

Hardin ISD

District of Innovation Plan



Building a Better Hardin, One Student at a Time

2017-2022



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Introduction

House Bill (HB) 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 school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- Local control: Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- Autonomy: Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On April 17, 2017, the Hardin Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On April 17, 2017, the Board appointed a District of Innovation Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including administrators, principals, parents, and community members. The Committee met on April 20, 2017 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The District will accept input on the proposed District of Innovation Plan by posting the Plan on the district website for 30 days starting April 21, 2017. The District will conduct a public forum and present the plan to the board.

The HISD Board of Trustees approved the Plan at its meeting on May 22, 2017.

District of Innovation Committee

Committee Role	Name	Position
District-level Professional	Brandon Peavey	Superintendent
District-level Professional	Dr. Adam Hile	Hardin ISD
District-level Professional	Cindy Peavey	Hardin ISD
Campus Administrator	Jennifer Stein	Hardin Elementary School
Campus Administrator	Julia Hall	Hardin Intermediate School
Campus Administrator	Dr. Bryan Taulton	Hardin Junior High School
Campus Administrator	Richard Ressler	Hardin High School
Campus Administrator	Cami Jones	Hardin High School
Counselor	Betsy Henry	Hardin High School
Community Representative	Jerry Ursprung	Board Member
Community Representative	Letha Holloway	Hardin ISD Parent
Community Representative	Trish Wall	Hardin ISD Parent
Teacher	Christian Goodwin	Hardin High School
Teacher	Kelly Fielder	Hardin High School
Teacher	Kim Collins	Hardin Intermediate School
Teacher	Tiffanee Simar	Hardin Elementary School
Teacher	Tina Fregia	Hardin Intermediate School
Teacher	Jessica Weaver	Hardin Elementary School
Teacher	Laura Hebert	Hardin Junior High School
Teacher	Tracy Pavliska	Hardin Junior High School



District of Innovation Timeline

1. April 17, 2017 Board Approves Resolution
2. April 17, 2017 Public Hearing by School Board
3. April 17, 2017 Board Appoints Committee to Develop Plan
4. April 20, 2017 Committee Meets to Develop and Approve Plan
5. April 21, 2017 Plan Posted on District Website
6. April 24, 2017 Board Notifies Commissioner of Intention to Vote on Plan
7. May 18, 2017 Committee Holds Public Hearing and Votes on Final Plan
8. May 22, 2017 Board Considers Adoption of Plan at Regular Board Meeting
9. May 23, 2017 Board Notifies Commissioner of Plan Adoption



Innovation Plan Exemptions

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

First Day of Instruction

Exemption from TEC 25.0811

Related Board Policies: EB (Legal)

Current Statute:

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows little 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.

Local Guidelines:

1. Hardin ISD will gather input from the District Educational Improvement Council and campus principals/staff to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with required instructional minutes requirement.
2. The start date of each school year will be determined with input from the staff and community. The start date may occur on or after the second Monday of August based on input.
3. Alignment of the district calendar with neighboring districts, dual credit college partner, and STAAR timelines will be considered.
4. The proposed calendar will be posted for public comment prior to Board approval.



School Day Length

Exemption from TEC 25.081; TEC 25.082

Related Board Policies: EC (Legal)

Current Statute:

TEC 25.081 states the length of the instructional day as “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses”. The intent of this code is to standardize across all districts the amount of time students engage in classroom learning. Flexibility in use of minutes as well as the length of the school day will support teachers and staff who participate in Professional Learning Communities, perfecting their craft, deepening their content knowledge, and analyzing student data.

Local Guidelines:

1. Hardin ISD will gather input from the District Educational Improvement Council and campus principals/staff to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with required instructional minutes requirement.
2. The majority of school days will be scheduled to meet the 420 minutes of instruction requirement.
3. Individual days with a length less than 420 minutes may be scheduled throughout the calendar to incorporate time for professional development or parent conferences as needed.
4. The proposed calendar will be posted for public comment prior to Board approval.



Class Size Ratio Reporting Requirements

Exemption from: TEC 25.112; TEC 25.113

Related Board Policies: EEB (Legal)

Current Statute:

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

TEC 25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.

Local Guidelines:

1. Hardin ISD will make every attempt to begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of at least 22:1 or less in each K-4 homeroom class.
2. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
3. A TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
4. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continue to be notified as per TEC 25.113.

Teacher Certification

Exemption from: TEC 21.003; TEC 21.053; TEC 21.057

Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal/Local); DK (Legal/Local)

Current Statute:

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 for Educator Certification.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

Local Guidelines:

1. Hardin ISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and is committed to hiring individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question. Where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.
2. In core classes, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document credentials the teacher possesses. The applicant must have a bachelor's degree with a minimum of 12 college hours in the subject they will teach.
3. In elective classes, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow an individual to teach a subject or specific course. The principal must specify credentials, work experience, or life experience the individual possesses that would qualify them to teach the proposed subject.
4. Teachers teaching outside of their certification area will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development, or other supports.
5. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.



Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC 21.102(b)

Relevant Board Policies: DCA (Legal)

Current Statute:

TEC 21.102(b) states that for experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Local Guidelines:

1. For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years.
2. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).



Interdistrict Transfers

Exemption from: TEC 25.036

Relevant Board Policies: FDA (Local)

Current Statute:

TEC 25.036 states that students attending a district through an interdistrict transfer may apply for transfer annually. This is interpreted that the interdistrict transfer must be for a term of one school year. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Hardin ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

Local Guidelines:

1. Hardin ISD will continue to accept transfers as space and local policy allows.
2. An interdistrict transfer student 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 expulsion.
3. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.



District of Innovation Plan Term

The term of the Plan is for five years, in effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Plan will be reviewed annually by the District of Innovation Committee. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas or operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the committee will consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan to be presented and approved by the Board. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan.

