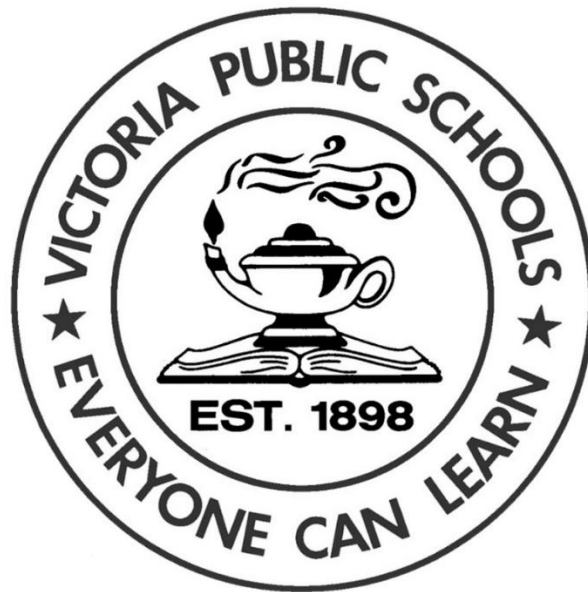


# Victoria

## Independent School District



## Local Innovation Plan 2021-2026

*Amended March 30, 2023*

HB 1842, of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows Texas district to qualify as a District of Innovation. Districts of Innovation can gain local control of certain operations that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

## District of Innovation Overview

The Texas Legislature during the 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill (HB) 1842. HB 1842 provides the opportunity for Texas public schools to be designated as Districts of Innovation.

Victoria ISD was one of the first school districts in Texas to take advantage of a new state law and explore becoming a designated “District of Innovation,” gaining more local control over the educational process in our community. The Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution January 21, 2016, to initiate a multi-step process that would give the district flexibility and the freedom from state mandates in certain areas like school calendars, class sizes, attendance and discipline, and teacher certification. The District of Innovation was adopted on March 24, 2016 and was good for five years, March 2021 marks five years for the VISD 2016-2021 District of Innovation. Therefore, VISD will need to complete the process of creating a District of Innovation Plan for the years 2021- 2026.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will allow a local school district to consider pursuing specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other local district concepts and ideas. HB 1842 allows for a local public-school district to develop a plan which may have greater local control and the ability to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements.

The Districts of Innovation legislation provides for a local public-school district to develop a plan which includes exemptions from many of the state laws that are not applicable to open enrollment school districts (charter schools). Laws that may be exempted include:

- Site-based decision-making processes (to the extent required by state law)
- Uniform school start date
- Minimum minutes of instruction
- Class size ratio
- The 90 percent attendance rule (compulsory attendance still applies)
- Student discipline (code of conduct and restrictions on restraint and seclusion still apply)
- Teacher certification (federal law still applies)
- Teacher contracts
- Teacher benefits, including state minimum salary schedule, duty-free lunch, and planning periods.
- Teacher appraisal system

## **The District of Innovation plan may not include exemptions to the following:**

- Elected boards of trustees.
- Powers and duties of school boards, superintendents, and principals
- PEIMS
- Criminal history record checks and educator misconduct reporting
- Curriculum and graduation requirements
- Bilingual education
- Special education
- Prekindergarten
- Academic accountability
- Financial accountability
- Open meetings
- Public records
- Purchasing under the Texas Local Government Code and conflicts of interest
- Nepotism

## **Districts of Innovation Process:**

- Initiated by a resolution of the board of trustees or a petition signed by the majority of the members of the district-level advisory committee.
- After the resolution or petition the board of trustees shall hold a public hearing to receive input on the district pursuing an innovation plan.
- The Board of Trustees may vote to appoint a committee to develop a plan or decline to pursue the designation as a District of Innovation.
- If the Board of Trustees votes to pursue the development of the innovation plan, a planning committee is to be approved by the board.
- The committee develops the plan which is customized for the local needs of the district and must identify the Texas Education Code provisions from which the District of Innovation should be exempted.
- The committee's plan must be presented to the District Advisory Committee who will hold a public meeting and then will vote on the plan. The plan must receive a majority vote from the District Advisory Committee to be sent to the Board of Trustees for their review and vote.
- The final plan must be posted online for 30 days before the board may vote on the plan.
- The Commissioner of Education does not approve the plan but must be notified by the district and receive a copy of the innovation plan.
- The Board of Trustees must approve the plan with a two-thirds majority vote.
- The local District of Innovation Plan may have a term of five years and may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees in the same manner as the initial plan was approved.

