Pearland Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Renewed for 2026–2031

Adopted by the Pearland ISD Board of Trustees
07/14/2026

Amended & Approved
08/11/2026

Effective: 08/01/2026

Prepared in accordance with Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code

Statutory Authority and Purpose

This plan is adopted pursuant to Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code.

A District of Innovation (DOI) plan provides local flexibility from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) that may inhibit district goals. The purpose of Pearland ISD's Local Innovation Plan is to:

1. Improve student outcomes through locally designed systems that strengthen teaching, learning, and supports.
2. Strengthen recruitment, retention, and effectiveness of staff by removing barriers that limit staffing flexibility and professional growth.
3. Increase operational efficiency by reducing duplicative compliance and prioritizing meaningful planning and accountability.
4. Enhance community confidence through transparency, clear guardrails, and Board oversight.

This plan does not reduce accountability. Pearland ISD will comply with all applicable federal law and all non-exempt state requirements, including TEA prohibited exemptions. Each exemption replaces prescriptive statutory requirements with Board-adopted policies, administrative regulations, and monitoring systems aligned to student outcomes, staff effectiveness, and transparency.

Local Context and Rationale for Innovation

Pearland ISD has a strong history of performance and stewardship. The district's focus is on directing time, resources, and leadership toward high-impact work rather than compliance-driven processes.

Pearland ISD's original DOI Plan was adopted in November 2016. This updated plan modernizes the framework to reflect best practices: flexibility tied to student outcomes, supported by clear guardrails and measurable monitoring.

The District seeks flexibility in staffing, instructional scheduling, governance, and operations to better support student learning outcomes and align resources to the highest-impact work.

Guiding Principles and Guardrails

Pearland ISD will implement DOI flexibility using the following principles:

- **Students First:** No exemption will diminish student safety, rights, or instructional quality.
- **Full Legal Compliance:** The District will comply with all applicable federal and state laws not subject to exemption and all TEA prohibited exemption rules.

- **Transparency:** The plan and amendments will be publicly posted and implemented in accordance with law.
- **Board Oversight:** The Board retains authority to adopt, amend, and monitor the plan.
- **Continuous Review:** The Superintendent will monitor implementation and recommend adjustments aligned to student outcomes and legal requirements.

Beliefs: In Pearland ISD, We Believe…

- Students thrive when they feel valued, empowered, and challenged to reach their highest potential
- Parents and Families are essential partners in student success.
- Staff are value-driven professionals who utilize data and innovative practices to inspire, educate, and empower every student.
- Campus Administrators are committed to prioritizing student growth, safety, and well-being of all.
- The Superintendent and Central Office Staff lead with accessibility, vision, and a spirit of servant leadership.
- The Board of Trustees operates as a collaborative, forward-thinking team, invested in the well-being and future of Pearland ISD.

Mission:

In collaboration with the community, families, and students, Pearland ISD prepares all learners to achieve their highest potential.

Vision:

Empowering every learner with the knowledge, character, and confidence to thrive and lead in an ever-changing global society.

Motto:

Build Pearland Proud

Innovation Areas Overview

In the sections that follow, Pearland ISD identifies specific TEC provisions from which the district seeks exemption, and for each exemption, the plan provides:

- The statute citation and language that Pearland ISD is exempting
- The rationale for exempting due to specific language or requirements of published statute
- The innovation Pearland ISD will follow

Pearland ISD will ensure each exemption remains compliant with TEA's current prohibited-exemption list and legislative updates and is implemented through Board adopted policies, administrative regulations, or practices aligned with district priorities.

Pearland ISD
2026-2031
District of Innovation (DOI) Plan
Statute List

Chapter 11: School District

- **TEC § 11.1511(b)(5) Specific Powers and Duties of Board**
- **TEC § 11.1511(b)(14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board**
- **TEC § 11.251: Planning and Decision Making Process**
- **TEC § 11.252: District Level Planning and Decision Making**
- **TEC § 11.253: Campus Planning and Site Based Decision Making**
- **TEC § 11.255: Dropout Prevention Review**

Chapter 21: Educators

- **TEC § 21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts**
- **TEC § 21.003 Certification Required**
- **TEC § 21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void**
- **TEC § 21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates**
- **TEC § 21.102 Probationary Contract**
- **TEC § 21.203 Employment Policies**
- **TEC § 21.353. Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance**
- **TEC § 21.354. Appraisal of Certain Administrators**
- **TEC § 21.401. Minimum Service Required**
- **TEC § 21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records**
- **TEC § 21.404. Planning and Preparation Time**
- **TEC § 21.418. Election by Teacher to Use Unpaid Leave**
- **TEC § 21.458. Mentors**

Chapter 22 School District Employees and Volunteers

- **TEC § 22.007. Incentives for Early Retirement**
- **TEC § 22.011. Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions**
- **TEC § 22.904. Mental Health Training**

Chapter 25 Admissions, Transfers, Attendance

- **TEC § 25.0344 Transfer of Students Who are Children of Peace Officers**
- **TEC § 25.0345 Transfer of Students Who are Children of Servicemembers**

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Statute List

- **TEC § 25.036 Transfer of Student**
- **TEC § 25.0811 First Day of Instruction**
- **TEC § 25.0812 Last Day of School**
- **TEC § 25.0822 Patriotic Society Access to Students**
- **TEC § 25.083 School Day Interruptions**
- **TEC § 25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade**
- **TEC § 25.111 Student/Teacher Ratio**
- **TEC § 25.112 Class Size**
- **TEC § 25.113 Notice of Class Size**
- **TEC § 25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes: Class Size**

Chapter 26 Parental Rights and Responsibilities

- **TEC § 26.0062 Required Disclosure Regarding Instructional Plan**

Chapter 28 Course of Study; Advanced

- **TEC § 28.02123 Notification of Certain High School Graduation Requirements**
- **TEC § 28.0216 District Grading Policy**
- **TEC § 28.022 Notice to Parent of Unsatisfactory Performance: Conf**

Chapter 31 Instructional Materials and Technology

- **TEC § 31.024 Limitation on the Adoption and Use of Instructional Material**

Chapter 33 Service Programs and Extracurricular Activities

- **TEC § 33.006 School Counselors; General Duties**
- **TEC § 33.026 Acquisition of Library Materials**
- **TEC § 33.027 Challenge or Appeal Regarding Library Materials; Local School Library Advisory Council Recommendations**

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 11 of the TEC regarding school district governance and planning -:

Chapter 11: School Districts

Statute: TEC§ 11.1511(b)(5): Specific Powers and Duties of Board [The Board shall] adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process as required under Section 11.251.

Rational: Pearland ISD believes local interests are best served by allowing the Board to determine planning and decision-making structures aligned to district priorities and organizational needs rather than being bound to prescriptive statutory requirements tied to §11.251 committee composition and procedures. This flexibility improves effectiveness, enables more representative participation based on current local demographics, and reduces compliance-driven structures that do not consistently produce better outcomes.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from the requirement that the Board adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process as prescribed by TEC §11.251 see §11.1511(b)(5). The Board will adopt and maintain local policy that establishes Pearland ISD's locally designed planning and stakeholder input framework aligned to the district's Strategic Plan and Board-adopted priorities.

Statute: TEC TEC§ 11.1511(b)(14): Specific Powers and Duties of Board [The Board shall] make decisions relating to terminating the employment of district employees employed under a contract to which Chapter 21 applies, including terminating or not renewing an employment contract to which that chapter applies;

Rational: The Board's required involvement in the initial decision stage can create delays and operational inefficiencies, particularly when timing is critical (e.g., employment notice windows and staffing continuity). Delegating initial action decisions to the Superintendent improves responsiveness, ensures consistent implementation of district performance expectations, and supports timely staffing decisions—while still preserving due process and Board oversight through appeal and final action processes required under Chapter 21. This approach strengthens accountability and protects the district's ability to manage personnel effectively without reducing employee rights.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption to allow the Board to delegate initial employment action decisions related to termination and nonrenewal of Chapter 21 contract employees to the Superintendent (or designee), while preserving all Chapter 21 due process rights and maintaining Board authority to hear appeals and take final action where required by law. Employees retain all hearing/appeal rights under Chapter 21. Superintendent authority applies to initial action decisions and notices; the Board retains authority for appeals/final action where legally required. This exemption does not alter timelines or substantive standards required by non-exempt law. Nothing in this exemption removes the Board's authority to take final action on employment matters as required by Chapter 21 or other applicable law.

Statute: TEC § 11.251: Planning and Decision Making Process (a) The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The board shall annually approve district and campus performance objectives and shall ensure that the district and campus plans:

(1) are mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives; and

(2) at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives under Chapter 4.

(b) The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. The board shall establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, including, if practicable, at least one representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The committee shall include a business representative without regard to whether the representative resides in the district or whether the business the person represents is located in the district. The board, or the board's designee, shall periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations.

(c) For purposes of establishing the composition of committees under this section:

(1) a person who stands in parental relation to a student is considered a parent;

(2) a parent who is an employee of the school district is not considered a parent representative on the committee;

(3) a parent is not considered a representative of community members on the committee; and

(4) community members must reside in the district and must be at least 18 years of age.

(d) The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board shall ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee will be actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision-making at the district and campus levels.

(e) The board shall adopt a procedure, consistent with Section 21.407(a), for the professional staff in the district to nominate and elect the professional staff representatives who shall meet with the board or the board designee as required under this section. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. The remaining staff representatives shall include both campus- and district-level professional staff members. If practicable, the committee membership shall include at least one professional staff representative

with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities. Board policy must provide procedures for:

(1) the selection of parents to the district-level and campus-level committees; and

(2) the selection of community members and business representatives to serve on the district-level committee in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity.

(f) The district policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district- and campus-level planning process.

(g) This section does not:

(1) prohibit the board from conducting meetings with teachers or groups of teachers other than the meetings described by this section;

(2) prohibit the board from establishing policies providing avenues for input from others, including students or paraprofessional staff, in district- or campus-level planning and decision-making;

(3) limit or affect the power of the board to govern the public schools; or

(4) create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

Rationale: TEC §11.251 prescribes committee membership and selection rules that can limit flexibility and create compliance-driven processes that do not consistently improve district planning quality. Pearland ISD will continue meaningful stakeholder engagement, but local control over membership, structure, and procedures allows the district to design a more effective planning process aligned to strategic priorities, capacity, and community demographics. TEA recognizes that DOI districts may use a "comparable committee" when a district is exempt from §11.251 for DOI purposes such as amendment/renewal, supporting the concept that locally designed structures can replace the statutory committee model.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from the requirements governing the establishment, composition, election procedures, and operational requirements for district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees under TEC §11.251. Pearland ISD will maintain a local planning and stakeholder engagement structure, but will determine committee design, membership, and procedures locally to best reflect district needs. Pearland ISD will continue to provide structured opportunities for parent, staff, and community input into district and campus planning through Board-adopted engagement processes, even when not using the statutory committee structure.

