

2023-2028
DILLEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
District of Innovation Plan

WHAT IS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION?

During the 84th Legislative Session, House Bill 1842 was passed by the Legislature, giving traditional independent schools flexibility through a concept known as “Districts of Innovation” (DOI). Essentially, an innovation plan allows the Dilley Independent School District the ability to exempt themselves from particular requirements of the Texas Education Code, thus gaining greater local control. The innovation plan will address the needs, goals, and values that are unique to the students of the Dilley.

In order to be designated as a “District of Innovation”, the District must comply with two components before approval is granted. First, the District’s most recent academic performance rating must be acceptable and secondly, the District’s financial accountability rating must be acceptable. A DOI designation is granted for five years provided all requirements are met.

TIMELINE

February 21, 2023 Appointment of a Sub-Committee at DAC Meeting

The sub-committee for DOI was determined at this District Advisory Committee Meeting.

February 27, 2023 School Board Informed of Intent to Renew

The school board was notified of the district's intent to renew the district's District of Innovation Plan for 2023-2028.

March 24 and March 28, 2023 Development of the Innovation Plan

A sub-committee of the District Advisory Committee met to discuss and develop the plan.

April 5, 2023 Tentative DOI Plan shared with DAC Prior to Voting

The tentative District of Innovation Plan was shared with the District Advisory Committee for review prior to the April 11th meeting.

April 11, 2023 DAC Votes on Innovation Plan/Public Meeting

The District Advisory Committee voted on the District of Innovation Plan and it passed unanimously.

April 13, 2023 Plan Posted Online

The Dilley ISD Innovation Plan was posted on the school district's website.

May 23, 2023 Board of Trustees Votes on Plan

The Innovation Plan was presented to the School Board and it passed unanimously.

Dilley ISD District Advisory Committee

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO DISD
Emilio Castro	Superintendent
Kelli DuBose	Curriculum Director
Mark Tribett	High School Principal
Margot DeHoyos	Middle School Principal
Benita Gonzalez	Elementary Principal
Amanda Ochoa	ARD Facilitator
Sarah Mitchell	High School Teacher
Rally Ochoa	High School Teacher
Jessica Rodriguez	Middle School Teacher
Jeffery Leonard	Middle School Teacher
Kayla Kerr	Elementary Teacher
Jennifer Kelley	Parent
Melody Carroll	Community Member

Dilley Independent School District District of Innovation Plan

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 11 – School Districts

Texas Education Code 11.251, 11.252, 11.253

<https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-11-251.html>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 11.252>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 11.253>

“Requirements and Configuration of the District/Site Based Management Committee”

Current Status

Site-based decision making is a process for improving the educational outcomes at the campus and district level. Through a collaborative effort of a team of principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives, educational outcomes are reviewed and evaluated to determine goals, strategies, and interventions to ensure improvement in student achievement. The education code and board policy require members to address areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, school organization as well as a host of other responsibilities identified in additional sections of the education code.

Benefit of Exemption

Dilley ISD shall determine the processes and memberships of its site-based management committees. Dilley ISD acknowledges the importance of developing district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment. The district feels that claiming exemption from the specific mandates of these sections is a local issue and not a state mandate. The district also feels that it will provide for greater parental involvement and better informed parents.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 21 - Educators

Texas Education Code 21.003, 21.051, 21.053, & 21.057

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.003>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.051>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.053>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.057>

“State Certification Requirements for Teachers and Other Educators”

Current Status

These provisions of the Texas Education Code Section dictate that all district teachers be certified in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC).

Benefit of Exemption

This will allow Dilley ISD the opportunity to hire nontraditional candidates who bring specific field experience, knowledge, and skills which would provide students with unparalleled learning experiences. It will allow flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts which are more beneficial to our students than what a standard teaching certificate could accomplish. The flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors will expand the opportunity for the dual credit courses outside of the norm. As a rural district, it will allow teachers to teach outside of their field/grade level in situations where vacancies are not filled. Although it is the District’s intent to limit the use of this exemption, the District will always seek to hire certified and highly qualified teachers. All special education and ESL teachers will continue to be SBEC certified. The District will move to establish its own local criteria/qualifications for hard to fill positions. The District will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child’s class.

Local Guidelines:

A. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subjects and/or grade levels out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject.

B. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification of uncertified individuals. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying him/her to teach the subject.

C. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification and will submit approved requests to the Board of Trustees for approval prior to the individual beginning employment.

D. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observation feedback, professional development, instructional resources, and other support.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 21-Educators

Texas Education Code 21.102

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.102>

“Probationary Contract Time Period”

Current Status

For experienced teachers who are new to the District, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Benefit of Exemption

For experienced teachers who are new to the District that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the first day of employment in Dilley ISD. A one-year probationary period is not a sufficient amount of time to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 21 - Educators

Texas Education Code 21.352, 21.3541

<https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-21-352.html>

https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._educ._code_section_21.3541

“T-TESS & T-PESS Appraisal Instrument”

Current Status

In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner or an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section [11.251](#); containing the items described by Sections [21.351](#)(a)(1) and (2); and adopted by the board of trustees.

Benefit of Exemption:

While the district intends to use both the T-TESS and T-PESS, the district would like the option to exercise local control of decisions regarding certain criteria within the appraisal instrument for teachers and administrators.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 25-Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Texas Education Code 25.036

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.036>

“Inter-District Transfers”

Current Status

A district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the District, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Benefit of Exemption

The District would have the option to have a student’s transfer request revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State’s 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Texas Education Code 25.0811

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.0811>

“First Day of Instruction”

Current Status

A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption

Having the flexibility to establish an earlier start date will enable the District to better balance the amount of instructional time available in each semester, providing classroom teachers the opportunity to deliver more equitable learning experiences for students in the fall and spring semesters. It allows for more instructional days prior to state assessment.

Changing the first day of instruction does not alter the University Interscholastic League (UIL) restrictions for the first day of practice for athletic or fine arts programs. The District may not schedule the last day of school prior to May 15.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Texas Education Code, Sec. 25.112 & 25.113

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.112>

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.113>

“Class Size, Notice of Class Size”

Current Status

Each school district must employ a sufficient number of teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. If class limit exemption is granted, written notice will be provided to parents.

Benefit of Exemption

In the event that class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio, in kindergarten-fourth grade, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, the situation may be reviewed by appropriate district and campus personnel and additional assistance may be provided. The Board will be informed of K-4 classes that exceed 22:1 for thirty school days. Additionally, parents will be informed of all efforts relative to class size. This exemption provides DISD local control over class size ratios, without the unnecessary step of seeking a waiver from the Texas Education Agency. It also alleviates the issue of finding quality teachers during the school year. The intent is to maintain a maximum of 24:1 for kindergarten-fourth grades.

Exemption from Original Plan:

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Texas Education Code 45.205

https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._educ._code_section_45.205

“Term of Contract”

Current Status

The depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two year terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Benefit of Exemption

The depository provision allows the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 6-year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive. It alleviates the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing Requests for Proposals. It allows Dilley ISD to continue its strong relations with the only bank in Dilley.

New:

Chapter 25: Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade
Texas Education Code 25.092

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.092>

“90% Attendance Rule”

Current Status:

TEC 25.092 states that except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.

Benefit of Exemption:

To allow flexibility in determining attendance standards locally, Dilley ISD will have the ability to exercise local discretion in awarding credit to students upon successful completion of course objectives.

Relief from TEC 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League rules. This also does not limit or modify a teacher’s right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with TEC 28.214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with TEC 28.20.6.

New:

Chapter 37: Discipline Alternative Education Programs

Texas Education Code 37.008 (a)(3) and 37.008 (a) (7)

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 37.008>

“Logistics and Assignment of Students to DAEP”

Current Status:

Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that, (3) that provides for the students who are assigned to the disciplinary alternative education program to be separated from students who are not assigned to the program; and (7) employ only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B and Chapter 21.

Benefit of Exemption:

The requirement to have DAEP staffed by certified personnel can be impractical, especially in small districts that do not have the personnel. The district has traditionally had very low numbers of students assigned to this program and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and/or a blended model and it is not necessary to have certified teachers on site. The campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certifications, as needed. This exemption would allow Dilley ISD to make a common sense approach and better utilize staff to effectively run the DAEP program and allow students placed in the DAEP to be educated in the same place as ISS (In School Suspension).

New

Chapter 37: Behavior Coordinator

Texas Education Code: 37.0012

<https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-37-0012.html>

“Designated Behavior Coordinator”

Current Status:

TEC 37.0012 requires that a person be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator, who is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and implementation of Chapter 37. The person may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.

Benefit of Exemption:

Dilley ISD will focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavior interventions and supports will encourage the social and emotional development of each student and his/her responsibility toward the community. The District seeks to help students become socially and emotionally intelligent. The district's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional, behavioral and social support to students, rather than just one person. The district will continue to utilize the DISD Student Code of Conduct.

