

# Olfen Independent School District



## District of Innovation Plan



By way of invoking H.B. 1842 (84<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature), Olfen ISD has developed a locally adopted Innovation Plan utilizing the flexibility granted under Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code (TEC). The purpose of this locally adopted Innovation Plan is to exempt and/or achieve flexibility for the district from sections of the TEC that inhibit the district's goals and objectives.

Olfen ISD's Innovation Plan will officially become effective pending the completion of all required steps outlined in TEC Chapter 12A Districts of Innovation. The date an official vote in favor of adoption by the Olfen ISD's Board of Trustees will serve as the plans commencement date. The term for Olfen's Innovation Plan will be five years from the school board's vote to adopt the plan.\*

\* Sec. 12A.007. AMENDMENT, RESCISSION, OR RENEWAL OF LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN. A local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee established under Section [11.251](#), or a comparable committee if the district is exempt from that section, and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption of a local innovation plan under Section [12A.005](#).

### Vision

Be an Educational Haven where all students may be successful learners.

### Mission

Olfen ISD believes that all children can learn. We are committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all students since children are our greatest natural resource and our future. Our children will be provided a positive and challenging environment which fosters self-motivated, responsible, life-long learners. Education at Olfen ISD is a partnership accomplished through the dedicated teamwork of parents, students, community and church members, and the staff.

### Goals & Objectives

The following five goals have been established in order to fulfill the districts potential to accomplish the designated Mission and Vision:

**Goal 1:** All students will fulfill their maximum learning potential.

**Goal 2:** Technology will continually be upgraded and integrated into classrooms and lessons.

**Goal 3:** Parents/Guardians will be afforded the opportunity to be full partners in the education of their children.

**Goal 4:** Promote a caring Family-like environment that will result in a safe drug-free environment where learning is maximized.

**Goal 5:** Retain and/or recruit quality personnel that mirror the values of the Olfen community and ISD's Mission and Vision

## Timeline of Events

Event/Activity	Organization/Group	Date Conducted
District of Innovation Status Discussion	Board of Trustees	10/11/2016
District of Innovation Board Resolution	Board of Trustees	11/08/2016
District of Innovation Public Hearing Innovation Committee Established	Board of Trustees & School Community	11/17/2016
District of Innovation Committee Meeting	District of Innovation Committee	12/16/2016
District of Innovation Committee Public Hearing to approve version for website	District of Innovation Committee	01/13/2017
District of Innovation Plan posted on school website and Commissioner informed	District Superintendent	01/13/2017
School Board vote to adopt plan	Board of Trustees	02/14/2017

## District of Innovation Committee

District/School Community Position	Name	Signature
Superintendent	Gabriel Zamora	
Office Manager	Brenda Blake	
Teacher	Sherril Lazarus	
Teacher	Kassi Bird	
Teacher	Cristina Gentry	
Teacher	Connie Eisenbach	
Teacher	Debbie Schroeder	
Teacher	Tim Parks	
Teacher	Laura Parks	
Library	Darla Williams	
Cafeteria	Linda Hearne	
Parent	Debbie Fisher	

## Proposed/Adopted Innovations

The information that follows on the following pages designates the Texas Education Code from which Olfen ISD seeks flexibility or exemption, each is followed by the Innovation/Rationale:

## **1. Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff (TEC 21.402)**

### **Summary of TEC:**

Currently education code establishes formulas which are utilized to determine minimum monthly salary based on years of experience for the following professional staff: classroom teacher, full-time speech pathologist, full-time librarian, full-time school counselor, full-time school nurse.

### **Innovation/Rationale:**

By exempting itself from the Minimum Salary Schedule, Olfen ISD hopes to entice retired professional educators seeking reemployment with a school district at a negotiated rate. By making it possible for retirees to agree to a salary lower than the state's 20 year experience rate, a scenario which may be mutually beneficial to all parties is created. It is not the intent of Olfen ISD to pay its professional staff less than the minimum salary scale. However, the Olfen Board of Trustees reserves the right to locally adopt a salary schedule it deems is in the districts best interest.

