



District of INNOVATION

DOI PLAN 2022-2027

Adopted February 28, 2022 | Amended April 27, 2026

I. Introduction

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On November 15, 2021, the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") approved the renewal of the District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On November 29, 2021, the Board appointed the District Planning and Advisory Committee to be the District of Innovation Planning Committee ("Committee"). The Committee met on September 29, 2021 and October 27, 2021 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). On January 19, 2022, the District Advisory Committee, created pursuant to TEC 11.251, held a public meeting to consider a vote on the local innovation plan as required by TEC 12.005. The voting members of the District Advisory Committee unanimously approved the plan. The Board approved the renewal of the local innovation plan on February 28, 2022, at a public meeting conducted in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The plan must be adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board as required by TEC 12A.005. The Board voted unanimously to renew the plan.

II. Term

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan.

III. Continual Improvement

The Local Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD Mission, Beliefs, and ASPIRE 2025 Strategic Plan.

MISSION

The mission of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District is to foster a culture of excellence that instills a passion for a lifetime of continuous achievement in every student.

*See www.emsisd.net for more information regarding the Belief Statements and ASPIRE 2025 Strategic Plan.

IV. Innovations

The EMS ISD School Board and the Local Innovation Committee considered all areas available for local innovation and created a plan in the best interests of the District and its students that centers around four areas:

① **EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION REQUIRED** (TEC 21.003) DBA & DK (LEGAL & LOCAL)

TEC 21.003 states “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.” An exemption from these requirements allows EMS ISD to issue a school district teaching permit to individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate, but whom the district deems best to teach in a particular area. EMS ISD is committed to hiring the best staff available and lists “Develop a systematic approach to aggressively pursue and retain highly qualified personnel and to meet the prioritized staffing needs of the campus and district” as one of its district strategic goals. Occasionally, teachers are needed for positions that are difficult to fill. This exemption relates only to those positions the District identifies as difficult to fill and would be assessed on an individual basis. Staff hired under a school district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district. After the required posting period and candidate interviews, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what specific credentials (i.e., experiences and expertise) the prospective teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach that subject(s). The superintendent must approve the person and the assignment. The District and local campus will assess appropriate training needs for any teacher hired under this exemption. Finally, this is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district. EMS ISD District of Innovation plan will comply with the requirements to have a certified educator in a bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), or special education classroom unless changed by law.

② **UNIFORM SCHOOL CALENDAR-FIRST & LAST DAY OF SCHOOL** (TEC 25.0811 & TEC 25.0812), EB (LEGAL & LOCAL)

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- ✓ Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while having the ability to end the first semester prior to the holiday break.
- ✓ Alignment of calendar with college/university semesters for Dual Credit, Advanced Placement Exams, and STAAR/EOC timelines.
 - >> Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.
- ✓ The balanced semesters will align with college semesters as well, allowing more opportunities for summer school, internships, and industrial certification opportunities.
 - >> Starting one week earlier will also accommodate new and innovative educational models such as longer and more effective summer programming.

③ GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND TIMELINES

(TEC 26A.001 AND TEC 26A.002), DGBA, FNG, GF (LEGAL & LOCAL)

Current law created timelines of up to 90 days for grievances and allowed for adding new information in as the grievance moved through the process. It also removed many requirements on timely filing and proper filing procedures.

The Texas Education Code §26A.001 and §26A.002 changed timelines, filing requirements and procedures around grievances, that make the process less efficient, more cumbersome to investigate and resolve, and allows grievants to bring months-old complaints which would often be moot by the time they are brought. Through this DOI exemption the District will continue to use its current, well-functioning, policy and procedures to handle all grievances. This includes:

- 15 Days of becoming aware of the decision or action to file Level 1 grievance.
- 10 Days for administrators to schedule a conference to hear grievances
- 10 Days to provide a written response.
- 10 Day time period after written response to file a grievance at the next level.
- Valid and grantable relief is required as is timely filing.
- Forms will be available at all administrative offices.

④ SCHOOL LIBRARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

(TEC 33.025)

Current law requires school boards to establish a local school advisory council to assist the district in ensuring community values are reflected in each school library catalogue in the district. A school district seeking an exemption from this requirement must ensure the district's procedures for adding or removing library materials to or from a school library catalogue comply with the library standards set forth in Tex. Educ. Code §33.021; and the meeting requirements under subsections (g) and (h). Tex. Educ. Code §33.025(a).

The District of Innovation plan will be amended to include the exemption from forming a School Library Advisory Council. The District will continue to ensure that the District's procedures for adding or removing library materials from a school library catalog comply with: (1) the library standards approved under Section 33.021 according to EFA(LOCAL) AND EFB(LOCAL), and (2) the procedures established to implement the policies. The District's policies EFB(LOCAL) and EFB(REGULATION) ensure compliance with these standards by designating the Director of Teaching & Learning as the District coordinator regarding library materials. These policies charge the Director of Teaching & Learning oversight regarding the acquisition, retention, and removal of library materials in accordance with the content standards set forth in Tex. Educ. Code §33.021 and the process set forth in Tex. Educ. Code §33.026.

An exemption from this statute will allow the District to meet the standards set forth in Tex. Educ. Code §33.021 and §33.026 while utilizing an already existing and effective process for library materials selection and removal under EFA(LOCAL), EFB(LOCAL), and EFB(REGULATION). The existing process ensures compliance with Tex. Educ. Code §33.021 and Tex. Educ. Code §33.026 content and process requirements. This exemption will ensure continued efficiency in the process guided by our district professionals.

⑤ **TRANSFER OF STUDENTS WHO ARE CHILDREN OF PEACE OFFICERS & SERVICE MEMBERS** (TEC 25.0344 & TEC 25.0345)

Current law requires automatic acceptance of children of peace officers and service members as those terms are defined in the statute. While this law's purpose is laudable, its application removes local control and ability to apply transfer policies consistently among transfer students—including those of peace officers and service members.

The District is seeking an exemption from the requirement to automatically accept students of peace officers and service members indefinitely. Rather, the District proposes to accept these students initially as required by statute but condition continued enrollment on the same academic, attendance, and disciplinary requirements binding all other transfers. These requirements are found in FDA(LOCAL). This exemption allows the District to treat transfer students of peace officers and service members the same as all other transfer students and allows the District to revoke a transfer for academic, attendance, disciplinary, or policy violations, rather than continue to serve the student for the duration of the school year and/or serve the student indefinitely solely because of their parent's status.

V. Timeline

