

**Texas City**

**District of Innovation Plan**

**Introduction**

House Bill 1842, created and passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in Spring 2015, provides a unique opportunity for Texas public school districts to exempt themselves from some parts of the Texas Education Code. In order to do this, a public school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12 A.

As a District of Innovation, Texas City ISD may be exempted from a number of state statues and will have:

* greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
* increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
* power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

**District of Innovation Process and Timeline**

* April 27, 2016 – District of Innovation presentation with David Anderson at Region IV for district administrators
* Fall 2016 – Review of district plans submitted for District of Innovation
* November 15, 2016 – CAPE meeting to review and discuss District of Innovation Plans developed by districts in the Gulf Coast area of Region IV
* December 13, 2016 – District of Innovation Resolution passed by Texas City ISD Board of Trustees and the District Educational Improvement Committee designated as the local innovation committee
* December 13, 2016 – Public Hearing to discuss purpose for District of Innovation
* December 13, 2016 – DOI process and timeline shared with Trustees members and posted on district website
* January 3-10 2017 – Draft plan developed by DOI subcommittee
* January 12, 2017 – Draft District of Innovation Plan reviewed by TCISD’s District QuEST Committee
* January 14, 2017 – February 14, 2017 – Texas City ISD’s District of Innovation Plan posted on the TCISD website; concurrently, the plan will be submitted to Texas Education Agency Commissioner, Mike Morath
* February 13, 2017 – Public meeting to present the proposed TCISD District of Innovation Plan and approval by District QuEST Committee – 4:00 PM Simpson Educational Support Center Board Room.
* February 14, 2017 – TCISD District of Innovation Plan submitted to TCISD Board of Trustees for approval
* March-April 2017 – Updates of all DOI related local and legal policies will be reviewed, revised and submitted to the Texas City ISD Board of Trustees for approval.

**Term**

Texas City ISD will be recognized as a District of Innovation for a term of five years, renewable within six months of the plan’s expiration date of February 2022. If, within the term of the plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board of Trustees will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. The plan is amendable by a majority vote of the District QuEST Committee and Board of Trustees. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. Texas City ISD will not implement two separate plans at any one time.

**Innovation Plan**

Texas City ISD proposes flexibility and seeks an exemption in the following areas:

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| **Teacher Certification** | |
| Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.044, §21.053, §21.055(d.I), §21.057(A-E), §25.7 | DBA(LEGAL), DBA(LOCAL), DK(LEGAL), DK(LOCAL), DK(EXHIBIT) |
| **Rationale:**   * The district will maintain its current expectation for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. * In the event a certified teacher cannot be hired for a position or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside his/her certification, the district must submit an emergency certification/exception/waiver to TEA. * The passing rate for the state required bilingual certification test is relatively low. * Many of the career pathways set forth by HB 5 require very specialized certification. The current laws limit the District’s ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill, high demand career and technical courses when quality certified teachers are not available. * Proposed TAC Rule (§231.611) states that individuals assigned to deliver content instruction in a special education setting must be certified in special education and the specific content area being taught. The proposed rule change compounds the current critical staffing shortage area of special education teachers. * Math and Science continues to be critical teacher shortage area for TCISD. The elimination of the 24/12 rule in the fall of 2017 will make finding appropriate candidates for these teaching areas extremely difficult. | |
| **Innovation:**  Texas City ISD Human Resources Dept. will submit a written request for approval to fill a teaching position to the Superintendent or designee:   1. For a certified teacher to teach a subject area out of his/her certified field. 2. For a certified teacher to work collaboratively with a bilingual teacher to meet the needs of ELL learners in grades K-6. 3. For a degreed, non-certified professional with career/industry experience to teach a CTE subject within his/her area of expertise. 4. For a certified special education teacher to address the special education needs of students while receiving support from teachers with appropriate content knowledge. 5. TCISD would like to continue to offer contracts to applicants who have 24 hours of course work of a specific subject area – of which 12 hours are upper level course work in the areas of math and science.   The written request will outline the reason for the request and it will document the credentials the recommended teacher possesses which qualify him/her to teach the subject. In addition, the written request must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee for approval prior to recommending to the Board of Trustees.  Exemption from the Texas Education Codes would enrich the applicant pools for English Language Learners, Career Technical Education content areas and Special Education positions . This will enable more students in our ELL Program to obtain high-quality first instruction from master teachers; our secondary students will obtain the educational benefits of CTE course offerings because of the District’s flexibility to hire skilled professionals in certain trades and vocations; and our special needs population will continue to benefit from qualified special education teachers. | |