Statute: TEC § 11.252: District Level Planning and Decision Making (a) Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups

in order to attain state standards in respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Section 39.053(c). The district improvement plan must include provisions for:

(1) a comprehensive needs assessment addressing district student performance on the achievement indicators, and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(2) measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate achievement indicators for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment;

(3) strategies for improvement of student performance that include:

(A) instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving their full potential;

(B) evidence-based practices that address the needs of students for special programs, including:

(i) suicide prevention programs, in accordance with Subchapter G, Chapter 38, which include a parental or guardian notification procedure;

(ii) conflict resolution programs;

(iii) violence prevention programs; and

(iv) dyslexia treatment programs;

(C) dropout reduction;

(D) integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs;

(E) positive behavior interventions and support, including interventions and support that integrate best practices on grief-informed and trauma-informed care;

(F) staff development for professional staff of the district;

(G) career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities;

(H) accelerated education; and

(I) implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program under Section 33.005;

(4) strategies for providing to elementary school, middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students' teachers and school counselors, and those students' parents information about:

(A) higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities, including state financial aid opportunities such as the TEXAS grant program and the Teach for Texas grant program established under Chapter 56;

(B) the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school; and

(C) sources of information on higher education admissions and financial aid;

(5) resources needed to implement identified strategies;

(6) staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;

(7) timelines for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of each improvement strategy;

(8) formative evaluation criteria for determining periodically whether strategies are resulting in intended improvement of student performance;

(9) the policy under Section 38.0041 addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children; and

(10) the trauma-informed care policy required under Section 38.036.

(b) A district's plan for the improvement of student performance is not filed with the agency, but the district must make the plan available to the agency on request.

(c) In a district that has only one campus, the district- and campus-level committees may be one committee and the district and campus plans may be one plan.

(d) At least every two years, each district shall evaluate the effectiveness of the district's decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district- and campus-level decision-making and planning to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance.

(e) The district-level committee established under Section 11.251 shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives. District policy and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee. This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(f) A superintendent shall regularly consult the district-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the district educational program.

Rationale: Pearland ISD maintains comprehensive planning and performance monitoring through its Strategic Plan and Board oversight processes, which provide clearer alignment to district priorities and measurable outcomes than compliance-oriented DIP formatting. Exemption reduces duplicative documentation and redirects leadership time toward implementation,

monitoring, and continuous improvement while maintaining transparency through public reporting mechanisms already required by TEA.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from the statutory requirements governing the development, component requirements, public meeting requirements, and annual revision cycle for a District Improvement Plan as prescribed by TEC §11.252. Pearland ISD will instead plan and monitor district improvement through its Board-adopted Strategic Plan, district scorecard/progress monitoring, and locally defined district improvement processes. Pearland ISD will continue to provide structured opportunities for parent, staff, and community input into district and campus planning through Board-adopted engagement processes, even when not using the statutory committee structure.

Statute TEC§ 11.253*:* **Campus Planning and Site Based Decision Making** (a) Each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

(b) Each district's policy and procedures shall establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees as provided for through the procedures provided by Sections 11.251(b)-(e).

(c) Each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, shall develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Section 39.053(c) and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations.

(d) Each campus improvement plan must:

(1) assess the academic achievement for each student in the school using the achievement indicator system as described by Section 39.053;

(2) set the campus performance objectives based on the achievement indicator system, including objectives for special needs populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(3) identify how the campus goals will be met for each student;

(4) determine the resources needed to implement the plan;

(5) identify staff needed to implement the plan;

(6) set timelines for reaching the goals;

(7) measure progress toward the performance objectives periodically to ensure that the plan is resulting in academic improvement;

(8) include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus;

(9) provide for a program to encourage parental involvement at the campus; and

(10) if the campus is an elementary, middle, or junior high school, set goals and objectives for the coordinated health program at the campus based on:

(A) student fitness assessment data, including any data from research-based assessments such as the school health index assessment and planning tool created by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

(B) student academic performance data;

(C) student attendance rates;

(D) the percentage of students who are educationally disadvantaged;

(E) the use and success of any method to ensure that students participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity as required by Section 28.002(l); and

(F) any other indicator recommended by the local school health advisory council.

(e) In accordance with the administrative procedures established under Section 11.251(b), the campus-level committee shall be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs.

(f) This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(g) Each campus-level committee shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual campus rating from the agency to discuss the performance of the campus and the campus performance objectives. District policy and campus procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input, and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the campus-level committees.

(h) A principal shall regularly consult the campus-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus educational program.

Rationale: Statutory campus improvement plans are frequently constructed to meet compliance checklists rather than to drive targeted improvement. A locally designed campus planning model allows campuses to focus on the highest-impact strategies for student learning and well-being, align resources to measurable outcomes, and reduce administrative burden—while preserving stakeholder input through locally determined engagement processes. This supports the DOI purpose of enabling districts to remove statutes that inhibit locally set improvement goals.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from the statutory requirements governing campus-level planning committees and Campus Improvement Plans under TEC §11.253. Campuses will continue improvement planning through locally designed Campus Accountability/Improvement Plans aligned to district priorities, student performance data, and campus needs.

Statute TEC§ 11.255: Dropout Prevention Review. (a) Each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee for a junior, middle, or high school campus shall analyze information related to dropout prevention, including:

(1) the results of the audit of dropout records required by Section 39.308;
(2) campus information related to graduation rates, dropout rates, high school equivalency certificate rates, and the percentage of students who remain in high school more than four years after entering grade level 9;
(3) the number of students who enter a high school equivalency certificate program and:
(A) do not complete the program;
(B) complete the program but do not take the high school equivalency examination; or
(C) complete the program and take the high school equivalency examination but do not obtain a high school equivalency certificate;
(4) for students enrolled in grade levels 9 and 10, information related to academic credit hours earned, retention rates, and placements in alternative education programs and expulsions under Chapter 37; and
(5) the results of an evaluation of each school-based dropout prevention program in the district.
(b) Each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee shall use the information reviewed under this section in developing district or campus improvement plans under this subchapter.

Rationale: Dropout and completion indicators are already captured and publicly reported through PEIMS/TAPR and accountability-related reporting and monitoring. Requiring separate committee-driven documentation tied to §11.252/§11.253 planning processes creates duplicative compliance without improving oversight or outcomes. Exemption allows Pearland ISD to focus on real-time data use, targeted interventions, and operational supports that directly impact graduation and completion consistent with DOI expectations that statutes inhibiting goals be replaced with more effective local practices.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from the dropout-prevention committee review and documentation requirements under TEC §11.255. The district will monitor dropout and completion indicators through district systems and required state reporting and will address prevention strategies through campus and district improvement structures that are locally designed.

These statutes function as an integrated planning/governance framework. Pearland ISD seeks exemption from the complete set to avoid statutory conflicts and to replace compliance-driven planning structures with a coherent local planning and accountability model aligned to Board priorities and district goals, consistent with TEA's DOI adoption and renewal framework.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code related to educator employment, contracts, certification, appraisal, and related personnel practices:

Chapter 21: Educators

Statute TEC § 21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts. (a) A school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under:

(1) a probationary contract, as provided by Subchapter C;
(2) a continuing contract, as provided by Subchapter D; or
(3) a term contract, as provided by Subchapter E.
(b) A district is not required to employ a person other than an employee listed in Subsection (a) under a probationary, continuing, or term contract.
(c) Each board of trustees shall establish a policy designating specific positions of employment, or categories of positions based on considerations such as length of service, to which continuing contracts or term contracts apply.

Rationale: §21.002 requires certain roles to be employed under statutory contract types (probationary, term, or continuing). While these frameworks provide structure, they can limit the district's ability to create flexible staffing models, pilot hard-to-fill roles, or implement innovative assignment structures that meet local needs. This exemption would allow Pearland ISD to modernize contract structures to support recruitment/retention and operational responsiveness while preserving clear expectations and performance accountability. Nothing in this exemption alters federal employment protections or Board-adopted grievance procedures.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.002 to allow the district to employ positions listed in §21.002(a) under locally adopted employment agreements when doing so improves staffing flexibility, recruitment, or assignment stability, while maintaining competitive compensation and appropriate due process protections.

Statute TEC§ 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.
(b) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, a person may not be employed by a school district as an audiologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, physician, nurse, school psychologist, associate school psychologist, licensed professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, social worker, or speech language pathologist unless the person is licensed by the state agency that licenses that profession and may perform specific services within those professions for a school district only if the person holds the appropriate credential from the appropriate state agency. As long as a person employed by a district before September 1, 2011, to perform marriage and family therapy, as defined by Section 502.002, Occupations Code, is employed by the same district, the person is not required to hold a license as a marriage and family therapist to perform marriage and family therapy with that district.
(c) The commissioner may waive the requirement for certification of a superintendent if requested by a school district as provided by Section 7.056. A person who is not certified as a superintendent may not be employed by a school district as the superintendent before the person has received a waiver of certification from the commissioner. The commissioner may limit the waiver of certification in any manner the commissioner determines is appropriate. A person may be designated to act as a temporary or interim superintendent for a school district, but the district may not employ the person under a contract as superintendent unless the person has been certified or a waiver has been granted.

Rationale: The educator workforce market—especially in specialized areas—can make it difficult to fill positions with traditionally certified candidates. Local flexibility supports recruitment in high-need, specialized, and industry-aligned roles, reduces vacancies, and increases continuity for students. This exemption will be implemented consistent with current DOI prohibition rules and legislative updates affecting certification-related exemptions.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.003 to allow the district to employ qualified individuals who do not hold standard certification for specific assignments when doing so supports student needs and staffing stability, subject to district screening, Board-approved qualifications, and all non-exempt legal requirements. Pearland ISD will comply with any prohibited exemptions adopted by TEA rules. Pearland ISD will follow HB 2-related limitations/phase-ins impacting how districts may use DOI certification flexibility for certain assignments. Pearland ISD will comply with applicable parent notification requirements and certification related provisions that are not eligible for exemption under applicable law.