## **2. Educator Contract Days (TEC 21.401)**

### **Summary of TEC:**

As it stands, educator contracts must be for a minimum of 10 months' service during which the educator must provide a minimum 187 days of service.

### **Innovation/Rationale:**

The Olfen ISD Board of Trustees reserve the right to annually determine the total number of days required of its educators. This flexibility allows Olfen which currently operates in a hybrid four day model (4-Day Option) to increase the daily rate of its educators by reducing the number of days required per 10 months of service. This is a tool which may be utilized to attract educators and reward current staff while facing the budget challenges associated with small rural school districts.

## **3. School Start/End Date (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812)**

### **Summary of TEC:**

Currently TEC 25.0811 does not allow school districts to begin instructional days for students before the fourth Monday in August. In addition, TEC 25.0812 mandates schools to schedule the last day of school no earlier than May 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Innovation/Rationale:**

Olfen ISD reserves the right to initiate instructional days prior to the fourth Monday of August and end school prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. This flexibility is an effort to maximize instructional time before state assessment exams and allow greater flexibility in creating the district calendar. Furthermore, beginning instructional days prior to the fourth Monday of August allows the district additional minutes which are crucial to the "4-Day Option" format currently implemented.

#### **4. Return to Probationary Contract (TEC 21.106)**

##### **Summary of TEC:**

Under current education code, a district may in lieu of discharging/or not renewing a teacher employed under continuing or term contract with “written consent of the teacher” return said teacher to a probationary contract. Teachers returned to probationary contract status must serve a new probationary contract period as provided by TEC 21.102.

##### **Innovation/Rationale:**

The Olfen ISD school board reserves the right to return a continuing or term contract teacher back to a probationary contract without the written consent of said teacher. This is a method that might be utilized to grant a reprieve to a teacher who would otherwise face discharge or nonrenewal. This action may only be initiated via a superintendent’s recommendation to the board of trustees, who must in turn act on the matter unanimously.

#### **5. Planning and Preparation Time (TEC 21.404)**

##### **Summary of TEC:**

Education code states that teachers must receive at least 450 minutes of planning/preparation time within each two-week period. Planning and preparation period may not be less than 45 minutes per instructional day.

##### **Innovation/Rationale:**

Due to the nature of our small school district, teachers often undertake additional duties (compensated via stipends) or utilize their planning/preparation time to conduct parent conferences. Teachers performing additional duties compensated by stipends may at times be required to conduct activities during their planning/preparation time. It is not the intent of Olfen ISD to abolish planning/preparation time, instead the district reserves the right to grant the minimum 450 minutes per two week period utilizing the time created by our “4-Day Option” schedule during which teachers may be granted up to an entire day of planning/preparation time.

#### **6. Removal by a Teacher (TEC 37.002)**

##### **Summary of TEC**

A teacher may remove from class a student who has been documented by the teacher to repeatedly interfere with the teacher’s ability to communicate effectively with the students in class. Furthermore, a student whose behavior is unruly, disruptive, or abusive may be referred to the campus behavior coordinator and/or principal. The principal may place the student into another appropriate classroom, into in-school suspension, or into a disciplinary alternative education program.

##### **Innovation/Rationale**

In addition to TEC 37.002 current format, Olfen ISD reserves the right to revoke the transfer status of students whose behavior is cause for removal by a teacher from their classroom. Armed with the

knowledge that this flexibility provides, the Olfen ISD Transfer Committee is more likely to grant second chance opportunities to out of district transfer students whose discipline and attendance record are less than ideal.

## **7. Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003) (TEC 21.005)**

### **Summary of TEC**

Currently school district teachers are only authorized to teach courses in their certified teaching areas. Exceptions to this are contingent upon TEA approving a request for probationary certification.

### **Innovation/Rationale**

As a small rural district, Olfen ISD teachers are often required to teach multiple grade levels sometimes in different subject areas. In order to facilitate the transition of an ever-expanding course load, Olfen ISD reserves the right to locally approve teachers to teach one core subject outside of their current certified area for a period of one school year based on superintendent approval. This arrangement may be extended for an additional year if approved by the board of trustees. Courses considered electives may be approved for up to two years at superintendent's discretion.

# **OLFEN ISD**

## **The Small School with a BIG**