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| **Teacher Appraisals** | |
| Texas Education Code §21.351 (a)(2), §21.352(a)(2)(B) | DNA(LEGAL), DNA(LOCAL) |
| **Rationale:**  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 that includes the performance of teachers’ students. | |
| **Innovation:**  The Texas City ISD District and Campus QuEST Committees will develop and adopt a local teacher appraisal system that can be used in place of T-TESS. The newly developed instrument will not include a student growth measure, nor will it require annual on-line certification for appraisers. | |

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| **First Day of Instruction** | |
| Texas Education Code §25.0811 | EB(LEGAL) |
| **Rationale:**  Texas Education Code states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday in August. This forces the district into a calendar that has minimal opportunity for teacher professional development, causes shortened grading periods when the first semester ends in December, and provides negligible time for summer school before state mandated assessment re-takes in the summer. | |
| **Innovation:**  To best serve the students in Texas City ISD, we would like the option of starting before the 4th Monday of August. Starting earlier will allow for creative scheduling that allows for more intentional teacher professional development throughout the school year and also allows students to have a schedule that is more conducive to their learning. | |

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| **Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size** | |
| Texas Education Code §25.111-13, §25.112(A-G), §25.113(A-B) | EEB(LEGAL) |
| **Rationale:**  A 22 to 1 student/teacher ratio is required by State law for Kindergarten to 4th grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency, and the district must notify parents of waivers to class size limits. | |
| **Innovation:**  While the district intends to keep a 22:1 ratio for the past several years, a class size waiver to TEA has been required. Based on our observations, we believe that a local solution to class size adjustments should be made without submitting waivers to TEA. Texas City ISD will continuously monitor enrollment at the elementary campuses. In the event a class size exceeds 22:1 ratio a waiver will not be submitted but the Superintendent will provide the Board of Trustees with updated enrollment numbers and action plans. | |

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| **Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator** | |
| Texas Education Code §37.0012 | FO(LEGAL) |
| **Rationale:**  Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator on each campus. This person is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A. | |
| **Innovation:**  Texas City ISD believes in a collaborative approach to discipline, with multiple people providing emotional social support to students, rather than just one person. All campus principals and assistant principals handle student discipline. Each campus administrator will serve as a Campus Behavior Coordinator in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the TCISD Student Code of Conduct. | |

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| **School Day Interruptions** | |
| Texas Education Code §25.083 | EC (LEGAL) |
| **Rationale:**  Currently, districts are required to limit the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring and test preparation to no more than 10% of the school day. Decisions on student instructional time should be based on the needs of the student and not directed by the state. | |
| **Innovation:**  TCISD believes that instructional decisions should made on the campus by staff members who know the needs of individual students. Therefore, we recommend deleting the provision requiring no more than 10% of the school day be spent for tutorials. | |

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| **Charitable Contributions** | |
| Texas Education Code §25.083 | DG (LEGAL) |
| **Rationale:**  There are worthy causes like the TCISD Foundation for the Future that are most easily presented to educators during faculty meetings. Currently, it is expected that separate meetings are scheduled for routine announcements and solicitations from these organizations. It should be a local decision to include these items on faculty meeting agendas. | |
| **Innovation:**  TCISD believes that it should be a district decision to allow solicitation for charitable contributions during a faculty meeting for those items that directly or indirectly benefit those in attendance. | |

**Summary**

Through HB 1842, Texas City ISD will have increased flexibility and local control to make decisions. The TCISD Innovation Plan identifies current State laws from which the district seeks relief in order to best

meet the needs of all stakeholders. Adjustments to Board policy will be reviewed, updated and presented to the TCISD Board of Trustees.

**Texas City ISD District of Innovation Committee:**

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