LEWISVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation
Lewisville ISD Local Innovation Plan

Introduction

Passed in 2015, House Bill 1842 created Districts of Innovation under Section 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC). A district may apply for designation as a District of Innovation to be exempt from specific statutes of the TEC so long as the district's most recent performance rating is at least acceptable ("C"). Designation as a District of Innovation provides Lewisville ISD with more local control, customization, and flexibility.

On May 16, 2017, the Lewisville ISD Board of Trustees (Board) approved a Local Innovation Plan (Plan) that was created and voted favorably by a board-appointed District of Innovation Committee (Committee). No amendments or changes have been made to the Local Innovation Plan since its approval, and it is set to expire on May 15, 2022. On September 13, 2021, the LISD Board of Trustees appointed a new District of Innovation Committee to revise and renew the existing plan. The committee consists of 34 parents, teachers, principals, district administrators, and community members, 14 of which previously served on the committee. Representation across the five high school feeder patterns has been ensured and membership priority was given to returning applicants for continuity purposes.

Terms

By law, designation as a District of Innovation may not exceed five years. The term of the Lewisville ISD Local Innovation Plan begins on May 02, 2022, and ends on May 01, 2027, unless amended or terminated earlier by the Board in accordance with the law or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by recommendation of the Committee, a majority vote of the district-level committee established under TEC 11.251 (Committee) along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An amendment to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an innovation district; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify the Texas Education Agency (TEA) within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates.

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The Committee will review the plan annually in the spring, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are aligned with Lewisville ISD (LISD) Strategic Design efforts. An annual report that includes data on the usage of each exemption will be provided to the Board based on the outcome of this review.

As part of the annual review process, the membership of the Committee will be renewed and/or modified by a majority vote of the Board. Outside of the annual review/renewal process, if a member of the Committee is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Board may appoint a replacement by majority vote. The intent of the Board is to maintain a balanced representation on the Committee of parents/community members and staff.

Lewisville ISD's Local Innovation Plan is aligned with the beliefs, vision, mission, and goals of LISD as approved in the Strategic Design Plan. Additionally, the Plan is not intended to compromise District funding.

Core Beliefs

We believe:

1. Every student is uniquely capable and deserves to be challenged each day.
2. Uninhibited learning depends on a safe, nurturing, inclusive and flexible environment.
3. An educated citizenry is essential for equal opportunity and a prosperous society.
4. Meaningful and relevant work engages students in profound learning.
5. Critical thinking and problem-solving today are necessary for students to be equipped for future challenges.
6. Genuine transformation requires disruptive innovation.
7. Education is the shared responsibility of the community.

Vision

All of our students enjoying thriving, productive lives in a future *they* create.

Mission

Students, staff and community design and implement a learning organization that provides engaging, innovative experiences every day.

Goals

1. Provide all learners with safe, nurturing, inclusive and flexible learning environments.
2. Engage learners through the use of technological tools to access, create and share content as well as collaborate with other learners throughout the world.
3. Reframe state readiness standards in a way that leads to profound learning and has meaning and value for students.

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4. Create flexible systems that result in a learning organization supported by innovative and engaged staff.
5. Continuously involve our diverse community, staff and students to use their strengths, resources and talents to provide engaging, innovative experiences for all learners.
6. Develop and implement meaningful, varied assessments that inform and inspire students and educators for continuous improvement and growth in a way that transforms learning and teaching.
7. Design an accountability system that transcends state/national mandates and reflects local values and expectations.

Innovations

It is determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the pursuit of the goals of LISD in meeting the needs of students at this time.

Innovation Plan Exemption 1: Uniform Start Date for Academic Calendar

Texas Education Code 25.0811(a) does not allow school districts to begin school before the fourth Monday of August. Exemption from Texas Education Code 25.0811(a) allows LISD to collaboratively design an academic calendar based on the needs of and input from the community. It provides the flexibility needed to maximize instructional time available before key exams and align more closely with dual credit courses.