## VISD Timeline for District of Innovation Events:

- **Tuesday, January 5, 2021**
  - Initial meeting with administrative leaders to identify potential District of Innovation Task Force,
  - Review the District of Innovation process and timeline.
  - Identify potential areas for inclusion in the District of Innovation request.
- **Monday, January 11, 2021 – 3:30pm-4:30pm TEAMS**
  - Meet with District Education Committee to discuss proposed DOI process and identify DEC members interested in serving on the DOI Task Force.
- **Friday, January 15, 2021 – 2:00-3:00pm TEAMS**
  - Review Work and get update on resources available from TEA
- **Thursday, January 21, 2021- Regular Board of Trustees meeting through Zoom.**
  - Board of Trustees approval of a resolution to initiate the process of exploring the option of designating Victoria Independent School District as a District of Innovation (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))
  - Public hearing to explain the process of becoming a District of Innovation and to hear from the community (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)
  - Board of Trustees approval to pursue the designation of District of Innovation, and the appointment of a Task Force to develop a plan (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)
- **Friday, January 22, 2021-** Committee Discussion and Review of DOI Exemptions
- **Friday, January 28,2021 – 1:00pm TEAMS**
  - Task Force develops exemptions and plans for DOI (District of Innovation).
  - A Thought Exchange is conducted regarding draft DOI.
- **Thursday, February 4, 2021 – 4:00pm – 5:00pm Zoom**
  - Joint meeting of the DOI Task Force and the District of Education Committee to review and discuss draft plan and hold a public hearing on the draft Victoria DOI plan. (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))
  - Approval of final plan by District Education Committee to submit to the Board of Trustees.
- **Friday, February 5, 2021 – 10:00 am**
  - District posts District of Innovation plan for public comment (30 days minimum) (TEC 12A.005 (a)(1))
  - Commissioner notified of Board’s intent to vote on the District of Innovation Plan
- **Thursday, March 11, 2021 –6:00 pm**
  - Present District of Innovation plan to Board of Trustees for final approval.
  - Board approval of the Victoria District of Innovation plan by at least a 2/3 majority (TEC12A.005(a)(1))
  - District of Innovation Plan and Figure 19 TAC 102.12307(d) sent to Commissioner (TEC 12A.004(a)(2))

## **Amendment Timeline**

- **Friday, October 21, 2022**
  - District team convened to review current District of Innovation plan.
  - Team included leaders from Curriculum, Instruction & Accountability, Student Services, the Office of Administration, the Office of Innovation, and the Office of Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention (TASR).
  - Team members were tasked with researching possible amendments needed.
- **Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 2:30 – 3:30**
  - District department leaders reconvened to discuss possible amendments.
  - Team included leaders from Curriculum, Instruction & Accountability, Student Services, the Office of Administration, the Office of Innovation, Risk Management, and the Office of Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention (TASR).
- **Friday, February 24, 2023 – 2:30 – 4:00**
  - District team met with policy consultant to review current plan and proposed amendments.
- **Friday, March 10, 2023**
  - District team finalized proposed amendments
- **Wednesday, March 22, 2023**
  - The proposed amendments were presented to and approved by the District Education Committee.
- **Thursday, March 30, 2023**
  - The VISD Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the amended District of Innovation plan with a vote of 7-0.



