



District of Innovation

Amended Local Innovation Plan

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Executive Summary

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation (DOI) and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). In order to maximize opportunities for all FBISD students, the FBISD School Board of Trustees initiated the process to become a District of Innovation (DOI) in October 2016. The district was awarded the DOI status for the 2017-2018 school year. The DOI status has allowed FBISD to have more local control and flexibility for the last 5 years to ensure staff was better equipped to make decisions that are in the best interest of the students as well as allow the flexibility to provide an exceptional learning experience to all students.

The effort was managed by a Local Innovation Committee comprised of district and community stakeholders. The committee, after months of work, proposed exemptions in the following areas:

- School Calendar
- Teacher Certification
- Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade – 90 Percent Rule

Original Local Innovation Committee Members who served during 2016-17 and developed the initial plan are as follows:

Original Local Innovation Committee Members	
NAME	POSITION
Kristen Adams	FBISD Elkins HS, Teacher
Mandy Antolini	FBISD Clements HS, Campus Assessment Coordinator
Walter Benavides	FBISD Christa McAuliffe MS, Teacher
Sonal Bhuchar	Community Member
Monique Brown	Community Member
Stacy Bynes	Community Member
Mike Chan	Community Member
Tramaine Chatman	(Ad Hoc Member) Community Member
Chetan Dave	Community Member
JJ Clemence	Community Member
Dolores Collins	FBISD Campus Parent Educator
Jill Curtis	Community Member
Christopher Hill	Fort Bend Education Foundation Board Member
Cathy Hunter	Community Member
Q Imam	Community Member
Nicole Jackson	FBISD Madden ES, Teacher
Vanesia Johnson	Community Member
Cynthia Knox	Community Member
Dee Koch	Community Member
Allie Lam	Community Member
Glenda Macal	FBISD, Heritage Rose ES, Teacher
Marc Muscarello	FBISD, Baines MS, Assistant Principal
Jay Neal	University of Houston, Assistant Provost

Original Local Innovation Committee Members	
NAME	POSITION
Chuckwudalu Ononenyi	FBISD Student
Queen Onyehialam	FBISD Student
Joe Rodriguez	FBISD, Assistant Superintendent
Michael Schiff	Community Member
Mike Schofield	Community Member
Terri Wang	Fort Bend Education Foundation Board Member
Karrie Washenfelder	Fort Bend Employee Federation
Lavanta Williams	FBISD, Heritage Rose ES, Principal
Original Local Innovation Committee Support	
Meeting Facilitator: Dr. Shelby McIntosh K12 Insight, Managing Director	
Legal Counsel: Debra Esterak Rogers, Morris & Grover, LLP, Attorney	
District Support: Beth Martinez FBISD, Chief of Staff and Strategic Planning	
District Support: Ginger Carrabine FBISD, Executive Director of Strategic Planning	
Writing Development Team members: Kristen Adams, Mandy Antolini, Chris Hill, Nicole Jackson, Glenda Macal, and Karrie Washenfelder	
Alternates: Walter Benavides, Q Imam	

Renewal Timeline

In 2021 – 22, FBISD followed the renewal process established by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 12A.

Date	Required Actions – Texas Education Agency
January 3, 2022	Superintendent notifies the Commissioner of Education of the Board of Trustees' (BOT) intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan
January 3 - February 1, 2022	Final Draft Local Innovation Plan posted for 30 days for community feedback
February 2, 2022	District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC) public meeting - considers public feedback and hosts vote to approve District of Innovation plan
February 7, 2022	BOT Agenda review
February 14, 2022	BOT considers adoption of proposed Local Innovation Plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board
February 21, 2022	Superintendent notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions

The committee responsible for the review, feedback, and approval of the renewal plan was comprised of members of the District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC). This Council includes stakeholders from the district and community. The Local Innovation Plan submitted for renewal was reviewed at the October 20th and November 17th meetings in which present DPAC members provided specific feedback on the components of the plan.

