

Evant Independent School District
Local District of Innovation (DOI) Plan
Revised 2022; Term April 11, 2022 through April 11, 2027 (5 year Term)

Background/Future Actions:

EISD adopted the first District of Innovation (DOI) Plan in 2017. It is available on our EISD website under District/Public Information/DOI and can be found at https://www.evantisd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=2582450&type=d&pREC_ID=2260522. The Board of Trustees designated a committee in 2017 to design the DOI plan.

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) by becoming a designated District of Innovation (DOI). It must be renewed every five years.

The district-level committee established under TEC §11.251, held a public meeting on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, to review the proposed renewal of the local District of Innovation (DOI) plan for EISD. Feedback was gathered from community participants during the public meeting. The final version of the proposed plan was posted on the EISD website, for over 30 days, beginning March 8, 2022 through April 11, 2022.

The Evant ISD Board of Trustees considered and unanimously approved the final District of Innovation plan at the April 11, 2022 Board meeting.

EISD notified the Commissioner of Education of the intent to renew the DOI plan. EISD will notify the Commissioner of Education about the adoption of the renewal of the DOI plan, along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the TEA required form. EISD will ensure that a copy of the renewed/approved local district of innovation plan is posted on the EISD website in accordance with the TEC, §12A.0071, for the term of the designation as an innovation district.

Members have changed since the DOI plan was created in 2017. Due to the size of our Rural School System, our committee members wear multiple hats. To help provide increased opportunities for stakeholder participation, all advisory committee meetings are open to the EISD community with the goal of involving more business owners, community members, parents, and/or staff. The EISD Board of Trustees also provides feedback, as well as considers and/or approves DOI amendments and/or revisions.

District of Innovation (DOI) Advisory Committee Members:

Austin Griffin	Agriculture/CTE Teacher
Brandon Young	Athletic Director
Brenda Martinez	Superintendent
Cheyenne Cook	Principal & Community Member
Claudia Canales	Effective Schools Coordinator & Parent
Jennifer Ingram	Assistant Superintendent, Parent, & Community Member

Kathy Kolodziej	Secondary School Counselor
Lori Slaughter	Elementary Teacher
Marsha Creek	Elementary School Counselor
Randy Newby	Secondary Teacher, Tech Director, & Community Member
Stacia Smith	Elementary Teacher, Parent & Community Member
Stacy Parrish	PEIMS Secretary & Community Member
Steve Adcock	Direction of Operations

Evant ISD Board of Trustees:

Sheila Williams, President	Vernon McCann, Vice President
Elisha Weeks, Secretary	Judd Wall, Trustee
Lauren Goins, Trustee	Melinda Acosta, Trustee

Texas Education Code (TEC) Exemptions:

District staff, in conjunction with the Local DOI committee, reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determine which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the educational opportunities of the students who attend Evant ISD. The following TEC Code (Current Statute) and proposed flexibility requests (to meet EISD) are requested through the renewed local District of Innovation (DOI) plan.

Revised - FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION (EB LEGAL) (TEC §25.0811)

Current Statute: Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. In the past, districts could apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier to meet the needs of the local community. Several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

If you do not start school until the 4th Monday in August, then school cannot end in May, it causes students to go to school into June to meet the required instructional minutes.

Proposed Flexibility: This flexibility allows the district to determine the best start date locally, on an annual basis, to best meet the needs of staff, students, and local community. Flexibility to start school earlier in August would help our district plan for balanced instructional time in the semesters. This also would allow EISD to begin the first day of school on a shortened week (i.e. starting on a Wednesday or Thursday), easing the transition for students.

Revised - CONTRACT SERVICE DAYS (TEC §21.401)

Current Statute: State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

This is separate from the instructional minutes requirements for students (75,600 minutes).

Proposed Flexibility: With the passage of §25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes (75,600) the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees (without a DOI it is set to 187 days).

For example, without the flexibility, a student may only be in school for say 175 days that equals 75,600 minutes, but a teacher must be on contract for 187 days; with the flexibility clause the district could decide a teacher is only on contract for 185 days.

The determination of how many days is required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision. This would allow us to get creative with our school calendar and not require teachers to be on contract for 187 days to meet the 187 day requirement; this would not impact pay rate.

Revised - RULES REGARDING FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE AND OPTIONS FOR FIELD EXPERIENCE & INTERNSHIPS, CERTIFICATION REQUIRED (DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (TEC §21.051, §21.003)

Current Statute: 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.

Special Education and Bilingual/ESL teachers must always meet SBEC certification requirements.

Proposed Flexibility: The flexibility in allowing EISD to make local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer and fill teaching positions that meet EISD needs within career and technology education (CTE) courses, hard to fill positions, and teaching positions where certified applicants are non-existent.

Across the state, there is a huge shortage of teachers. This flexibility would allow EISD to hire individuals to fill teacher roles that have not yet earned a teaching certification, but at a minimum have a bachelor's degree and are actively working towards a teaching certification (ex: they are enrolled in an alternative certification program).

This flexibility would be for teaching positions where a certified teacher cannot be secured. Applicants who are certified would be considered first. The goal is to reduce the amount of long-term substitutes or varied substitutes used to cover a teaching position. Acquiring substitutes with former certified teacher experience is challenging.

This flexibility will also enrich applicant pools for all content areas. The district's exemption from TEC §21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses, as well as allow industry experts to transition into the teaching profession within various course roles (ex: career and technology education courses).

Out-of-state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials.

This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in regards to class offerings.

All Special Education and Bilingual/ESL teachers must meet SBEC Certification regulations/requirements.

New - TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS (TEC §21.002 and §21.102)

Current Statute: TEC §21.102 requires that experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that 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.