# Victoria ISD Board of Trustees

102 Profit Drive, Victoria, TX 77901 | Phone: (361) 576-3131 | Fax: (361) 788-9643

## RESOLUTION TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING THE OPTION OF DESIGNATING VICTORIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

*Whereas, the 84th Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation; and*

*Whereas, Texas school districts designated as a District of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state requirements which affords traditional public schools with many of the same freedoms that apply to open-enrollment charter schools; and*

*Whereas, the mission of Victoria Independent School District (VISD) is to provide rigorous, relevant learning and life experiences so that all students contribute positively to society; and this legislation empowers local communities to be creative and innovative, while also providing greater local control in the decision-making process; and*

*Whereas, the Board of Trustees believes that decisions affecting the students of Victoria Independent School District are best made at the local level by those who know our students, district, and community; and*

*Whereas, the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees has a strategic plan that supports customization and innovation; and*

*Whereas, HB 1842 requires districts seeking to be designated as a District of Innovation to develop a local innovation plan that allows for increased freedom from certain state mandates; and*

*Whereas, the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing and receive feedback from stakeholders to consider the development of a local innovation plan; following the public hearing, the Board of Trustees may decline to pursue the designation or may appoint a committee to develop a plan in accordance with chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code;*

*Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees initiates the process of exploring and considering the option of designating VISD as a District of Innovation under HB 1842.*

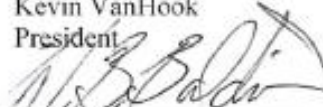
*Witness these signatures on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2021.*

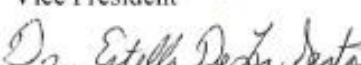
  

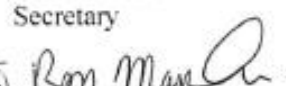
Kevin VanHook  
President


Tami Keeling  
Vice President


Mike Mercer  
Secretary

  
Bret Baldwin  
Board Trustee

  
Dr. Estella De Los Santos  
Board Trustee

  
Ross Mansker  
Board Trustee

  
Margaret Pruett  
Board Trustee

  
Dr. Quintin Shepherd  
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Quintin Shepherd    Kevin VanHook    Tami Keeling    Mike Mercer    Bret Baldwin    Dr. Estella De Los Santos    Ross Mansker    Margaret Pruett  
Superintendent    President    Vice President    Secretary    Trustee    Trustee    Trustee    Trustee

The Victoria Independent School District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other basis prohibited by law for admission, treatment, or participation in its educational programs, services and activities, or employment.

## District of Innovation Task Force - 2021

Name	Task Force Member Position
Dr. Quintin Shepherd	Superintendent
Dr. Greg Bonewald	Deputy Superintendent of Operations
Dr. Susanne Carroll	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Melissa Correll	Director of Innovation
Larry Davis	Executive Director of Secondary Instruction and Talent Development
Dr. Stanton Lawrence	Assistant Superintendent of Administration
Dawn Maroney	Director of Student Services
Tammy Nobles	Executive Director of Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention
Tammy Sestak	Executive Director of Elementary Instruction and Talent Development
Ashley Scott	Executive Director of Communications
Frances Koch	Assistant Superintendent of Budget and Finance
Carla Schaefer	Director of Assessment and Accountability
Selina Perez	District Education Committee Patti Welder Teacher

## District Education Committee Members - 2021

Name	Campus/ Position
Jennifer Young	Aloe
Stephanie Baumann	Chandler
Sandra Pruitt	Crain
Kimberly Allen	Deleon
Blake Jacobusse	Dudley
Trisha Forester	Hopkins
Joycelyn Drozd	Mission Valley
Sarah Wauson	O'Connor
Melissa Stolle	Rowland
Patricia Rowland	Torres
Cory Bena	Schorlemmer
Jo Ann Winston	Shields
Nachieli Rendon	Smith
Kirsty Hagan-Padoven	Cade
Karen Matak	Howell

Sonia Mejia	Patti Welder
Kenny Smith	Stroman
John Wright	CTI
Katy Polk	JJC
Katherine Munoz	Liberty Academy
Kim Valdez	Liberty DAEP
Amanda Heinold	Victoria East
Deena Sartor	Victoria West
Susanne Carroll	Asst. Superintendent, CIA
Carla Schaefer	Director of Assessment & Accountability
Melissa Correll	Director of Innovation
Regina Bryan	Health Services Coordinator
Michelle Yates	Director State and Federal Programs
Alejandro Mojica	Director of Bilingual/ESL
Rachel Nessel	Parent - Torres



# Victoria Independent School District

## INNOVATION PLAN

### *INTRODUCTION*

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On January 21, 2021, the Victoria Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On January 21, 2021, the Board appointed a 12-member District of Innovation Task Force ("Committee") and the District Education Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators to develop and proposed a plan. The Task Force met on January 5, 2021 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The Task Force met again on January 28, 2021, to finalize the draft plan to present to the twenty-nine-member District Education Committee. The Draft Victoria ISD Local Innovation Plan was then shared in a public forum composed of District Education Committee members February 4, 2021 to accept input on the proposed District of Innovation Plan. Based on the input received from the District Education Committee, the Committee adjusted the plan, and then approved the plan by a unanimous vote. The VISD Board of Trustees will consider the Plan at its meeting on March 11, 2021.

