

### **Introduction**

The Texas Legislature during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session passed statute (HB 1842) allowing local education agencies the opportunity to become a District of Innovation. As a District of Innovation, a school district may be exempt from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. These exemptions allow a school district to exercise local control and provide greater flexibility to meet the unique needs of the students, staff, and community.

A process for becoming a District of Innovation has been established. This process includes a resolution from the Board of Trustees, establishment of a committee to draft an Innovation Plan, public meetings and notification to the community, and adoption of the Innovation Plan by the Board of Trustees. The approved Local Intervention Plan is then submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The Local Intervention Plan is also posted on the District website for the duration of the plan. A Local Innovation Plan may not exceed a term of five (5) years.

### **Timeline**

December 4, 2018	District Site-Based Committee approved request to begin District of Innovation process.
December 17, 2018	Board of Trustees adopt Resolution to pursue District of Innovation Process Public Hearing conducted concerning District of Innovation Process Committee Appointed to write Innovation Plan
December 18, 2018	Resolution submitted to TEA
January 15, 2019	District Committee approves Innovation Plan
January 16, 2019	Proposed Local Innovation Plan posted on District Website
February 18, 2019	Board of Trustees considers approval of Innovation Plan
February 2019	Innovation Plan submitted to Texas Education Agency

### **Term**

The term of this plan is for five years beginning with the 2019-2020 school year and continuing through the 2023-2024 school year unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees. If the decision is made to amend the Local Innovation Plan, the Board of Trustees will appoint a committee to consider and propose any changes; the public will be notified of the proposed changes and given an opportunity to provide feedback. The Board of Trustees will hold the authority to approve or deny any proposed changes. An amendment does not extend the term of the Innovation Plan.

## **I. First Day of Instruction –Exemption from §TEC 25.8011**

TEC §25.0811 states that “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.”

This statute greatly reduces the flexibility to design the calendar of instructional days to fit the needs of the students, staff, and community.

Proposal: The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the month of August allows the District to better meet the needs of the local area. Benefits of an earlier start include the following.

- Better balance between semesters
- Better fit between dual enrollment opportunities and local instructional days
- More instructional days prior to state mandated testing
- Allowance for high school students and staff to enroll in first summer session college courses
- Shortened first week of school to allow for easier transition from summer to school year
- More professional development provided during the school year

Each year, the district will determine the school start date as a part of the school calendar development. Through the District Site Based Decision Making Committee, staff, parents, business, and community members will have the opportunity to provide input on the creation of the school calendar.

## **II. Inter-district Transfers—Exemption from TEC §25.036**

TEC §25.036 states, “any child...may transfer annually from the child’s school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.” This statute is interpreted to mean a transfer for a period of one school year.

Groesbeck ISD allows transfer students under policy FDA (Local) requiring non-residents who wish to attend school in Groesbeck ISD to file a transfer request each school year. Transfer requests are approved based upon “availability of space and instructional staff and the student’s disciplinary history and attendance records.” Transfer students are expected to follow attendance requirements and to meet discipline standards. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. Students who do not meet attendance and discipline expectations would no longer meet the guidelines for approval as a transfer student and could have their transfer revoked at the end of any grading period. The specific guidelines will be included in the written transfer agreement.