when scoring **Standard 1 (D): The principal ensures that effective instruction maximizes growth of individual students and student groups, supports equity, and eliminates the achievement gap.***

Revocation of Inter-District Transfer During a School Year

Texas Education Code (TEC) 25.036

Kerrville ISD accepts inter-district transfer students as a way to increase diversity among students and uses the money generated by these students to offer programs that enhance the educational experiences of all students.

TEC 25.036 states 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. The phrase, "transfer annually" was interpreted by the Commissioner of Education to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year, thus restricting a district's ability to revoke a transfer approval mid-year.

Kerrville ISD seeks to increase the number of transfer students annually but acknowledges the inherent risk of inadvertently accepting a transfer student whose behavior and/or attendance are not in keeping with district expectations.

Kerrville ISD will be exempt from TEC 25.036 and will exercise its right to revoke a student transfer at any time during the school year as explained below:

Kerrville ISD may revoke the transfer of a student under the following guidelines:

- 1. The principal will recommend a revocation with supporting evidence to the superintendent or superintendent's designee who will make a final determination on the student's transfer status.*
- 2. A transfer may be revoked if the student has been absent without an excuse acceptable to the campus principal for 10% or more of the number of days of school.*
- 3. A transfer may be revoked if the student engaged in behavior or conduct, on or off campus, that:*
 - a. Resulted in the placement of the transfer student in the district disciplinary alternative school;*
 - b. Resulted in being charged with, convicted of, or deferred adjudication for a felony offense;*
 - c. Resulted in being charged with, convicted of, or deferred adjudication for a misdemeanor offense that contains any element of assault or is drug or gang related; or*
 - d. Disrupted the learning environment, placed others in harm, and/or negatively impacted the orderly operations or climate of the school.*

School Start Date

Texas Education Code (TEC) 25.0811

Each year a sub-committee of the Kerrville ISD Faculty Community Advisory Committee (FCAC) develops a district instructional calendar that is recommended to the Board of Trustees for approval. Locally developed parameters guide committee members in their creation of a calendar that is responsive to the needs of students, teachers, families and the community, including area summer camps.

However, TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction for students before the fourth Monday in August. Beginning the school year on the 4th Monday in August makes the calendar creation process highly restrictive and does not allow for meaningful discretion. This is compounded even further in years in which the 4th Monday in August falls late in the month.

Important elements of the calendar include, but are not limited to, balanced numbers of days in the fall and spring semesters, balanced numbers of days in a grading period, timely student holidays, strategically selected teacher in-service dates, and the ability of high school students co-enrolled at local colleges and universities to start the school year at the same time their college courses begin.

To allow greater flexibility and responsiveness to student, teacher, family and community needs in the calendar development process, Kerrville ISD will be exempt from TEC 25.0811.

Probationary Contracts

Texas Education Code (TEC) 21.102

Each year Kerrville ISD welcomes new teachers into our school community. Support, feedback, and professional learning opportunities are provided to ensure a smooth transition into the district. All newly hired teachers are given a probationary contract in their first year of service.

New teachers to Kerrville ISD must meet a number of expectations including, but not limited to, the ability to:

1. Provide a positive learning environment through strong relational skills and effective classroom management;
2. Ensure authentic student engagement by establishing clear learning expectations, preparing high interest lessons at the appropriate level of rigor, differentiating instruction to meet the various learning needs of students, and integrating technology;
3. Implement intentional and ongoing assessment for learning;
4. Be self-reflective, accept feedback, and implement a professional learning plan;
5. Work positively and professionally with co-workers and supervisors;
6. Communicate positively and effectively with parents; and
7. Represent themselves, their campus, and the school district in a positive and professional manner.

Principals carefully monitor the effectiveness of new teachers. Before the end of a new teacher's first year of service, his or her principal must determine the type of contract that will be offered for the next school year. The principal has the choice of recommending a term contract, a probationary contract, or non-renewal of the new teacher's contract.

However, TEC 21.102 states a probationary period for a classroom teacher new to the district 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. This law can be detrimental to teachers who meet its criteria. Principals have only two choices with these teachers: recommend a term contract or recommend non-renewal.

Contract decisions are critical. Students deserve to have the best teacher in the classroom, and new teachers who have invested in Kerrville ISD as their employer deserve to have adequate time to prove themselves in the classroom.

Kerrville ISD will be exempt from TEC 21.102 which will provide flexibility to the principal to offer a second-year probationary contract to a covered employee who might otherwise be recommended for non-renewal because they have not had adequate opportunity to meet all campus and district expectations.

- *This exception does not affect the ability of a principal to recommend non-renewal of an employee.*
- *This exception does not imply that all newly hired employees who meet the criteria of TEC 21.102 will be given a probationary contract in their second year of employment.*

Teacher Certification

Texas Education Code (TEC) 21.003

Kerrville ISD is committed to providing learning opportunities to all students that prepare them for college and the world of work. In conjunction with a strong core curriculum, it is imperative that the district offers a wide variety of courses that enrich and expand students' interests, actively engage and motivate students, teach specific job skills, and are responsive to the economic development efforts of the community.