The 2021 – 22 DPAC members and District support team:

2021 – 22 DPAC Members and District Support	
Name	Position
Erika Andrews	FBISD, Patterson ES, Counselor
Tracey Arana	Community Member
Nana Baffour	FBISD Crockett MS, Teacher
Tyenise Blackmon	Community Member
Courtney Border	FBISD, Sartartia MS, Assistant Principal
Reba Brown	FBISD, Assistant Director, Special Education
Laurie Caldwell	FBISD, Oakland ES, Teacher
Kellie Clay	FBISD, Palmer ES, Principal
Kathleen Collins	FBISD, HR Senior Consultant
Holly Durham	FBISD, Interim Director, District Strategic Transformation
German Enamorado	Community Member
Sarah Erschabek	FBISD, Austin Parkway ES, Teacher
LaKeitha Ford	FBISD, Jones ES, Teacher
Summer Frasier	Community Member
Rick Garcia	Community Member
Jacqueline Gooden	Community Member
Reaeanna Hall	FBISD Student
Kendra Hayes	FBISD, Lexington Creek ES, Teacher
Maria Hernandez	Community Member
Melissa Hubbard	FBISD, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
Grace Lacy	FBISD Student
Cameron Lathan	FBISD, Missouri City MD, Teacher
Cynthia Lauer	FBISD, Sullivan ES, Teacher
Paula Leehan	FBISD, Holley ES, Teacher
Ira Lynn Lewis	FBISD, Hightower HS, Counselor
Orjanel Lewis	Community Member
Robin Lewis	FBISD, Lantern Lane ES, Teacher
Elizabeth Martin	FBISD, Elkins HS, Teacher
Abraham Martinez	FBISD, Holley ES, Interventionist
Beth Martinez	FBISD, Chief Academic Officer
Rolanda McKyer	FBISD, Garcia MS, Counselor
Sambit Mirsa	Community Member

2021 – 22 DPAC Members and District Support

Name	Position
Carla Morton	FBISD, Cornerstone ES, Teacher
Hannah Nguyen	FBISD Student
Leyna Nguyen	FBISD Student
Phuong Nguyen	Community Member
Sydney Olszewski	FBISD Student
Abigail Pagnotti	FBISD, Ridge Point HS, Teacher
John Portier	FBISD, Brazos Bend ES, Teacher
Aleida Ramos	FBISD Student
Guerin Riffel	FBISD Student
Annette Sanford	FBISD, Hightower HS, Teacher
Jeremy Sapp	FBISD, Travis HS, Teacher
Jessica Singh	FBISD, Willowridge HS, Teacher
April Spicer	Community Member
Natalie Sylvester	FBISD, Dulles HS, Teacher
Lynnette Tucker	FBISD, Reese Ctr, Teacher
Imelda Valencia-Guitierrez	FBISD, Quail Valley MS, Teacher
Tracy VanWright	FBISD, Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation
Lisa Washington	FBISD, Mission West ES, Teacher
Pilar Westbrook	FBISD, Executive Director, SEL and Comprehensive Health
Stephanie Williams	FBISD, Executive Director of Organizational Transformation
Aisha Winfrey	FBISD, Parks ES, Teacher
Marian Zaki	FBISD Community Member

Amendment Requirements & Timeline

A designated District of Innovation may choose to amend or renew its plan at any time pursuant to the applicable Texas Education and Texas Administration Codes. An amendment to a local innovation plan is approved by a vote of the district-level advisory committee and the Board of Trustees (TEC §12A.007). In FBISD, the referenced district-level committee is the District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC). A majority vote is needed from DPAC and a two-thirds vote is needed from the Board of Trustees for the amendment to be adopted (TAC §102.1313). Amending the local plan does not extend the renewal date, and amendments already formally approved are not required to be reviewed during the amendment process.

In Spring 2024, Administration engaged in the following process to amend the Local Innovation Plan using the timeline outlined below:

Date	Required Actions – Texas Education Agency
May 8, 2024	District Planning Advisory Council (DPAC) meet to review and approve amendments (majority vote required)
July 22, 2024	Board of Trustees vote to approve amendment (2/3 majority vote required)
By Aug 6, 2024 (no later than 15 th day after BOT approval)	Notify TEA Commissioner of amendment, post amended plan on the District website and send the link to the Commissioner

Below you will find the DPAC members who were present to vote to approve the amendment to the local innovation plan:

2023 – 24 DPAC Members and District Support at May 8 th , 2024 Meeting	
Name	Position
Ahmad, Maryam	Student
Baffour, Nana	FBISD, Crockett MS, Teacher
Boykin, Jaraz	Community Member
Bryant, Debra	FBISD, Settlers Way ES, Teacher
Caldwell, Laurie	FBISD, Oakland ES, Special Education Teacher
Chadwick, Jen	FBISD, Director SEL & Enrichment
Cox, Robin	FBISD, Almeta Crawford HS, Teacher
Crousset-Rivera, Griselda	FBISD, Mission West ES, Librarian
Day, Callie	FBISD, Walker Station ES, Campus Compliance Coordinator
Edwards, Ametra	FBISD, Patterson ES, Teacher
Erschabek, Sarah	FBISD, Austin Parkway ES, Teacher

