



**Fannindel ISD
District of Innovation
Plan**

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I. Fannindel ISD as a District of Innovation

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 16, 2017, the Fannindel ISD Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. The Board approved the establishment of a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of staff and community stakeholders to begin the process of developing an Innovation Plan. On February 20, 2017 the Board held a public meeting and made the determination to proceed with the planning process. On March 20, 2017 the Board reviewed the proposed draft of the District of Innovation Plan and posted it on the district's website for 30 days for public input pending final review, edit, approval or rejection by the Board.

II. Comprehensive Educational Program

The Fannindel ISD District of Innovation Plan is founded and aligned to the Board's Mission, Values, Strategic Objectives and Goals for the District.

A. Mission: **"The mission of the Fannindel Independent School District is to educate and empower students for lifelong success."**

The above adopted Mission Statement is used as the foundation for the Fannindel ISD, in partnership with the community and is dedicated to developing lifelong learners and leaders prepared to contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

B. Vision Statement: Participating in Fannindel ISD empowers students to be able to adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with, and contribute to, the global community and to be creative and disciplined in their thinking.

Fannindel graduates will be empowered to:

- Proactively adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives
- Collaborate and contribute to the global community
- Be both creative and disciplined in their thinking

C. History: Fannindel ISD is a consolidated public school district. The consolidated school was the result of a vote of the Ladonia and the Pecan Gap school districts in 1960. Clark School, the previous all black school was part of the Ladonia School District. Clark High School became part of Fannindel in 1966. Clark Elementary, grades 1-8, was integrated in 1967.

Fannindel Independent School District, a 1A school, is based in the small northeast Texas towns of Ladonia and Pecan Gap. Fannindel High School, located in Ladonia, serves grades sixth through twelve. In addition to Ladonia, the district serves the city of Pecan Gap. Fannindel Elementary School, located in Pecan Gap, serves grades Pre-K to five.

The district's name is a portmanteau of Fannin and Delta, the counties in which it is primarily located. The district also includes the northeast portion of Hunt County.

The current enrollment in Fannindel ISD is 156 students. The average class size is about 11 students per teacher, compared to the state average of 15.

The current Superintendent of Fannindel ISD is Jack Ellis.

D. Values: The operation of the District as well as organizational behavior is based upon the four core values below:

Integrity, Respect, Discipline, Work Ethic

E. District Goals:

Fannindel ISD has two major ongoing district goals:

1. Ensure continued improvement in student learning.
2. Ensure efficient use of financial resources.

F. Strategic Objectives: The District Strategic Plan includes the three following objectives:

- Personalized Opportunities: All students will have the opportunity to develop their individual interests and abilities in a safe and innovative environment.
- Exceptional Staff and Facilities: All students will benefit by attracting and retaining excellent staff.
- Strong Support Network: All students will grow through strong community partnerships.

G. Strategies: Establishing a culture of innovation requires flexibility and additional local control in order to achieve our District Mission, Vision, Goals, and Strategic Plan.

- The District needs local flexibility for the elements presented above to improve student outcomes on college and career readiness, personalized learning, character development, social and emotional learning, leadership skills, and workforce ready skills and to enhance professional development opportunities for staff to build leadership capacity and collaborate on support systems that will benefit students. By providing an innovative curriculum and schedules for students, the District will

promote a more authentic and engaging learning environment that is challenging and supports problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and effective communication. This innovative environment will include an emphasis on Fine Arts and Career and Technology programs as well as support for all extra-curricular and academic programs.

- Providing innovative programs by modifying the school day and year will enable the District to provide more time for professional development for staff and parents along with more time for enrichment opportunities for students and support. In addition flexibility in teacher certification will allow us to better use the personnel resources we have to better meet the needs of our students in expanding and providing an innovative curriculum.

III. Texas Education Code exemptions required for the fulfillment of the goals upon adoption by the District of Innovation Plan

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) that “inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan”. Given the comprehensive education program outlined in this plan and the necessity for local control in decision making of the plan elements, Fannindel ISD seeks exemption for all allowable TEC requirements under the HB 1842 statute. Under the statute Fannindel ISD will be developing and implementing a plan for the following:

A. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Credit

In order to provide engaging and challenging learning to all students, the District needs relief from Texas Education Code Section 25.092, which inhibits the goals of the Plan by not allowing the District to issue class credit or a final grade for a class if a student is not in attendance an arbitrary percentage of the time that a class is offered. In other words, the law currently requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on content mastery. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting active learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. One of the overarching goals in the Strategic Plan within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning is to implement tools, resources, and training that support blended and personalized learning for both students and teachers. Blended learning, where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online, is one example where exemption from Section 25.092 will likely foster greater innovation to promote active learning and improve student outcomes. In addition, exemption from this requirement will allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities and will promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities. Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alters existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas

Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216

B. First Day of Instruction

The Fannindel ISD Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of an innovative learning environment, college and career readiness, along with leadership and social and emotional development. Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver 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. Finally, starting the school year earlier for students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school will promote social and emotional learning by giving those students additional time and support to enable them to adjust socially and emotionally to their new campus environments.

