

# Evant Independent School District

## Local Innovation Plan

### Background

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code by becoming a designated District of Innovation. On Monday, January 16, 2017, during the regularly scheduled board meeting, the Evant ISD Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution to consider developing a Local Innovation Plan. The board of trustees appointed a Local Innovation Committee to research, discuss and develop the Local Innovation Plan.

The committee met on February 8, 2017 to review, discuss, and develop the innovation plan the plan was posted online for public viewing and feedback on March 9, 2017 and will remained online until April 9, 2017. The Local Board held a public hearing on March 20, 2017 to review the plan and community feedback. The final version of the plan was approved by the Local Innovation Plan committee and referred to the District Advisory Committee final vote. The District Advisory Committee held its meeting on March 8, 2017 and voted to approve the plan with an 18-0 vote. With a majority of committee members voting in the affirmative, the plan moved on for final vote of the Evant ISD Board of Trustees. On April 10, 2017 the Board of Trustees approved the plan with a final vote of 6-0.

### District Advisory Committee

Heather Waldrum, Parent Ashlea Hall, Parent Melanie Locke, Community Member Sharon Myers, Community Member Beverly Marwitz, Business Member Rhonda Chumney, High School Teacher Clarence Dixon, Elementary Teacher Phillip Martin, High School Teacher Lisa Lacomb, Paraprofessional	Lynette Vann, Paraprofessional Jordan Webster, Elementary Teacher Stacia Smith, Elementary Teacher Dusty Mahan, High School Teacher Danny Hemphill, Business Manager Lora Slaughter, School Counselor Brianna Ethridge, Assistant Principal Craig Taylor, High School Principal James Slone, Superintendent of Schools
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### Evant ISD Board of Trustees

Ricky Bates, President Mike Perryman, Vice-President Sheila Williams, Secretary Mary Ann Davison, Member	Shelly O'Briant, Member Donald Young, Member Matt Nixon, Member
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### Texas Education Code Exemptions

District staff in conjunction with the Local Innovation Committee reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determine which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the educational opportunities of the students who attend Evant ISD.

I. **Uniform Start Date (TEC §25.0811)**

State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless they are year-round districts.

Rationale for Exemption

The flexibility of the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the need of the students, the school, and the community. In addition, this flexibility allows the district to better align its starting date to accommodate the start date of colleges in which the district uses for dual credit courses. Another benefit of exempting this restriction is it allows the school to look at starting classes as a short week which can ease the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help to better balance the amount of days in each semester.

II. **Length of School Day (TEC §25.081)**

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Rationale for Exemption

Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Evant ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year.

Exempting completely from the 420-minute requirement would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling (above and beyond the 6-day maximum as needed) without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements. This would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development.

Evant ISD does not have any intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, "early release" days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

III. **Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)**

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Rationale for Exemption

With the passage of §25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision.

IV. **Current Law** {Teacher Certification—TEC 21.003, DK (Legal, Local)}

Under current law, a district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency when a district is unable to locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside their certification. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

**Rationale**

In order to best serve Evant ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. This will allow greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools, and provide more options when assigning current certified staff members to grade level and subject areas of instruction.

The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses as well as allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology and other areas. It would also assist in staffing high need and demand areas such as STEM and Dual-Credit. Out-of-state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials. Often experienced certified teachers are available with expertise for courses outside their certification due to previous education, background and/or experience.

Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in regards to class offerings.

**Term and Implementation**

The term for this plan is for five years unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event Evant ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee and follow all procedures for amending this plan.

This innovation plan and specific implementation of the plan will be developed by the appropriate campuses and principals. Adjustments to Evant ISD Board Policy and other district policies will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees.