



**MELISSA
SCHOOLS**

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed in 2015 in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, partly amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the TEC, providing more flexibility and control in meeting the needs of students and the communities served locally. On August 15, 2022, the Melissa ISD Board of Trustees (Board) adopted a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation. On the same date, the Board held a public hearing to discuss whether the district should develop a local plan designating the district as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection during the hearing, the Board of Trustees charged Deputy Superintendent, Kim Boedeker, to create a committee and formulate a district plan.

On September 28 and October 11, 2022, the committee met to discuss the process and drafted a Local Innovation Plan (Plan). The committee included administration, teaching staff, support staff, and community members. The DOI committee met on November 30, 2022, to approve the plan, which was approved unanimously. The plan was posted on the district website on December 1, 2022, for community feedback.

Their recommendations will be submitted to the Board for consideration on January 9, 2023. The proposed plan, once adopted, will remain in effect for the next five years (2023-2028). The District of Innovation Committee may amend the plan at any time with the school board's approval. The implemented plan supported the mission and vision of the Melissa ISD Board of Trustees. The district will notify the Commissioner of Education following the January board meeting with the intent to file a plan with the Texas Education Agency.

Mission, Vision & Core Values

Vision

Melissa ISD will empower ALL students to reach their utmost potential to achieve excellence and life-long success.

Mission

In Melissa ISD, we share the responsibility of growing a community of learners. This requires action from each stakeholder:

- “The Students will be active partners in their education. They will be engaged, confident individuals who pursue life-long learning. The Students will demonstrate pride in their community and contribute positively to society.
- “The Faculty and Staff will foster the unique development of each child by encouraging independent thought and creativity. Through research, study, and continued education, they will further develop their mastery of their discipline.
- “The Parents will partner with faculty, staff, and students to encourage and support the learning process. This partnership will develop through communication and participation at all grade levels.
- “The Community will support both academic and extracurricular activities. By working together with the schools, they will foster a sense of pride by encouraging and celebrating success.

Core Value Statement

Knowing that we are committed to being child centered, we will act with and instill: integrity, loyalty, honesty, humility, and hope.

Integrity – Ability to last over time.

Loyalty – Not to an individual but to the concept in the best interest of students.

Honesty – Tell the truth in a way that does not hurt or divide.

Humility – Understanding we are fallible and to live with grace and dignity.

Hope – Gift to instill in our students and parents that we can build a brighter tomorrow.

District Goals

1. Provide a high standard of care shaped by the core values of integrity, loyalty, honesty, humility, and hope.
2. Hire quality staff that have a passion for the academic and extracurricular success of our students, and maintain competitive pay that supports a positive culture.

3. Foster quality partnerships with students, parents/guardians, and the community.
4. Build a culture of academic excellence, where students learn the value of knowledge, inquiring, problem-solving, risk-taking, open-mindedness, balance, and social-emotional health.
5. Promote a healthy culture of success and growth through student involvement in extracurricular and cocurricular programs.
6. Maintain a safe and secure environment.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees in October 2021.

District of Innovation Committee Members	
Keith Murphy	Superintendent
Kim Boedeker	Deputy Superintendent
Robert Rich	Deputy Superintendent
Jenny Clark	Executive Director of Special Education
Debi Crawford	Executive Director of HIRE Education and Technology
Walter Perez	Executive Director of Campus Services
Nancy Perdomo	Director of Teaching and Learning/IB
Lindsay Pitts	Director of Assessments and Accountability
Hillary Croissant	Director of Teaching and Learning
Jerry Whorton	Director of Fine Arts
Renee Jones	Coordinator of Innovative Instruction
Emily Chapman	High School Associate Principal
Marcus Eckert	Middle School Principal
Will Daniel	Sixth Grade Center Principal
Precious Bale	Elementary Principal
Krissy Womack	Elementary Principal

District of Innovation Committee Members

Amy Edwards	Elementary Principal
Julie Nally	Elementary Principal
Melinda Keen	Middle School Assistant Principal
Henslie Fournier	Secondary Counselor
Jenni Breaux	Elementary Instructional Coach
Kimberly Wimberly	Elementary Teacher
Rhonda Adamson	Elementary Teacher
Tammy Brand	Elementary Counselor
Tiffany Anderson	Secondary Teacher
Chad Edwards	Middle School Boys Athletics Coordinator
Kyle Brenner	Secondary Tech Theater
Alisa Baker	Elementary Teacher
Amy Klein	Secondary Teacher
Jamie Roubinek	Elementary Teacher
Deadra Courtney	Elementary Aide
Justin Staats	Community Member
Bretta Graham	Community Member
Manual Lopez	Community Member

Innovation Plan

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning June, 2023 and ending June 20, 2028, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with the law. If, within the term of the Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a 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.

STATUTES UNDER CONSIDERATION AT THIS TIME INCLUDE:

Probationary Contracts (Ed. Code 21.102) <i>Relevant Board Policy: DCA LEGAL</i>	
Current Statute:	<p>A person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28,1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract.</p> <p>All teachers that have been teaching in public education at least five of the last eight years prior to being employed by the district must be offered a term contract following one year on a probationary contract.</p> <p>Note: A "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under TEC§21. Subchapter B.</p>
Proposed:	<p>Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired in Melissa ISD, which will allow us to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.</p>

K-4 Class Size (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113) <i>Relevant Board Policy: EEB Legal</i>	
Current Statute:	<p>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 completes a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.</p>

	<p>These waivers are approved by TEA. Along with this 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.</p>
<u>Proposed:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Melissa ISD will continue to follow current practices and keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees. b. In the event a K-4th core classroom reaches 22:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation. c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. <p>This gives Melissa ISD the flexibility of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.</p>

Teacher Certification ([Ed Code 21.003](#)), ([Ed Code 21.0031](#)), ([Ed Code 21.051](#)), ([Ed Code 21.053](#)), ([Ed Code 21.057](#))

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL; DK LEGAL

<u>Current Statute:</u>	<p>TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification.</p>
<u>Proposed:</u>	<p>In order to best serve Melissa ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally including allowing a certified teacher to teach a subject or subjects out of their certified field. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. This innovation has the potential to also enrich</p>

	<p>applicant pools in specialized CTE course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.</p> <p>Possible qualification criteria might include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional work experience. • Formal training/education in content area. • Active/relevant professional industry certification. • A combination of work experience, training, and education. • Demonstration of successful experience working with students. <p><i>This is for all subjects, except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual.</i></p>
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Parent Notification ([Ed Code 21.057](#))

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL; DK LEGAL

<u>Current Statute:</u>	If a district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than thirty consecutive instructional days during the same school year, it shall provide written notice of the assignment to the parents or guardians of each student in that classroom.
<u>Proposed:</u>	Parental notification will be provided if a teacher does not otherwise qualify to teach accordance with Melissa ISD's District of Innovation Plan.

Uniform School Start Date ([Ed. Code 25.0811](#))

Related Board Policy: EB LEGAL

<u>Current Statute:</u>	TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter. Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped
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	because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.
<u>Proposed:</u>	The flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Flexibility to start earlier in August would help our district plan an earlier start date if it was agreed upon in all areas. This flexibility will be implemented beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year.