

Oglesby ISD

District of Innovation

Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation, which would allow them to obtain flexibilities with certain provisions of the Texas Education code, most of which are available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools. Oglesby ISD is exercising this opportunity of becoming a District of Innovation to obtain more flexibility in order to better meet the unique needs of our district, students and community.

Committee Members:

Jason Jones-Superintendent
David Maass-Principal
Jennifer Thompson-School Board Member
Rebecca Schultz-School Board Member
Shannon Jones-Teacher
Julie Seiler-Teacher
Kristen Hamilton-Teacher
Melissa Wells-Paraprofessional

Timeline:

January 19, 2017-OISD School Board passed resolution to consider becoming a "District of Innovation" and DOI team was appointed by School Board.

January 23, 2017-DOI Team met to establish innovated considerations

January 26, 2017-DOI Team met with entire OISD staff to gain input on innovative considerations.

February 9, 2017-OISD School Board held a public hearing to discuss DOI considerations. Following public hearing, the board adopted the DOI plan.

February 10, 2017-DOI plan was posted on the OISD website.

March 16, 2017-OISD School Board unanimously adopted the DOI plan. Commissioner notified.

August 17, 2020-OISD School Board unanimously votes to amend Oglesby ISD DOI, to allow employees access to an alternative health care plan.

August 28, 2020-Amended Oglesby DOI posted on OISD website. Commissioner notified.

Kindergarten-4th grade Class Size (TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL):

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 5th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. TEC 25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

Benefit: Allows OISD the flexibility to address the issue locally, if a class size grows beyond the 22 to 1 ratio, without having to file a waiver with the Commissioner.

School start date (TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Benefit: Allows OISD the flexibility to adjust the start date to equalize the number of days from the first semester to the second semester. Currently, there is an 18-day difference between Semesters. Also, it could allow for significant calendar adjustment flexibility.

Length of School Day (TEC §25.082a) (SAAH 3.8.1)

TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions. SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement. The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.

Benefit: OISD would have local flexibility with school day length without TEA approval. Example: Hosting JH UIL or other event, bad weather day, electrical outage, etc... We would still be required a set amount of minutes through the year but can adjust it locally as needed.

Certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan TEC 21.003(a) 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.

Benefit: OISD would be allowed to locally control an extenuating circumstance where an employee is needed, who may not be certified, but has experience in a needed area. Example: Nurse or Career and Tech.

Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)

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.

Benefit: By extending probationary contracts to 2 years for those employees with 5 to 8 years' experience, this would allow OISD the opportunity to evaluate teacher effectiveness and growth for an additional year which may be needed in some cases. This would be utilized only on an as needed basis.

90% Attendance Rule (TEC 25.092)

State law mandates students may not receive credit for a class unless the student is in attendance 90% of the days the class is offered. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75% and less than 90% and completes required course work, campus administrators may award credit.

Benefit: The 90% rule in most cases is an accurate percent. However, if OISD would like to implement a student work program, off-campus dual credit, service learning opportunities, or other beneficial academic activities for students, under current law, we would need exemption from the 90% rule.

Group Health Benefits for Employees (TEC 22.004)

State law precludes a school district from providing an alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Charter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all Oglesby ISD employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost.

Benefit: Increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs. *(Amended to DOI on August 17, 2020)*