



# District of Innovation Plan

## 2022-2027

## I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

## II. Term

The term of the plan will begin with the 2022-2023 school year and terminate at the end of the 2026-2027 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the District Level Improvement Committee (DLIC) and the Board of Trustees. The DLIC will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the District website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. [Refer to HEB ISD Board Policy AF.](#)

## III. District Level Improvement Committee

The DLIC developed this Plan and includes members representing the following:

- Teachers
- Key Community Leaders
- Parents
- Students
- District Administrators

## IV. Timeline

DATE	PROCESS REQUIREMENT	AMENDMENT	RENEWAL
Feb 17	Proposed version of the amended plan will be reviewed for renewal and approval.	YES	YES
April 1	Final version of the proposed plan has been available on the district's website for at least 30 days	NO	YES
May 9	The board of trustees has notified the commissioner of education of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan (see applicable "Notification" section below)	NO	YES
May 12	The district-level committee established under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.251, has held a public* meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan and has approved the plan by a majority vote of the committee member (*meeting must be public for renewal)	YES	YES
June 13	The board of trustees adopts a proposed local innovation plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board	YES	YES
June 14	The district notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the agency <a href="#">form</a> provided in the figure in this subsection (see applicable "Notification" section below)	YES	YES
June 14	The district shall ensure that a copy of the local innovation plan is posted on the district's website in accordance with the TEC, §12A.0071, for the term of the designation as an innovation district.	YES	YES

June 15	Not later than the <u>15th day</u> after the date on which the board of trustees finalizes a local innovation plan either through adoption, amendment, or renewal, the district shall provide a copy of [link to] the current local innovation plan to the Texas Education Agency for posting on the agency website	YES	YES
Feb 19, 2026	Amendment approved by the District Level Improvement Committee	YES	NO
Feb 23, 2026	Amendment approved by the Board of Trustees	YES	NO



V. Strategic Plan

This Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the District’s Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan.

### **Class Size in Prekindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Texas Education 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 prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

§ 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 person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

#### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- The district would no longer have to submit annual class size waivers that are continuously approved by TEA and do multiple communications to parents each six weeks allowing the district to redirect resources more effectively.

#### **Local Guidelines:**

- The district will continue to maintain established class size thresholds of prekindergarten and kindergarten at 23 students to 1 teacher and Grades 1-4 at 24 students to 1 teacher. The district will provide parents class size notification at the start of school. [Refer to HEB ISD Board Policy EEB.](#)
- The district will establish a ratio of 26 students to 1 teacher for Spanish Immersion classrooms in Grades 1-4.

## **First Day of Instruction (School Start Date)**

Texas Education Code Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance - §25.0811 First Day of Instruction (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- Restricting school start date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August operationally challenges HEB ISD because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August and generally May 28 due to constraints of the venue contract for HS graduation. Flexibility to the start date would allow the district to address the following issues caused by the current calendar constraints:
  1. Increased student regression due to longer summer break.
  2. Lack of flexibility to schedule student breaks or other options during the school year.
  3. Condensed employee work schedules limiting flexibility to schedule holidays, personal days and professional development days impacting employee work / life balance.
  4. Increased teacher absences and related substitute teacher expense.
  5. A lack of true choice for the Calendar Committee in development of the school calendar.

### **Local Guidelines:**

- The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers which will remain the same. [Refer to HEB ISD Board Policy EB.](#)

## **Probationary period for Ch. 21 Contracts**

Texas Education Code Subchapter C. Sec. §Sec. 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...(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.

### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- The exemption is specifically for teachers who have taught in at least 5 of the last 8 years in public education. In addition to a one-year probationary contract, the district may recommend a second year probationary contract to be approved by the Board of Trustees. An extension to a second-year probationary contract is to recognize that, at times, even experienced teachers new to the district need more than one year to learn the HEB Teaching and Learning system and the district's Continuous Improvement model. A one-year probationary period may not allow the teacher or the administrator time to evaluate the teacher's capacity or ability to adopt the HEB ISD requirements.

**Local Guidelines:**

- The district will have the option to recommend a second year probationary contract to teachers who are new to the district, but have taught at least 5 of the last 8 years in public education. There are no changes to first time teacher probationary contract terms only teachers who have taught in public education in at least 5 of the last 8 years. The second-year probationary contract is not automatic, but at the discretion of Human Resources and the campus administrator. [Refer to HEB ISD Board Policy DCA.](#)

## **Teacher Certification - CTE**

Texas Education Code §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.

Texas Education Code §21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES. (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- The exemption is to specifically allow the district to issue local teaching permits to teachers of non-core and core academic CTE courses without intervention by the Commissioner to review the issued permits. The exemption is to allow the district to establish local requirements including the current requirements in Sec 21.055 for teacher preparation (including all background checks, training and classroom management preparation) to enhance our ability to compete for teaching resources with industry expertise
- Texas Education Code §21.003 and §21.053 outlines state certification standards for teachers. Staff hired under a school district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district.

### **Local Guidelines:**

- The district will establish local guidelines to have the option to issue local certification for any CTE core academic and non-core class teacher. The district's local guidelines will maintain the requirements for criminal background checks and classroom management training and preparation, including optional support at the district discretion for a mentor teacher. [Refer to Policy DBA and DK.](#)
- The exemption is to specifically allow the district to issue local teaching permits to teachers of non-core and core academic CTE courses without intervention by the Commissioner to review the

issued permits. The exemption is to allow the district to establish local requirements including the current requirements in Sec 21.055 for teacher preparation (including all background checks, training and classroom management preparation) to enhance our ability to compete for teaching resources with industry expertise.

### **Teacher Certification - World Languages**

Texas Education Code §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.

Texas Education Code §21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES. (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

#### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- The exemption is to specifically allow the district to issue local teaching permits to teachers of world languages courses without intervention by the Commissioner to review the issued permits. The exemption is to allow the district to establish local requirements including the current requirements in Sec 21.055 for teacher preparation (including all background checks, training and classroom management preparation) of difficult to-fill teaching positions.
- An exemption from these requirements as noted in Texas Education Code §21.055 allows the District to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate, but whom the district deems best to teach in positions identified as difficult to fill. The District and local campus will assess appropriate training needs for any teacher hired under this exemption. This is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district.
- Texas Education Code §21.003 and §21.053 outlines state certification standards for teachers. Staff hired under a school

district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district.

**Local Guidelines:**

- The district will establish local guidelines to have the option to issue local certification for any world languages teachers. The district's local guidelines will maintain the requirements for criminal background checks and classroom management training and preparation, including optional support at the district discretion for a mentor teacher. [Refer to Policy DBA and DK.](#)
- After the required posting period and candidate interviews, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document the specific credentials (i.e. experiences and expertise) the prospective teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to fill the position.

## **School District Depositories Contract**

Texas Education Code Subchapter G. School District Depositories Sec. §45.205 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 three-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.

### **Rationale for the Exemption:**

- This exemption is 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 services out for 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. This will further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to change direct deposit instructions each time a new depository occurs and allows the district flexibility with respect to banking relationships.

### **Local Guidelines:**

- The district will only send depository services out to bid if the district determines contract pricing becomes uncompetitive or there is some operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. With this exemption in place, none of the additional requirements related to the bid or request for proposal detailed in Sec 45.206 through 45.209 would be applicable. [Refer to HEB ISD Board Policy BDAE.](#)