C. School Year Calendar

The flexibility to utilize the 75,600-minute yearly requirement without restriction on the number of early release days and the opportunity to utilize the Optional Flexible Year Program (OFYP) will enhance the ability to increase intervention support for those students in need of additional learning time as well as provide support to build capacity in developing an exceptional staff through job-embedded professional development opportunities. Students identified in need of extra time to master skills and develop social and emotional skills will be afforded this additional time beyond the required 75,600-minute yearly requirement. The exemptions could include requirements pursuant to Texas Education Code Sections 25.081, 25.0811, 25.082, 25.083, and 25.084.

Time to collaborate within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in addition to the need for mentoring support is a priority to provide innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and personalization for each student. Early release days will be strategically placed to maximize the professional development support for staff in planning for these interventions and student support.

By modifying the school calendar we will be better able to balance the number of days and instructional minutes in each semester and will be able to have several extra weeks of class time to teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of each course that will be tested in the spring. Since the TEKS are quite extensive in several courses this would allow us to better prepare students and cover the TEKS more extensively and in greater detail before students are tested either by the state assessment system and/or local mid-term and final exams.

D. Teacher Certification for Dual Credit, Career and Technical Education, Arts, and Advanced/Hard to Fill High School Courses

In the event the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the District must submit a request to 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. Flexibility under TEC 21.003 would allow the District the ability to hire qualified instructors without the current paperwork process now required by TEA.

Within the focus area of providing engaging and challenging learning, the Innovation Plan sets forth specific goals under the initiative to improve college and career readiness options. Three of these goals – preparation for post high school programs, improvement of workforce skills, and expansion of dual credit programs- are inhibited by Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.053, 21.044 and 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231 to the extent these laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard to fill, high demand dual credit and career and technical/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such dual credit and career and technical/STEAM course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit, career and technical/STEAM, Fine Arts, and hard to fill content teachers, the District will have the flexibility to hire credentialed/certified personnel in specific content areas in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. For dual credit and hard to fill areas the district will require that teaching candidates have at a minimum a bachelors degree in the field they would be teaching. In CTE areas the district will require instructors to have at least ten years of work experience in their trade or to be licensed or considered a master of that trade. This exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations (such as welding, fine arts, etc.) in career and technical/STEAM courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. This will also apply to content area teachers for hard to fill positions as identified by TEA.

All employees hired under district permit will be considered an at-will employee and subject to the same review and renewal/non-renewal procedures as all other at-will employees of the district. These individuals will receive compensation based upon the state minimum salary scale without the district provided above base stipend paid to certified staff members. The superintendent will determine what step these permit teachers will be placed upon after review of credentials. Unless a teacher has the appropriate teaching certification they will not be hired under a Chapter 21 contract. Additionally, current staff which has expertise in areas under which they have not received a teaching certification may be determined qualified by local administration to teach one course out of their area of certifications if it is so determined by administration that they have the prerequisite skill to teach the course. The assignment would be good for one year, reviewed annually, and can be

renewed or non-renewed at the discretion of the district superintendent upon recommendation by campus administration.

IV. Terms of District of Innovation Plan

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2017-2018 school year and ending at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with statute. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan. Activation of the exemptions from the TEC may require the revision and/or addition of Fannindel ISD local policies. Any exemptions from TEC or amendments to the District of Innovation Plan will be reflected in Policy AF (LOCAL) – INNOVATION DISTRICTS following board action pursuant to law.

V. Strategic Planning/Innovation Process Timeline

January 16, 2017 – Board adopts resolution to pursue District of Innovation process

February 20, 2017 – Board holds a Public hearing to receive community input on whether to proceed with the District of Innovation Plan. If the district proceeds an Innovation Planning Committee will be recommended for approval by the Board. Commissioner will be notified.

March 20, 2017 – Innovation plan is presented to the Board for review. The plan, as reviewed by the Board, will be posted on the district website for public view and responses for thirty days.

April 24, 2017 – The Board will conduct a final review of the District Plan of Innovation and vote to proceed, reject, or amend. If amended the plan will be posted once again for thirty days for review before being brought back to the Board for the Board to either accept or reject. Commissioner will be notified if approved by the Board.

VI. Fannindel ISD District of Innovation Planning Committee

Administration:

Drew Thomas
Marshall Moore

Central Office:

Jack Ellis
Discha Threlkeld

Teachers:

Cindy Derrick
Jeanette Pevey
Tiffany Richards

Community:

*Karen Pickard
Wanda White
Pat Bellinowski*

Special Programs:

*Jana Stancil
Phillip Burnett*

Paraprofessional:

Erik Pevey

School Board Member:

Gwen Beeler

Parents:

*Sheri Howard
Cassie Smith
Tonya Cook
Cindy Franklin*

Students:

*Lyndsey Franklin
Grady Howard*