Statute TEC§ 21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void. (a) An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee:
(1) does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification;
(2) fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend the employee's temporary, probationary, or emergency certificate or any other certificate or permit issued under Subchapter B; or
(3) fails to comply with any requirement under Subchapter C, Chapter 22, if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate under Section 22.0831(f)(2).
(b) If a school district has knowledge that an employee's contract is void under Subsection (a):
(1) the district may, except as provided by Subsection (b-1):
(A) terminate the employee;
(B) suspend the employee with or without pay; or
(C) retain the employee for the remainder of the school year on an at-will employment basis in a position other than a position required to be held by an employee under a contract under Section 21.002 at the employee's existing rate of pay or at a reduced rate; and
(2) the employee is not entitled to the minimum salary prescribed by Section 21.402.
(b-1) A school district may not terminate or suspend under Subsection (b) an employee whose contract is void under Subsection (a)(1) or (2) because the employee failed to renew or extend the employee's certificate or permit if the employee:
(1) requests an extension from the State Board for Educator Certification to renew, extend, or otherwise validate the employee's certificate or permit; and
(2) not later than the 10th day after the date the contract is void, takes necessary measures to renew, extend, or otherwise validate the employee's certificate or permit, as determined by the State Board for Educator Certification.
(c) A school district's decision under Subsection (b) is not subject to appeal under this chapter, and the notice and hearing requirements of this chapter do not apply to the decision.
(d) This section does not affect the rights and remedies of a party in an at-will employment relationship.

(e) This section does not apply to a certified teacher assigned to teach a subject for which the teacher is not certified.
(f) For purposes of this section, a certificate or permit is not considered to have expired if:
(1) the employee has completed the requirements for renewal of the certificate or permit;
(2) the employee submitted the request for renewal prior to the expiration date; and
(3) the date the certificate or permit would have expired is before the date the State Board for Educator Certification takes action to approve the renewal of the certificate or permit.

Rationale: Certification renewals and validations sometimes involve processing delays that can unnecessarily disrupt staffing and student continuity. Local flexibility allows the district to retain effective employees while ensuring they complete the required steps, maintaining stability for students and campuses

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.031 to allow continued employment of an individual whose certification has lapsed or is delayed due to administrative processing, when the district determines the individual is otherwise qualified and the assignment is not prohibited by law, while the individual completes renewal or validation steps. This exemption will not be used in any role or circumstance where certification is legally required and non-exemptible, and the district will follow TEA/SBEC requirements and prohibited-exemption rules.

Statute TEC§ 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: This statute, as written, directs that a substitute teacher could not teach without a certificate, and certainly could not get paid. Moreover, an educator whose certificate has lapsed would not be eligible to work for the district in a non-teaching job, because the law prohibits their payment for "work done."

Innovation: Pearland ISD desires the flexibility to – employ and compensate individuals who do not hold a valid teaching certificate on a temporary basis, consistent with its District of Innovation Plan, and when the district has determined the individual is otherwise qualified for the assignment..

Statute TEC§ 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.

(a-1) A person who voluntarily accepts an assignment in a new professional capacity that requires a different class of certificate under Subchapter B than the class of certificate held by the person in the professional capacity in which the person was previously employed may be employed under a probationary contract. This subsection does not apply to a person who is returned by a school district to a professional capacity in which the person was employed by the district before the district employed the person in the new professional capacity as described by this subsection. A person described by this subsection who is returned to a previous professional capacity is entitled to be employed in the original professional capacity under the same contractual status as the status held by the person during the previous employment by the district in that capacity.
(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: The statutory probationary contract timeline limits the district's ability to meaningfully assess educator effectiveness in evolving instructional roles, specialized assignments, and leadership pipelines. Local flexibility allows Pearland ISD to align probationary periods with actual performance evidence, coaching cycles, and student impact rather than fixed timelines that may not reflect readiness for continued employment.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.102 to allow locally determined probationary periods aligned to assignment type, performance data, and support structures, while preserving due process, evaluation requirements, and Board oversight.

Statute TEC§ 21.203 Employment Policies. (a) Except as provided by Section 21.352(c), the employment policies adopted by a board of trustees must require a written evaluation of each teacher at annual or more frequent intervals. The board must consider the most recent evaluations before making a decision not to renew a teacher's contract if the evaluations are relevant to the reason for the board's action.
(b) The employment policies must include reasons for not renewing a teacher's contract at the end of a school year.

Rationale: Local evaluation systems can be better aligned to district priorities and reduce duplicative documentation.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.203 to allow the district to design evaluation cycles and documentation practices that align to its local appraisal system while maintaining regular performance feedback.

Statute TEC§ 21.353. **Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance.** A teacher who directs extracurricular activities in addition to performing classroom teaching duties shall be appraised only on the basis of classroom teaching performance and not on performance in connection with the extracurricular activities.

Rationale: Many instructional roles include significant extracurricular or co-curricular responsibilities that directly impact student engagement, school climate, and program quality. Restricting appraisal solely to classroom instruction can limit the district's ability to provide comprehensive feedback and accountability for these roles.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.353 to allow educator appraisals to reflect the full scope of assigned professional responsibilities when those duties are integral to the role, while maintaining fairness, transparency, and job-related performance criteria.

Statute TEC§ 21.354. **Appraisal of Certain Administrators.** (a) The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of various classifications of school administrators. The criteria must be based on job-related performance.
(a-1) This section does not apply to the appraisal of the performance of a principal.
(b) The commissioner may solicit and consider the advice of teachers and administrators in developing the appraisal process and performance criteria.
(c) Each school district shall appraise each administrator annually using either:
(1) the commissioner's recommended appraisal process and performance criteria; or
(2) an appraisal process and performance criteria:
(A) developed by the district in consultation with the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251; and
(B) adopted by the board of trustees.
(d) Funds of a school district may not be used to pay an administrator who has not been appraised under this section in the preceding 15 months.

Rationale: Locally developed leadership frameworks allow districts to align administrator evaluation to strategic priorities, campus improvement goals, and leadership competencies rather than generalized state models.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.354 to utilize a locally adopted administrator appraisal system aligned to Board goals, student outcomes, leadership effectiveness, and continuous improvement expectations.

Statute TEC§ 21.401. Minimum Service Required. (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service.
(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c-1), an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.
(c) The commissioner, as provided by Section 25.081(b), may reduce the number of days of service required by this section. A reduction by the commissioner does not reduce an educator's salary.
(c-1) If a school district anticipates providing less than 180 days of instruction for students during a school year, as indicated by the district's academic calendar, the district may reduce the number of days of service required by this section proportionately. A reduction by the district does not reduce an educator's salary.
(d) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a contract between a school district and an educational diagnostician.

Rationale: §21.401 can restrict calendar design and make it difficult to create schedules that support teacher sustainability, professional learning, and targeted student intervention time. This flexibility supports local calendar solutions and staff retention while maintaining instructional time requirements and Board oversight.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.401 to permit local determination of educator workdays aligned to the Board-adopted instructional calendar and district priorities, rather than a fixed statutory minimum number of service days, while maintaining required instructional minutes and no reduction in educator salary.

Statute TEC§ 21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records. (a) In this section:
(1) "Salary schedule" means the minimum salary schedule under Section 21.402 or a comparable salary schedule used by a school district that specifies salary amounts based on an employee's level of experience.
(2) "Service record" means a school district document that indicates the total years of service provided to the district by a classroom teacher, librarian, school counselor, or nurse.
(b) On request by a classroom teacher, librarian, school counselor, or nurse or by the school district employing one of those individuals, a school district that previously employed the individual shall provide a copy of the individual's service record to the school district employing the individual. The district must provide the copy not later than the 30th day after the later of:
(1) the date the request is made; or
(2) the date of the last day of the individual's service to the district.
(c) If a school district fails to provide an individual's service record as required by Subsection (b), the agency shall, to the extent that information is available to the agency, provide the employing school district with information sufficient to enable the district to determine proper placement of the individual on the district's salary schedule.

Rationale: TEC §21.4031 prescribes a rigid, paper-driven timeline and process for the exchange of professional service records that does not reflect modern human resources systems or inter-district data practices. In practice, delays or discrepancies in service record transfers can create inefficiencies, temporary payroll inaccuracies, and administrative burden without improving

transparency or employee protections.

Pearland ISD maintains comprehensive, verifiable employment and service history records through electronic HR systems, payroll documentation, and TEA-reported data. Local flexibility allows the district to rely on verified internal and state-reported records to ensure accurate salary placement and timely compensation while awaiting formal service record documentation when necessary.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.4031 to allow the district to determine years of service and salary placement using locally verified employment records, state-reported data, and official documentation provided by the employee, rather than being limited to the statutory service record transfer timeline.
The district will continue to:

- Honor verified prior service for salary placement purposes
- Correct any discrepancies once official service records are received
- Ensure employees are not financially penalized due to administrative delays beyond their control
- Exempt themselves from the 30 day production requirement for services records and release official records when leave balances have been calculated to ensure accuracy for the receiving entity.

This innovation improves payroll accuracy, reduces administrative inefficiencies, and supports timely onboarding while maintaining transparency, fairness, and Board oversight.

Statute TEC§ 21.404. **Planning and Preparation Time.** 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 and preparation period under this section 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.

Rationale: While planning time is essential, rigid statutory minute requirements can limit a campus's ability to design schedules that maximize collaborative planning, intervention time, and instructional effectiveness.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.404 to allow flexible scheduling of planning and collaboration time that meets instructional needs, supports team-based planning, and maintains educator effectiveness without reducing total planning opportunities.

Statute TEC§ 21.418. **Election by Teacher to Use Unpaid Leave.** The board of trustees of a school district shall adopt a policy that provides a classroom teacher employed by the district the option to elect not to take the teacher's paid personal leave concurrently with unpaid leave the teacher is entitled to take under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. Section 2601 et seq.) for an absence due to pregnancy or the birth or adoption of a child.

Rationale: TEC §21.418 requires districts to adopt a specific policy structure governing how

paid personal leave must be used concurrently with unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for certain life events. While intended to ensure employee protections, the statute can limit a district's ability to clearly align leave administration with evolving federal guidance, payroll systems, and employee preferences.

