

Malone Independent School District

Innovation Plan

2017-2021

Amended June 19, 2018

Amended March 19, 2020



Introduction

What is a District of Innovation? 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. On January 19, 2017, the Malone Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Adopt 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. The Board appointed a District of Innovation District Advisory Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. A public hearing was held on February 16, 2017 to determine if this procedure was a right fit for Malone ISD. The Committee met on February 21, 2017 to discuss and draft the District of Innovation Plan.

District of Innovation Team – updated 2019-2020

Linda Buffe, Superintendent

Leonard Buffe, Athletic Director

~~LaKechia Johnson, Assistant Principal~~

Windy Schwartz, Assistant Principal

Barbara Christian, Assistant Principal

Sara Radke, Library Aide

Sharon Campbell, Elementary Teacher

~~Janice Trompler, Junior High Teacher~~

Michael Mitchell, Parent/JH Teacher

Larry Hancock, Board President

~~Cory Trompler, Parent/ Board Trustee~~

Enereo Pineda, Parent/Board Trustee

~~Larry Wright, Community Member~~

Pat Henley, ~~Parent~~ Community Member

Misty Arnold, Parent/ Paraprofessional

~~Elizabeth Guerrero, Parent/ Paraprofessional~~

Alva Jimenez, Parent/ School Secretary

Innovations

1. School start date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Current Law

Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August.

Proposed

To develop a calendar that fits the needs of the community of Malone.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August.
- b. This start date will provide more educational days prior to state testing.
- c. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- d. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

2. Teacher Evaluation

(DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL) (Ed. Code 21.352)

Current Law

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state issued a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, that is called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Malone ISD teachers are formally evaluated annually.

Proposed

Administrators would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument and/or process that fits the needs and goals of Malone ISD.

- a. Malone ISD will utilize a locally developed teacher evaluation tool.
- b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, and any other relevant best practice.
- c. Teachers will be evaluated in the fall and spring of each school year.
- d. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals.
- e. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Malone ISD.

3. Probationary Contracts

(Ed. Code 21.102)

Current Law

Currently State law states that 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.

Proposed

This time period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to state assessment results and end of year progress testing.

- a. Experienced teachers new to Malone ISD 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 two years from the last date of district employment.
- b. This allows Malone ISD more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.

4. Teacher Contract Days

(TEC 21.401)

Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 184 with no effect on teacher salaries. This somewhat makes an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- a. This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- b. This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with other districts.
- c. This proposal will significantly improve teacher morale.
- d. This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Amendment

The Malone ISD District of Innovation Committee met on May 9, 2018 to discuss and add an amendment in relevance to student transfers, campus planning meetings, T-TESS, class size, and student discipline to the current District of Innovation Plan. The amendment was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 19, 2018.

5. Inter-District Transfers

(Ed. Code 25.036) (FDA Local)

Current Law

Currently, under Texas Education Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed

Malone ISD student transfer policy FDA (Local) requires that all nonresident students who wish to transfer must file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, as well as school rules and regulations of the district. The district is seeking to be exempt from any one-year commitment that might be implied by the provisions of TEC 25.036 when accepting transfer applicants. Students who engage in misbehavior and students who do not attend school for 90% of all classes interferes with our school district's ability to educate our student body in a way that is effective. When students are disruptive and/or excessively absent, time is spent correcting the behavior, or catching those students up, and does not adequately prepare the students who are behaving and want to learn. For these cases, Malone ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment and to allow the district Superintendent to rescind a transfer at any time during the school year.

6. District Advisory Council Statute

(Ed. Code 11.251 b,e; 11.252; 11.253 and 28.004 d)

Current Law

Currently under Texas Education Code 11.252 and 28.004d, a district must hold a minimum of 4 meetings per year for the School Health Advisory Council and the Site-based Decision Making Committee.

Proposed

Malone ISD is a small town with a population of roughly 300 residents. The district has an enrollment of 156 students (PreK-8th grade). Resources are limited for these committees without asking the same people to serve on several committees. In place of the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and the Site-Based Decision Making Committee, Malone ISD will establish a

District Advisory Council (DAC) to meet, review, analyze, and respond to data pertinent to the campus/district. The consolidation of these committees will allow for one council to address the needs of our school. This council will convene a minimum of two times per year. MISD feels this is the best fit for our small district.

7. Removal of Student Achievement from T-TESS

(Ed. 21.353 a 2)

Current Law

The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including the performance of students. In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner.

Proposed

Malone ISD is seeking flexibility within the recommended appraisal process and performance criteria of the Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System (TTESS). We feel that the T-TESS instrument is robust enough without the addition of student achievement/student learning objectives. Administrators will review retention rates, TPRI scores, and STAAR scores to address these areas. Being a small, one campus district allows for ample collaboration to address student needs as well.

8. Kindergarten- Grade 4 Class Size

(Ed. 25.112a-g; 25.113a-b;) (EEB Legal)

Current Law

The current law states: (A) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. Notice of Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade (Ed. Code 25.112 & 25.113) Notice of Class Size. (B) 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 a person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

Proposed

At the beginning of each school year, Malone ISD will meet the suggested student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees. The campus principal will report to the parents of the affected students. The determination of whether to add another teacher to bring the class under the 22:1 mandate will be made by the district administration and this recommendation will be reported to the Board of Trustees. The district seeks this local control to not file a waiver with TEA.

9. Student Discipline- Students Below Grade 3

(Ed. 37.005c)

Current Law

Current policy states that a student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property, the student engages in: i. Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05; ii. Conduct that contains the elements of a violent offense related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.011, 22.02, 22.021; or iii. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of: a. 1. Marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.; 2. A dangerous drug, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483; or 3. An alcoholic beverage.

Proposed

Malone ISD wishes to provide a high quality learning environment for all students. Malone ISD would have the option to place a student in ISS or OSS for “persistent misconduct.” This will be determined by the Campus Behavior Coordinator based on previous documented interventions and office referrals.

Amendment

The Malone ISD District of Innovation Committee met on March 2, 2020 to discuss and add an amendment with regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provision, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commission of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education. The plan amendment was posted on March 3, 2020. The amendment was approved by the Board of Trustees on March 19, 2020.

Texas Education Code §22.004(i) Inhibits the Goals of the Local Innovation Plan

TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.

Exemption from Texas Education Code §22.004(i)

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).