

Eastland ISD
District of
Innovation Plan



Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in the Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Term

The term of the District of Innovation plan, as constituted by statute, may not exceed five years. Upon board approval, the renewed EISD DOI plan begins with the 2022-2023 school year is valid through the end of the 2026-2027 school year. The plan remains in effect for the period listed unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by Board action per state law or the Commissioner of Education terminates the plan. The plan must be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Improvement Team and requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Board to take effect. The school district must notify TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date, not to be later than the start of the following school year, to comply with all sections of the Texas Education Code.

Process

On February 14, 2017, the Eastland Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On February 14, 2017, the Eastland ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing on whether the District should pursue the designation as a District of Innovation. The Board of Trustees appointed the District of Innovation Committee to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, and district administration. The committee met on March 1st and 22nd to discuss and develop the plan. The plan went to the Board of Trustees for final approval on May 8th.

Additional documentation of the renewal and revision of the EISD District of Innovation Plan can be found in the timeline below.

Eastland I.S.D. Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task
February 14 th , 2017	Board of Trustees held public hearing regarding District of Innovation (DOI) Board of Trustees adopted resolution to initiate District of Innovation and appointed Committee to draft a DOI Plan
March 1 st , 2017	1 st Meeting of DOI Committee to discuss District of Innovation Plan
March 22 nd , 2017	2 nd Meeting of DOI Committee to discuss District of Innovation Plan
March 22 nd , 2017	Post DOI Plan on Eastland ISD website for 30 days
May 8 th , 2017	Recommend Final Plan to Board of Trustees for Approval
November 10 th , 2021	District Improvement Team reviews the DOI plan and unanimously recommends renewal of the plan until 2027
December 13 th , 2021	Public meeting for consideration of renewing the DOI plan.
December 15 th , 2021	The District notifies the Commissioner of Education of the district's intent to renew the DOI plan until 2027. The District's intent to renew the existing DOI plan until 2027 is posted on the district website.
January 17 th , 2022	EISD Board of Trustees to approve the renewal of the DOI plan until 2027.
January 18 th , 2022	EISD notifies the Commissioner of Education of the Board's decision to renew the DOI plan.

EISD District of Innovation Planning Committee

Member Name	District/Community Role
Jeremy Williams	<u>Assistant Superintendent</u>
Jason Cochran	<u>Superintendent</u>
Bill Moore	<u>Technology Director</u>
Mary Jones	<u>Chief Financial Officer</u>
Brandon Chesser	<u>Principal, Siebert Elementary</u>
Adam Bramlett	<u>Principal, Eastland High School</u>
Jason Henry	<u>Principal, Eastland Middle School</u>
Victoria Jimenez	<u>Business Representative</u>
Candi Kanady	<u>Business Representative</u>

Shelley Rinehart	<u>Director Curriculum and Instruction</u>
Alisha Rogers	<u>Teacher, Eastland High School</u>
Kristi Fambro	<u>Teacher, Siebert Elementary</u>
Kristin Oznick	<u>Teacher, Siebert Elementary</u>
Lori Hammon	<u>Teacher, Eastland High School</u>
Denise Skinner	<u>Teacher, Eastland Middle School</u>
Marla Foster	<u>Teacher, Eastland Middle School</u>
Terry Slavens	<u>Parent</u>
Rhyne Hobbs	<u>Parent</u>

Innovations

EISD proposes flexibility in the following areas:

1. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

a. Ed. Code 25.092

- i. A student in any grade from K-12 may not be given credit unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered.**

Proposal:

Eastland ISD would like to have the freedom to make course credit decisions on a case-by-case basis, for example, in such an instance where a student is involved in numerous UIL academic, UIL athletic, FFA, FCCLA, Band, and other extra-curricular activities.

2. SCHOOL START DATE

a. Ed. Code 25.0811

- i. Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August**

Proposal:

This flexibility of a start date allows EISD to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This will allow the first and second semesters to be closer to equal in the number of days of instruction. Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges. An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments in December. This would allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school.

3. Class Size and Notice of Class Size

a. Ed. Code 25.111, 25.112, 25.113

- i. A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.
- ii. 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.

