

# **Paris ISD**

## **District of Innovation Plan**



**March 2022 through March 2027**

## **Introduction**

District of Innovation status would give Texas school districts more flexibility in exchange for exemption from state regulations. Interested districts would create an innovation plan outlining what they would seek in terms of flexibility and exemptions. It will empower a district to innovate and plan differently – to create and implement transformative processes.

## **Who is eligible?**

Any district who has an academic accountability rating of “Met Standard.”

## **What is the process for becoming a District of Innovation?**

The steps include: 1) the Board passes a resolution to initiate the process, 2) a public hearing is held at a Board meeting, 3) a committee is formed to write an innovation plan, 4) an innovation plan is developed, 5) the plan is posted online for 30 days, 6) the District-wide Advisory Committee holds a public meeting and the DWAC approves the plan by a majority, 7) the Board approves the plan by two-thirds majority, and 8) the Commissioner is notified.

## **How long does an innovation plan stay in effect?**

The plan may have a term of up to five years, and it may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of DWAC and the board of trustees in the same manner required for initial adoption. Paris ISD will review every biennium to consider new legislation.

## **Are the rules firmly established for the long term or could they potentially change over time?**

Because this is a new concept, nothing is set in stone. There is no guarantee that the rules would not change in the future and there is no way to predict if districts that already have been designated would be grandfathered in. If rules are changed in the future, Paris ISD will follow all requirements of the Texas Education Code.

HB 1842, of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session,  
allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation.

Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations  
that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

### **Paris ISD Mission Statement**

**The mission of Paris ISD is to provide a quality education  
to a diverse student population, enabling each to achieve full potential and become a  
productive, responsible citizen.**

### **District Goals**

- 1. Will have a learning environment that challenges and provides opportunity for all students to succeed.**
  - A. Recruit and retain the most effective people by rewarding excellence and providing opportunities for continual growth.**
  - B. Remain an academically high performing, leading and innovative school district that produces college and career-ready graduates capable of critical thinking and achievement.**
  - C. Maintain a safe and secure environment for our students, staff and community.**
- 2. Continue to be fiscally responsible and financially stable.**
  - A. Be a leader in education by providing outstanding facilities while remaining good stewards of our finances and resources.**
  - B. Will continue to grow through competitive compensation to attract top educators and results-oriented employees who strive to increase student achievement.**
- 3. Continue building positive relationships with our community, media and families of the district.**
  - A. Actively engage and partner with parents in the educational experience.**
  - B. Enhance educational excellence and workforce development through collaboration with community partners.**
  - C. Promote awareness and support of PISD's vision to be a premier school district.**

**Paris ISD District of Innovation Team (DIT)**

<b>Paul Jones</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>
<b>Althea Dixon</b>	<b>Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability</b>
<b>Gary Preston</b>	<b>Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Student Services</b>
<b>Clifton Fendley</b>	<b>Board Member, Paris ISD</b>
<b>Cynthia Jackson</b>	<b>DWAC Member</b>
<b>Vickie England</b>	<b>DWAC Member</b>
<b>Renee Keeling</b>	<b>DWAC Member</b>
<b>Madison McDowell</b>	<b>DWAC Member</b>
<b>Eva Williams</b>	<b>Director, Lamar County Head Start</b>
<b>Sheila Ensey</b>	<b>Principal, Givens</b>
<b>Kim Donnan</b>	<b>Principal, Aikin Elementary</b>
<b>Renee Elmore</b>	<b>Principal, Justiss Elementary</b>
<b>Brock Blassingame</b>	<b>Principal, Crockett Intermediate School</b>
<b>Kristi Callihan</b>	<b>Principal, Paris Junior High</b>
<b>Stephen Long</b>	<b>Principal, Travis High School</b>
<b>Chris Vaughn</b>	<b>Principal, Paris High School</b>
<b>Karol Ackley</b>	<b>Director, Federal and State Programs</b>
<b>Jerrica Liggins</b>	<b>Director, Secondary Education</b>
<b>Jennifer Ray</b>	<b>Director, Elementary Education/GT</b>
<b>Lydia Fitzgerald</b>	<b>Community Representative/Parent</b>
<b>Andrea Gillem</b>	<b>Community Representative/Parent</b>
<b>Audrey Mathieu</b>	<b>Community Representative/Parent</b>

Paris ISD's Board of Trustees adopted the above resolution and held a public hearing at its meeting on October 17, 2016. The Board of Trustees appointed a 21 member committee, called the District Innovation Team (DIT), which was comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders, as set forth in the chart above. The plan below is proposed by the DIT. It will be posted on the District's website for 30 days.