### *TERM*

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning March 11, 2021 and ending March 12, 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time

## *AMENDMENT*

In the Spring of 2023, the district reviewed the District of Innovation plan and recommended multiple amendments. The amended plan was reviewed and approved by the District Education Committee on March 22, 2023. On March 30, 2023, the Victoria ISD Board of Trustees approved the amended plan with a vote of 7-0.

## *AREAS OF INNOVATION*

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

VISD requested areas of Innovation are connected the district Strategic Initiatives that align to the following fifteen findings. These findings were developed through a committee made up of over seventy staff, students, community, parents, and teachers and are the key drivers of all work in VISD.

### **Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning**

1.1 A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

#### **Digital Ecosystem**

2.1 We believe teaching and learning is enhanced by equitable access to a technology-rich environment.

#### **Effective Communication**

3.1 We believe effective two-way communication is the life blood that builds trust and ownership with our community.

#### **Finding Their "And"**

4.1 All VISD students will find their "And": they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

#### **Community-based Accountability**

5.1 We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

#### **Talent Development**

6.1 We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible.

6.2 We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

#### **Equity**

7.1 We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.

#### **Social Emotional Learning**

8.1 We believe a socially and emotionally healthy community is essential.

8.2 We believe students and teachers must be seen first as people before they are seen as learners and professionals.

#### **Facilities**

9.1 We believe facilities play an integral role to inspire teaching and empower learning.

9.2 We believe safe and secure facilities and process are vital to creating a healthy, productive environment for our students and staff.

9.3 We believe having well-maintained facilities creates pride in our district and honors our commitment to our community.

#### **Community Partnerships**

10.1 Community partnerships and shared resources are foundational to creating a premier district.

10.2 As primary partners, we will support families to instill the value of education and foundational life skills for students.

**Innovation Title: Certification Requirements**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

**TEC 21.003-Certification Requirements:** (a) 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.

**TEC 21.051-Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships:** (a) In this section, "teacher of record" means a person employed by a school district who teaches the majority of the instructional day in an academic instructional setting and is responsible for evaluating student achievement and assigning grades. (b) Before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record and, except as provided by Subsection (b-1), after the candidate's admission to an educator preparation program, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities involving a diverse student population that, to the greatest extent practicable, includes students with disabilities under supervision at:(1) a public school campus accredited or approved for the purpose by the agency; or (2) a private school recognized or approved for the purpose by the agency.

**TEC 21.055-School District Teaching Permit:** (a) states a school district may issue a school district teaching permit and employ as a teacher a person who does not hold a teaching certificate issued by the board. (b) states to be eligible for a school district teaching permit under this section, a person must hold a baccalaureate degree. This subsection does not apply to a person who will teach only career and technology education.

**TEC 21.057 Parental Notification:** (a) states that a school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. (d) For purposes of this section, "inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher" includes: (A) an individual serving on an emergency certificate or (B) an individual who does not hold any certificate or permit.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

DBA (Legal) (Local)

DF (Legal) (Local)

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

**TEC 21.003:**

*A combination of the teacher shortage and the current certification requirements required by Education Code limit and inhibit the district's ability to fill the positions listed in TEC 21.003. In lieu of these requirements set forth in law and instead by using locally-determined requirements including but not limited to the following as well as highly vetting each applicant, the district will be able to fill teacher vacancies with:*

- *non-degreed and/or non-certified individuals who are on a local plan and seeking a degree and/or certification through various vetted programs such as the VISD Bridge Academy to Certify Teachers or similar programs,*
- *degreed but not certified or degreed but inappropriately certified individuals who are seeking certification either through alternative certification programs or by completing appropriate certification tests within district-set parameters,*
- *individuals with industry experience (which is particularly helpful with Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses),*
- *individuals with out-of-state and/or out-of-country teaching experience.*