Pearland ISD supports employee choice and compliance with all federal leave protections. Local flexibility allows the district to administer leave in a manner that is transparent, employee-centered, and aligned with modern HR practices while ensuring staff fully understand their options and are not disadvantaged by rigid statutory sequencing requirements.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.418 to allow the district to administer paid and unpaid leave in accordance with locally adopted leave policies that comply with federal law, respect employee choice, and ensure consistent payroll and benefits administration.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Preserve all employee rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act
- Clearly communicate leave options and implications to employees
- Allow employees to make informed choices regarding the use of paid and unpaid leave
- Maintain Board-adopted policies governing leave administration

This innovation improves clarity, reduces administrative complexity, and ensures leave practices are implemented in a manner that is fair, transparent, and supportive of employee well-being while remaining fully compliant with federal requirements.

Statute TEC§ 21.458. **Mentors.** (a) Except as provided by Subsection (a-2), each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. A teacher assigned as a mentor must:
(1) to the extent practicable, teach in the same school;
(2) to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level, as applicable; and
(3) meet the qualifications prescribed by commissioner rules adopted under Subsection (b).
(a-1) To be assigned as a mentor, a teacher must agree to serve as a mentor teacher for at least one school year. The assignment must begin not later than the 30th day of employment of the classroom teacher to whom the mentor teacher is assigned. A district must agree to assign a mentor to a new classroom teacher for at least two school years.
(a-2) A school district shall assign a mentor teacher to a classroom teacher who has been issued a temporary certificate to teach career and technology education under Section 21.0444 for at least two school years.
(b) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to administer this section, including rules concerning the duties and qualifications of a teacher who serves as a mentor and the number of classroom teachers that may be assigned to a mentor. The rules concerning qualifications must require that to serve as a mentor a teacher must:
(1) complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;
(2) complete a mentor training program provided by the district, which the district may allow to be satisfied by completing the training program described by Subdivision (1);

(3) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; and
(4) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.
(b-1) A school district must provide training as described by Subsection (b)(2) to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with the classroom teacher or supervise the classroom teacher. A district may allow a training program approved by the commissioner under Subsection (b)(1) to qualify for the training required by this section. The training must be completed by the mentor teacher and the district and campus employees before the beginning of the school year. The district shall also provide supplemental training to mentor teachers and employees during the school year. The training must include content related to best mentorship practices.
(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 943 (H.B. 3), Sec. 4.001(a)(10), eff. September 1, 2019.
(d) In adopting rules under this section, the commissioner shall rely on research-based mentoring programs that, through external evaluation, have demonstrated success.
(e) Each year the commissioner shall report to the legislature regarding the effectiveness of school district mentoring programs.
(f) A mentor teacher must meet with each classroom teacher assigned to the mentor not less than 12 hours each semester. Observations of the mentor by the classroom teacher being mentored or of the classroom teacher being mentored by the mentor may count toward the 12 hours of meeting time required for the semester. Except as provided by Subsection (f-1), the mentoring sessions must address the following topics:
(1) orientation to the context, policies, and practices of the school district;
(2) data-driven instructional practices;
(3) specific instructional coaching cycles, including coaching regarding conferences between parents and the classroom teacher;
(4) professional development; and
(5) professional expectations.
(f-1) Subject to approval by the agency, in determining the topics to be addressed in the mentoring sessions, a school district may create an appropriate curriculum that meets the district needs.
(g) A school district must:
(1) designate a specific time during the regularly contracted school day for meetings between mentor teachers and classroom teachers assigned to a mentor; and
(2) schedule release time or a reduced teaching load for mentor teachers and classroom teachers under this section to facilitate mentoring activities, including classroom observations or participation in supportive coaching.

Rationale: TEC §21.458 prescribes detailed requirements related to mentor assignment, qualifications, training, duration, meeting frequency, and scheduling. While well-intentioned, the statute's uniform structure does not always align with local staffing realities, campus models, specialized assignments, or evolving evidence on effective induction practices.
Pearland ISD is committed to supporting new and early-career teachers through high-quality mentoring and induction. Local flexibility allows the district to design mentoring systems that respond to assignment-specific needs, leverage instructional coaches and leadership teams, and

integrate mentoring into broader professional learning structures. This approach supports teacher effectiveness and retention more effectively than compliance-driven hour and meeting requirements.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §21.458 to allow the district to design and implement a locally developed mentoring and induction framework aligned to district priorities, campus contexts, and instructional models.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Provide structured support for new and early-career teachers
- Match mentors based on assignment needs, instructional expertise, and campus context
- Utilize a combination of mentor teachers, instructional coaches, and leadership staff
- Define mentoring duration, training, and meeting structures locally based on effectiveness and capacity
- Monitor mentoring effectiveness through feedback, retention data, and instructional outcomes

This innovation enables Pearland ISD to provide meaningful, differentiated mentoring support that improves teacher readiness and retention while maintaining accountability, transparency, and Board oversight.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 22 of the TEC related to school district employees and related administrative practices.

Chapter 22 School District Employees and Volunteers

Statute TEC§ 22.007. **Incentives for Early Retirement.** A district may not offer or provide a financial or other incentive to an employee of the district to encourage the employee to retire from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Rationale: TEC §22.007 prohibits districts from offering incentives that encourage employees to retire from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. While intended to prevent coercion, the statute can limit a district's ability to engage in responsible workforce planning during periods of budget constraint, enrollment shifts, program redesign, or organizational restructuring.
Pearland ISD does not seek to encourage or pressure employees to retire. However, limited local flexibility allows the district to consider voluntary separation or transition programs that support long-term financial sustainability, create staffing stability, and open pathways for succession planning—without diminishing employee choice or retirement benefits.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §22.007 to allow the Board of Trustees to consider locally designed, voluntary workforce transition or separation options when necessary to support fiscal responsibility, staffing alignment, and long-term organizational planning.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Ensure all participation is strictly voluntary
- Prohibit coercion or pressure related to retirement decisions

- Maintain transparency through Board-approved policies and public action
- Ensure compliance with all Teacher Retirement System and federal requirements

This innovation provides the district with limited workforce planning flexibility while protecting employee rights, preserving trust, and maintaining ethical and transparent employment practices.

Statute TEC§ 22.011. **Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions.** (a) A school district board of trustees or school district employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce any school district employee to:
(1) make a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund-raiser; or
(2) attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.
(b) A school district board of trustees or school district employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce any school district employee to refrain from:
(1) making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund-raiser; or
(2) attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

Rationale: TEC §22.011 is designed to protect employees from being required or coerced into making charitable contributions or participating in fundraising activities. Pearland ISD fully supports this purpose and maintains a culture in which charitable giving is voluntary and free from pressure.
However, the statute's rigid prohibitions can create uncertainty around district-supported charitable campaigns, payroll deduction options, or participation in community initiatives that are entirely voluntary but facilitated by the district for employee convenience or community partnership purposes. Local flexibility allows the district to clearly distinguish between voluntary opportunities and prohibited coercion while maintaining strong employee protections.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §22.011 to allow the district to locally define and administer voluntary charitable giving opportunities, community campaigns, and payroll-based donation options in a manner that is clearly non-coercive and transparent.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Prohibit any requirement or pressure for employee participation
- Clearly communicate that all charitable contributions and participation are voluntary
- Ensure no adverse employment consequences are associated with participation or non-participation
- Maintain Board-adopted policies governing ethical standards and employee rights

This innovation provides administrative clarity and supports positive community engagement while preserving employee autonomy, trust, and legal protections.

Statute TEC§ 22.904. **Mental Health Training.** (a) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a school district shall require each district employee who regularly interacts with students enrolled at the district to complete an evidence-based mental health training program designed to provide instruction to participants regarding the recognition and support of children and youth who experience a mental health or substance use issue that may pose a threat to school

safety.
(b) A school district may not require a district employee who has previously completed mental health training offered by a local mental health authority under Section 1001.203, Health and Safety Code, to complete the training required by this section.
(c) From funds appropriated for the purpose, the agency shall provide an allotment to each school district to assist the district in complying with this section. The amount of an allotment provided to a school district under this subsection may not exceed the costs incurred by the district for employees' travel, training fees, and compensation for the time spent completing the training required by this section. The agency may proportionally reduce each district's allotment if the amount appropriated is insufficient to pay for all costs incurred by districts under this subsection.
(d) The State Board for Educator Certification shall propose rules allowing an educator to receive credit toward the educator's continuing education requirements under Section 21.054(g) for the educator's participation in mental health training under this section.
(e) The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section, including rules specifying the training fees and travel expenses subject to reimbursement under Subsection (c).

Rationale: Pearland ISD supports the intent of TEC §22.904 to strengthen school safety by ensuring employees who regularly interact with students can recognize and respond appropriately to mental health and substance use concerns. The district's primary challenge is not the goal, but the implementation burden: the requirement applies broadly to many employee groups and must be completed districtwide within the TEA rule's phase-in timeline. To best serve students and staff, Pearland ISD will implement the requirement through a locally designed, evidence-based training system that:

- avoids duplicative annual compliance training,
- recognizes valid prior completion (including MHFA/YMHFA certificates, consistent with TEA guidance),
- uses TEA/HHSC/ESC-identified compliant resources,
- and prioritizes job-relevant delivery methods that maintain fidelity while protecting instructional time.

Innovation: Pearland ISD will not seek to waive the mental health training requirement. Instead, Pearland ISD will implement an innovative approach to compliance that meets TEC §22.904 and 19 TAC §153.1015 while minimizing redundancy and disruption:

1. Tiered Implementation by Role (within TEA rule requirements):
   Pearland ISD will prioritize employees with the most frequent and direct student interaction first (campus-based and student-facing roles) while ensuring districtwide completion within the TEA phase-in timeline.
2. Credit for Prior Completion / No Retake Requirement:
   Employees who can present a valid MHFA or YMHFA certificate will receive credit and will not be required to retake training to satisfy this statutory requirement, consistent with TEA guidance.
3. Locally Selected TEA-Compliant Training Pathways:
   Pearland ISD may select training from TEA/HHSC/ESC-recommended sources or

implement a locally selected course that satisfies the commissioner rule competencies, allowing delivery formats that are job-embedded and scalable.

