

Shepherd ISD

District of Innovation Plan



Amended February 2018

District of Innovation Plan

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Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, during Regular Session 2015, permits eligible Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from many requirements of the Texas Education Code.

The adoption of this plan seeks to increase Shepherd ISD's:

- freedom and flexibility, with accountability, in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community;
- capacity for making educational decisions at the local level, which is the most effective way to support local needs; and
- power to innovate and think differently.

Local Guidelines

The District of Innovation Committee created this plan to provide the increased flexibility needed to enact the District Improvement Plan. Careful consideration was given to the selection of the exemptions contained within this plan.

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. Shepherd ISD intends to follow the Texas Education Code (TEC) in all other areas. Any revisions or changes to the innovation plan that may arise will be brought before the District of Innovation Committee to explore the request. If the committee determines that a revision is needed, the revised innovation plan will then be taken back through the process of being posted on the district's website for at least 30 days before being presented to the School Board for approval.

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC), "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan..." The District Improvement Plan calls for innovative practices and opportunities for our students, and therefore Shepherd ISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

- Uniform School Start Date
- Campus Behavior Coordinator
- Class Size
- Contract Service Days
- Probationary Contract

Timeline

Board Resolution	March 20, 2017
Public Hearing	April 10, 2017
Appoint Innovative Plan Committee	April 10, 2017
Develop Innovation Plan	April 11, 2017
30 Day Public Review (Website Posting)	April 13, 2017 – May 14, 2017
Commissioner of Education is notified of Board's intent to vote on the plan	April 13, 2017
District Improvement Team Public Meeting and Approval	April 19, 2017
Board Action for Final Approval	May 15, 2017
Notification of Approval to TEA Commissioner, Plan is Published	May 16, 2017
District Improvement Team Amendment Approval	February 6, 2018
Board Action for Amendment Approval	February 19, 2018

Term

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning May 15, 2017, and ending May 14, 2022, unless amended, rescinded, or terminated earlier by the Board in accordance with TEC §12A.006, §12A.007, and §12A.008. The Committee will annually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan on or before May 1st of each year of implementation. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Shepherd ISD District of Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency.

Innovations

Uniform School Start Date – Calendar	
Texas Education Code §25.0811	EB(Legal)
<u>Currently</u> Texas Education Code §25.0811 states a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.	
<u>Proposed Innovation</u> TEC Sec. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) modifications to the school day or year It is the intent of Shepherd ISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community. The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets these needs.	
<u>Rationale</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides flexibility for scheduling timely and meaningful professional development opportunities throughout the school year for teachers and staff• Start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students starting a new campus• Starting classes as a short week allows teachers to cover expectations and procedures as well as take care of supplies allowing for the first full week to start out strong	

Campus Behavior Coordinator

Texas Education Code §37.0012

FO(Legal)

Currently

Texas Education Code §37.0012 states a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator.

Proposed Innovation

TEC Sec. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

It is the intent of Shepherd ISD to provide campuses the opportunity to designate more than one campus administrator as campus behavior coordinators.

Rationale

- Allows for collaboration and more administrators providing support
- Allows all administrators to handle discipline on an as needed basis which will decrease the time a student is out of class waiting to be seen
- Allows the administrator who currently has a relationship with the parent and student to make the contact

Class Size

Texas Education Code §25.111 & §25.112

BF(Legal) & EEB(Legal)

Currently

Texas Education Code §25.111 states each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance

Texas Education Code §25.112 states a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class

Proposed Innovation

TEC Sec. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement

It is the intent of Shepherd ISD to maintain small class sizes. However, we do not believe that adding one or two more students always has a negative impact. In fact, many times it is the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment not class size. Shepherd ISD will attempt to keep an average 20:1 ratio and all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event either ratio is exceeded, the superintendent will request a waiver from the Board of Trustees to adjust class size. Parents of the students in the classroom/s affected will be informed.

Rationale

- Allows for local control without a disregard for intent to maintain small classes
- Allows the district to be selective when adding additional staff
- Allows for flexibility for regrouping students
- Prevents students from being moved from class to class leaving behind relationships already formed

Contract Service Days

Texas Education Code §21.401(b)

DC(Legal) & DEA(Legal)

Currently

Texas Education Code §21.401(b) states an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed Innovation

TEC Sec. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) modifications to the school day or year

As an incentive to encourage quality teachers to come to Shepherd ISD, the District Improvement Team will designate zero, one, or two professional development days as vacation days for 10-month contract employees on the school calendar annually.

Therefore, 10-month contract employees will be paid for working 187 days but only required to provide 185, 186, or 187 days of service.

Rationale

- Encourages quality teachers to want to teach at Shepherd ISD
- Provides the opportunity for professional development geared towards paraprofessionals

Probationary Contract

Texas Education Code §21.102(b)

DCA(Legal)

Currently

Texas Education Code §21.102(b) states the probationary period 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 by the district.

Texas Education Code § Sec. 21.101. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under Subchapter B or a nurse.

Proposed Innovation

TEC Sec. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Shepherd ISD will, when deemed necessary, have the option of offering a second one year probationary contract to a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Rationale

In many cases, the one year probationary time period is not sufficient to evaluate teacher (as defined above) effectiveness.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Steve Pierce-Superintendent
Hannah Williams-Curriculum Director
Tommy Hues-Technology Director
Brenda Cronin-Personnel Director
Charlene Lowe-Special Education Director
J.W. Kirkham-Business Manager
Sarah Fulcher-Curriculum Secretary
Jimmy Meekins-HS Principal
James Albano-HS Teacher
Cheryl Rudolph-HS Teacher
Buna Jones-Business Person
Angela Allen-Parent
Pam Ellis-Community Person
Michael Smith-MS Principal
Emily Garcia-MS Teacher
Diedre Richardson-MS Teacher
Tracie Syracuse-Parent
Lori Bullock-Parent
Candace Harper-Community Person
Mary Williams-IS Principal
Mary Vogt-IS Teacher
Nancy Smith-IS Teacher
Amanda Addison-Parent
Rachel Mitchell-Business Person
Vicki Albritton-Community Member
Sandra Meekins-PS Principal
Angelan Ringland-PS Teacher
Brandy Keel-PS Teacher
Shelly Cutaia-Business Person
Stacey Myers-Community Member