Innovation Plan Exemption 2: Probationary Contracts for Experienced Teachers

Texas Education Code Section 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-year classroom and student data. Exemption from Texas Education Code Section 21.102(b) allows LISD to offer an additional probationary contract, when needed, to teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses that are new to LISD who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years to benefit the individual, schools, and students served. Offering an additional probationary contract will only be used when necessary to further support the impacted individual and campus.

Innovation Plan Exemption 3: Educator Certification for Teachers in State-Identified Shortage Areas in Non-Compliance Programs

Texas Education Codes 21.003 and 21.057 outlines state certification standards and notification standards for teachers. An exemption from these requirements allows LISD to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate or do not hold a certificate in the content area and/or grade in which they will be assigned, but whom the district deems best to teach in a state-identified shortage area. Shortage areas are defined annually by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. In the event LISD experiences a shortage area that is not on the state's shortage

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area list, the Superintendent and Chief Human Resource Officer will inform the Board. LISD will always strive to ensure only the highest quality educators are hired for the benefit of our students. Classroom teachers with current state credentials will remain the preference. However, on occasion when the district has positions that are difficult to fill, this exemption may be leveraged to meet the needs of a campus. Staff hired under a school district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district. After the required posting period and candidate interviews, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what specific credentials (i.e. experiences and expertise) the prospective teacher possess that would qualify the individual to teach that subject(s). The Superintendent must approve the selection and report the action to the Board at the first board meeting following the assignment. Teachers hired under this exemption will be required to participate in the district's three-year tiered support system that is customized for DOI hires to ensure successful acclimation to their role in the district. Finally, this is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district.

Innovation Plan Exemption 4: School Library Advisory Counsel

Texas Education Code § 33.025 allows school boards to establish a community-based advisory committee for the review of library materials, reconsideration processes, and collection development. However, the statute includes prescriptive requirements related to committee membership, meeting procedures, and a petition process that can create unnecessary burdens on the district and disrupt existing community engagement efforts. Lewisville ISD values the involvement of parents, staff, and community members in decisions related to library materials. Exemption from Texas Education Code § 33.025 allows the district to maintain and strengthen that engagement while developing a more flexible, locally designed process. This local approach ensures continued community input and allows the district to include trained professionals in the advisory process to better meet the needs of the LISD community.

Innovation Plan Exemption 5: Acquisition of Library Materials

Texas Education Code § 33.026 requires the Board of Trustees to approve all library materials purchased or donated for use in school libraries and mandates a 30-day public posting period prior to approval. This process creates significant delays in providing students and teachers with essential learning resources. An exemption from § 33.026 would allow the Board to rely on the expertise of district staff and community-based review committees to make timely, informed, and professional library acquisition decisions. This approach maintains accountability while reducing administrative burden and ensuring that students have prompt access to high-quality materials that support literacy development, a fundamental component of student learning. Lewisville ISD has current established local policies and procedures for library acquisitions that align with the Collection Development Standards published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, ensuring continued adherence to state expectations for transparency, quality, age-appropriateness and community involvement.

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Innovation Plan Exemption 6: Reconsideration of Library Materials