4. Streamlined Documentation and Audit Readiness:
   Pearland ISD will maintain centralized documentation of completion aligned to the rule's expectations (who is covered, what training was used, and completion records), ensuring the district can demonstrate compliance upon request.
5. Integrated Safety/Wellness Training Design:
   Where appropriate, Pearland ISD will coordinate this training with other required mental health and safety-related topics to reduce duplication while ensuring the selected training still meets the §153.1015 competencies.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 25 of the TEC related to student admissions, transfers, attendance requirements, school calendars, and class size or staffing structures:

Chapter 25 Admissions, Transfers, Attendance

Statute TEC§ 25.0344 Transfer of Students Who are Children of Peace Officers. a) In this section, "peace officer" has the meaning assigned by Section 1701.001, Occupations Code.
(b) On request of a peace officer who is a parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student, the board of trustees of a school district or the board's designee shall transfer the student to another district campus or to another school district under an agreement under Section 25.035.
(c) A transfer under this section must be to the campus or school district, as applicable, selected by the peace officer making the request.
(d) A school district is not required to provide transportation to a student who transfers to another campus or school district under this section.

Rationale: TEC §25.0344 requires a district to approve and honor a student transfer request made by a peace officer parent to a campus or district of the parent's choosing. While Pearland ISD values and supports peace officers and their families, the statute removes local discretion to consider campus capacity, program availability, staffing, safety considerations, or the impact of transfers on instructional continuity.
Local flexibility allows the district to balance support for peace-officer families with responsible enrollment management, campus safety, and equitable access to programs. This ensures that transfer decisions are made in the best interest of students while maintaining stable learning environments and operational effectiveness across campuses.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.0344 to allow the district to evaluate transfer requests for children of peace officers using locally adopted transfer guidelines that consider campus capacity, program availability, student support needs, and safety considerations.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to give priority consideration to transfer requests from peace-officer families
- Apply consistent, transparent criteria to all transfer decisions

- Ensure decisions are student-centered and support campus stability
- Maintain Board-adopted transfer policies and administrative oversight

This innovation allows Pearland ISD to honor and support peace-officer families while ensuring transfer decisions align with student needs, campus capacity, and district operational responsibilities.

Statute TEC§ 25.0345 Transfer of Students Who are Children of Servicemembers. (a) In this section, "servicemember" means an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, or the Texas National Guard.

(b) On request of a servicemember who is a parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student, the board of trustees of a school district or the board's designee shall transfer the student to another district campus or to another school district under an agreement under Section 25.035.

(c) A transfer under this section must be to the campus or school district, as applicable, selected by the servicemember making the request.

(d) A school district is not required to provide transportation to a student who transfers to another campus or school district under this section.

Rationale: TEC §25.0345 requires a district to approve and honor a student transfer request made by a servicemember parent to a campus or school district of the parent's choosing. Pearland ISD recognizes the unique challenges faced by military families, including frequent relocations, deployment-related disruptions, and the need for stability in schooling.

At the same time, the statute removes local discretion to consider campus capacity, program availability, staffing, safety considerations, or the cumulative impact of transfers on instructional continuity. Local flexibility allows the district to balance support for military-connected students with responsible enrollment management and equitable access to educational programs across campuses to the extent permissible by law.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.0345 in a manner that does not conflict with applicable federal protections to allow the district to evaluate transfer requests for children of servicemembers using locally adopted transfer guidelines that prioritize student stability while considering campus capacity, program availability, student support needs, and safety considerations.

Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to give priority consideration to transfer requests from military families consistent with applicable law
- Apply consistent, transparent criteria to all transfer decisions
- Ensure decisions are student-centered and support campus stability
- Maintain Board-adopted transfer policies and administrative oversight

This innovation allows Pearland ISD to support military-connected students and families while ensuring transfer decisions align with district capacity, safety, and instructional effectiveness.

Statute TEC§ 25.036 transfer of Student. (a) 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.
(b) A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.

(c) In the case of a transfer under this section, a child's school district of residence shall provide the receiving district with the child's disciplinary record and any threat assessment involving the child's behavior conducted under Section 37.115.

Rationale: TEC §25.036 permits student transfers between districts subject to mutual agreement but provides limited guidance regarding local capacity considerations, program availability, student support needs, or the cumulative impact of transfers on instructional continuity and campus operations. As enrollment patterns shift and program offerings become more specialized, districts require greater local discretion to manage transfers in a manner that is equitable, sustainable, and aligned with student needs.
Pearland ISD supports school choice within a framework that prioritizes student success, campus stability, and responsible use of district resources. Local flexibility allows the district to implement transfer practices that balance parent choice with instructional quality, staffing capacity, and safety considerations.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.036 to allow the district to manage student transfers under locally adopted Board policies that establish clear criteria for approval, continuation, and revocation of transfer agreements.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Apply transparent, consistently applied transfer criteria
- Consider campus capacity, program availability, and student support needs
- Monitor the impact of transfers on academic progress and campus stability
- Maintain Board oversight of transfer policies and procedures

This innovation enables Pearland ISD to responsibly manage transfers in a way that supports student outcomes, preserves program integrity, and ensures equitable access to district resources.

Statute TEC§ 25.0811 First Day of Instruction. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. A school district may:
(1) begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August if the district operates a year-round system under Section 25.084; or
(2) begin instruction for students for a school year on or after the first Monday in August at a campus or at not more than 20 percent of the campuses in the district if:
(A) the district has a student enrollment of 190,000 or more;
(B) the district at the beginning of the school year provides, financed with local funds, days of instruction for students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses, in addition to the minimum number of days of instruction required under Section 25.081;
(C) the campus or each of the multiple campuses are undergoing comprehensive reform, as determined by the board of trustees of the district; and
(D) a majority of the students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses are educationally disadvantaged.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a school district that does not offer each grade level from

kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend schoolin another state for the grade levels the district does not offer may start school on any date permitted under Subsection (a) or the law of the other state.

Rationale: TEC §25.0811 restricts the date on which a school district may begin instruction for students, limiting local discretion in calendar design. While intended to create statewide uniformity, the statute can constrain a district's ability to align instructional calendars with professional learning, intervention needs, family schedules, and operational realities.
Pearland ISD's instructional calendar is a critical lever for student success, staff retention, and instructional coherence. Local flexibility allows the district to design calendars that support strong starts to the school year, provide time for teacher preparation and onboarding, and strategically schedule intervention and enrichment opportunities aligned to district goals.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.0811 to allow the Board of Trustees to determine the first day of instruction through the locally adopted instructional calendar, based on student learning needs, staff preparation, and community considerations.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Maintain required instructional minutes and accountability requirements
- Provide adequate preparation time for teachers and staff
- Engage stakeholders through Board-adopted calendar processes
- Publicly adopt and communicate the instructional calendar

This innovation enables Pearland ISD to align the start of the school year with instructional readiness and community needs while maintaining transparency, accountability, and Board oversight.

Statute TEC§ 25.0812 Last Day of School. (a) 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.
(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a school district that does not offer each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend school in another state for the grade levels the district does not offer may schedule the last day of school on any date permitted under Subsection (a) or the law of the other state.

Rationale: TEC §25.0812 restricts the date on which a school district may schedule the last day of school for students, limiting local discretion in instructional calendar design. While intended to ensure consistency across districts, the statute can constrain a district's ability to align the school year with instructional pacing, assessment windows, intervention needs, and staff sustainability.
Pearland ISD's calendar design is intentionally aligned to student learning goals, assessment cycles, and instructional planning. Local flexibility allows the district to thoughtfully schedule the conclusion of the school year in a manner that supports completion of instructional objectives, targeted interventions, and orderly transitions for students and staff.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.0812 to allow the Board of Trustees to determine the last day of school through the locally adopted instructional calendar, based on instructional completion, student needs, and operational considerations.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Maintain required instructional minutes and accountability requirements
- Ensure completion of instructional and assessment obligations
- Adopt the instructional calendar through public Board action
- Clearly communicate calendar decisions to families and staff

This innovation supports coherent calendar planning, instructional integrity, and local accountability while preserving transparency and Board oversight.

Statute TEC§ 25.0822 Patriotic Society Access to Students. (a) In this section, "patriotic society" means a youth membership organization listed in Title 36 of the United States Code with an educational purpose that promotes patriotism and civic involvement.
(b) At the beginning of each school year, the board of trustees of an independent school district shall adopt a policy to allow the principal of a public school campus to provide representatives of a patriotic society with the opportunity to speak to students during regular school hours about membership in the society and the ways in which membership may promote a student's educational interest and level of civic involvement, leading to the student's increased potential for self-improvement and ability to contribute to improving the student's school and community.
(c) The board policy shall give a principal complete discretion over the specific date and time of the opportunity required to be provided under this section, except that the policy shall allow the principal to limit:
(1) the opportunity provided to a patriotic society to a single school day; and
(2) any presentation made to students as a result of the opportunity to 10 minutes in length.

Rationale: TEC §25.0822 requires districts to adopt policies providing representatives of certain patriotic societies the opportunity to speak to students during regular school hours. While Pearland ISD values civic engagement and student awareness of community organizations, the statute limits local discretion to manage instructional time, ensure age-appropriate delivery, and balance access among multiple organizations requesting campus time.
Local flexibility allows the district to ensure that instructional time remains protected, student participation is appropriate, and campus leaders can manage access in a manner that aligns with educational priorities, safety considerations, and operational capacity. This flexibility supports a neutral, student-centered approach to campus access without diminishing opportunities for civic engagement while honoring applicable constitutional protections.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.0822 to the extent permissible by law to allow the district to locally determine how and when civic and community organizations may be provided access to students, consistent with Board-adopted policies and campus administrative procedures.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Preserve instructional time and academic focus
- Ensure any student access opportunities are age-appropriate and non-disruptive
- Maintain viewpoint neutrality and equitable treatment of organizations

- Provide campus administrators with discretion to manage scheduling and logistics
- Ensure all access aligns with Board policy and district standards

This innovation allows Pearland ISD to support civic awareness and community engagement while protecting instructional integrity, campus operations, and student well-being.

Statute TEC§ 25.083 School Day Interruptions. (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements and sales promotions. At a minimum, the policy must limit announcements other than emergency announcements to once during the school day.
(b) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring or test preparation. A district may not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent or another person standing in parental relation to the student provides to the district written consent for removal from class for such purpose.