TEC 21.003 states beginning in the 2026-2027 school year districts cannot exempt teacher certification for English Language Arts, Math, Science, or Social Studies in grades 5th and below. For grades 6th and above the district cannot exempt a teacher in English Language Arts or Math. Kerrville ISD is consistently able to recruit and hire certified teachers for core academic courses. However, there are certain Technology, Engineering, Arts, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and other innovative courses for which certified applicants are not readily available.

The ability of the district to offer courses in these areas is greatly inhibited under current certification rules. Therefore, Kerrville ISD will be exempt from TEC 21.003 within the following parameters:

1. *Kerrville ISD will require teachers who teach core academic foundational education courses, Special Education, Bilingual, and English as a Second Language courses to be certified under TEC 21.003;*
2. *Training on designing instruction and assessment to promote student learning, creating a positive and productive classroom environment, providing proper and effective responsive instruction and assessment, and fulfilling professional roles and responsibilities will be required of uncertified teachers who have not previously received training in these areas.*

Term of Bank Depository Contracts

Texas Education Code (TEC) 45.205

TEC 45.205 requires school districts to either solicit competitive bids or issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a depository bank. The term of the contract is two years. The depository bank and the school district may agree to extend the depository contract for three additional two-year terms without soliciting competitive bids or issuing an RFP. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms.

Kerrville ISD will add one additional two-year extension of the depository contract for a total of four possible contract extensions. Maintaining a long-term relationship with a bank is important for continuity of services to the school district and avoids the cumbersome and disruptive nature of an RFP process and changing of banks.

This exemption does not prevent the district from issuing a bank depository RFP, as allowed by law, if deemed necessary.

Required Disclosure Regarding Instructional Plan

Texas Education Code 26.0062 (SB 12 section 15)

TEC 26.0062 requires school districts to adopt a policy to make available on the District's website at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the district for that semester.

Kerrville ISD teachers may provide a parent or guardian at their request an instructional plan or course syllabus for their student or students courses. Campus and course information is provided to parents through beginning of the year course syllabi, class and campus newsletters, campus and district calendars, and all additionally required notifications.

Grievance Process, Paperwork, and Timelines

Grievances

Texas Education Code 26.011 (SB12 section 19)

TEC 26.011 requires districts to adopt a grievance policy in compliance with Chapter 26A.

Grievance Policy

Texas Education Code 26A.001 (SB 12 section 20)

TEC 26A.001 requires the school districts to adopt a grievance policy to address grievances received by the District which must provide for a variety on requirements including: various levels of review, supplementation the record with additional information (claims or evidence) at any time during the grievance process, and recusal of the individual hearing the grievance if he/she is the subject of the grievance among other items.

Timelines for Filing and Appeal

Texas Education Code 26A.002 (SB 12 section 20)

TEC 26A.002 requires school districts who adopt TEC 26A.001 to provide for a grievance to be filed by a parent or guardian 60 days from the date on which the parent knew or should've known of the facts giving rise to the grievance, if the parent engages or attempts informal resolution before filing a grievance they then have the later of 90 days to file a grievance from the date they knew or should've known or 30 days from the date on which the district provided the parents information on how to file a grievance. The decision deadline is 20 days from the date of the hearing and the appeal deadline is 20 days from the date the decision is rendered. Board hearings must be held not later than 60 days after the date the previous decision was made, and the board must render a decision within 30 days from the date the board hearing is held. The law is unclear regarding whether "days" means calendar or business days.

Posting of Procedures and Forms

Texas Education Code 26A.003 (SB 12 section 20)

TEC 26A.003 provides that the board of trustees shall develop, make available in a prominent location on the district website, and include in the student handbook a procedure for resolving grievances, standardized forms for filling a grievance, a notice of appeal or a request for a hearing under this chapter and the method by which the grievance may be filed electronically from/through the district's website.

Kerrville ISD policy currently provides for many of the procedural requirements and grievance processes required by TEC 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002 and 26A.003 and therefore there is no need to adopt these statutes. See Board Policies FFH (Legal) and (Local); DIA (Legal) and (Local); FNG (Legal) and (Local) and GF (Legal) and (Local). The district's plan is to continue to implement the policies for hearing grievances in a timely fashion and at the lowest level for a resolution.

Local School Library

Local School Library Advisory Council

Texas Education Code 33.025 (SB 13 section 4)

TEC 33.025 authorizes the board of trustees to, if they wish, establish a local school library advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in each school library catalog in the District.

Acquisition of Library Materials

Texas Education Code 33.026 (SB 13 section 4)

TEC 33.026 requires a board of trustees to adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials, including procedures for the procurement of library materials and receipt of donated library materials. The policy must require the board to approve all donated or procured materials for a library in the district.

Challenge or Appeal Regarding Library Materials

Texas Education Code 33.027 (SB 13, section 4)

TEC 33.027 allows for a parent of or a person standing in parental relation to a student enrolled in the district, an employee of the district or a resident of the district to submit to the district a written challenge to any library material in the catalog of the school library in the district and may appeal any challenge to the board of trustees in compliance with the process set forth in TEC 33.027.

Kerrville ISD policy EFB(Local) outlines collection development goals that reflect the community values of the district and procedures regarding the selection and recommendation of library materials. The policy allows parent/guardian access to the library materials. Additionally, the policy defines procedures to informally and formally request reconsideration of library materials.