Andrews Independent School District
Local Innovation Plan
(2027-2032 Renewal)

Overview

2017
The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code by becoming a designated District of Innovation. On Monday, January 10, 2017, during the regularly scheduled board meeting, a public hearing was conducted to consider whether Andrews ISD should develop a plan for designation as a District of Innovation. The Andrews ISD Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution to consider developing a Local Innovation Plan. The board of trustees appointed a 14-person Local Innovation Committee to research, discuss and develop the Local Innovation Plan.

The Local Innovation Committee met on January 17, 2017 to review, discuss, and develop the initial innovation plan. The initial proposed plan was presented to the District Educational Improvement Council for discussion and revision. The plan was then posted online for public viewing and feedback on February 16, 2017 and will remained online until March 17, 2017. The Local Innovation Committee then met on March 20, 2017 to review the plan and consider community feedback. The final version of the plan was approved by the Local Innovation Committee and the District Educational Improvement Council on March 28, 2017. The plan moved on for final vote of the Andrews ISD Board of Trustees. On April 11, 2017 the Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the plan with 7-0 vote.

2021
In the fall of 2021 AISD began the process of renewal for its DOI plan. The AISD District Site Based Decision Committee (DEIC) held a public hearing on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 to review the renewal plan. The AISD Board of Trustees approved on October 12, 2021 the AISD administration to notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of its intent to renew its DOI Plan. The administration notified the Texas Commissioner of Education on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 and received confirmation from TEA on Friday, October 22, 2021. The AISD DOI plan renewal was posted on the AISD website for 30 days. The AISD Board of Trustees approved its renewed DOI plan on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. The Texas Commissioner of Education was notified of the AISD finalized plan, and the new DOI plan was implemented accordingly.

2026
In the fall of 2026, AISD began the process of renewal for its DOI plan. The AISD District Site Based Decision Committee (DEIC) held a public hearing on Wednesday, September 30, 2026 to review the renewal plan. The AISD Board of Trustees approved on

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Andrews ISD Board of Trustees

Jeff Saldivar, President
Holly Conyers, Vice-President
Xavier Emiliano, Secretary
Jerika Olivas, Member
Jim Leach, Member
Mindy Wiggins, Member
David Pipes, Member

Local Innovation Committee

Dr. Bobby Azam - Superintendent of Schools
Kevin Vaughan – Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Chris Dulin - Asst. Supt. of Finance
Dr. Krista Scott – Asst. Supt. of Secondary Ed
Belma Avena – Asst. Supt of Elementary Ed.
Suzanne Mata- Executive Director of HR
Dennis Haynie – Director of Technology
Ben Huddleston - High School Principal
Dr. Carlton Johnson - AEC Principal
Juan Carrion - Middle School Principal
Susan Netopski -Underwood Elementary Principal
Christy Cabrera - Devonian Elementary Principal
Dr. Lisa Marroquin - Clearfork Elementary Principal
David Lowder – Director of Student Services

District Educational Improvement Council

Shannon Anderson – Parent
David Smiley- Teacher
Jenny Hernandez– Parent
Kevin Vaughan – Administrator
Bobby Azam – Parent
Tiffany Tijerina - Counselor
Reenie Phelps – Auxiliary
Kristina Keesee –Para
Harley Machuca– Teacher
Gabriela Payen – Teacher
Belma Avena- Administrator
John Mireles- Community
Valicia Vargas – Teacher
Chris Dulin – Administrator
Debra Ellison– Teacher
Roberto Guadarrama– Teacher
Ana Henson– Teacher
Ryan Dagenhart – Teacher
Marci Street – Parent
Steve Wusterbarth – Teacher
Gloria Perez– Teacher
Esther Quintanilla – Teacher
Christy Cabrera- Administrator
David Lowder - Administrator
Juan Carrion - Parent
Kindra Smiley - Counselor
Heather McGowen - Teacher
Ana Bailey- Teacher
Cindy Martinez – Teacher
Lisa Marroquin - Administrator
Suzanne Mata – Administrator
Gabriella Balderrama- Teacher
Becky Nelson- Community
Danny Caballero- Community
Susan Netopski- Administrator

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Texas Education Code Exemptions

District staff in conjunction with the Local Innovation Committee reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determined which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the educational opportunities of the students who attend Andrews ISD.