*The district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such individuals in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.*

**TEC 21.051:**

*The district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such individuals in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. To increase District flexibility and allow for the administration and implementation of an internal para-to-teacher pathway program, classroom instructors will be allowed to serve as teacher of record prior to being admitted into an educator preparation program and prior to earning 15 hours of field-based experience.*

**TEC 21.055**

*To increase District flexibility when a non-degreed, certified or inappropriately certified teacher is hired to teach or is teaching a grade level or content area outside of his/her certification, the district will not submit exemption requests, permits, or waivers from certification requirements to TEA (except for Special Education and Bilingual teacher positions). Submission of the following requests is a burdensome, time-intense, costly process. The District will use its own internal vetting and documentation process when employing an individual who otherwise would have required the submission of a:*

- *Temporary Classroom Assignment Permit (TCAP),*

**Innovation:**

First and foremost, the District will maintain its current high expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification. However, when that is not possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. When this exception to certification requirements must be made for teaching vacancies, hard-to-fill assignments or to allow certified educators to teach courses outside of the original area of certification, the district will not submit exemption requests (waivers, permits, etc.) to the Commissioner of Education. Instead, we will use a locally developed plan for vetting an individual's qualifications for an assignment and for

placement decisions. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

Candidate qualifications may include a combination of professional work experience, formal training and education which demonstrate subject-matter competency, relevant industry licensure, certificate or registration, or any combination of work experience, training, education, or industry-credential related to the subject matter he/she will be teaching. Campuses will submit a written recommendation to the Superintendent or Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention (TASR) Office designee for approval prior to employing a person in a teaching position if:

--the individual has professional or vocational experience but does not possess a bachelor's degree and/or traditional teaching certificate yet is highly credentialed to teach certain courses or

--the individual will be teaching a course outside of his/her certified field for one year in grades K-12.

This written recommendation will outline the reason for the recommendation, and it will document the credentials possessed by the recommended teacher which qualify him/her to teach the course.

Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

Because the District's internal vetting process may consider individuals to be appropriately qualified without a degree or certification upon being hired in these positions, the employee will be employed using a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) until he/she obtains an Intern Certificate from SBEC at which time a probationary contract may be issued depending on time of year. Non-certified individuals would earn a percentage of zero-year annual teacher salary. Inappropriately certified individuals would be employed on a probationary or term contract and would be entitled to the minimum teacher salary.

Finally, because the district's internal vetting process will consider the persons hired in these positions to be appropriately qualified, a special notification to the parents of students in these classes stating the teacher does not hold a traditional teaching certificate will not be provided unless at a Title I campus.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Finding Their "And"** - All VISD students will find their "And" and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

**Innovation Title: Probationary Contracts**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

**TEC 21.102 Probationary Contract:** (b) states that 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.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

DCA (Legal)

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

**TEC 21.102 Probationary Contract:**

Having worked in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with VISD does not in and of itself justify a term contract at the conclusion of year one. A one-year probationary period is not always sufficient to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of a classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse or school counselor (as defined by TEC 21.002) and to formulate contract decisions to meet employment timelines. In addition, the T-TESS and T-PSS are growth models and may require more than one year to implement.

**Innovation:**

For experienced teachers, new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to three (3) years.

All other teachers hired in the district may remain on probationary status for three years and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC21.102(c).

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Finding Their "And"** - All VISD students will find their "And" and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

**Innovation Title: Teacher Planning and Preparation Time**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

**TEC 21.404-Planning and Preparation Time:** states that each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

DL (Legal)

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

**TEC 21.404-Planning and Preparation Time:** *The rigid 45-minute daily minimum makes flexible scheduling a challenge and limits opportunities for increased planning and collaboration time.*

**Innovation:**

All teachers would be guaranteed 450 total minutes within each two-week period (minimum of 30 consecutive minutes daily) for instructional preparation, conferences, and evaluating students' work and planning. Scheduling is a critical component in allowing for vertical, horizontal, and cross-campus collaboration. Flexibility in planning and preparation time daily allotments would allow for opportunities for increased collaboration between educators. The District would create procedures to provide the adequate time educators need to plan, but it would allow for innovative scheduling for things such as Professional Learning Communities.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning** - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.



