



# Dalhart ISD

District of Innovation Plan

Approved by District Advisory Committee April 25, 2017

Approved by the DISD Board of Trustees April 25, 2017

## Introduction

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HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in the Spring 2015 and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A. Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will:

- give greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increase freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- empower the district to innovate and to think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

## Process

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On January 25, 2017, DEIC reviewed the guidelines for becoming a District of Innovation. At the February board meeting DEIC presented the Board of Trustees with information about becoming a District of Innovation. Following the February board meeting, the District of Innovation framework was presented to each campus for input. At the March 7 DEIC meeting, a petition was signed to be presented to the Board of Trustees at the March Board meeting. A public hearing was held at the March 21 board meeting. The Board appointed the **District Advisory Committee** (DEIC, Campus and District Administration) to discuss and draft this plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus and district administration. The committee met on March 22 to develop and finalize the plan. The plan was posted on the district website March 23, 2017.

## Term

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The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in May 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through May 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. Any amendment to the Innovation Plan must follow the same process as the plan development. The District Advisory Committee would consider any proposed amendment(/s). Any amendment/s would require the majority approval of the District Advisory Committee, a posting of the proposed change on the district website for 30 days, and a Public Hearing to gather input from all stakeholders. A 2/3 vote by the Board of Trustees would be required for final approval of any amendment(/s).

# Timeline

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DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE	
January 25, 2017	DEIC meets and discusses District of Innovation
February 21, 2017	Present District of Innovation to Board
March 7, 2017	DEIC signs petition to become DOI
Before March 21, 2017	Meet with each campus to get input from staff
March 21, 2017	Board meeting: Present Petition to Board of Trustees Present findings from staff Public hearing Board either approves or denies pursuing DOI If approved, then appoint committee to develop plan.
March 22, 2017	Committee Meets to write plan
March 23, 2017	Post Plan on Website Notify Commissioner
April 25, 2017	Public meeting and Vote of District Committee to approve plan.
April 25, 2017	Board approves plan

## District Advisory Committee

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Renee Wilkerson	XIT
Lida Trusler	DHS
Sandra Richmond	DHS
Kira Satterfield	DHS
Deborah Dunham	DJHS
Jordan Evans	DJHS
Shannon Wilson	DJHS
Dona Smith	DIS
Krisa Smith	DIS
Veronica Boatman	DIS
Lauren Nevils	DES
Leslie Arnold	DES
Bethanne Ballew	DES
Susan Bailey	Parent
Carol Lathem	Parent
Reynaldo Encinias	Business
Angela Lusk	Business
Rebecca Amyx	Community
Alice Thetford	Community
John Massey	Superintendent
Sarah Nutter	Director Student Services
Thad Lasater	Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Douglas	DHS
Shannon Marshall	DJHS
Misty Heiskell	DIS
Claudia Montoya	DES

## Proposed Exemptions:

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### **SCHOOL START DATE**

*(EB LEGAL) (Texas Education Code 25.0811)*

#### Current Law

*25.0811 - Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August.*

#### Proposed

- A. Dalhart ISD will determine on an annual basis the first day of instruction of the first semester, not to precede the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in August of any given year.
- B. The annual calendar will be submitted by the DEIC and approved by the Board of Trustees – in accordance with district policy, procedure and practice.

## **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY**

*(EC LEGAL) (Texas Education Code 25.082)*

### Current Law

*25.082- State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculation and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.*

### Proposed

- The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus.
- This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
- This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
- 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/distributed to district stakeholders in advance of the school year. The district would not schedule early release days under this exemption that were shorter than 240 minutes (4 hours).

**CLASS SIZE WAIVERS K-4**

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

Current Law

*Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.*

Proposed

- a. DISD will continue to make every effort to begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a 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. Note: DISD will continue to ensure that the District Student /Teacher ratio does not exceed 20:1 (TEC 21.111)
- b. Once the student to teacher ratios in core classrooms of a single grade level reach 23:1 for 30 consecutive days, the district will begin the process of pursuing an additional teacher.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

**CERTIFICATION**  
**(DK LEGAL) (TEC 21.003)**

Current Law

*21.003- 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 Subchapter B. TEC21.057 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.*

Proposed

Dalhart ISD will always strive to hire certified teachers, however the occasion may arise which requires the district to fill CTE positions with non-certified professionals. An exemption from teacher certification requirements would enable greater flexibility in staffing these positions. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology and also assist in staffing high need CTE and dual credit course offerings. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Often there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines

- a) The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject and/or grade level out of their field for the maximum of one school year. The need will be evaluated annually, and the principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach the subject.
- b) Out-of-State certified teachers can be considered for positions upon local review of experience, education and credentials. Teachers will have up to two years to acquire their Texas certification. Failure to complete certification will result in non-renewal of their contract.
- c) An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course. An individual may hold a teaching certification in another state for core areas or Career and Technology. An individual may have background, experience, skills or work related/ industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area. The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.
- d) The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.