

Levelland Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Date of Board Approval Here -- February 16, 2017/Updated March 20, 2017 – Update Approval



DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in spring 2015. This bill provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities a school district must adopt a District of Innovation Plan. Districts of Innovation provides opportunities for:

- Greater local control;
- Increased flexibility governing education programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes related to curriculum, graduation requirements, nor academic and financial accountability.

1/12/2017 Adopting Resolution On January 12, 2017 the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to explore the opportunity for Levelland ISD to become a District of Innovation. The Board of Trustees appointed use of the District Advisory Committee (DAC) to develop the plan.

1/23/2017 District Advisory Committee develops a draft of the plan, which includes the innovations agreed upon by the committee members.

1/23/2017 Develop a Plan of Innovation

The DAC will explore and develop a District of Innovation Plan.

1/23/2017 District of Innovation Draft plan posted to the district website for 30 days concluding on February 15, 2017.

2/15/2017 Draft of District of Innovation Plan will be finalized electronically by the members of the DAC prior to the Public Hearing and the board will notify the commissioner of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.

2/16/2017 Public Hearing

On February 16, 2017 the Levelland ISD Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing for public input on the District of Innovation opportunity.

2/16/2017 Board of Trustees Approves District of Innovation with a two-thirds affirmative vote of the membership of the board.

2/17/2017 District Plan of Innovation Posted and Delivered to TEA

The Levelland ISD District Plan of Innovation will be posted on the district website and on the TEA website.

3/20/2017 Updates to Plan

District Plan of Innovation Updated based on TEA feedback for plan

3/13/2017 Board of Trustees Approves Updates to District of Innovation Plan

Board Resolution

INNOVATION DISTRICTS

AF
(EXHIBIT)

RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER DESIGNATION AS 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 Levelland School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

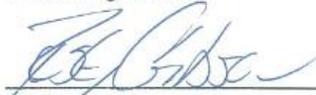
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Levelland School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A to become a District of Innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held within 30 days to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that within 30 days of the public hearing the Board of Trustees of Levelland School District shall appoint an innovation plan committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 12 (date) day of January (month), 2017 (year), by the Board of Trustees.



Presiding Officer



Secretary

District of Innovation Committee Members

On January 12, 2017, the Board of Trustees identified the DAC as the District DOI Committee:

Position	Name
ADMINISTRATOR	BRAD CLANTON
OTHER PROFESSIONAL	JODI BARNES
HIGH SCHOOL	MIRAN FAULKS
MIDDLE SCHOOL	JANIE FRYAR
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	IVY GILBREATH
CAPITOL ELEMENTARY	YVONNE SMITH
SOUTH ELEMENTARY	JESSICA VERGARA
LABC	SOMMER COATS
SPECIAL EDUCATION	MELISSA CLANTON
BUSINESS	KAREN GREEN
COMMUNITY	FRANKIE RUIZ
PARENT #1	STEPHANIE LATHAM
PARENT #2	MICHAEL WIIEST
DISTRICT LEVEL	DONNA PUGH
BOARD DESIGNEE	JEFF NORTHERN

District Vision:

We envision a Levelland ISD graduate as a well-rounded, life-long learner who will work to develop his/her ability and contribute productively to a diverse and democratic society. The graduate will seek balance personally, professionally, and intellectually and will respond positively to the demands of an ever-changing world. The LISD Board, administration, and teachers are committed to challenging each student to reach his/her full potential.

PRIDE

Preparation for college, career readiness and being productive citizens
Respect for the education process, teachers, and discipline
Integrity of LISD shown through consistent actions
Dependability of the educational process at LISD
Effort to establish and promote district pride

District Goals

Goal 1: During this school year, LISD district staff will develop and implement an academic system to support our diverse population.

Goal 2: LISD will utilize technology to enhance instruction and manage relevant data, in addition to linking the district to the home and community.

Goal 3: LISD will effectively communicate with and provide ways for parents to assume a positive role in their children's education.

Goal 4: LISD will monitor attendance, completion and graduation rates to stay above the state and federal requirements.

Goal 5: LISD will recruit and retain highly qualified staff and provide staff development that meets the mission of the district and the needs of the district.

