

Flatonia ISD

District of Innovation Plan

February 2020

To Be Effective June 2020 - June 2025



Introduction

House Bill (HB) 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 December 9, 2019, the Flatonia Independent School District District of Innovation Committee presented the Board of Trustees an amended District of Innovation Plan. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

Also on December 9, 2019, the Board appointed a District of Innovation Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders who represent members of the FISD District Site Base Committee that includes a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on November 5, 2019, December 5, 2019, and January 6, 2020 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The District Site Base Committee voted in favor of Flatonia ISD renewing being a District of Innovation on January 6, 2020. On January 13, 2020, the Flatonia ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve a Resolution for FISD to renew as a District of Innovation, the District Innovation Committee as presented, and to initiate consideration to be designated as a District of Innovation under House Bill 1842.

Term

The term of the Plan is for five (5) years, beginning 2020-2021, and ending 2024-2025 SY, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will approve a new committee of volunteers from the district site based committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

Implementation and Policy Expectations

This Local Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which FISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which FISD seeks relief so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. Specific implementation plans will be developed and approved by the DSB Committee in order to fully realize the work of the Innovation Committee.

Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees where appropriate. It is the expectation of the Innovation Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan. Policy development resulting from this Local Innovation Plan will be provided to the Committee for review and feedback before the policies are presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration. After policies resulting from this Plan are adopted, it is the expectation of the Committee that future revisions to these specific policy provisions, if any, will be reviewed and voted on by DSB Committee members prior to Board review to ensure alignment with the work of the Committee.

Any and all changes that arise from the District of Innovation work will be accompanied by a comprehensive communication plan for students, families, and community.

Amendment Process

This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval following procedures established in the Texas Education Code 12.A as listed below.

§102.1313. Amendment, Rescission, or Renewal.

(a) A district innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a majority vote of the district-level committee established under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.251, or a comparable committee if the district is exempt from that section, and a two-thirds majority vote of the board of trustees.

(1) Amendment. An amendment to an approved plan does not change the date of the term of designation as an innovation district. Exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed.

(2) Rescission. A district must notify the Texas Education Agency within five business days of rescission and provide a date at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC, but no later than the start of the following school year.

(3) Renewal. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the district must follow all components outlined in §102.1307 of this title (relating to Adoption of Local Innovation Plan).

(b) The district shall notify the commissioner of education of any actions taken pursuant to subsection (a) of this section along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates.

Flatonia ISD's District of Innovation Committee - November 2019

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|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Valerie Targac | Junior High Teacher |
| Kaylyn Stryk | Secondary Teacher |
| Ashley Grahmann | Curriculum Director |
| Crystal Harris | Elementary Teacher |
| Amanda Lamaza | District Counselor |
| Delia Moeller | Elementary Teacher |
| Christine Mulholland | Secondary Teacher |
| Debbie Kelly | Elementary Teacher |
| Laura Kutac | Elementary Principal |
| Tandy Betak | Secondary Principal |
| Robin Branecky | Director of Federal & State Programs |
| Dr. Andy Reddock | Superintendent |

District of Innovation Timeline

| Date | Action |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| November 5, 2019 | District Site Base and District of Innovation Committee initially started weighing the pros and cons of renewing the District of Innovation. |
| November 5, 2019 | District Site Base creates subgroup to do investigative work. District of Innovation committee was created. |
| December 5, 2019 | District of Innovation Subcommittee met at 3:45 p.m. at the HS Library to review DOI timelines, possible intentions, further meeting dates, to be planned. School Start Date, Length of School Day, Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator, Teacher Certification, and Transfer Policy would be addressed. (No need to sign petition, DOI Subcommittee will take to School Board for Resolution.) |
| November 28, 2019 & December 5, 2019 | Notice of Public Hearing for District of Innovation renewal ran in <i>The Flatonia Argus</i> . |
| December 9, 2019 | School Board appoints committee to develop plan; Public Hearing |
| December 10, 2019 | District of Innovation Plan posted on Flatonia ISD's website; Notice was sent to the Commissioner of Intention to Vote on Proposed revised and to renew Flatonia ISD as a District of Innovation. |
| January 20, 2020 | District Site Base reconvenes to discuss and give input to Flatonia ISD's District of Innovation Plan. |
| February 10, 2020 | The Flatonia ISD Board of Trustees will formally vote on approved Flatonia ISD District of Innovation Plan |
| February 11, 2020 | Upon Board approval, the plan is submitted to TEA and Commissioner. |

Innovations

Flatonia ISD is seeking flexibility in five areas:

1. School Calendar (TEC §25.0811)

Currently:

State law states that school districts cannot start any earlier than the Fourth Monday in August.