Paris ISD's Comprehensive Education Program is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision Statement and the District's Goals. The Board recognizes that for students to succeed in today's world, school must go beyond the traditional classroom environment to provide a well-rounded educational experience for our students. Because Paris ISD is located in a very rural area, the Board acknowledges the need for flexibility for our district in finding highly qualified personnel.

#### **A. District Priorities**

##### **1. Will have a learning environment that challenges and provides opportunity for all students to succeed.**

**A. Recruit and retain the most effective people by rewarding excellence and providing opportunities for continual growth.**

**B. Remain an academically high performing, leading and innovative school district that produces college and career-ready graduates capable of critical thinking and achievement.**

##### **3. Continue building positive relationships with our community, media and families of the district.**

**B. Enhance educational excellence and workforce development through collaboration with community partners**

#### **B. District Plan**

- **Promote Innovative Curriculum**
- **Promote Innovative Instructional Material**
- **Promote Innovative Ideas Regarding Community participation**
- **Modify the School Year**

The District needs local flexibility for the elements presented above to improve student outcomes on college and career readiness, personalized learning, social and emotional learning, to collaborate on support systems that will benefit students and strengthen community partnerships.

Two key priorities identified by Paris ISD as critical to achievement of the District Vision

and Goals are the expansion of the CTE program fostered by HB 5 and the construction of our new facilities and the desire to find quality teachers to fill vacant high need positions. Finding highly qualified individuals to fill these positions will maintain our strong AP/Dual Credit, Spanish, Math, and Science programs.

The following are the requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (denoted by TEC section) that inhibit the goals of Paris ISD's innovation plan and from which the district should be exempted, along with the specifics about how such exemptions will be implemented.

## **TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

### Current:

TEC 21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

### Proposed:

Rural, high poverty districts have the hardest time filling positions with quality instructors, especially in subjects where statewide shortages exist. Furthermore, there have been instances when persons meeting the criteria outlined in TEC 21.0003 (a) and TEC 21.055 (related to a School District Teaching Permit) have been denied local certification because they were actively, yet unnecessarily, pursuing an alternative certification. Additionally, highly qualified standards/notifications have been removed from federal requirements under repeal of the ESSA Act.

Paris ISD will be exempt from the requirements of TEC 21.003 and 21.057. In addition, though not an exemption, Paris ISD will no longer take advantage of TEC 21.055, but instead will use a local certification process, as set forth below.



Paris ISD will continue its quest for highly effective educators.

a) In order to best serve Paris ISD students, all decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be handled locally.

b) An individual with certain qualifications who is not certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions including, but not limited to, TEA approved shortage areas such as mathematics, science, Languages Other than English (LOTE), and Career & Technical Education (CTE).

c) Classroom teachers who have exhausted all efforts to become fully certified, and who have consistently received positive formal evaluations from their evaluator may be eligible for local certification.

**d) The campus principal may submit to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified.**

**e) The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the subject/field of study.**

Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:

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- The seal of Paris ISD is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a cross, surrounded by a wreath. The word "PARIS" is prominently displayed in the center. Below it, "ISD" and "EST. 1884" are visible. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "PARIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS DISTRICT".
- i. Professional work experience
  - ii. Formal training and education
  - iii. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration
  - iv. Combination of work experience, training, and education
  - v. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.

f) Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

g) When possible, lesson plans for the uncertified teacher will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field.

**h) An employee working under local certification will receive a one year renewable employment agreement (not a Chapter 21 contract), but will be compensated the same as a certified teacher.**

i) Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.

j) An employee working under local certification will qualify for a subsequent employment agreement if they demonstrate the following: a) reasonable effort to become certified, and b)

meet all PISD requirements for contract renewal.

k) A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.

l) An employee working under a local certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.

m) An employee working under a local certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

## **TEACHER CONTRACTS**

### **Current:**

TEC 21.401 states that a contract between the district and an educator must be for a minimum of ten months of service. An educator employed under a ten-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. The Commissioner may reduce the number of days of service, but such a reduction does not reduce an educator's salary.

