

Terrell County Independent School District

Sanderson School

Excellence Is Our Expectation



District of Innovation: Local Innovation Plan 2017 - 2022

Terrell County Independent School District

During the 84th Texas Legislative Session, House Bill 1842 was passed. HB 1842 provides Texas public school districts with the opportunity to pursue the designation of District of Innovation. Through HB 1842, District of Innovation, local school districts may obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code, providing flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from certain statutes, giving them:

- Greater local control as the decision maker over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Under House Bill 1842, districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum, graduation requirements, academic and financial accountability.

Districts wishing to become a District of Innovation must hold at minimum, an academic performance rating of “met standard.” **During the 2015-2016 school year, Terrell County ISD did receive a rating of “met standard.”**

Terrell County ISD’s Innovation Plan will begin in the fall of 2017 and continue until the Spring of 2022.

Terrell County Independent School District

District of Innovation Timeline and Process

Wednesday, January 25, 2017, 3:40 p.m. - TCISD School Library

Initial meeting with TCISD CEIC to discuss preliminary thoughts on District of Innovation Process.

Week of February 6, 2017 – Inform faculty of intent to apply for District of Innovation.

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Special Called Board Meeting for Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. in order review and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation

Regular Board Meeting for Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. in order review and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation

- **Action to Consider:** Board of Trustees to consider approving resolution to become a District of Innovation.
- **Action to Consider:** Board of Trustees to consider approving the members of the District of Innovation Committee

Friday, February 16, 2017 – Post District of Innovation information on the TCISD website

Monday, February 20, 2017 at 3:40 p.m.: TCISD School Library

Initial meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

Monday, February 27, 2017 at 3:45 p.m.: TCISD Conference Room

Meeting to finalize the District of Innovation Plan with the District of Innovation Committee

Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.: TCISD Conference Room

Public Meeting to discuss and present the finalized District of Innovation Plan
The DEIC will be in attendance to vote on the approval of the District of Innovation Plan

Tuesday, February 28, 2017: Target date to email Plan to TEA

March 1 – March 3, 2017 - Window for campus faculty meetings to preview District of Innovation Plan.

March 6 – April 7, 2017 - Post the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days

Wednesday, April 19, 2017: Regular TCISD board meeting in order to consider approving the District of Innovation Plan and 2017-2018 school calendar

- Consider approving the District of Innovation Plan
- Consider approving the 2017-2018 school calendar

Monday, April 24, 2017 - Update all policy changes with TASB

Terrell County Independent School District

The District of Innovation Planning Committee

The Terrell County ISD Local Innovation Committee is comprised of administrators, teachers, staff members, parents and a community member. These members were approved by the Board of Trustees and charged with formulating a plan of action that promotes innovation within the school district, focusing on the academic success of ALL students.

Local Innovation Members

- Amanda Magallan – Superintendent
 - Sam Magallan – District Campus Behavior Coordinator
 - Virginia Garza – District School Counselor
 - Tanna Lowrance – Elementary Teacher
 - Tami Carrasco – Elementary/JH Teacher
 - Christine Johnson – Secondary Teacher
 - Maje Arthur – Special Education Teacher
 - Mary Alice Rodriguez, PEIMS Coordinator
 - Kristy Billings, Parent/Business Office Accounts Receivable
 - Leticia Arredondo – Parent
 - Shelly Cleveland – Community Representative
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The Local Innovation Committee met on the following dates:

- Monday, February 20, 2017
- Monday, February 27, 2017

During the committee meetings, the committee reviewed the options within the TEC Chapter 12A, reviewed the district's goals, reviewed the district's needs assessment and then drafted a plan that was focused on improving the academic success of the students within Terrell County ISD.

Terrell County Independent School District

The District of Innovation Local Plan

Teacher Certifications: **21.003 and TAC Chapter 231**

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.” These certification requirements do not provide a district with the flexibility to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), or Health Science courses. The Texas Education Code sections 21.003, 21.053, 21.044 and 19 TAC Chapter 23, inhibit the development of post high school plans. They also inhibit the improvement of work forces skills. These TEC Codes limit the district’s ability to find qualified applicants.