2023 – 24 DPAC Members and District Support at May 8th, 2024 Meeting

Name	Position
Faulkner, Kate	FBISD, Assistant Director Assessment Accountability Compliance
Fuentes, Karla	FBISD Executive Assistant
Havies, Precious	FBISD Student
Hill, Deena	FBISD, Executive Director Student Support Services
Hubbard, Melissa	FBISD Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
Jackson, Natasha	FBISD Parent
Jones, Carlos	Community Member
Kuzniar, Heather	FBISD, Cafeteria Specialist
Lauer, Cynthia	FBISD, Sullivan ES, Teacher
Lawson, Kimberly	Chief Academic Officer
Lewis, Robin	FBISD, Lantern Lane ES, Teacher
Marin, Claudia	FBISD, EA Jones ES, Bilingual Specialist
Meija, Alejandro	FBISD Student
Miller-Freeman, Alleisha	FBISD Student
Mobley, Quantney	FBISD, Ridgemont ES, Campus Compliance Coordinator
Page, Leshunda	FBISD, Assistant Director School Counseling
Sankaranarayain, Kratnu	FBISD Student
Sartain, Lori	FBISD, Director Behavioral Health
Seleyman, LaTosha	FBISD Parent
Singh, Jessica	FBISD, Willowridge HS, Teacher
Thummel, Allison	SHAC
Tran, Tinou	FBISD, Director Multilingual
Unruh, Tiffany	FBISD, Director Strategic Planning
Westbrook, Pilar	Executive Director SEL & Comprehensive Health
Williams, Stephanie	Executive Director Organizational Development

Term

The Local Innovation Plan’s term is five years, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with statute. The Local Innovation Plan was renewed in February 2022. The Amended Local Innovation Plan will continue the term until the end of the 2026 – 27 school year.



CORE BELIEFS AND COMMITMENTS

Core Belief 1: All students can reach their full potential.

Commitment: Fort Bend ISD will provide an educational system that will enable all students to reach their full potential.

Core Belief 2: We believe student success is best achieved...

...through effective teachers that inspire learning.

Commitment: Fort Bend ISD will recruit, develop and retain effective teachers.

...in a supportive climate and safe environment.

Commitment: Fort Bend ISD will provide a supportive climate and a safe learning/working environment.

...by empowered and effective leaders throughout the system.

Commitment: Fort Bend ISD will provide and promote leadership development at all levels.

...in a well-functioning, high-performing community of learners.

Commitment: Fort Bend ISD will be a collaborative, efficient and effective learning community.

MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

Fort Bend ISD exists to inspire and equip all students to pursue futures beyond what they can imagine.

VISION

Fort Bend ISD will graduate students who exhibit the attributes of the District's Profile of a Graduate.

PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

A Fort Bend ISD Graduate has a rigorous academic foundation, strong character, and is...



equipped with skills for life.

Fort Bend ISD graduates exhibit grit and determination in all aspects of life; respect self and others; engage in healthy life choices; are literate and articulate; proficient with technology; and meaningfully and practically apply knowledge in productive ways.



a compassionate citizen.

Fort Bend ISD graduates are empathetic to their fellow citizens, exhibiting care and concern for others; are inclusive and embrace differences; are culturally aware; actively engage in improving our diverse community; exercise their right to vote; and are dependable, respectful, trustworthy, and self-disciplined.



a servant leader.

Fort Bend ISD graduates demonstrate confidence while maintaining a humble and kind demeanor; prioritizing the needs of others while accepting responsibility for themselves and are accountable for their own actions; are optimistic; and strive to bring out the best in others.



a collaborative team member.

Fort Bend ISD graduates work effectively with others to achieve group goals; take actions that respect the needs and contributions of others; yield their own objectives to the goals of the team; and positively facilitate and contribute to teamwork.



an effective communicator.

Fort Bend ISD graduates communicate clearly both orally and in writing; respectfully and actively listen to others; appropriately engage in courageous conversations; and appropriately adapt their communication style to the audience.



a life-long learner.

Fort Bend ISD graduates approach life with wonder and curiosity; seek opportunities to be creative; possess a thirst for knowledge and the ability to adapt to change; and are academically prepared to pursue and attain futures beyond what they can imagine.



a critical thinker.

Fort Bend ISD graduates are visionary and solutions-oriented problem solvers; are inquisitive and innovative; and have the courage to actively challenge conventional methods in order to improve themselves and the world around them.