<p><b>Innovation Title: Professional Staff Service Records for Former Employees</b></p>
<p><b>Texas Education Code Chapters:</b></p> <p><b>TEC 21.4031</b> On request by a classroom teacher, librarian, school counselor, or nurse or by the school district employing one of those individuals, a school district that previously employed the individual shall provide a copy of the individual’s service record to the school district employing the individual. The district must provide the copy not later than the 30th day after the later of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the date the request is made; or</li> <li>2. the date of the last day of the individual’s service to the district.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:</b></p> <p>DBA (Legal)</p>
<p><b>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</b></p> <p><b>Texas Education Code 21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records for Former Employees:</b></p> <p>Due to new VISD employee hiring taking priority over employee turnover and forwarding of service records to next employer, an extension is needed that would allow for service records to be processed and provided no later than the 45<sup>th</sup> day instead of the 30<sup>th</sup> day. This is especially needed and of assistance during peak hiring times within VISD.</p>
<p><b>Innovation:</b></p> <p>Providing additional days and focused time to appropriately onboard new hires as well as ample time to accurately update staff service records that reflect time served in VISD will allow an individual leaving VISD (i.e., former employee) to receive proper credit for salary-setting purposes in his/her new district of employment.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</b></p> <p><b>Talent Development</b> - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students’ success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.</p> <p><b>Finding Their “And”</b> - All VISD students will find their “And” and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.</p>

<p><b>Innovation Title: Employment Practices—Posting of Vacancies</b></p>
<p><b>Texas Education Code Chapters:</b></p> <p><b>TEC 11.1513(d):</b></p> <p>The employment policy must provide that not later than the 10th school day before the date on which a district fills a vacant position for which a certificate or license is required as provided by <a href="#">Section 21.003</a>, other than a position that affects the safety and security of students as determined by the board of trustees, the district must provide to each current district employee:</p> <p>(1) notice of the position by posting the position on:</p> <p>(A) a bulletin board at:</p> <p>(i) a place convenient to the public in the district's central administrative office; and</p> <p>(ii) the central administrative office of each campus in the district during any time the office is open; or</p> <p>(B) the district's Internet website, if the district has a website; and</p> <p>(2) a reasonable opportunity to apply for the position.</p>
<p><b>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:</b></p> <p>DC (Legal)</p>
<p><b>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</b></p> <p><b>Texas Education Code 11.1513(d): Employment Practices—Posting of Vacancies</b></p> <p>The 10-day posting requirement can cause an employment recommendation for a prospective employee and the ensuing employment decision to be prolonged resulting in the loss of the selected candidates due to having to wait almost three weeks before being recommended and hired. With the teacher shortage we are currently experiencing and challenged by, this extended posting requirement cannot be allowed to impede and negatively impact our hiring schedule. This is true year-round but is especially challenging during the summer period when the district is closed on Fridays. Being exempt from this TEC requirement will allow for recommendations and candidate hiring to be expedited year-round in VISD thereby increasing the likelihood that a candidate will be secured and hired v. frustrated and lost to another district while waiting for the 10-day posting period to expire. This is especially true during the peak summer hiring blitz when the District Administrative Office is only open 4 days per week.</p>
<p><b>Innovation:</b></p> <p>By allowing for employment matters to be handled more expeditiously and in fewer than 10 school (business) days, new hires can be processed, hired, trained, and allowed to participate in professional development in a timelier manner and in advance of and in preparation for the first day of school.</p>

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Finding Their "And"** - All VISD students will find their "And" and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

**Innovation Title: First Day of Instruction**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

§25.0811 First Day of Instruction,

(a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

EB (LOCAL)

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

V I S D values and supports the contributions of staff and community partnerships in strengthening the learning experience. The State designation of the fourth Monday in August as the first instructional day restricts the District's ability to provide.

1. balanced semesters
2. restricts time before state testing dates and
3. limits coordination with university partners for students taking dual credit courses.