In the event that Terrell County ISD is unable to hire a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is not certified for a specific content area, the district must submit waiver forms to the Texas Education Agency requesting that a teacher be allowed to teach a subject/grade level outside his/her certification area. This causes problems in communities such as Sanderson, Texas, where there is no draw for applicants to move to the area. Applicants are rare and often times do not have the correct certifications for the positions that are vacant.

Rationale:

The district seeks the ability to establish its own local qualification requirements in lieu of TEC 21.003. This will assist the district with hiring in trades and vocations such as welding, health science, architecture, career and technical studies. This exemption will also provide the district with the flexibility to hire certified teachers outside their content or grade level and place them in classroom where they will positively impact students, without filing Teacher Certification waivers. This exemption provides TCISD with the flexibility to hire professionals with the skills that fit the needs within the district.

Terrell County Independent School District

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when 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.

Innovation Strategy:

The District Superintendent will submit to the Board of Trustees a request for local certification that would allow a certified teacher to teach in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The Superintendent would specify, in writing, the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject/s. Financial situations and/or emergencies creating the need for this type of assignment must also be noted when appropriate.

To promote the CATE/STEM courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements that are set forth in TEC 21.003(a). This exemption will allow TCISD to:

- Consider part-time professionals to teach courses
- Give an opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession
- Increase the number of CATE/STEM courses available
- Offer trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses.

Through this exemption, the district will **not** submit teacher certification waivers, state permit applications or other paperwork currently required by the Texas Education Agency for Teacher Certifications. The district will continue to notify all parents of the inappropriate certified or uncertified teacher who is working for the school district.

Terrell County Independent School District

The District of Innovation Local Plan

Uniform School Start and End Date: TEC 25.811 and 25.0812

Terrell County ISD is seeking exemptions from TEC 25.0811, dictating that schools must not start prior to the 4th Monday in August and TEC 25.0812, requiring that the last day of instruction not be set prior to May 15th. These statute requirements do not take into consideration the needs for the students within specific communities.

Rationale:

Terrell County ISD seeks local control over the start and end dates of a school year. This provides TCISD with the flexibility needed to address the instructional needs of the students while addressing the professional development needs of the district staff. This flexibility would help balance the days of instruction in each semester and align the district's calendar with Midland College and/or the University of Texas of the Permian Basin for dual credit courses. This calendar flexibility would work in conjunction with the new instructional minutes rather than instructional day requirements.

Innovation Strategy:

Terrell County ISD will have the flexibility to start class as early as the third Monday in August, depending on the needs of the district.

Terrell County Independent School District

The District of Innovation Local Plan

Length of School Day:

TEC 25.081 and SAAH 3.8.1, 3.8.2.4

The Texas Education Code 25.081 addresses the length of the instructional day by providing a definition of 420 minutes of instruction to encompass a day of instruction.

Rationale:

Remaining in compliance with the required 75,600 instructional minutes, TCISD is seeking exemption from the 420 minutes of instruction to encompass a day of instruction. With this exemption, Terrell County ISD would have the flexibility to develop a school calendar that meets the needs of the district. It would also allow the district to alter the school day schedule on selected days, whenever locally determined necessary or beneficial to the district. The calendar and adjustments made throughout the year would uphold instructional integrity and would continue to meet the 75,600 instructional minutes required for funding.

This exemption would allow TCISD greater control over scheduling which would lend time for analysis of student data, attending targeted professional development and parent involvement.

Innovation Strategy:

TCISD will ensure that “early release” days are planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar. To the greatest extent possible, all “early release” days would be approved by the Board of Trustees, published, and distributed to stakeholders in advance.

Through this exemption, TCISD will no longer submit waiver day requests to the Texas Education Agency; however, they will continue to present these requests to the Board of Trustees for approval.