

The 84th Legislature passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members, Floydada ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

Floydada ISD is seeking to become a district of innovation for five years, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. On January 24, 2017, the FISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to develop a local innovation plan for the designation of our district as an Innovation District. At a public hearing held on February 16, 2017, the board considered whether to develop a local innovation plan. At the same meeting, the board appointed the district site-based committee to develop the innovation plan. The proposed plan was posted on February 27, 2017 for 30 days on the district website. A public meeting was held on April 5, 2017 in which the district site-based committee unanimously voted to approve the final version of the proposed plan. The FISD Board of Trustees approved the proposed Innovation Plan on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 effective August 1, 2017 and ending July 31, 2022. This distinction may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The plan will be monitored for effectiveness, and updates or necessary modifications will be submitted to the Board of Trustees when needed.

Exemptions Requested in the Texas Education Code

1. School Start Date/Last Day of School/Length of School Day

(EB Legal) (EB Local) (EC Legal) (EC Local)
(TEC 25.0811)(TEC 25.0812)

Current Law

Texas Education Code 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

Texas Education Code 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Innovation Plan

To meet local, community, staff and student needs, this plan will allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and more instructional days prior to the state assessments given in early May. With minute requirements at 75,600 and the state assessment given in early May, it may be possible to finish the school year prior to May 15.

The district will also have the ability to schedule shorter days in the school calendar to accommodate time for parent conferences, Professional Learning Communities, semester exams, and other activities as the need arises. However,

the district will still strive to meet the minutes requirement of 75,600 minutes (37,800 for Pre-K) per school year.

- a. Students will start school no earlier than the 2nd Monday in August.
- b. The school year may end before May 15th.

2. Educator Contract Days

(DC Legal) (DC Local)
(TEC 21.401(b))

Current Law

Texas Education Code 21.401. MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIRED. (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Innovation Plan

This plan gives the district the flexibility to reduce educator contract days from 187 to no less than 182 with no effect on educator salaries. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make our salaries more competitive. For purposes of this plan, all other staff will have the number of work days reduced by the same number of days.

- a. This plan may increase the daily rate the district pays educators.
- b. This plan should enhance educator recruitment.
- c. This plan will provide educators more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.
- d. In each year of the plan, it will be part of the calendar planning process to try to maintain the reduced number of educator contract days.

3. Teacher Certification

(DK Legal) (DK Local) (DK Exhibit) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local)
(TEC 21.003)

Current Law

TEC 21.003 states that “a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern, or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter b.”

In the event a District cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or where a teacher will teach a subject outside of his/her field of certification, the district

must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Innovation Plan

The current certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire quality professionals for positions outside of their field of certification or with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics courses, or other subject areas/grade levels that the district has difficulty filling. In order to best serve the students of Floydada ISD by providing more opportunities to take such courses and obtain professional certifications, decisions on certification will be handled locally:

- a. The principal will submit to the superintendent a request to allow a teacher to teach subject(s) outside of his or her field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses that qualify the individual to teach this subject/grade level.
- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate.
- c. This plan will provide more flexibility and more options for students and the district.
- d. The superintendent must approve all requests from campus principals and then allow the Board of Trustees to approve employment of the individual on an at-will basis.

4. Class Size Ratio

(EEB Legal)

TEC 25.111 TEC 25.112 TEC 25.113

Current Law

Sec. 25.111. STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS. Except as provided by Section 25.112, 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.

Sec. 25.112. CLASS SIZE. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Sec. 25.113. NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE. (a) A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

While the class size ratio may be addressed by a state waiver, the waiver must be applied for annually by the district.

Innovation Plan

The district will strive to 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; however, the this plan will allow the district to exceed this requirement based on campus or district needs.

The district will also still strive to maintain a ratio of 22:1 in Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, and fourth grade; however, under this plan, the district is no longer prohibited from enrolling more than 22 students in a K-4 class. This innovation will allow the district to have some flexibility during the peak periods of migrant work in the community that add to student enrollment and increase class sizes in K-4. In addition, this plan will allow the district to have some flexibility in scheduling.

The district values communication with parents about the education of their children. However, in the event that the district exceeds class size limits, this plan will allow the district to be exempt from the requirement to provide written notice to parents or guardians of the affected students.