DISTRICT GOALS



District Goal 1

Fort Bend ISD will provide rigorous and relevant curriculum and deliver instruction that is responsive to the needs of all students.



District Goal 2

Fort Bend ISD will provide a positive culture and climate that provides a safe and supportive environment for learning and working.



District Goal 3

Fort Bend ISD will recruit, develop, and retain high quality teachers and staff.



District Goal 4

Fort Bend ISD will engage students, parents, staff, and the community through ongoing communication, opportunities for collaboration and innovation, and partnerships that support the learning community.



District Goal 5

Fort Bend ISD will utilize financial, material, and human capital resources to maximize district outcomes and student achievement.



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Innovations

Fort Bend ISD proposes to maintain flexibility in the following areas of innovation related to:

- A. School Calendar,
- B. Teacher Certification
- C. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (90 Percent Rule)

A. School Calendar

Statutory Requirement: TEC Section Requiring Exemption: §25.0811 and §25.0812

Texas Education Code §25.0811: FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Texas Education Code §25.0812: LAST DAY OF SCHOOL (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Exemption*

RENEW exemptions relating to the first and last day of student instruction in order to provide local control and flexibility with calendar start and end dates.

Rationale and Benefits

The Fort Bend ISD goal states that FBISD will provide an educational system to enable all students to reach their full potential. By eliminating the calendar restrictions imposed by §25.0811 and §25.0812, the District will improve student learning by providing flexibility to balance the days between the first and second semesters of school. With more balanced semesters, teachers can pace instruction to provide more adequate time for students who take a one semester course in either the Fall or Spring semester. In addition, having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier allows high school seniors the opportunity to enroll in college summer school classes, thereby supporting the District's goal of promoting College and Career readiness. The ability for students to begin the school year earlier also allows the District to offer transitioning grades (PreK/Kinder, 6th, and 9th) an earlier start time for an orientation. Orientation provide an opportunity for students to acclimate, socially and emotionally, to their new campus environments. This reinforces the District's goal of establishing an active learning community.

Flexibility in the calendar allows professional development days to be distributed throughout the school year, rather than grouped together at the beginning or end of the school year. This supports the District goal of student success by ensuring that teachers can learn, collaborate, and grow throughout the school year and in real time. This flexibility also allows for the possibility of teacher workdays near the end of each grading period to be utilized for tasks such as finalizing grades, analyzing class data, completing report cards, conferencing with parents, and planning for improvements in teaching and learning. This ultimately allows our teachers to be better prepared to support students and ensure each student has an effective learning experience.

Implementation Guidance

When planning student and staff calendars the District shall ensure the following actions:

- Convene an annual District Calendar Committee for the purpose of recommending a calendar to the Board of Trustees for consideration
- Establish priority guidelines for development of draft calendars that maximize student instructional days while applying defined innovations
- Publish draft calendars for community feedback prior to BOT consideration and adoption
- Ensure the draft calendar meets the required 75,600 minutes and bank of minute requirements
- Ensure alignment of systems to support the implementation of the instructional calendar

B. Teacher Certification (Amended July 2024)

Statutory Requirement: TEC Section Requiring Exemption: §21.003

Texas Education Code §21.003: CERTIFICATION REQUIRED (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

Texas Education Code § 21.053: (a) a person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees (managers) of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Exemption

RENEW exemptions relating to teacher certification to have flexibility in recruiting teachers for areas with identified needs determined by existing vacancies.

Rationale and Benefits:

Fort Bend ISD strives to recruit, develop and retain effective teachers. FBISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction. In the current nationwide teacher shortage, flexibility is needed to ensure we recruit highly qualified candidates to ensure that FBISD is competitive, able to attract, and provide the support to retain staff. Allowing the District to take a creative approach to recruiting and developing qualified, enthusiastic teacher candidates greatly supports students. The benefits of this exemption include:

- Providing students access to highly qualified, industry-experienced teachers in specialized fields with industry-based expertise (i.e. CTE),
- Allowing flexibility to hire teachers for positions where vacancies continue to exist,
- Enabling the hiring of out-of-state teachers who meet state criteria for a one-year certificate, and
- Providing students with a well-rounded education by offering a wider range of course options.

By exempting the district from teacher certification requirements, this plan aims to improve student outcomes and provide a more well-rounded educational experience through recruitment and development of highly qualified candidates.

The District will continue to prioritize the hiring of credentialed teachers for open positions. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will exercise this exemption to recruit an out-of-state certified, non-certified experienced candidate, or an industry/language expert. This exemption allows the district greater flexibility in recruitment of experienced candidates to support student success. This exemption allows for inclusion of the following certifications:

- CTE
- World Languages
- Out of State Certification
- Core Content Areas (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Generalist)
- Non-Core Content
- Out of Grade Band

Note: Special education, Pre-K, and Bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be State Board of Education Certified and are not eligible to be hired without a certification under the District of Innovation exemption.

