

ORE CITY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Local Innovation Plan 2022 - 2027

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative session, allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation. Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

**Adopted by the Ore City ISD Board of Trustees
On March 28, 2022**

ORE CITY ISD INNOVATION PLAN

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.

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.

TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning June 1, 2022, and ending May 31, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law.

AREAS OF INNOVATION

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.

1. School Start and End Date

Exemption from: TEC§25.0811, §25.0812

Related Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

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 15. 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.

Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday with no exceptions.

Innovation Strategies

a. Relief from the statute will allow OCISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes requirement, rather than days.

b. Alignment of the district calendar with local universities, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.

c. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

2. Teacher Certification

Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.057

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL/LOCAL; DK LEGAL/LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

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

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, with the exception of special education and bilingual/ESL teachers, 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.

b. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing, the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.

c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trade course, a licensed corrections officer teaching a criminal justice course, or a retired CPA teaching an entry level accounting course.

d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

3. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b)

Relevant Board Policies: DCA LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

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.

Innovation Strategies

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. 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).

4. Transfer Students

Exemption from: TEC §25.036 Related Board Policy: FDA LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

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.

Innovation Strategies

OCISD 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, academic records, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance 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 transfer applications for the following circumstances:

- Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program or expulsion;
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard.
- Student academic performance