

Atlanta Independent School District



District of Innovation Plan



March 2017 ~ February 2022

Equity and Excellence in Education

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of trustees of the district; and

WHEREAS THE Atlanta Independent School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Atlanta Independent School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A to become a district of innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that after the public hearing the Board of Trustees of Atlanta Independent School District shall appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 5th day of January, 2017, by the Board of Trustees.


Presiding Officer – Joe Steger


Secretary – Charlotte Stanley

INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have: Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;

- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.
Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

PROCESS

On January 5, 2017 the Atlanta Independent School District’s Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On February 2, 2017 the Atlanta ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District Site Based Committee to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration and local business owners. The committee met initially on February 9, 2017 to discuss and develop the plan.

The plan was posted on the District website for 30 days, beginning February 10, 2017, before being presented to, and approved by the District Site Based Committee on March 16, 2017. Atlanta ISD notified the Texas Commissioner of Education of the District’s final District of Innovation Plan and the plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval on March 28, 2017.

TERM

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in March 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through February 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Site Based Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

TIMELINE

Timeline	Activity/Task	Action
January 5, 2017	Board of Trustees passes Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan	Complete
February 2, 2017	Board of Trustees holds public hearing / appoints committee to draft plan	Complete
February 9, 2017	Committee meeting to draft / finalize District of Innovation Plan	Complete
February 10, 2017	Post District of Innovation Plan on AISD website	Complete
March 16, 2017	Committee vote on District of Innovation Plan	Complete
March 21, 2017	Notify the Commissioner of Education of Districts intent to submit Plan	Complete
March 28, 2017	Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan	Complete
March 29, 2017	Final District of Innovation Plan submitted to Commissioner of Education	Complete

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Name	Member Category
Sidney Harrist	District Level Administrator
Joey Geletka	District Level Administrator
Nancy Rinehart	High School Administrator
Jay Wylie	Middle School Administrator
Todd Marshall	Elementary School Administrator
Donna Rice	Primary School Administrator
Rebecca Hearn	High School Teacher
David Wommack	High School Teacher
Cherise Wicks	Middle School Teacher
Loree Saffel	Elementary School Teacher
April Britton	Elementary School Teacher
Mary Kutz	Primary School Teacher
Elizabeth Booth	Non Teacher/Elementary
Rae Hammonds	Non Teacher/Primary
Linda Howard	Non Teacher/High School
Marilyn Cobb	District Level Professional
Caren Rumsey	District Level Professional
Hunter Tidwell	Business Member
Craig Hale	Business Member
Shirley Lightfoot	Parent
Kenisha Webster	Parent
Terri Peace	Parent
Stacie Holland	Parent
Susan Rich	Parent
Michelle Caver	Parent
Antwyn Falls Sr.	Parent

EXEMPTIONS

25.0811 UNIFORM SCHOOL START DATE

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates on a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

PROPOSED

Atlanta Independent School District will begin instruction no earlier than the third Monday of August in an effort to create greater flexibility in the school calendar. This flexibility will allow more opportunities to:

- schedule timely and meaningful staff development.
- provide additional days of instruction prior to state assessment.
- improve balance between the number of instructional days in Semester 1 and Semester 2.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

The District Site Based Committee will meet annually to develop a district instructional calendar that meets the needs of district and community stakeholders.

21.102 Probationary Contract

Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

PROPOSED

Experienced teachers and counselors new to Atlanta Independent School District that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the last date of district employment. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will allow time to fully determine a staff member's effectiveness.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's performance. In determining an employee who will receive a second year probationary contract, the district will review:

- employees most recent evaluation conducted by AISD
- employees record of attendance
- district staffing patterns and needs

25.001 Inter-District Transfers

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

PROPOSED

Atlanta ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space, staffing, 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, rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Atlanta ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

Nonresident students who have been accepted as an inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

21.003 Certification

TEC 21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, education diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. TEC 21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

PROPOSED

In order to best serve Atlanta ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. Exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part time professionals to teach courses, allow industry professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology, and assist in staffing dual credit course offerings. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon local review of experience, education and credentials. Exemptions to this statute do not apply to special education and bilingual teachers.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

- The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.
- An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be considered at-will.