By expanding the pool of potential candidates, the district can attract top talent and provide students with a more diverse and enriching educational experience.

Implementation Guidance

The District will determine the areas and programs included in the exemption based on staffing needs and articulate the hiring process in the Human Resources annual hiring timeframe.

Fort Bend ISD will identify necessary certification exemptions and training requirements for professionals and experts to teach courses in lieu of the traditional state requirements through a local process that includes a review of open positions, evaluation of candidate qualifications, individual staffing needs, and the availability of support.

Candidate qualifications may include a combination of:

- Professional work experience,
- Formal training and education,
- Relevant industry licensure, certification, or registration,
- Any combination of work experience, training and education, or industry credentialed related to the subject matter he/she will be teaching, and/or
- Intent to pursue Alternative Certification Program statement of eligibility.

When hiring teachers, the District shall ensure the following actions:

- Qualified candidates with a Texas Certification will be given priority.
- All candidates are required to complete the criminal background check in compliance with State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) rules mandated by TEC §22.0833 for a non-certified

employee.

- Candidates are thoroughly vetted to ensure they have not surrendered any teaching certificates in the past or been terminated from a teaching position for reasons unacceptable to the District.
- Candidates attend new teacher orientation and are supported by a mentor. In addition, candidates receive pedagogy and classroom management training to ensure they can reach students and scaffold information appropriately.
- The DOI Teacher Certification exemption will be applied when hiring CTE, World Languages, Specialized Non- Core courses and core content, when vacancies remain, and according to the Human Resource hiring timeline.
- The use of this exemption shall be limited to identified certification exemptions articulated in the rationale and benefits above.
- Human resources in collaboration with Department of School Leadership will monitor placement of candidates who are hired under the teacher certification exemption to ensure that the percentage of non-certified teachers on a campus or grade level is not excessive.
- Special education and bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be SBEC certified and are not eligible to be hired through the DOI Teacher Certification credentialing process.

The District commits to providing rigorous mentorship, educational, professional development opportunities, and/or other supports to ensure successful assimilation to their role as educator in the district to ensure success of our students.

C. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (90 Percent Rule)

Statutory Requirement: TEC Section Requiring Exemption: §25.092

Texas Education Code §25.092: MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) 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.

Exemption

RENEW exemption requiring students to be present in the classroom 90 percent of the time in order to earn credit and to provide flexibility for instructional delivery methods and to support students unable to attend class due to extenuating circumstances.

Rationale and Benefits:

As FBISD's mission is to inspire and equip all students to pursue futures beyond what they can imagine, we must also consider that all students have different needs and abilities. The 90 percent attendance requirement locks students into learning only during traditional class times and in a more traditional class setting. Even with the proliferation of online courses and learning, this rule still dictates that students must be either physically present or logged in during specific times. FBISD recognizes that some students learn at different paces as well as have extenuating circumstances that could keep them from learning opportunities requiring 90% of their learning during specified times during the school day.

This exemption allows for greater flexibility in FBISD’s educational offerings as well as ways to ensure that all students are provided a learning plan that allows them to demonstrate mastery and receive course credit. The flexibility will shift based on the needs of our diverse student population. Examples of this flexibility for students are:

- the opportunity for students to differentiate the pace of their learning and move forward with courses at a pace that is appropriate for them,
- project-based learning to demonstrate mastery, or
- expansion of learning modalities that give students control over time and place of learning.

In addition, this flexibility will offer specialized pathways for students who need abbreviated daily schedules because of work, medical issues, or family obligations to have options to gain credit with working on class outside of the traditional school day. This also can support students who thrive in an online environment or use hybrid situations to accelerate their learning. Under this exemption, the District will continue to investigate the abundant opportunities for active learning outside the classroom in order to receive course credit for content mastery, that does not bind a student to a traditional school schedule. Overall, the exemption allows the district to provide innovative options to promote student engagement in course material in flexible ways, ultimately allowing learning to happen anytime, anyplace.

Implementation Guidance:

When utilizing this exemption, the District shall ensure the following:

- This exemption does not impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (“UIL”) rules,
- This exemption in no way limits or modifies a teacher’s right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214,
- This exemption does not restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.

Implementation

Procedures will be developed to guide implementation of each exemption outlined in the Amended Local Innovation Plan.