I. Uniform Start Date (TEC §25.0811)

State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless they are year-round districts.

Rationale for Exemption
The flexibility of the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, the school start date that best meets the need of the students, teachers, and the community. In addition, this flexibility allows the district to better align its starting date to accommodate the start date of colleges and universities for dual credit courses. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help to better balance the amount of days in each semester.

II. Minimum Minutes of Instruction (TEC §25.081)

The 420 daily instructional minute requirement that was located in §25.081(e) as well as the 7-hour school day requirement in §25.082(a) and were both repealed in the 85th Legislative Session (2017) and are no longer applicable. Districts may be exempt from the §25.081 provision and serve less than the required *annual* minutes of operation, however if the required *operational* and/or *instructional* minutes/days as defined in the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH) are not followed, funding for our school district will be reduced proportionally.

Rationale for Exemption
Exemption from any mandatory school day length or school year length would allow Andrews ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule and overall school calendar as most beneficial to the district and its stakeholders.

Exempting completely from a 'minimum minute' or a 'specific number of school days' requirement would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements. This would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development.

Andrews ISD does not have any intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, "early release" days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published to stakeholders in advance of the school.

III. Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003 and §21.053)

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

Rationale for Exemption

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, as well as career/technical courses. Andrews ISD is located in a rural area which limits course offerings and the utilization of creative instructional methods district wide. Allowing the local district control over teacher certification for hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, and career/technical courses, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for these specific certifications. As well, the district will establish its own requirements for training professionals, including the use of the district's own SBEC approved EPP, utilizing district field experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

Note: *We acknowledge that all foundational subjects (Reading; English Language Arts; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies) including Special Education, Bilingual, and Pre-K teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.*

IV. Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios (TEC §25.111, §25.112, §25.113, and §25.114)

State law requires districts to maintain an average student-teacher ratio at most of 20:1 for average daily attendance. For physical education, the student-teacher ratio cannot be greater than 45:1. In Kindergarten through grade four the class student-teacher ratio must not exceed 22:1.

Rationale for Exemption

Small class size is indeed a contributing factor to overall classroom success. Nonetheless, it must be balanced with the district's overall staffing plan as well as the ability to attract/hire quality teachers. It is often quoted that smaller class size improves academic performance; however, research clearly shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning, not absolute class size. While, classes can definitely become too big or overcrowded, AISD has no intention or plan to overly burden teachers with excessive student numbers. Ultimately, AISD's fundamental declaration on class size and student-teacher ratio remains that minimum class size should be a local decision not a state-wide determination.

V. Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TEC §21.352, §21.354,§21.3541)

State law has utilized the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system until it introduced the new system, Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Andrews ISD teachers and administrators are evaluated annually. AISD Principals complete informal walk-throughs on a weekly basis. AISD Principals are evaluated utilizing a locally developed evaluation tool.

Rationale for Exemption
Andrews ISD teachers and administrators will develop an evaluation tool that combines the PDAS, T-TESS for teachers, T-PESS for administrators, and other best practices to develop a local instrument and/or process that best meets the needs and goals of AISD.

All campus administrators will continue to be formally evaluated annually. All teachers will be evaluated every other year, but will continue to have walk-throughs and regular formative/summative conferences annually.

This locally developed evaluation tool should reflect the strengths, areas of concerns, and goals for Andrews ISD.

Term and Implementation

The term for this plan is for five years (April 1, 2027 – April 1, 2032) unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event Andrews ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee and follow all procedures for amending this plan.

This innovation plan and specific implementation of the plan will be developed by the appropriate campuses and principals. Adjustments to Andrews ISD Board Policy and other district policies will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees.

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