Rationale: TEC §25.083 requires districts to adopt and strictly enforce policies limiting classroom interruptions and student removals during the instructional day. While Pearland ISD fully supports the goal of protecting instructional time, the statute's prescriptive limits do not always reflect modern campus operations, digital communication systems, multi-tiered interventions, or student support practices that require timely and flexible access to students. Local flexibility allows campuses to manage instructional interruptions in a way that prioritizes learning while accommodating necessary academic supports, counseling services, assessments, and safety-related needs. This approach ensures instructional time is protected without creating barriers to essential student services or responsive campus operations.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.083 to allow the district to locally define and manage policies governing classroom interruptions and student removals during the school day through Board-adopted guidelines and campus procedures.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to prioritize protection of instructional time
- Allow necessary academic, counseling, intervention, and safety-related student supports
- Utilize modern communication systems to minimize disruptions
- Ensure campus-level accountability for managing interruptions
- Maintain Board oversight through locally adopted policies

This innovation supports instructional focus while allowing campuses to respond effectively to student needs and operational realities.

Statute TEC§ 25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.
(a-1) A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan

approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case.
(a-2) Subsection (a) does not apply to a student who receives credit by examination for a class as provided by Section 28.023.
(a-3) A student's excused absence under Section 25.087(b)(3) may not be considered in determining whether the student has satisfied the attendance requirement under Subsection (a) or (a-1).
(b) The board of trustees of each school district shall appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions for class credit or a final grade by students who are in attendance fewer than the number of days required under Subsection (a) and have not earned class credit or a final grade under Subsection (a-1). Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the membership of the committee. A committee may give class credit or a final grade to a student because of extenuating circumstances. Each board of trustees shall establish guidelines to determine what constitutes extenuating circumstances and shall adopt policies establishing alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. The alternative ways must include at least one option that does not require a student to pay a fee authorized under Section 11.158(a)(15). A certified public school employee may not be assigned additional instructional duties as a result of this section outside of the regular workday unless the employee is compensated for the duties at a reasonable rate of pay.
(c) A member of an attendance committee is not personally liable for any act or omission arising out of duties as a member of an attendance committee.
(d) If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the board of trustees. The decision of the board may be appealed by trial de novo to the district court of the county in which the school district's central administrative office is located.
(e) This section does not affect the provision of Section 25.087(b) regarding a student's excused absence from school to observe religious holy days.
(f) The availability of the option developed under Subsection (b) must be substantially the same as the availability of the educational program developed under Section 11.158(a)(15).

Rationale: TEC §25.092 establishes minimum seat-time requirements for awarding class credit or a final grade. While attendance is important, rigid seat-time thresholds do not always reflect actual student learning, mastery of content, or the effectiveness of instructional interventions—particularly for students experiencing illness, mobility challenges, family instability, or participation in alternative or accelerated learning models.
Pearland ISD is committed to high academic standards and meaningful learning outcomes. Local flexibility allows the district to emphasize mastery of essential knowledge and skills, timely interventions, and demonstrated learning rather than relying solely on attendance percentages as the primary determinant of credit. This approach supports student success while maintaining accountability and instructional rigor.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.092 to allow the district to award class credit or final grades based on demonstrated mastery of course standards and completion of required instructional components, rather than solely on minimum attendance thresholds.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Maintain high expectations for academic mastery
- Implement intervention plans and credit-recovery options aligned to course requirements
- Monitor attendance and address chronic absenteeism through support systems
- Use consistent, Board-adopted criteria for awarding credit
- Preserve due process through campus-level review and administrative oversight
- Maintain compliance with compulsory attendance and truancy requirements

This innovation enables Pearland ISD to focus on learning outcomes and student growth while ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in credit-earning decisions. Attendance continues to be monitored, and instructional time expectations remain in place; this exemption does not allow automatic credit or grade advancement without demonstrated learning.

Statute TEC§ 25.111 Student/Teacher Ratio. Except as provided by Section 25.112, each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance.

Rationale: TEC §25.111 requires districts to maintain a minimum average student-to-teacher ratio based on daily attendance. While intended to ensure adequate staffing, the statute relies on a single numerical measure that does not fully reflect modern instructional models, differentiated staffing patterns, or the use of specialized support personnel to meet student needs.
Pearland ISD utilizes a variety of instructional configurations—including co-teaching, interventionists, instructional specialists, and targeted small-group instruction—that support student learning beyond traditional one-teacher classroom models. Local flexibility allows the district to design staffing structures that better align with student needs, instructional strategies, and campus contexts while maintaining appropriate supervision and instructional quality.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.111 to allow the district to determine student-to-teacher ratios through locally adopted staffing models that reflect instructional design, student needs, and campus-level strategies rather than a fixed statutory average.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Ensure students receive appropriate instructional support and supervision
- Use staffing models aligned to instructional priorities and student performance data
- Monitor class size and workload to support effective teaching and learning
- Maintain Board oversight of staffing policies and resource allocation

This innovation supports flexible, student-centered staffing models while preserving instructional quality, accountability, and transparency.

Statute TEC§ 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. That limitation does not apply during:

(1) any 12-week period of the school year selected by the district, in the case of a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 48.005(c); or
(2) the last 12 weeks of any school year in the case of any other district.
(b) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of the 12-week period for which a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 48.005(c) is claiming an exemption under Subsection (a), the district shall notify the commissioner in writing that the district is claiming an exemption for the period stated in the notice.
(c) In determining the number of students to enroll in any class, a school district shall consider the subject to be taught, the teaching methodology to be used, and any need for individual instruction.
(d) On application of a school district, the commissioner may except the district from the limit in Subsection (a) if the commissioner finds the limit works an undue hardship on the district. An exception expires at the end of the school year for which it is granted.
(e) A school district seeking an exception under Subsection (d) shall notify the commissioner and apply for the exception not later than the later of:
(1) October 1; or
(2) the 30th day after the first school day the district exceeds the limit in Subsection (a).
(f) If a school district repeatedly fails to comply with this section, the commissioner may take any appropriate action authorized to be taken by the commissioner under Section 39.131.

Rationale: TEC §25.112 establishes class size limits for early elementary grades. While small class sizes can support effective instruction, rigid statutory limits do not always account for variations in instructional models, team-teaching structures, specialized programs, or the availability of additional instructional support staff.
Pearland ISD is committed to maintaining developmentally appropriate learning environments that support student success. Local flexibility allows the district to consider instructional design, staffing configurations, and student needs holistically rather than relying solely on a fixed numerical threshold. This enables campuses to use co-teaching, interventionists, and targeted supports to maintain instructional quality when class size variations occur.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.112 to the extent permissible by law to allow the district to locally determine class size in early elementary grades through Board-adopted staffing and instructional guidelines, rather than relying exclusively on statutory limits. Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Prioritize developmentally appropriate instruction for young learners
- Consider instructional models, staffing supports, and student needs when setting class size
- Monitor the impact of class size on student learning and teacher workload
- Maintain Board oversight and transparency in staffing decisions
- Ensure class size decisions align with student safety and early literacy priorities

This innovation provides Pearland ISD with the ability to design instructional environments that support student learning while preserving accountability, quality, and community trust.

Statute TEC§ 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. The notice must be in conspicuous bold or underlined print and:
(1) specify the class for which an exception from the limit imposed by Section 25.112(a) was granted;
(2) state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted; and
(3) be included in a regular mailing or other communication from the campus or district, such as information sent home with students.
(b) The notice required by Subsection (a) must be provided not later than the 31st day after:
(1) the first day of the school year; or
(2) the date the exception is granted, if the exception is granted after the beginning of the school year.

Rationale: TEC §25.113 requires written notification to parents when a campus exceeds statutory class size limits under TEC §25.112. While the intent is to promote transparency, the statute prescribes a narrow notification method and timeline that does not reflect modern communication systems or local approaches to parent engagement.
Pearland ISD values clear, timely communication with families and already provides parents with access to class information through electronic platforms, campus communications, and ongoing engagement. Local flexibility allows the district to communicate class size information in ways that are more timely, accessible, and meaningful to families while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.113 to allow the district to provide parent notification regarding class size through locally adopted communication methods and timelines, rather than being limited to the statutory written notice format.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to inform parents when class size variations occur
- Use multiple communication platforms to ensure timely and accessible notification
- Maintain transparency regarding instructional supports and staffing
- Ensure Board-adopted communication standards are followed
- Ensure timely notice to parents for class size variations in accordance with applicable law

This innovation enhances parent communication, reduces administrative burden, and supports transparency while preserving the spirit and intent of the statute.

Statute TEC§ 25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes: Class Size. (a) In implementing the curriculum for physical education under Section 28.002(a)(2)(C), each school district shall establish specific objectives and goals the district intends to accomplish through the curriculum, including, to the extent practicable, student/teacher ratios that are small enough to enable the district to:
(1) carry out the purposes of and requirements for the physical education curriculum as provided under Section 28.002(d); and
(2) ensure the safety of students participating in physical education.

(b) If a district establishes a student to teacher ratio greater than 45 to 1 in a physical education class, the district shall specifically identify the manner in which the safety of the students will be maintained.

Rationale: TEC §25.114 directs districts to establish physical education student-to-teacher ratios that support instructional goals and student safety, and requires additional documentation when ratios exceed a specified threshold. While student safety is paramount, the statute's numeric trigger does not always reflect the wide range of instructional settings, facilities, supervision models, and staffing supports used in modern physical education programs.
Pearland ISD designs physical education instruction using multiple supervision strategies, including certified physical education teachers, instructional aides, facility-appropriate grouping, and activity-specific safety protocols. Local flexibility allows the district to determine appropriate ratios based on the activity, space, equipment, and student needs rather than relying on a single numeric threshold that may not accurately reflect actual supervision or safety conditions.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §25.114 to allow the district to establish and manage physical education class ratios through locally adopted safety, staffing, and instructional guidelines rather than a fixed statutory ratio trigger.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Prioritize student safety in all physical education settings
- Align ratios to activity type, facility capacity, and supervision supports
- Utilize certified staff and trained aides as appropriate
- Monitor physical education classes for safety and instructional effectiveness
- Maintain Board oversight through adopted policies and administrative procedures

This innovation supports safe, high-quality physical education instruction while allowing campuses to use staffing and facility resources effectively and responsibly.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 26 of the TEC related parent rights and communication regrading instructional plans:

Chapter 26 Parental Rights and Responsibilities

Statute TEC§ 26.0062 Required Disclosure Regarding Instructional Plan. (a) Each school district shall adopt a policy to make available on the district's Internet website at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the district for that semester.
(b) The policy adopted under Subsection (a) must:
(1) require each teacher to provide before the beginning of each semester a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class for which the teacher provides instruction to:
(A) district administration; and
(B) the parent of each student enrolled in the class; and
(2) provide for additional copies of an instructional plan or course syllabus to be made available to a parent of a student enrolled in the class on the parent's request.

