



ALBA-GOLDEN ISD

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 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 start date and required minutes of instruction.
- Local control: Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- Autonomy: District submit a District of Innovation Plan to the commissioner of education, but commissioner approval is not required.

Comprehensive Educational Program

Term

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning August, 2020 and ending 2025, 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 the same 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.

Goals

- All students will benefit by attracting and retaining excellent staff
- All students will have the opportunity to develop their individual interests and abilities in a safe and innovative environment
- All students will grow through strong community partnership

Parameters

- Decisions will be made in the best interest of our children
- Learning is our core business
- We will be good stewards of taxpayer dollars
- We will not allow government regulations to impede opportunities for our students' education

Texas Education Code exemptions required for the fulfillment of the goals upon adoption by the District of Innovation Plan

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) that “inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan”. Given the comprehensive education program outlined in this plan and the necessity for local control in decision making of the plan elements, Alba-Golden ISD seeks exemption for all allowable TEC requirements under the HB 1842 statute.

Areas of Innovation

Instructional Minutes/Length of Instructional Day/Early Release (TEC 25.081 & 25.082)

Current Law

TEC 25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students each school year. Education Code 25.081(e) defines a day of instruction to mean 420 minutes of instruction while 25.082(a) requires a school day to be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Plan

Although all students will still be required to receive 75,600 minutes of instruction, the flexibility to adjust when those minutes of instruction are accrued will allow Alba-Golden ISD to more effectively meet the needs of our students. This exemption will also allow Alba-Golden ISD to alter the length of the school day or school year to meet the needs of Alba-Golden ISD.

Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401)

Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Plan

Reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This makes an

attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students. This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers, enhance teacher recruitment, and therefore put the district on a more level playing field with larger districts. This proposal will also significantly improve teacher morale.

Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003)

Current law

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 of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

Plan

The current state teacher certification requirement could potentially inhibit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach many courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefits, the district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach courses. This would be in lieu of the certification requirement set forth by the law. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the district will have the flexibility to hire community, college instructors, university professors, business professional or certified teaching professionals seeking assignments outside of their certification area. Teachers in Special Education and/or Bilingual classrooms will be required to have the appropriate certification. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

School Start and End Date (TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812)

Current Law

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15th. 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.

Plan

Relief from the statute will allow Alba-Golden ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes requirement, rather than days. Also, relief from the statute will enable Alba-Golden ISD to align the district calendar with local universities, partnering school districts and STAAR timeline. This plan would provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

Campus Behavior Coordinator (TEC 37.0012)

Current Law

Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator Embedded in multiple strategies within the Alba-Golden ISD Strategic Plan is to help students become socially and emotionally intelligent individuals. Social and emotional learning is inhibited by Texas Education Code Section 37.0012, which constrains campus governance by requiring one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the District's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program in which the schools, along with the community provide social and emotional supports to students.

Plan

By obtaining exemption from Section 37.0012, the District will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibility toward the community.

Minimum attendance for class credit or final grade (TEC 25.092)

Current Law

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 for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class.

Plan

In order to provide engaging and challenging learning to all students, the District needs relief from Texas Education Code Section 25.092. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the District by promoting active learning through

innovation in methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. In addition, exemption from this requirement will allow District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities and will promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, but encouraging more students to participate in such activities.

Inter-district Transfer (TEC 25.036)

Current Law

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

Plan

Alba-Golden ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the Districts. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program or expulsion. In addition, the student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standards. In these rare cases, Alba-Golden ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment. Local-Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status 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 expulsions. In addition, students not meeting the state's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Activation of the exemptions from the TEC will most likely require the revision and/or addition of Alba-Golden ISD local policies. Any exemptions from TEC or amendments to the District of Innovation Plan will be reflected in LOCAL POLICY following board action pursuant to law.

Board Appointed DOI Committee

Amanda Wright

Deitra Bizzell

Brandon Bohannon

Starla Bryant

Deann Hanson

Eddie White

Michele Glidewell

Karyn Margos

Katherine Richardson

Kristy Neal

Michael Scott

Michael Mize

Nick Kerry

Jeannette Peel

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Stacy Rolen

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Stephanie Sitar

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Tom Ferguson

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