

Marfa ISD
District of Innovation Plan

August 2020- July 2025

Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

Member Name	Role
Janet Enriquez	Teacher
Oscar Aguero	Superintendent/Committee Chair
Linda Ojeda	Teacher/Athletic Director
Lucas Salcido	Transportation/Maintenance
John Sherrill	High/JH Principal
Amy White	Elementary Principal

Marfa ISD Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task
February 24,2020	DOI Overview Presented, School Board held public hearing and adopted resolution to initiate District of Innovation
February 25. 2020	Local Innovation Plan Committee Named
February 25. 2020	1 st Meeting of DOI Committee to discuss Local Innovation Plan
February 27. 2020	2 nd Meeting of DOI Committee to discuss Local Innovation Plan
March 8, 2020	Final Meeting of DOI Committee to finalize Local Innovation Plan
May 18, 2020	School Board votes to Notify Commissioner of Intent to adopt
May 19, 2020	Post DOI Plan on Marfa ISD Website for 30 days
June 20, 2020	District Site Based Meeting/Public Hearing
July 20, 2020	Recommend Final Plan to Board for Approval

Proposed Exemptions

The following are the provisions of the Texas Education Code that inhibit the goals of the district and from which the district seeks to exempt itself through adoption of the District of Innovation Plan.

School Start Date

[Texas Education Code 25.0811]

Current Law

25.0811 – Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August.

Proposed

The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This flexibility of the start date also offers the following opportunities:

- It will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat 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.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well.
- This would allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition for students from summer to the school schedule.
- The district will determine, on an annual basis, when the school year will begin.

Length of the School Day

[Texas Education Code 25.081]

Current Law

25.081 – Currently, all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

Proposed

Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow the district the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary to be beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from this requirement, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year. The district has no intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days would be planned ahead of time and noted on the district calendar, approved by the school board, published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media. This flexibility of the length of the school day also offers the following opportunities:

- It would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling (above and beyond the 6-day maximum as needed) without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might result in lack of compliance with annual minute requirements.
- It would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development.
- It would allow the district the flexibility to delay the start of the school day or release early due to hazardous weather conditions without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might result in lack of compliance with annual minute requirements.

Teacher Certification

[Texas Education Code 21.003]

Current Law

If the 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.

Proposed

The exemption from teacher certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. That would offer the following opportunities:

- The district would have greater flexibility in staffing by considering part-time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology (CTE) courses, assist in staffing high need areas and dual credit course offerings.
- The district could consider out-of-state certified teachers for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials.
- Experienced, certified teachers within the district could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, experience and/or background.
- With the necessity for teachers in this district to teach multi-level classes, it would afford flexibility in staffing and enrich the applicant pools.
- The administration will report this action to the school board at the first meeting following these assignments, detailing the reason for the action and the documentation demonstrating the qualifications for the assignment.

Probationary Contracts

[Texas Education Code 21.102(b)]

Current Law

State law declares that a probationary contract 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 with the district.

Proposed

This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness, especially with the multi-level classes in our district. Flexibility in this area would provide for the following opportunities:

- A comprehensive evaluation could be conducted when the end of year classroom and student data and state assessment data becomes available.
- An additional year would afford the teacher the time to adjust to the difficulties presented in multi-level and multi-grade classrooms.
- Mentoring and professional development opportunities, where needed, could be provided and sufficient time allowed for implementation and evaluation of effectiveness.
- Flexibility for administration to provide growth opportunities to a promising staff member over a sufficient time schedule.

Local Role in Teacher and Principal Evaluation

[Texas Education Code 21.352, 21.353, 21.354, 21.3541]

Current Law

The state of Texas is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, called the Texas Teacher Evaluations and Support System (T-TESS).

Proposed

A committee of administrators and teachers would have the option to develop a local teacher and principal evaluation system that could be a combination of T-TESS, T-PESS, and other best practices. While the district intends to use the T-TESS in the 2016-2017 school year, the district would like the option to exercise local control of decisions regarding teacher and other administrative appraisals.

Inter-District Transfers

[Texas Education Code 25.036]

Current Law

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

Proposed

TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfers for the following:

- In spite of administrative review of prospective transfers, some student behavior will result in suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program or expulsion.
- Student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard or 90% standard.
- Availability of space, instructional staff, programs and services may change.

In these rare cases, the district seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment. Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year for the above transgressions.