Rationale: TEC §26.0062 requires districts to publicly post and distribute an instructional plan or course syllabus for every class at the beginning of each semester. While Pearland ISD strongly supports transparency and parent access to instructional information, the statute prescribes a fixed format and timing that does not reflect the dynamic nature of instruction, ongoing instructional adjustments, or differentiated approaches used to meet student needs. Instructional plans evolve based on student progress, assessment data, and instructional pacing. Requiring static, semester-based disclosures can create confusion, generate unnecessary administrative burden, and reduce teacher flexibility without meaningfully improving parent understanding. Local flexibility allows the district to provide instructional transparency in ways that are timely, accurate, and meaningful to families.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §26.0062 to allow the district to provide parents access to instructional information through locally adopted practices and communication platforms rather than a prescribed semester-based posting requirement. Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to provide parents with meaningful access to instructional information
- Use digital platforms and ongoing communication to share course expectations and learning progress
- Allow teachers to update instructional plans responsively based on student needs
- Maintain Board-adopted policies governing parent access and transparency

This innovation enhances instructional accuracy, supports teacher professionalism, and ensures parents receive clear, relevant information while maintaining transparency, accountability, and trust.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 28 of the TEC related to curriculum requirements, grading policies, and graduation planning:

Chapter 28 Course of Study; Advanced

Statute TEC§ 28.02123 Notification of Certain High School Graduation Requirements.
(a) Not later than September 1 of each school year, a school district shall notify by regular mail or e-mail the parent of or other person standing in parental relation to each student enrolled in grade nine or above that the student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation high school program.
(b) The notification must include information regarding the potential consequences to a student of not completing an Algebra II course, including the impact on eligibility for:
(1) automatic college admission under Section 51.803; and

(2) certain financial aid authorized under Title 3, including:
(A) the TEXAS grant program under Subchapter M, Chapter 56; and
(B) the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program under Subchapter P, Chapter 56.

Rationale: TEC §28.02123 requires districts to provide annual, prescribed notification to parents regarding graduation requirements, including information related to Algebra II and its impact on postsecondary opportunities. While the intent is to ensure parent awareness, the statute relies on a single, time-bound notification that may not fully support informed decision-making as students' academic pathways evolve.
Pearland ISD supports proactive, ongoing communication with families regarding graduation pathways, course selection, and postsecondary implications. Local flexibility allows the district to provide more frequent, contextualized, and accessible information through multiple communication channels rather than relying solely on a once-per-year notice.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §28.02123 to allow the district to communicate graduation requirement information to parents and students through locally designed, ongoing communication practices rather than a single annual notification.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Continue to inform families about graduation requirements and postsecondary implications
- Provide guidance during course selection, advising, and academic planning processes
- Use multiple communication platforms to support accessibility and understanding
- Ensure parents and students have opportunities to ask questions and receive counseling support
- Maintain Board-adopted policies governing graduation communication and guidance
- Ensure parents receive clear and timely graduation related information consistent with applicable law

This innovation enhances family understanding, supports informed academic decision-making, and aligns graduation communication with student needs while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Statute TEC§ 28.0216 District Grading Policy. A school district shall adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. A district grading policy:
(1) must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment;
(2) may not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student's quality of work; and
(3) may allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

Rationale: TEC §28.0216 requires districts to adopt grading policies with specific statutory parameters related to minimum grades and assignment recovery. While intended to promote fairness, rigid grading prescriptions can limit a district's ability to implement research-based grading practices that more accurately reflect student learning, mastery, and growth.

Pearland ISD is committed to maintaining high academic standards and ensuring grades communicate meaningful information about student performance. Local flexibility allows the district to align grading practices with instructional goals, assessment literacy, and student learning progress rather than relying on uniform grading structures that may not reflect mastery or instructional intent.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §28.0216 to allow the district to adopt locally designed grading policies that emphasize mastery of standards, timely feedback, and opportunities for learning recovery while maintaining academic rigor and transparency.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Ensure grades reflect demonstrated learning and mastery
- Provide opportunities for reassessment and academic recovery aligned to instructional expectations
- Maintain clear grading criteria communicated to students and parents
- Use Board-adopted policies to govern grading practices across campuses

This innovation supports accurate, student-centered grading practices that promote learning and growth while preserving fairness, consistency, and accountability.

Statute TEC§ 28.022 Notice to Parent of Unsatisfactory Performance: Conference. (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt a policy that:
(1) provides for at least two opportunities for in-person conferences during each school year between each parent of a child enrolled in the district and the child's teachers;
(2) requires the district, at least once every 12 weeks, to give written notice to a parent of a student's performance in each class or subject; and
(3) requires the district, at least once every three weeks, or during the fourth week of each nine-week grading period, to give written notice to a parent or legal guardian of a student's performance in a subject included in the foundation curriculum under Section 28.002(a)(1) if the student's performance in the subject is consistently unsatisfactory, as determined by the district.
(b) The notice required under Subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) must:
(1) provide for the signature of a student's parent; and
(2) be returned to the district.
(c) A policy adopted under this section does not apply to a student who:
(1) is 18 years of age or older and who is living in a different residence than the student's parents;
(2) is married; or
(3) has had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.
(d) In this section, "parent" includes a guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of a student.
(e) A district that uses an electronic platform for communicating student grade and performance information to parents may permit a parent to sign a notice required under Subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) electronically, so long as the district retains a record verifying the parent's acknowledgment of the required notice. A district that accepts electronic signatures under this subsection must offer parents the option to provide a handwritten signature as provided under Subsection (b).

Rationale: TEC §28.022 prescribes specific timelines, formats, and frequency requirements for notifying parents of unsatisfactory student performance and for conducting parent-teacher conferences. While the intent is to promote parental awareness and involvement, rigid statutory timelines may not always align with grading cycles, progress-monitoring systems, or individualized intervention timelines.
Pearland ISD prioritizes early identification of academic concerns and proactive communication with families. Local flexibility allows the district to use continuous progress-monitoring tools, digital grade-reporting platforms, and individualized outreach strategies to ensure parents receive timely, meaningful information that supports student success rather than compliance-driven notifications that may occur after learning gaps have already widened.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §28.022 to allow the district to communicate student performance concerns and conduct parent engagement activities through locally adopted practices rather than strictly prescribed statutory timelines and formats.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Provide parents with timely access to student performance information through digital platforms
- Initiate parent contact and intervention planning as soon as academic concerns are identified
- Offer conferences and support meetings aligned to student needs and instructional timelines
- Maintain Board-adopted policies governing parent communication and engagement
- Ensure parents are timely notified in accordance with applicable law

This innovation strengthens family-school partnerships, supports earlier intervention, and ensures communication practices are responsive, consistent, and focused on improving student outcomes while maintaining transparency and accountability.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 31 of the TEC related to Instructional Materials and Technology for public schools and charter schools in Texas.

Chapter 31 Instructional Materials and Technology

Statute TEC§ 31.024 Limitation on the Adoption and Use of Instructional Material. A school district may not adopt or otherwise use instructional material included on the list of rejected instructional materials maintained by the State Board of Education under Section 31.022(a).

Rationale: TEC §31.024 restricts the adoption and use of instructional materials to those approved or adopted through state processes. While intended to ensure quality and alignment, the statute can limit a district's ability to respond quickly to instructional needs, incorporate innovative resources, or supplement core materials to address diverse learners, emerging standards, and evolving instructional practices.
Pearland ISD is committed to high-quality, standards-aligned instruction and responsible stewardship of instructional resources. Local flexibility allows the district to evaluate, pilot, and supplement instructional materials that enhance student learning, support differentiation, and align to district instructional priorities while maintaining oversight, transparency, and compliance

with applicable law.

Innovation: Pearland ISD will not approve or use material that has been rejected by SBOE or TEA. Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §31.024 to allow the district to adopt, pilot, and use locally selected instructional materials that supplement or enhance state-adopted resources when doing so supports instructional effectiveness and student needs.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Ensure instructional materials are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
- Use local review processes to evaluate instructional quality and appropriateness
- Maintain transparency and Board oversight in instructional material adoption
- Comply with all applicable state and federal requirements related to instructional content
- Monitor the effectiveness of materials and adjust use based on student outcomes

This innovation enables Pearland ISD to remain responsive to instructional needs, support diverse learners, and continuously improve teaching and learning while preserving accountability, transparency, and local governance.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 33 of the TEC related to counseling services and library programs:

Chapter 33 Service Programs and Extracurricular Activities

Statute TEC§ 33.006 School Counselors; General Duties. (a) The primary responsibility of a school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal, and social abilities.
(b) In addition to a school counselor's responsibility under Subsection (a), the school counselor shall:
(1) participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive developmental guidance program to serve all students and to address the special needs of students:
(A) who are at risk of dropping out of school, becoming substance abusers, participating in gang activity, or committing suicide;
(B) who are in need of modified instructional strategies; or
(C) who are gifted and talented, with emphasis on identifying and serving gifted and talented students who are educationally disadvantaged;
(2) consult with a student's parent or guardian and make referrals as appropriate in consultation with the student's parent or guardian;
(3) consult with school staff, parents, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success;
(4) coordinate people and resources in the school, home, and community;
(5) with the assistance of school staff, interpret standardized test results and other assessment data that help a student make educational and career plans;
(6) deliver classroom guidance activities or serve as a consultant to teachers conducting lessons based on the school's guidance curriculum; and
(7) serve as an impartial, nonreporting resource for interpersonal conflicts and discord involving

two or more students, including accusations of bullying under Section 37.0832.
(c) Nothing in Subsection (b)(7) exempts a school counselor from any mandatory reporting requirements imposed by other provisions of law.
(d) Except as provided by Subsection (e), the board of trustees of each school district shall adopt a policy that requires a school counselor to spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005. For purposes of this subsection, time spent in administering assessment instruments orproviding other assistance in connection with assessment instruments, except time spent in interpreting data from assessment instruments, is not considered time spent on counseling. Each school in the district shall implement the policy. A copy of the policy shall be maintained in the office of each school in the district and made available on request during regular school hours to district employees, parents of district students, and the public.
(e) If the board of trustees of a school district determines that, because of staffing needs in the district or at a school in the district, a school counselor must spend less than 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005, the policy adopted under Subsection (d) shall:
(1) include the reasons why the counselor needs to spend less than 80 percent of the counselor's work time on duties that are components of the counseling program;
(2) list the duties the counselor is expected to perform that are not components of the counseling program; and
(3) set the percentage of work time that the counselor is required to spend on components of the counseling program.
(f) A school district may not include a provision in an employment contract with a school counselor under Chapter 21 that conflicts with the policy required by Subsection (d) or, except as provided by Subsection (g), has the effect of authorizing a school principal or school district superintendent to require a school counselor to generally perform duties that are not primarily related to a counseling function.
(g) A school district to which Subsection (e) applies may not include a provision in an employment contract under Chapter 21 with an affected school counselor that has the effect of requiring the counselor to generally perform a duty that is not primarily related to a counseling function unless the duty is specified in the district's policy under Subsection (e)(2).
(h) Each school district shall annually assess the district's compliance with the policy adopted under Subsection (d) and, on request by the commissioner, provide a written copy of the assessment to the agency on or before the date specified by the commissioner. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this subsection.