By obtaining an exemption from TEC §25.0811, the District will be better able to create balanced grading periods while still ending the first semester prior to the mid-year break. Additionally, the District can align with the local college semester dates. The District will be able to start school mid-week, allowing for a smoother transition at the beginning of school.

**Innovation:**

This action affords local control using a collaborative committee comprised of community partners and District staff members to develop an instructional calendar that provides balanced semesters, aligns with local colleges, begins mid-week, and begins instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning** - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

**Community-based Accountability** - We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. And we believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Innovation Title: Post-Secondary & Military Excused Absences**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

§25.087 (b-2, 5, 6)

Sec. 25.087. EXCUSED ABSENCES. (a) A person required to attend school, including a person required to attend

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

FEA (LEGAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance

FEA (LOCAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

Currently only students classified as junior and senior years are allowed two excused absences per year to visit colleges or universities for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education. In some cases, where students are visiting colleges out of state, students need more than the allowed two days to safely visit a college they are interested in attending. Students may also want to complete comparative visits to multiple colleges throughout their high school career.

Students who are 17 years of age or older are allowed a maximum of four excused absences while enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. Current limitations on the number of days excused or age restrictions are preventing students from gaining insight into multiple opportunities.

**Innovation:**

Victoria ISD is requesting to expand age requirements and increase the excused absence threshold for post-secondary visits. This will allow students to gain a greater understanding of the steps needed to achieve college/career goals at an earlier age. In addition, the flexibility of additional days would provide students more opportunities or additional travel time for long-distance/out of state visits.

1. Victoria ISD will broaden its college and career readiness emphasis by allowing students in grades 9-12 to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations.
2. Victoria ISD will waive the two-day excused absences limit per year and adopt a policy allowing seniors to miss 4 days per year, juniors to miss 3 days per year, sophomores to miss 2 days per year and freshman to miss 1 day per year to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest.
3. Victoria ISD will waive the four-day total limit on students seeking to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. A newly adopted policy will allow classified juniors and seniors meeting the 17-year-old age requirement, four excused absences per year to pursue interest in the military. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Equity** - We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.

**Finding Their "And"** - All VISD students will find their "And": they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

**Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning** - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

**Innovation Title: Maximum Class Size**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

TEC 25.112 Class Size

TEC 25.113 Parent Notification

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

EEB (LEGAL)-

TEC 25.112 (d)-(e) Exception to Class Size Limits

TEC 25.113 Parent Notification

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

State law requires that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a PreK-4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. If classes are going to exceed this cap, a waiver is required from the Texas Education Agency. If approved, the district must notify the parents by specifying the class for which an exception from the limit was granted.

Victoria ISD begins the school year with staff based on student enrollment projections. Often, enrollment will exceed projections. As a result, teachers and/or students must be moved from one campus to another to meet the 22 to 1 student to teacher ratio limit for grades PreK-4 or request the required waiver from the Texas Education Agency to exceed 22 students in a class. With enrollment changing daily, parents could be notified that a class has exceeded the student limit and the next day the same class could become compliant within the maximum class size limit.

Being exempt from the 22 to 1 ratio requirement will also allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates with whom they have already established relationships, thus fostering continuity and stability which will support increased student achievement.

**Innovation:**

The class size exception innovation is described as follows:

- Victoria ISD will attempt to keep all PreK-4 core classrooms to a 22 to 1 ratio.
- In the event a PreK-4 classroom exceeds this ratio, the District will allow class sizes to go to 24 to 1 in order to keep students on a campus where they have already formed relationships.
- The district would be exempt from requesting a TEA waiver when a PreK-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

While the class size exemption will allow PreK-4 classrooms to exceed the 22 to 1 ratio, Victoria ISD will implement the following action steps to help maintain the recommended maximum class size:

1. *Survey campus enrollment, staffing ratios and class sizes at the beginning of each school year and monitor throughout.*
2. *Use attrition to return class size to 22 to 1 as soon as possible.*
3. *Apply District staffing ratios to support students and teachers in classes where the class size ratios exceed 22 to 1*

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**I Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning** - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

**Community-based Accountability** - We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

**Equity** - We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.

**Finding Their "And"** - All VISD students will find their "And": they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**Innovation Title: School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

Sec. 28.004. a) The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

(d-1) The local school health advisory council shall meet at least four times each year.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

BFD (LEGAL) - Board Internal Organization: Citizen Advisory Committees - Meetings

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

Throughout the school year, SHAC stakeholders have questions/concerns regarding best practices in school health that do not always align with the dates of quarterly meetings. The needs of the committee do not always align with the timeline established in TEC.

