



Pittsburg ISD District of Innovation Plan 2022–2027

(Amended to include the addition of Item #7 on January 24, 2022, by PISD Board of Trustees. Amended to include the addition of Item #3 on January 22, 2024, by PISD Board of Trustees. Amended to include the addition of Items #9, #10, #11, #12 on October 20, 2025, by PISD Board of Trustees. Amended to include changes to #4, #8, #11, #3 under DOI 24-25 approved by the Board of Trustees on December 15, 2025.) Amended to include the addition of item #9 on January 26, 2026.

Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed to provide more local control in certain areas for public schools. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law to which charter schools are currently entitled. This provides an opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2022–2027).

Committee Members

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jyl Wood – Primary School Principal• Benita Tomlinson – Primary School Teacher• Terri Foster – Primary School Teacher• Dawn Kennington – Elementary School Principal• Kelly McGee – Elementary School Teacher• Susan Gilbert – Elementary School Teacher• Todd Newman – Intermediate School Principal• Kristal Williams – Intermediate School Teacher• Jennifer Hammonds – Intermediate School Teacher• Jennifer Styles – Junior High Principal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Melody Wright – Junior High Teacher• Erin Knabenshue – Junior High Teacher• Ruston Ramsey – High School Principal• Cheyenne Reynolds – High School Teacher• Jamie Craig – High School Teacher• Patti Ayers – Community Member• Dia Hardeman – Community Member• Laurie Smith – Director of Health Services• Kristane Moore – Assistant Superintendent• Terry Waldrep – Superintendent |
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1. School Start Date

TEC §25.0811

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what start date best meets the needs of the students and local community. It allows students participating in embedded dual enrollment classes an opportunity to work with more balanced semesters. It allows the district the opportunity to more closely align the fall and spring semesters in the number of minutes and/or days of instruction. Also, altering the school start date from the fourth Monday in August could provide an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.

Local Guidelines

Pittsburg ISD will determine, annually, when each school year will begin.

2. Employment Contracts

TEC § 21.002

Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Proposed

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Relief from TEC § 21.002 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced certified staff.

Local Guidelines

1. At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

3. Teacher Certification Requirements

TEC §21.003(a), TEC§21.053

TEC §21.003(a)

A person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless that person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and /or State Board of Educator Certification

TEC §21.053

This requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

Proposed

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for all positions. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Exemption from TEC §21.003 would allow the district the ability to locally certify teachers in order to better meet the educational needs of our students, allow more flexibility in scheduling, enrich applicant pools, and provide more options for our students.

1. Individuals with certain qualifications who are not certified as teachers can be eligible to teach in positions including but not limited to: Math, Spanish, ELAR, and Career and Technical education.
2. Certified teachers, due to their education, background, and/or experience, could be equipped to teach a course outside of their certification area or grade level. This would allow the district the option of locally certifying them to do that.
3. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials.
4. This exemption does not include Bilingual, Special Education, or Pre-K teachers. Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, this exemption will no longer apply to core subject area teachers. Any exemptions at that time will be applied through the Commissioner’s Teacher Certification Transition Plan.

Local Guidelines

1. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification for an individual. The individual may have background, experience, skills, work related or industry experience, an industry certification, or a post-secondary degree at a bachelor’s level or

- higher. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document the credentials the individual possesses to teach the subject.
2. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or in a grade level out of their certification area. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document the credentials the certified teacher possesses to teach the subject/grade level.
 3. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification of a qualified applicant holding an out of state certificate.
 4. The superintendent may approve or deny requests for local certification.
 5. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
 6. An employee working under a local certification will receive a non-chapter 21 contract and will be paid in accordance with district guidelines.
 7. An employee working under a local certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.
 8. An employee working under a local certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of certified teachers including 30 clock hours per year of continuing education.

4. Inter-district Transfers

TEC §25.036

Under Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one year.

Proposed

Pittsburg ISD maintains a transfer policy requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application yearly. In approving transfer requests, the student's disciplinary history and attendance records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the District. TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. Pittsburg ISD is seeking the flexibility to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfers in any of the following circumstances:

1. The student's behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in an alternative program, or expulsion.

2. Student attendance falls below the TEA attendance standard of 90%.
3. Parent/Guardian is uncooperative in addressing behavior or attendance.

Local Guidelines

1. Non-resident students who have been accepted as a district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expelled.
2. Non-resident students not meeting the state 90% attendance standard will be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.
3. Non-resident students whose parent/guardian is uncooperative in addressing the student's behavior or truancy concerns will be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.