Proposal:

The goal of EISD will be to limit class size to the extent possible, meeting the required limits prior to the beginning of the school year. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent and campus administrators will meet to determine whether to add another teacher. Once that determination has been made the superintendent will report the decision to the Board of Trustees.

4. Recommended Appraisal Process and Performance Criteria

a. Ed Code 21.203, 21.351, 21.352, 21.354, 21.3541

- i. Relating to the T-TESS and T-PESS evaluation systems and intervals of the intervals required within.

Proposal:

A committee initiated and formed by EISD would have the option to develop a local instrument and process to evaluate teachers and principals that meets the needs and goals of EISD. This committee would also have the authority to determine the frequency of both types of evaluations. The Board of Trustees would approve the use of the local instrument once developed by the committee in lieu of the instrument directed by the Texas Education Agency.

5. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

a. Ed Code 21.003, (Board Policies DBA (Legal), DK (Legal), DK (Local), DK (Exhibit))

- i. 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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Proposal:

This flexibility will allow EISD decisions on certification to be handled locally. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology and assist in staffing high need STEM

and dual credit course offerings. Out-of-state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Often there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background, and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings. The principal shall submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification. ****Note: special education and bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.****

6. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

a. Ed Code 37.0012 (Related Board Policy FO (legal))

- i. A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator.**
- ii. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.**

Proposal:

The specific duties of the Campus Behavior Coordinator will be given to the campus principal who may divide and/or delegate duties to assistant principals as needed. The discipline plan of the campus will be in the control of the campus principal and consideration will be taken to account for multiple administrators assisting with discipline. This will allow a more collaborative approach to the social and emotional support of all students on the campus.

7. Transfer Students

a. Ed Code 25.036 (Related Board Policy FDA (local))

- i. TEC §25.001 specifies that a school district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district.**
- ii. TEC §25.036 indicates that a transfer is approved for a period of one school year. Board policy FDA (Local) states, “Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time.”**

Proposal:

The district seeks an exemption from the one school year enrollment requirement for transfer students, allowing the district to accept at-risk transfer students. This exemption would allow the district to consider transfer students seeking a school change in hopes of a fresh start regarding grades, attendance, and discipline. This type of student would likely not be accepted because of the one-year requirement. Eastland ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local), requiring nonresident students to file a transfer

application each school year. Out of district transfer requests are considered based on class size, staff availability, and the type of programs required to serve the transfer student. Additionally, campus principals review the student's discipline history, academic grades, state assessment results, and attendance records before approving or denying the transfer request. If approved, transfer students will comply with district policies and attendance requirements or be subject to revoking their transfer by the Superintendent or designee.

8. School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings

a. Exemption from TEC §28.004(d-1) (Board Policy (BDF Legal))

- i. TEC §28.004(d-1) mandates that the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) meet at least four times per school year.**

Proposal:

The district seeks an exemption from the number of required SHAC meetings (4). The exemption would allow local control by the board of trustees and the committee members to determine the need to convene the SHAC. District size and consistency of SHAC members do not warrant meeting four times during the school year. District leaders keep SHAC members informed on the health and safety needs of students. The EISD SHAC does not need to meet four times to accomplish its intended purpose.

9. DAEP, Teacher

a. Exemption from TEC §37.008(a)(7), Board Policy FOCA (Legal)

- i. TEC §37.008(a) mandates that school districts provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.**

Proposal:

An exemption from this requirement would give the district flexibility in scheduling teachers and aides as needed. A district our size has very few students assigned to a DAEP setting during the school year. Employing a full-time certified teacher specifically for DEAP is not financially feasible for our district. If a student requires a DAEP placement, the district will ensure that the student is appropriately supervised and receives the instructional support necessary to succeed academically. The campus principal will ensure appropriate supervision for students assigned to DAEP by a full-time paraprofessional trained in positive behavior supports and restorative discipline practices. Students assigned to the district's DAEP will receive instructional support from appropriately certified teachers to ensure they remain on track to complete their core academic classes.