Texas Education Code § 33.027 establishes a process through which parents or guardians, district employees, and community members may challenge library materials. The statute requires the Board of Trustees to review each challenge within 90 days of submission. During this period, all students must be denied access to the challenged material until the review is complete—regardless of where the material is housed or the age and maturity of the students. Additionally, the statute mandates the use of the Texas Education Agency's challenge form, which includes language that does not align with Lewisville ISD established practices for the reconsideration of library materials. These inconsistencies may lead to confusion rather than promote the transparency the process is intended to ensure. An exemption from TEC § 33.027 would allow Lewisville ISD to rely on its existing policies and procedures for forming reconsideration committees that ensure representation from stakeholders at the campus where the concern originated. The district follows board policy EFB (local) and EFB (Admin Regulations) to guide the reconsideration process. These processes include: (a) appointment of a reconsideration committee by the superintendent's designee within 15 days of receiving the reconsideration form. (b) resolution of the reconsideration within 60 days of committee formation (c) a written report of committee findings submitted to the superintendent and board of trustees (d) library material found to meet criteria through the reconsideration process cannot be reconsidered again for a timeframe of 2 years and (e) allows for appeal of decision to the board following policy (DGBA, FNG, and GF). The district believes maintaining this approach is essential to preserving fairness, relevance, and community trust in the review process. The exemption would enable the district to continue using its locally developed reconsideration form, which aligns with LISD's established practices, thereby promoting greater transparency and consistency. This exemption will also ensure that students maintain access to high-quality instructional resources throughout the review period.

Innovation Plan Exemption 7: Texas Education Code 26A.001-26A.004

The 89th Texas Legislature created a new chapter concerning grievances against a school district, Texas Education Code Chapter 26A. Chapter 26A is contrary to Lewisville ISD's commitment to resolving matters promptly and efficiently. For example, Section 26A.001 allows complainants to amend their complaints and supplement the record at any point in the grievance process, thereby extending the grievance process and interfering with the administration's efforts to investigate and resolve the entire complaint at the lowest level possible. Section 26A.002 allows complainants up to 90 days to file a Level One complaint and up to 20 days to file each appeal, thereby delaying the administration's opportunity to resolve a complaint close to the time of the event or decision about which the person is complaining. The District has established strong policies and procedures for resolving grievances, and the District is committed to allowing complainants to seek redress for their grievances, within prompt and appropriate timelines. Through the exemption to this chapter, (1) complainants will submit their grievances in a timely manner, (2) administrative efforts will be allocated most efficiently, and (3) the District may hear and respond to complaints more effectively.

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Note: This exemption does not include exemptions from requirements or authority of the Texas Commissioner of Education or the Texas Education Agency such as those in § 26A.001(f), § 26A.001(h), and § 26A.001(i).

Innovation Plan Exemption 8: Texas Education Code 21.211(b)

Texas Education Code § 21.211(b) establishes a process by which an employee may be placed on unpaid leave. By exempting the District from this provision, the LISD Human Resources department will have the flexibility to suspend without pay when determined conduct has violated the Educator Code of Conduct. Any decisions made regarding suspension without pay would be open to appeal through the grievance process. This provision will only be used pending the discharge of a teacher or in lieu of terminating the teacher

Summary

The District of Innovation Committee carefully weighed and considered the renewal of each of these exemptions and found each of these to offer the flexibility and local control we need to better serve our students, their families, and our communities. These exemptions are also common among surrounding school districts and can be found in their local innovation plans. The DOI Committee will meet annually to review these exemptions and explore ways that the district may continue to innovate in ways that meet the needs of our students and educators.

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DOI Committee Members

Rachel Alley-Wallace, Parent
Patrick Best, Teacher
Christy Bailey, Board Appointed
Deborah Bailey, Principal
Lisa Burleson, Campus Admin
Kim Coppens, Teacher
Angela Cortez, Principal
Monay Crow, District Leadership
Janice Eason, Teacher
Marianne Eckley, ATPE Rep
Ginny Evans, TSTA Rep
Rachel Flanders, Principal
Adam Gray, Principal
Angie Greenlaw, Teacher
Claire Kincheloe, Teacher
Alexis Miller, District Leadership
Lynette Narrell, Board Appointed
Gretchen Pace, Campus Admin
Kristin Petrunin, District Leadership
Debbie Proulx, Parent
Estella Rupard, District Leadership
Shawn Sheehan, District Leadership
Will Skelton, District Leadership
Vicky Ursi, Board Appointed
Gail Warner, UEA Rep

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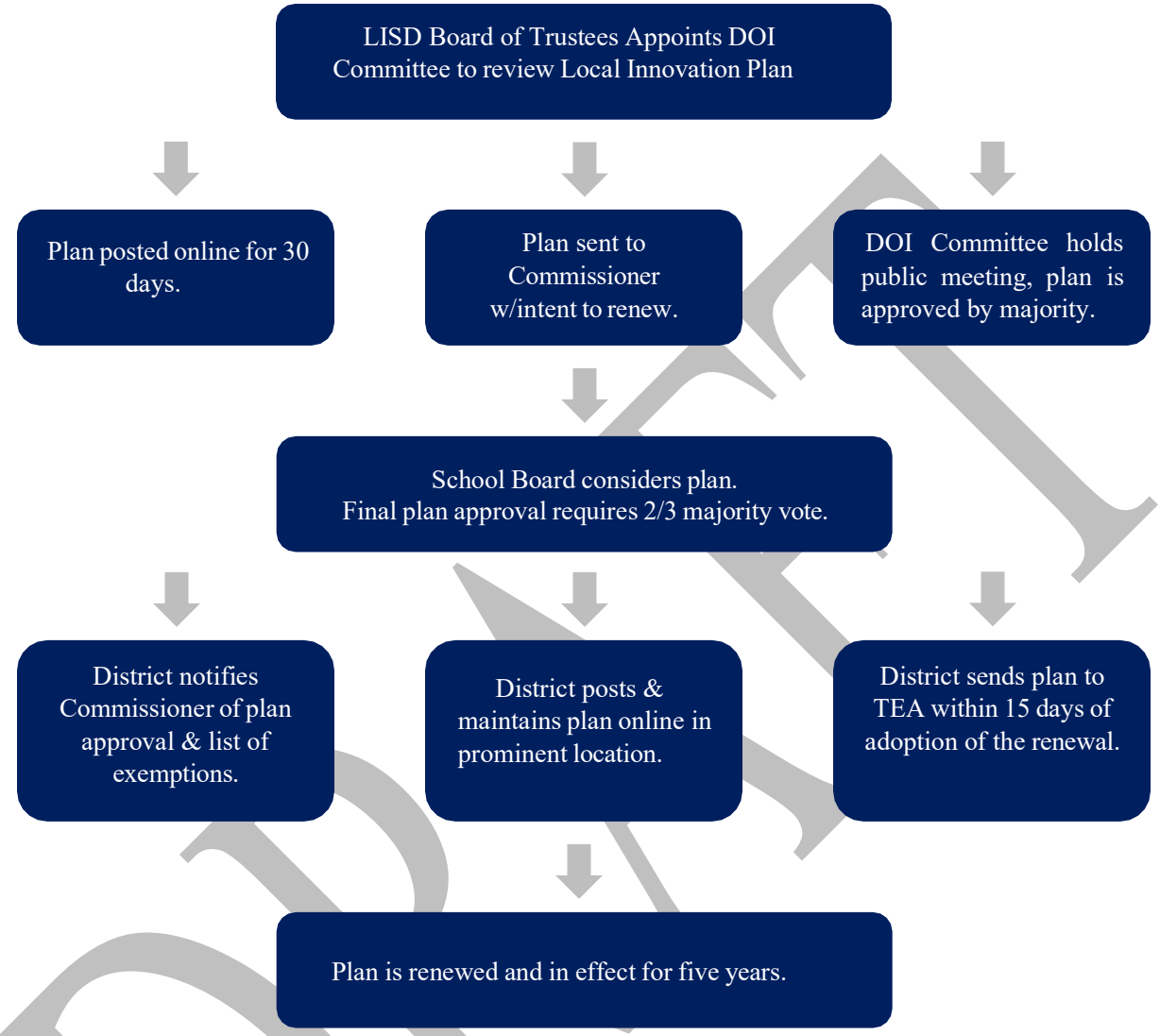
District of Innovation Renewal Process



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