District calendars are designed to maintain the minimum total of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year. Although flexibility has been allowed for required student attendance, there was no flexibility that impacted teacher contract days.

### **Proposed:**

Paris ISD will be exempt from TEC 21.401 and will decide annually the days of service required for educators. This will allow Paris ISD to better align with the 75,600 minutes required of students while not having an effect on a teacher's salary.

## **PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS**

### **Current:**

TEC 21.102 states for experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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. 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.

### **Proposed:**

Paris ISD will be exempt from TEC 21.102. For experienced teachers, counselors, or



nurses new to the district 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. This flexibility will give campus administration an additional year to evaluate a teacher and/or provide additional assistance to a teacher, if needed.

## **DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR**

### Current:

TEC 37.0012 requires that a person be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC) who is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and implementation of Chapter 37 and allows duties imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator to be performed by the campus behavior coordinator.

### Proposed:

This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the District's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program that provides social and emotional supports to students. It takes the control of the discipline plan out of the principal's control and does not take into consideration situations where discipline is handled by multiple assistant principals in larger districts.

The District will be exempt from TEC 37.0012 and will instead focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his/her responsibility toward the community.

a. Paris ISD will restore control and management of maintaining student discipline to the oversight of the campus principal.

b. The specific duties of the CBC position will be assigned at the district level; the duties may be divided and/or delegated to assistant principals as needed. Examples: parent notification of disciplinary action, notice of law enforcement action, restraint reports, corporal punishment, video recordings, etc.

By obtaining exemption from TEC 37.0012, the District will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while fostering the connection between actions and consequences. Allowing multiple district personnel to administer discipline will ensure each student is getting individualized attention to develop discipline plans, contracts, and to monitor progress effectively.

## **School Start Date**

### Current:

TEC 25.0811 states that students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule, however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even beginning as early as the 2nd Monday. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, without exceptions.

### Proposed:

Paris ISD will be exempt from TEC 25.0811, which will give it the freedom to develop a calendar that better fits the needs of the community should the committee choose. Having greater flexibility in this area will allow the District Committee to better balance the first and second semesters and provide more instructional days prior to state testing. Calendar flexibility also allows for improvement of active learning through better pacing and delivery of instruction before and after the winter break. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness.

## **CLASS SIZE WAIVER**

### Current:

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose. TEC 25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases due to high mobility within Paris ISD, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.

### Proposed:

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when only one or two more students are

added. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom, which influence the learning environment.

a. Paris ISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.

b. In the event a K-4th core classroom reaches 24:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.

c. When a class exceeds 24:1, Paris ISD will work with the campus level principals to develop a plan of action for support for the classroom teacher.

d. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

e. This gives Paris ISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.

### **25.036 Interdistrict Transfers**

#### Current:

Under Texas Education Code 25.036, 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.

Paris 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 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, 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 a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Paris ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

Proposed:

Nonresident students who have been accepted as interdistrict 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.

### **§37.105 Unauthorized Persons: Refusal of Entry, Ejection, Identification**

Current:

Currently, a district must maintain a record of each verbal warning issued under Section 37.105 (a)(2)(A), including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of issuance. At the time a person is refused entry to or ejected from a school district's property under Section 37.105, the district must provide the person a written information explaining how to appeal. Each school board must adopt a policy that uses the district's existing grievance process to permit a person ejected or denied entry to address the Board of Trustees in person within 90 days of the commencement of the appeal, unless the appeal is granted sooner.

Texas Education Code section 37.105 includes a process for ejecting or denying entry to a visitor who presents a substantial risk of harm or behaves in a manner inappropriate for the school setting.

To better ensure the safety and security of students and staff in Paris ISD, we propose that the District not be required to maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from district property/facilities, nor be required to provide written information explaining the appeal process to those who have been refused entry to district property/facilities or removed from district property/facilities. The District currently attempts to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities. Should an exemption from TEC

§37.105 be granted, the District shall continue to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities in situations where the administrator on site feels it is reasonable and safe to do so.

Proposed:

Campus and District administrators, as well as school resource officers and District police officers if applicable, may refuse to allow a person to enter or may eject a person from property under the District's control in accordance with law.

An appeal notice must be filed with the Superintendent, in writing, and submitted to the Administration Office for review.