Goal 6: LISD will maintain a safe and healthy environment for all constituents through expectations that students exhibit acceptable conduct in the classroom and during activities where they represent their school.

Term

As outlined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the Innovation Plan is five years. The plan will commence with the adoption at the February 16, 2017, Board of Trustees Regular meeting and conclude February 16, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC) will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications as needed.

INNOVATION PLAN

1. 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.

Innovation Strategies

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 number of days in each semester.

2. Length of School Day (TEC§25.081)

State law currently requires that all school days must be 7 hours 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.

Innovation Strategies

Exemption from the 7 hour/day requirement would allow Levelland 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 7 hour/day 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.

Levelland ISD does not have any intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without a 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. **(however, if the overall 75,600 minute requirement is not reached, funding will be reduced proportionally)**

3. Teacher Certification(TEC§21.003)

State law 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.

Innovation Strategies

The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CTE and STEM-related courses along with other required courses, such as fine arts, needed throughout the district. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a). The exemption will allow the district to consider professionals, those with proven skills, and trade-related professionals to teach courses on a full-time or even part-time basis.

The campus principal shall submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified or non-certified teacher to teach a subject(s) for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Background checks will be conducted and finger prints required. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.

A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. **(although, please note that special education and bilingual teachers must continue to be certified)**

4. Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios (§25.112)

In Kindergarten through fourth grade, the class student-teacher ratio must not exceed 22 to 1. Districts are also required to notify parents of waivers or exceptions submitted to TEA due to class size limits.

Innovation Strategies

At the beginning of each school year, the goal of Levelland ISD will be to meet the suggested student to teacher ratio of 22: 1 per K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. The determination of whether to add another teacher to bring the class under the 22:1 mandate

would be made by the campus administration and superintendent. In some instances, students would benefit from exceeding the ratio to minimize disruption. This recommendation will be reported to the Board of Trustees. A waiver will not be filed with TEA.

5. Probationary Contracts (TEC §21.102(b))

States that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Innovation Strategies

This period of time 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 the availability of end of year classroom and student data. For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Levelland ISD that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Levelland ISD can be one or two years based on the principal recommendation.

6. 90 Percent Attendance Rule (TEC §25.092)

State law mandates a student may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75 percent and less than 90 percent they may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the campus administrator and meets the instructional requirements for the class.

Innovation Strategies

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage. Districts should have the option to set their own requirement. Local districts need the flexibility to set attendance requirements which reflect their specific situations and expectations.

If the Levelland ISD is to be able to implement innovative instructional methods such as virtual classrooms, blended learning, and work-study opportunities, and other educational activities as approved by the administration, it will need an exemption from the 90% "seat time" attendance rule as set forth in §25.092. Relief from the restriction of this rule will allow for flexibility in designing a plan that ensures students are mastering the TEKS required for the course prior to allowing and assigning credit.

7. Removal of Student Achievement from T-TESS (TEC§21.353)

The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including the performance of teachers' students.

Innovation Strategies

We feel that the 2017-2018 timeline for implementing the growth components of the T-TESS instrument are too tight and does not allow for time to ensure an equitable process. Also, administrators already take into account student achievement whether it is retention rates, passing rates, STAAR, Common Assessments, NWEA or other test measures when considering feedback during T-TESS post conference.

The methods suggested for courses where pre and post testing are not ideal will take years to develop and implement successfully. This use of performance objectives or portfolios to determine student performance appears to be subjective and/or arbitrary depending on what subject(s) we were looking at to incorporate student achievement into the T-TESS instrument.

District of Innovation Public Hearing

Date: February 16, 2017
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Levelland ISD Board Room
704 11th Street
Levelland, TX 79336

Adoption of Innovation Plan

LEVELLAND ISD has met all of the process requirements outlined by the TEA and the Commissioner of Education to receive the designation as a District of Innovation. The local Innovation Plan was developed and approved by DAC. In addition, a public hearing was conducted on February 16, 2017. The plan was then posted on the District's website for the required 30 days and approval by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by the DAC Committee on the 23 day of Jan., 2017

Approved by the Levelland ISD Board of Trustees on the 13 day of April, 2017.



FE Shaheen, President



Rusty Gibson, Secretary