Rationale for Exemption:

Starting school earlier than the fourth Monday in August will allow teachers and staff additional professional development days during the school year to vertically align curriculum, assess student performance, and develop targeted instruction plans based on individual students' needs. By starting earlier in the month of August, we can have more balanced semesters, while working with our community needs. Furthermore, this will also allow time for our students to have breaks within the school year to rejuvenate and prepare for state-mandated tests.

Proposed Implementation:

- Students will begin no earlier than the second Monday of August.
- Faculty and staff will begin no earlier than the first Monday of August.

2. Length of School Day (TEC §25.081)

Currently:

State law currently requires that all school days must be at least 420 minutes long in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Rationale for Exemption:

Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Flatonia ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it is 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 420-minute 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 may cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements. This would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days in the calendar to allow teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development.

Proposed Implementation:

- Flatonia ISD does not have any intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis or without 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.

**3. Campus Behavior Coordinator - Student Discipline Provisions
(FO LEGAL & LOCAL)
(TEC §37.0012)**

Currently:

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Rationale for Exemption:

This exemption allowing FISD to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator will free the district from this particular legislative requirement that was put into place as a solution to a non-existent problem in FISD. Campus principals and assistant principals already serve in this capacity and a bureaucratic requirement to designate someone for this position is not necessary.

Proposed Implementation:

- Campus principals and assistant principal(s) will be designated as campus behavior coordinators

4. Inter-District Transfers
(FDA LOCAL)
(TEC §25.036)

Currently:

Under TEC 25.036, a District may choose to accept, as transfers, students who do not reside within the boundaries of the FISD School District. However, TEC 25.036 requires that the length of the transfer period must be the entirety of one school year.

Proposed Implementation:

- Allow FISD to revoke transfer agreements at any time that a student is not meeting the terms of the transfer agreement.
 - A. Flatonia ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (LOCAL), requiring nonresident students to file a transfer application each school year. In considering transfer requests, the availability of space, instructional staff, the student's disciplinary history, academic performance, mandatory state testing results, and attendance are evaluated prior to granting a transfer.
 - B. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time if the student has any of the following issues:
 - 1. Poor attendance
 - 2. Disciplinary behavior that results in suspension, expulsion, or DAEP

5. Teacher Certification

(DBA LEGAL, LOCAL, DK LEGAL, LOCAL)

(TEC §21.053) (TEC §21.003) (TEC §21.057)

Currently:

TEC §21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by SubchapterB. TEC §21.0583 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the district before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the district from paying an educator for teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certification at the time. TEC §21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

Rural, high poverty districts have the hardest time filling positions with quality instructors, especially in subjects where statewide shortages exist. 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/local certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEA then approves or denies this request. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district. Furthermore, there have been instances when persons meeting the criteria outlined in TEC§21.057 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 ESSA Act.

Proposed Implementation:

1. Flatonia ISD will continue to recruit for highly effective educators. In order to best serve FISD students, all decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be determined locally.
2. All teachers hired will have at ***minimum*** a baccalaureate degree (except for permitted career and technical subjects).
3. Parental notification of Local Innovative Permits shall not be necessary, nor will a teacher certification waiver, state permit application, notifications

or other paperwork be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.

4. The campus principal will submit to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in which he/she is not certified.
 - a. The principal and teacher will first meet to discuss and address possible concerns for the potential move. Minutes will be recorded and signed by both parties before sending them to the Superintendent.
 - b. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possess that would qualify this individual to teach the subject/field of study.
 - c. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
 - d. When possible, a mentor teacher and/or support system including (mentor teacher(s), a “Go-To” person, and/or administrator) will be assigned and created to aid the teacher with lesson plan development, Year At a Glance, possible and potential problems and pitfalls to avoid, potential professional development, etc.
5. FISD will allow Local Innovative Permits based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.
 - a. An individual with certain qualifications who is not certified as a teacher will 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), Career & Technical Education (CTE), Bilingual Education, etc.
 - i. Teachers who teach in federally funded programs (i.e. Special Education, ESL, Title I) must be certified in the appropriate area as addressed in the program.
 - b. The principal will submit to the superintendent and/or the superintendent’s designee, a request for District Teaching Permit (local certification) outlining all the individual’s credentials/qualifications.
 - c. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 1. Professional work experience
 2. Formal training and education
 3. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration
 4. Combination of work experience, training, and education

5. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.
 6. Enrollment in a training program
- d. The superintendent or his/her designee will then approve the request if it is believed the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and/or experience required of the position and has the potential to be an asset to students.
 - e. An employee working under a Local Innovative Permit will not receive a contract but will work on an at-will basis. At the district's discretion, an Employment Agreement may be utilized.
 - f. Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - g. An employee working under a Local Innovative Permit will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
 - h. An employee working under a Local Innovative Permit will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.
 - i. A Local Innovative Permit will meet the necessary qualification requirements to allow funding for CTE courses.