



# AISD District Plan of Innovation

2017 - 2022

## District of Innovation Timeline

	Nov 17, 2016	AISD Board of Trustee discusses rules and process for being an Innovation District.
	Nov 17, 2016	AISD Board votes to adopt Resolution to initiate consideration for being designed as an Innovation District
	Nov17, 2016	AISD Board selected the District Innovation Team (DIT), the current AISD leadership team, to develop the local innovation plan.
	Nov 29, 2016	DIT meets to discuss innovative ideas.
	Jan 24, 2017 Feb 7, 2017	DIT meets to discuss calendar options. DIT meets to discuss draft plan and calendar options.
	Feb 21, 2017	District Innovation Team hosts public meeting to consider final version of AISD Innovation Plan to Board of Trustees for approval with $\frac{2}{3}$ vote; Board votes to notify Commissioner of its intention to vote on adopting final LIP.
	April 20, 2017	Approve @ Board Meeting.
	April 21, 2017	District sends approved plan to Commissioner of Education for Final approval.

## DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE

1. Pete Slaughter Superintendent
2. Thomas O'Neal Deputy Superintendent
3. Sue Akins Assistant Superintendent
4. Dr. Brad Duncan Executive Director
5. Jennifer Kelley Director
6. Thance Springer AHS Principal
7. Tressi Brown AMS Principal
8. Karen Reddell Elementary Principal
9. Kelly Kane Elementary Principal
10. Paula McMillion ESL/Bilingual Coordinator
11. Chad Long Transportation Director
12. Mindi Vandagriff Instructional Technologist
13. Chris Burk Assistant Principal MS
14. Julie Shannon Assistant Principal SER
15. Dana Condron Instructional Coach
16. Susan McQueen Instructional Coach
17. Paige Gilliland Teacher
18. Lisa Hutchinson Teacher
19. Emily Burk Teacher
20. Robin Latham Teacher
21. Rebecca Steffen Teacher
22. Valerie Garcia Teacher
23. Justin Wallis Teacher
24. Maegan Rodgers Teacher
25. Lindsey Johnson Teacher
26. Heather Boykin Teacher
27. Heather Summers Teacher
28. Tom Plunkett Board Member
29. Larissa Thornburg Board Member
30. Chris Jackson Community Member
31. Rhonda Waites Community Member

House Bill (HB) 1842 passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices available to open-enrollment charter schools such as:
  - Uniform school start date
  - Class size ratio
  - Minimum minutes of instruction
  - The 90 percent attendance rule (but compulsory attendance still applies)
  - Student discipline provisions (with some key exceptions, like the requirement to have a code of conduct and restrictions on restraint and seclusion)
  - Teacher appraisal system
  - Teacher certification (except as required by federal law)
  - Teacher contracts
  - Teacher benefits
  - Site-based decision making processes (to the extent required by state law)
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On November 17, 2016, the Anna Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a 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 17, 2016, the Board appointed a 29-member District of Innovation Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and February 7, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan").

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning April 21, 2017 and ending April 21, 2022 , 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 new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

## Areas of Innovation

### 1. Uniform School Start Date

*(EB LEGAL) (TEC 25.0811)*

#### **Current**

- (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school before the fourth Monday in August.

#### **Innovation Rationale**

The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, based on student and staff needs.

- a) The district will increase professional development through-out the school year to increase staff instructional support and increase student learning.
- b) The district will balance semester instructional days.
- c) The district strives to reduce the amount of summer gaps to promote student achievement and increase academic retention to support at-risk students.
- d) The district site-based/strategic planning committee will annually seek input from the district and community stakeholders to review calendar options that best meet the needs of AISD.

### 2. 90 Percent Attendance Rule

*(FEC LOCAL) (TEC 25.092)*

#### **Current**

- (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through 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.

(b)

#### **Innovation Rationale**

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. This exemption will allow the District to promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities. It will also allow AISD administrators to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts, rather than because they've attended a certain number of school days.

The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. AISD will also explore other innovative ways to demonstrate mastery, given this exemption.

This exemption supports overarching goals in the strategic plan to implement tools, resources, and training that support personalized learning for both students and teachers.

Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alters the existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

- a) Students involved in extra-curricular and curricular activities through the AISD organization will be allowed to participate in those activities with prior approval and must demonstrate mastery of content in all course work.

### **3. Student Discipline Provisions**

*(FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (TEC 37.0012)*

#### **Current**

- (a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person may be the principal or the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.

#### **Innovation Rationale**

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. AISD's approach to discipline is becoming more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the AISD Student Code of Conduct.

- a) All certified campus administration will serve as joint behavior coordinators and work collaboratively with campus and district staff to promote campus goals.

### **4. Teacher Certification**

*(DBA Legal) (TEC 21.003, 21.055, 21.057,)*

#### **Current**

21.003 (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.

21.055 (a) As provided by this section, a school district may issue a school district teaching permit and employ as a teacher a person who does not hold a teaching certificate issued by the board. (b) To be eligible for a school district teaching permit under this section, a person must hold a baccalaureate degree. (c) Promptly after employing a person under this section, a school district shall send to the commissioner a written statement identifying the person, the person's

qualifications as a teacher, and the subject or class the person will teach. The person may teach the subject or class pending action by the commissioner.

21.057 (a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom.

### **Innovation Rationale**

In order to best serve AISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand courses. The District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

- a) The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question ( e.g., CTE, STEM, and Dual Credit)
- b) For grades 6-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. ( e.g., CTE, STEM, and Dual Credit)
- c) An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. ( e.g., CTE, STEM, and Dual Credit)
- d) Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.
- e) The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.
- f) Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. There will be no requirement for parent notification regarding teacher certification, and the District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teacher have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.
- g) These positions will be employed under a non-chapter 21 contract and considered "at will" based on district needs.

## **5. Probationary Contracts**

(DCA LEGAL) (TEC 21.102)

### **Current**

(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.

### **Innovation Rationale**

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to three years from the last date of district employment.

- a) As a fast-growing school district, this will allow AISD to properly assess and assist new personnel in the acclimation of the district.