

*Pawnee Independent
School District*



District of Innovation Plan

Board Approved 7/11/17

Pawnee ISD as a District of Innovation

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations, in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Pawnee ISD will be able to implement increased flexibility and freedom necessary to be innovative with the kinds of learning experiences afforded to our students. Making important educational decisions at the local level is the most effective way to support the innovation plans in our district.

District of Innovation Timeline:

Board Meeting/Public Hearing: 3/7/17

PISD Board of Trustees passes resolution to submit District of Innovation Plan.

PISD Board conducts a public hearing to consider developing an innovation plan.

Website Posting of Intent to become a District of Innovation and Invitation to Participate: 3/8/17

PISD District of Innovation Committee holds a public meeting to consider and approve the final version with a majority vote for recommendation to the PISD Board.

DOI Committee Meeting: 3/27/17

District of Innovation Sub Committee Meetings are open to the public will be held in the library at 3:30pm. All are welcome to attend.

Sub Committee Meetings:

Date	Topic
April 3, 2017	School District
April 4, 2017	Fiscal Management
April 5, 2017	Students
April 6, 2017	Educators

Board Meeting/Public Hearing: 4/11/2017

PISD Board Review of Innovation Plan Draft; Q&A

Board Meeting/Public Hearing: 5/9/17

PISD Board Review of Innovation Plan Draft; Q&A

Board meeting/Public Hearing: 6/13/17

PISD Board Review of Innovation Plan Draft; Q&A

District of Innovation Committee Meeting: 7/10/17

District of Innovation Committee Review of Final Submission for Designation

Board Meeting: 7/10/17

Designation of Superintendent for Submission to Commissioner

PISD Board Adoption of District of Innovation Plan

District of Innovation Plan posted on website: www.pawneeisd.net

Website Posting: 7/11/17

PISD notifies the Commissioner of intent to adopt plan.

District of Innovation Plan posted on district website: www.pawneeisd.net

Term:

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning August 2017 and ending at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the plan.

PISD District of Innovation Committee:

Michelle Hartmann, Superintendent
Kendra Wuest, Principal
Josh Wadsworth, Counselor
Braden Lyssy, Business Manager
Susan Huskey, Food Service Director
Michelle Alewine, Teacher

Kristi Theis, Parent
Margaret DeLeon, Community Member
Erin Haws, Community Member
Grace Deleon, Parent
Brandy Stehle, Teacher

The Plan:

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district intends to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If at some point it is decided that changes or additional exemptions should be considered, as per the Districts of Innovation process, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Team to explore the request and proceed with the board approval process. Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) “that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . .” The *Profile of the Pawnee ISD Student* demands innovative practices and opportunities for our students, and therefore, PISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

- Uniform Start/End Date (TEC 25.0811, TEC 25.0812)
- 420 Minutes/Day (TEC 25.082)
- Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions (TEC 37.0012)
- Teacher Certification (TEC 21.044, 21.003)
- 90 Percent Attendance (TEC 25.092)
- Transfer Policy (TEC 25.036)
- Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)
- Conference Period (TEC 21.404)
- Duty Free Lunch (TEC 21.405)

Proposed Exemptions and Flexibility:

Uniform Start Date:

Current Statue: (EB LEGAL) *TEC 25.0811, TEC 25.0812*

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. In the past, districts could apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier to meet the needs of the local community. School Districts may not schedule the last day of school for students before May 15.

Proposed Flexibility:

This 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 prior to the 4th Monday in August would help our district plan for balanced instructional time throughout the year. Recent legislation prevents the last day of school to be prior to May 15. Pawnee ISD, however, will provide a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development plan in conjunction with the new instructional minutes, rather than focus on instructional days required. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the flexibility to start prior to the 4th Monday in August and

end the school year prior to May 15, should the district deem it necessary and appropriate. This flexibility will allow for job embedded professional staff development opportunities as needed.

420 Minutes/Day:

Current Statute: (EB Legal) TEC 25.081

State Law requires an educational day to be no fewer than 420 minutes

Proposed Flexibility:

Exemption from this law will allow the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule as locally determined to be beneficial to the district. Exempting the district from the seven hour school day requirement would give the district local control over scheduling without the fear of losing state funding or credit for instructional time. Pawnee ISD will meet or exceed the 75,600 minutes/year of instruction. “Early release days” will be planned ahead of time and noted on the school calendar to the greatest extent possible. This flexibility will assist with personalized instruction and allow for improved parental communication opportunities.

Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions:

Current Statute: (FO Legal/Local) TEC 37.0012

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed Flexibility:

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. Pawnee ISD’s approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple individuals providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one individual. Exemption from this requirement will increase the option of collaboration in regards to student discipline. Both PBIS and restorative practices emphasize a proactive rather than reactive approach. Pawnee ISD will continue to implement the Student Code of Conduct.

Teacher Certification:

Current Statute: (DK Legal/ Local) TEC 21.044, 21.003

Requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

Proposed Flexibility:

Pawnee ISD is committed to hiring the most qualified for all of its teaching positions. Decisions on hiring will be handled locally to best meet the needs of our students. All candidates will be carefully researched to be certain that he or she has the appropriate education, experience, and expertise to provide the highest quality instruction to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the respective course. All candidates hired will continue to follow the current board approved process. It is our belief that this practice addresses the challenges of hard to fill positions and better align our class offerings to better prepare students for their high school experience. Flexibility in this area will allow learners to have the opportunity to personalize areas of interest in areas such as STEM, business and industry, public services, health sciences, and agriculture.

90 Percent Attendance:

Current Statute: (FEC Local) TEC 25.092

State law currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days on a district calendar to earn credit. The law requires districts to award class credit to students based on the time a student is present in a classroom for instruction, rather than mastery of content and subject proficiency.

Proposed Flexibility:

Pawnee ISD believes in awarding credit based on content mastery rather than seat time to earn credit. Flexibility will allow the district to recognize enriching activities, academic experiences or other extenuating circumstances that support the Pawnee ISD student profile. This flexibility will allow the district to work with students and parents on innovative options to reaching a student's academic goals. We recognize that our students gain knowledge outside the traditional classroom through extra/co-curricular activities that currently count against the 90% attendance rule. Flexibility in this area does not in any way impact or alters existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic (UIL) rules. This flexibility does not alter or limit a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades.

Transfer Policy:

Current Statute: (FDA Local) TEC 25.036

A district may choose to accept students as transfers, even if they are not entitled to admission in district, however, has been interpreted to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed Flexibility:

Pawnee ISD transfer policy requires that all non-resident students who wish to transfer must file a transfer application each year and complete the transfer process in its entirety. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the students' disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students and their parents are informed that they are expected to follow attendance requirements, rules and regulations of Pawnee ISD. A student's enrollment status may be revoked at any time of the year when the Superintendent determines that student is assigned discipline consequences (in or out of school), has not attended 90% attendance or whose behavior interferes with the school district's ability to educate our student body. The decision to revoke a transfer student's enrollment can be made at any time of the instructional calendar. Students are welcome to reapply for transfer admission after one full school year following dismissal.

Probationary Contracts:

Current Statute: (DCA Legal) (TEC 21.102)

Current guidelines call for probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years to not exceed more than one year. This limits the period needed to sufficiently determine the teachers' effectiveness and efficiency in the classroom.

Proposed Flexibility:

The proposal is for the District to have the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses newly hired to Pawnee ISD. This will allow additional time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not be counted toward meeting the two year requirement.

Conference Period:

Current Statute: (DL Legal) TEC 21.404

The code guarantees each classroom teacher a planning period. Specifically, 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 period 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.

Proposed Flexibility:

Pawnee ISD believes that teachers become more effective and efficient educators when they collaborate and share ideas together on a regular and consistent basis. It is our belief that this team approach benefits both students and their families. This has proven to be especially true when addressing the needs of a High Quality Prekindergarten Program. Teachers may be assigned conference periods at the beginning or end of their scheduled workday, regardless of the students' instructional day schedule. The district will continue the allowable task of asking teachers to engage in group planning during conference periods as deemed appropriate by the district.

Duty Free Lunch:

Current Statute: (DL Legal) TEC 21.405

Each classroom teacher or full-time librarian is entitled to at least a 30-minute lunch period free from all duties and responsibilities connected with the instruction and supervision of students.

Proposed Flexibility:

Pawnee ISD is committed to meeting the needs of our low income students and their families. The district supports utilizing family style meals as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization. We request the flexibility for staff to engage in family style meals. A thirty minute duty free break will be provided each day.