5. Class Size and Notice of Class Size

TEC §25.112, TEC §25.113

TEC §25.112

This statute limits the number of students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade to 22. While the maximum number of students in K-4 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, the waivers must be applied for annually.

TEC §25.113

This statute requires districts to notify each parent of students in the class section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio and inform them the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed

Pittsburg ISD values small class size and believes it plays a positive role in the classroom. However, we believe, in certain situations, that the addition of up to two students may be accomplished without necessarily producing a negative consequence. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom that influence the learning environment. PISD will attempt to keep all K-4 core classrooms to a 22-1 ratio. If this is not reasonably possible, Pittsburg ISD is seeking the flexibility to add up to two students without additional paperwork.

Local Guidelines

1. Should it appear necessary for the class size of a K-4 classroom to exceed this ratio, the classroom data will be compiled by the principal for review by the Superintendent.
2. The decision to increase the class size of a classroom will be made by the Superintendent.
3. A TEA waiver and parent notification will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

6. Grievance Policy

TEC Chapter 26A

Senate Bill 12 (SB 12) requires school boards to adopt grievance procedures under Texas Education Code Chapter 26A, including provisions that:

- Allow grievants to supplement records and add additional claims.
- Require a decision on the merits of a grievance regardless of procedural errors.
- Extend grievance filing and appeal deadlines.
- Require recusal if the subject of a grievance is involved.
- Require boards to consider extracurricular grievances if they involve local policy violations.

TASB model policies are expected to extend SB 12 grievance procedures to parents/students (FNG), employees (DGBA), and community members (GF).

Proposed

Implementation of SB 12 requirements significantly increases administrative burden, expands grievance processing time, and requires the board to hear additional Level III grievances. As a DOI district, Pittsburg ISD seeks to preserve local authority by limiting application of SB 12 grievance requirements.

Local Guidelines

Pittsburg ISD will exempt from the provisions of Texas Education Code Chapter 26A to the extent permitted, specifically:

- Exempt employee (DGBA) and community (GF) grievances from SB 12 requirements.
- Retain flexibility in timelines, filing requirements, and grievance procedures consistent with existing district policy.
- Maintain board discretion in addressing extracurricular grievances, except as otherwise required by federal or state law.

7. Senate Bill 1191 – GPA Calculation

TEC §28.0252(a–b)

Senate Bill 1191 requires the Commissioner of Education to establish a uniform GPA calculation method for all Texas school districts.

Proposed

The Commissioner's standardized method has not yet been issued, creating uncertainty about implementation timelines and potential negative impact on students who are already partway through high school under existing GPA calculation practices. Pittsburg ISD seeks to maintain local control of GPA calculation to ensure fairness and continuity for students.

Local Guidelines

Pittsburg ISD will exempt from the requirements of TEC §§ 28.0252(a) and (b) to continue using its locally developed GPA calculation method until such time that the Commissioner's rules are fully developed and the district determines implementation will not unfairly disadvantage students.

8. Senate Bill 12 – Instructional Plan / Teacher Syllabus Posting Requirement

TEC §26.0062

Senate Bill 12 (SB 12) also amends TEC § 26.0062 to require each district to make available, on its website at the beginning of each semester, an *instructional plan or course syllabus* for every class offered. Teachers must provide copies to district administration and to parents before the semester begins.

Proposed

- Requiring advance posting of every syllabus creates unnecessary administrative burden.
- Teachers often adjust pacing or curriculum during the semester to meet student needs; pre-posted syllabi may limit instructional flexibility.
- Public posting of all syllabi may expose instructional plans to unnecessary complaints or misuse with little instructional benefit.
- Parent communication is already ensured through campus-level practices.

Local Guidelines

Pittsburg ISD will exempt from the requirements of TEC § 26.0062 as added by SB 12, specifically:

- The district will not require universal public posting of all class syllabi on the district website.

- Teachers will continue to provide syllabi or instructional plans to enrolled students' parents and campus administration at the beginning of each semester.
 - The district will allow syllabus access upon request rather than public posting.
 - Teachers will retain flexibility to adjust syllabi throughout the semester to best support student learning.
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9. Last Day of School

TEC §25.0812 – Last Day of School

Statute

Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Proposed

This flexibility regarding the last day of school allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of students and the local community. Ending the school year shortly after state testing may alleviate student and teacher fatigue and support overall morale. An earlier release may also better align the district calendar with the schedules of postsecondary and collegiate partners. Additionally, establishing an earlier last day of school allows teachers and students a timely break before state assessment results are released and may support the district's efforts to retain and recruit high-quality staff.

Local Guidelines

Pittsburg ISD will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will end in accordance with local needs and priorities.