New

Chapter 25: Instructional Minutes

TEC 25.081

[https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.081](https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex.educ.code.section.25.081)

“Length of Instructional Day”

Current Status:

School districts are to provide 75.600 minutes of instruction (which include intermissions and recess). State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes.

Benefit of Exemption:

Dilley ISD requests an exemption from this requirement to allow the flexibility to alter the school day schedule on selected days. This allows for an altered length of school day for early release or late start days, as needed. Early release days will be built into the school calendar prior to the start of the school year.

New

**Chapter 11 and 28: Site-Based Decision Making/ School Health Advisory
TEC 11.251 and 28.004**

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 11.251>

<https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-28-004.html>

“District Site-Based Decision Making Committee and School Health Advisory Committee”

Current Status:

Dilley ISD seeks an exemption from the site based decision making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of these two bodies. SHAC currently must post agendas in advance, record meetings, and post meeting minutes and recordings within 10 days of the meetings. SHAC is also responsible for deciding upon the Health Education Curriculum for the district.

Benefit of Exemption:

The purpose of the combining of these two committees is to create a single group of people. This consolidation of committees will yield a greater opportunity for one team to address a multitude of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year. Many of our staff members are on multiple committees due to the small size of our district. The District will seek feedback regarding health-related curriculum, food service, budget, and other related items as needed. The district will not record the meetings and the agendas and meeting minutes will be made available upon request.

New

Chapter Teacher Employment Contracted Days

TEC 21.401 (a) (b) (c-1)

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.401>

“187 educator calendar days”

Current Status:

A contract between a district and an educator must be for a minimum of ten months of service. An educator employed under a ten-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. If a district anticipates providing less than 180 days of instruction for students during the school year, as indicated by the district’s academic calendar, the district may reduce the number of days of service proportionally. A reduction by the district does not reduce an educator’s salary.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exemption of the required 187 educator calendar days will allow DISD educators to follow a more consistent calendar schedule with the students. With the exception of including professional development days prior to the student’s first day of school.

- a. DISD does not intend to shorten the educator calendar below the number of student school days, plus professional development days needed.
- b. Shortening the educator calendar days does not affect the 10 month educator calendar, nor does it affect the educator or paraprofessional pay scale.
- c. Educator responsibilities and requirements will not change with the exemption of 187 day requirement. Educators will still be responsible for the same duties as they worked 187 days.

New

Chapter 33: School Counselors

TEC 33.006

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 33.006>

“School Counselor General Duties”

Current Status:

The board of trustees adopts a policy regarding that 80 percent of the school counselor’s total work time on duties that are components of a school counseling program under Section 33.005. If you determine that your district cannot meet this requirement, you are to determine the percentage for your district. Our current percentage is 60%. Since we are a small district, we need to have our counselors help administer assessments at times along with other tasks that are not considered counselor duties. Our counselors have to keep logs that track all of their activities which shows at any time what their current percentages are. This is time consuming.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exemption from this statute will allow Dilley ISD to utilize school counselors’ time to best meet the student and district needs without concern as to whether counselors strictly comply with TEC 33.006 (d-h). Furthermore, the exemption will eliminate the administrative burden of responding to requests from the State regarding compliance with the new law and avoid the possibility of extra paperwork for counselors to provide compliance with the law. While Dilley ISD seeks exemption from the statute, the District ensures the counselor will spend the maximum amount of time appropriately performing duties necessary to provide the greatest help for our students and their families.

New

Chapter 21: Staff Development

TEC 21.451

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 21.451>

“Staff Development Requirements”

Current Status:

The staff development provided by a school district to an educator other than the principal, must be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district and designed to improve the education in the district.

Benefit of Exemption:

The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for its instructional and non-instructional staff.

New

Chapter 25: Truancy Prevention Measures

TEC 25.0915

<https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex. educ. code section 25.0915>

“Truancy prevention measures”

Current Status:

The state required truancy prevention measures to be put in place for each district. A behavior improvement plan must be created that is put in place for 45 days or impose school based community service. This is all prior to being referred to truancy court. Our district does not have personnel whose only job is to work with Truancy Cases.

Benefit of Exemption:

Dilley ISD works diligently with our students (and their families) who regularly miss school. The mandates outlined in this statute create burdensome requirements on the District. Dilley ISD will continue its notification processes and continue to assign consequences to truant students. Since the hiring of Social Emotional personnel, this has been an added component to aid in working with our truant students.