Rationale: TEC §33.006 prescribes specific duties and time allocations for school counselors, including limits on non-guidance activities. While the statute is intended to protect counselors' instructional guidance role, its prescriptive structure does not fully reflect the expanded and evolving needs of students related to mental health, social-emotional learning, crisis response, and coordinated student supports.
Pearland ISD values the critical role school counselors play in student success. Local flexibility allows the district to align counselor responsibilities with current student needs, campus support models, and district priorities while ensuring counselors are used effectively and appropriately. This approach supports a comprehensive counseling program that balances academic guidance, social-emotional support, and campus-level coordination without being constrained by rigid duty

classifications.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §33.006 to allow the district to locally define school counselor duties and time allocation through Board-adopted policies and administrative guidelines that reflect student needs and campus contexts.
Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will: Maintain comprehensive school counseling programs aligned to student academic, social, and emotional needs

- Ensure counselors are not routinely assigned clerical or inappropriate duties
- Allow flexibility in counselor roles to support mental health, crisis response, and intervention systems
- Align counselor responsibilities with district student support frameworks
- Maintain Board oversight and accountability for counseling services
- Maintain the expectation that School Counselors and Student Support Counselors are required to spend at least 80 percent of their total work time on duties that directly support and implement the comprehensive school counseling program.

This innovation ensures school counselors are utilized strategically and effectively to meet the needs of today's students while preserving professional standards, transparency, and student-centered support.

Statute TEC§ 33.026 Acquisition of Library Materials. (a) The board of trustees of a school district shall adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials, including procedures for the procurement of library materials and the receipt of donated library materials. The policy must require the board to:
(1) approve all library materials that have been donated to or that are to be procured by a school library in the district, with the advice and recommendations of the district's local school library advisory council if the district established a council under Section 33.025;
(2) make the list of library materials not described by Subsection (f) that have been donated to or that are proposed to be procured by a school library accessible for review by the public for at least 30 days before final approval;
(3) approve or reject the list of library materials that have been donated to or that are proposed to be procured by a school library in an open meeting; and
(4) ensure compliance with the library standards approved under Section 33.021.
(b) Each member of the board of trustees of a school district is entitled to:
(1) review each list of library materials that have been donated to or that are proposed to be procured by a school library in the district; and
(2) propose changes to each list described by Subdivision (1) before the board votes to approve or reject the list.
(c) For purposes of Subsection (a)(3), the board of trustees shall approve or reject a list of library materials that have been donated to or that are proposed to be procured by a school library at the first open meeting of the board held on or after the 30th day after the date the list is made accessible for review by the public as required by Subsection (a)(2).
(d) If a school district established a local school library advisory council, the council shall meet to determine the council's recommendations regarding library materials that have been donated to or that are proposed to be procured by a school library before the date of the open meeting of the board of trustees described by Subsection (a)(3). The local school library advisory council meeting may occur during the period the list is available for review by the public as required by

Subsection (a)(2).

(e) A school district may not add a donated library material to the school library catalog or otherwise make the donated library material available for student use unless the board of trusteesof the district approves the addition of that donated library material to the school library catalog for the grade levels for which the material is intended.

(f) This section does not apply to library materials that have been donated to or that are to be procured by a school library that:

(1) replace a damaged copy of a library material with the same International Standard Book Number that is currently in the school library catalog;

(2) are additional copies of a library material with the same International Standard Book Number that is currently in the school library catalog; or

(3) have the same International Standard Book Number and have been approved for the same grade levels by the board of trustees of the school district from a previous proposed list of library materials.

(g) The agency shall adopt and make available a model policy for the acquisition of library materials that a school district may adopt to comply with the requirements of this section.

Rationale:

These requirements create operational inefficiencies and limit the district's ability to:

- Respond quickly to instructional and student needs
- Utilize professional expertise of certified librarians
- Implement efficient, locally aligned review systems

Pearland ISD is committed to maintaining transparency, accountability, and community engagement while ensuring timely access to high-quality, age-appropriate instructional resources.

Innovation: Pearland ISD seeks flexibility from the procedural requirements of TEC §§33.026 to the extent permitted by law, to implement a locally designed system for the selection and review of library materials.

- The Board will:
  - Adopt and review library material policies
  - Approve selection criteria and processes (not individual titles)
  - Receive regular updates and retain authority to review materials as needed
- The district will:
  - Monitor library collections on an ongoing basis
  - Ensure alignment with state standards and district expectations
  - Provide periodic reports for the Board

  Pearland ISD will maintain Board oversight, transparency, and parent engagement while shifting from title-by-title approval to systems-level governance, allowing for a more efficient, responsive, and educationally sound library program.

Statute TEC§ 33.027 Challenge or Appeal Regarding Library Materials; Local School Library Advisory Council Recommendations. (a) A parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student enrolled in a school district, a person employed by the district, or a person

residing in the district may submit:
(1) to the district a written challenge to any library material in the catalog of a school library in the district using the form adopted under Subsection (e); or
(2) to the district's board of trustees an appeal of an action taken by the district in response to a written challenge received under Subdivision (1).
(b) Not later than the fifth day after the date on which a school district receives a written challenge under Subsection (a)(1), the district shall provide a copy of the challenge to the district's local school library advisory council if the district established a council under Section 33.025. The council shall make a recommendation for action by the district not later than the 90th day after the date on which the council receives the copy.
(c) If the procedures recommended by the local school library advisory council, if applicable, and adopted by the board of trustees permit the appointment of library material review committees that consist of persons who are not members of the council to review library materials challenged under Subsection (a)(1), the council may base the council's recommendation for action to be taken by the district under Subsection (b) on the recommendation of a library material review committee if the committee consists of at least five persons appointed by the board of trustees, a majority of whom are parents of students enrolled in the school district and are not employed by the district. Sections 33.025(g) and (h) apply to a library material review committee authorized by this subsection in the same manner as a local school library advisory council.
(d) The board of trustees shall take action on:
(1) a written challenge submitted under Subsection (a)(1) at the first open meeting of the board held after:
(A) the 90th day after the date on which the school district receives a written challenge under Subsection (a)(1); or
(B) if applicable, the local school library advisory council has made a recommendation under Subsection (b) regarding the challenge; or
(2) an appeal under Subsection (a)(2) at the first open meeting of the board held after the date the appeal is filed.
(e) The agency shall adopt and post on the agency's Internet website a form to be used in making a written challenge under Subsection (a)(1). Each school district shall post the form on the district's Internet website, if the district has an Internet website. The form shall require the person submitting the form to identify how the challenged library material violates the library standards approved under Section 33.021.
(f) In taking action on a written challenge submitted under Subsection (a)(1) or an appeal under Subsection (a)(2), the board of trustees of a school district shall consider:
(1) if applicable, the advice of the district's local school library advisory council; and
(2) whether the library material challenged under Subsection (a)(1) or appealed under Subsection (a)(2) is suitable for the subject and grade level for which the library material is intended, including by considering:
(A) whether the library material adheres to the library standards approved under Section 33.021; and
(B) reviews, if any, of the library material conducted by academic experts specializing in the subject covered by the library material or in the education of students in the subject and grade level for which the library material is intended.

(g) A school district that receives a challenge to a library material under Subsection (a)(1) shall prohibit students enrolled in the district from accessing the library material until the district takes action in response to the challenge.

(h) If a challenge to a library material submitted under Subsection (a)(1) results in the board of trustees, with the recommendation of the local school library advisory council, if applicable, removing the library material from a school library catalog, the board shall notify each teacher assigned as the classroom teacher at the grade level for which the library material was determined to be not appropriate and instruct the teacher to remove any copy of the library material from the teacher's classroom library, if applicable.

(i) If a challenge to a library material submitted under Subsection (a)(1) results in the board of trustees, with the recommendation of the local school library advisory council, if applicable, not removing the library material from a school library catalog, the board is not required to take any action in response to a written challenge of the library material submitted before the second anniversary of the date of the determination to not remove the library material.

Rationale: TEC §33.027 establishes a prescribed process for challenges or appeals regarding library materials and the role of a local school library advisory council. While intended to ensure community input and transparency, the statute's specific procedural requirements can limit a district's ability to respond efficiently, consistently, and in alignment with locally adopted policies governing instructional materials and library collections.

Pearland ISD values parent and community engagement in the review of library materials and is committed to fair, transparent, and respectful resolution of concerns. Local flexibility allows the district to integrate library challenges and appeals into a coherent, districtwide materials review process that ensures consistency, clarity, and timely resolution while maintaining appropriate stakeholder involvement.

Innovation: Pearland ISD proposes exemption from TEC §33.027 to allow the district to address challenges or appeals regarding library materials through locally adopted Board policies and administrative procedures rather than a statutorily prescribed process.

Under this flexibility, Pearland ISD will:

- Provide clear, accessible procedures for submitting and reviewing material challenges
- Ensure due process, parent challenge, and appeal rights consistent with applicable law
- Ensure parent and community input is included in the review process
- Maintain defined timelines and decision-making authority
- Preserve due process and transparency throughout reviews and appeals
- Retain final authority with the Board of Trustees consistent with local governance

This innovation allows Pearland ISD to manage library material challenges in a consistent, efficient, and transparent manner aligned to district values, educational priorities, and community expectations while maintaining accountability and public trust.

The following exemptions address provisions within Chapter 38 of the TEC related to student health, safety, and wellness programs:

This DOI plan enables Pearland ISD to move from compliance-driven systems to student-centered, outcome-focused practices while maintaining full accountability, transparency, and Board oversight. The plan ensures that flexibility is used strategically to improve student learning, strengthen staff effectiveness, and align district systems to the highest-impact work for students.