**Innovation:**

To better serve our community and our students, the district requests that the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) meet annually to set goals, review topics of interest, and make recommendations as needed. ThoughtExchange surveys will be sent out quarterly to update stakeholders on district best practices regarding school health and allow for feedback. If needed, the data from the survey would then drive the development of a subcommittee to better address specific areas of focus. Additional meetings may be called by the chair to hear from subcommittees.

The SHAC will continue to fulfill all responsibilities outlined in TEC Sec. 28.004.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

3.1 We believe effective two-way communication is the lifeblood that builds trust and ownership with our community.



**Innovation Title: Texas Reading Academies – Timeline Requirements**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

**TEC, §28.0062(2)(B)** - Not later than the 2021-2022 school year, each classroom teacher in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade and each principal at a campus with kindergarten or first, second, or third grade has attended a teacher literacy achievement academy developed under Section 21.4552 (Teacher Literacy Achievement Academies)

**TEC, §21.4552**- The commissioner shall develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers who provide reading instruction to students at the kindergarten or first, second, or third grade level.

House Bill 3 was updated by the 87th Texas Legislature in June 2021. It states that all kindergarten through third grade teachers and principals must attend a "teacher literacy achievement academy" by the end of the 2022 - 2023 school year.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

NA

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

Requirements for the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) certification exam and Reading Academies were established in 2019 by the 86th Texas Legislature with the passage of House Bill 3 (HB 3). Reading Academies and the STR certification exam are different requirements that complement each other. The STR certification exam demonstrates a beginning teacher's proficiency in the science of teaching reading. Reading Academies is an **11-month professional development program** that continues learning and builds on knowledge of the STR in a school context. Together, these programs provide teachers with the foundational knowledge to teach reading and writing and to effectively apply that knowledge in a classroom setting.

Having new K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers complete the 11-month Texas Reading Academies course on top of learning the TEKS for all contents in their grade level, mastering effective planning, and delivering highly effective instruction while also fulfilling all other required teacher responsibilities has proven to be very overwhelming for the new teachers, many of whom are also pursuing their alternative certification at the same time. As a result, the coursework is often completed for compliance without experiencing the full benefit of the experience.

**Innovation:**

VISD teachers and principals in grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> who are required by state statute to complete the 11 month Texas Reading Academies course will complete the course within their first two years of assignment.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

**Talent Development** - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

**I Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning** - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

**Innovation Title: Designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator (CBC)**

**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

Texas Education Code, Chapter 37.0012 A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator/ the person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.

**Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:**

VISD Policy FO(LEGAL) stipulates the designation of a campus behavior coordinator (CBC) at each campus. The CBC may be the principal, or any other administrator selected by the principal.

**Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:**

By specifying a specific campus administrator to serve as the campus behavior coordinator, the campus is limited from achieving greater efficiency which is gained through allowing multiple administrators to jointly share in the responsibilities of the campus behavior coordinator function. By providing greater flexibility regarding the designation of the campus behavior coordinator, campuses can collaborate and share in managing these responsibilities in a manner which ultimately provides better coverage in the area of student behavior and discipline management. It will also allow the investment of more effort into development of a positive campus culture as campuses transition away from traditionally punitive practices to Restorative Disciplinary Practices (RDP). Lastly, it will address the challenge related to data disproportionality brought about with historically overdisciplined student sub-populations (Latino, African American, at-risk, and students with disabilities).

**Innovation:**

Through engagement in a collaborative arrangement, the campus will have greater latitude to serve the student behavior and discipline management needs of their entire student population without the limitations brought about by having a solitary administrator serving this function. VISD is a participating in the System of Great Schools (SGS) which keeps our campuses extremely focused on innovations to elevate student outcomes.

**Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:**

Social Emotional Learning 8.1 We believe a socially and emotionally healthy community is essential.