Proposed Flexibility: EISD suggests that sometimes one year of time is not always sufficient to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness. This flexibility would allow EISD to offer a one-year probationary contract, for up to three years when needed, to experienced teachers who have been employed in public education, prior to working for EISD, for at least five of the eight previous years (to include the initial contract at hiring). *If a teacher with experience displays the necessary skill set, then a term contract may be extended starting year two.*

EISD also proposes that all new hires, new to the teaching field, be on a one-year probationary contract period for three consecutive years.

New - STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO, CLASS SIZE, & NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE (EEB LEGAL) (TEC §25.111, §25.112, and §25.113)

Current Statute: According to state law, Pre-Kindergarten – 4th grade class sizes are to remain at or below a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. The waiver is completed at the start of a school year, as well as anytime a child enrolls in an elementary school at a grade level where the ratio is already maintained according to staffing projections the previous year. *The waiver, when approved, allows for the class size to exceed 22 students in grades PK-4th.*

Proposed Flexibility: This exemption allows EISD the time to staff campuses with effective teachers by granting local control over class size ratios. The district will not file a waiver to TEA when class sizes in Pre-kindergarten-4th grade classrooms exceed the 22:1 ratio. Flexibility around class size can be considered at the elementary level in configurations that support the work of classrooms and students' needs at certain grade levels. If EISD remains above the 22:1 ratio, for a period of 1 month, it will notify the board and move forward with planning for potential additional support (ex: a classroom aide) to assist with the teacher/student ratio in the classroom.

New - TRANSFER STUDENTS (TEC §25.036) (FDA LEGAL, FDA LOCAL)

Current Statute: Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

Proposed Flexibility: The ability to revoke a transfer for a student at any time during the year based on behavior or attendance allows our district to continue accepting the greatest number of transfer students seeking a different educational setting than what is available where they reside, while ensuring they are meeting compliance with our student code of conduct and expectations.

New - MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL CREDIT (FEC LOCAL) (TEC §25.092) *High School Students*

Current Statute: State law currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days on a district calendar to earn course credit. The law requires districts to award class credit to students based on the time a student is present in a classroom for instruction, rather than mastery of content and subject proficiency.

Proposed Flexibility: The 90 percent rule is a subjective percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery.

Flexibility from this requirement means the district will not have to penalize students who miss class due to enriching activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances that supports EISD's goal to educate the whole child.

EISD would like to investigate the option to provide students credit for courses based on content mastery, not the amount of time the student spends in the classroom. This exemption would allow the district to provide innovative options to promote student engagement in course material in flexible ways. Our students attain valuable and meaningful learning from extra/co-curricular activities and experiences that currently count against the student's 90% attendance availability if a student has to miss part of the traditional school day.

Relief from TEC §25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of TEC §25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with TEC §28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with TEC §28.0216.

New - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (TEC §11.253, §21.404, §21.451, and §21.458)

Current Statute: State law currently requires a specified number of minutes, 450 minutes every two weeks, for teacher's planning and preparation time (aka conference time), oversight by the campus-level committee established under §11.253, as well as only allows districts to assign mentors to teachers with less than two years of teaching experience.

Proposed Flexibility: It is necessary for local districts to have the flexibility to schedule instructional meetings, as needed, during the workday without compromising student instructional time.

In a rural school system most, if not all, staff wear multiple hats. Waiting to meet before or after school is not the most effective practice due to the multiple roles employees hold within the school system.

Providing mentors to teachers in need, regardless of experience, would be a local choice and should be available for any teacher who needs the additional support.

New - SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPOSITORY CONTRACT (TEC §45.205)

Current Statute: TERM OF CONTRACT. (A) Except as provided by subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected as has qualified. (B) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend the depository contract for two additional two-year terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section §45.206. (C) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Proposed Flexibility: By gaining exemption from these statutes, EISD would be able to allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total six-year allowable contract term. The district may choose to remain with the institution, if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's bank services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there are no other banking institutions within the district's boundaries available to bid for the district's depository contract. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter direct deposits and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships. *Banking with our local bank also supports our local community.*

New - LOCAL SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL AND HEALTH EDUCATION INSTRUCTION (FFA Local) (TEC §28.004)

Current Statute: Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan Sec. §28.004 (d) 1 of this code requires the SHAC to meet four times annually.

Proposed Flexibility: In a small district, the same staff members are required to sit on several different committees, thus limiting their ability to effectively serve on those that meet at the same time, or require several meetings throughout the year.

Additionally, the members of the SHAC will have a much more intimate relationship with the needs and goals of this committee due to the small number of students it serves, thus not requiring four meetings throughout the year to update its plan and vision.

EISD seeks exemption from the requirement to hold a minimum of 4 meetings per year under Sec. §28.004(d-1) The EISD committee shall meet at least once each year.

New - DISTRICT-LEVEL AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING (TEC §11.251 and §11.253)

Current Statute: TEC §11.252 states each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section §11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Sections 39.053(c)(1) -(4). Texas Education Code §11.253 states that each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

Proposed Flexibility: In an effort to add meaning and relevance to the district and campus level decision-making process, EISD would like to implement the following Strategic Planning process to replace the District and Campus Improvement Plans. EISD district and campus level strategic planning committees will be established as outlined in TEC §11.251 to review, learn, study, and analyze multiple data sources regarding success of all aspects of district operations, most importantly students' success. The Strategic Plan will align to School Board and District goals. The committee will meet at least two times per year and generate a strategic plan for district resources and efforts. Under the DOI, the prescriptive list of requirements in the District and Campus Improvement Plans will be replaced with a Strategic Planning process.

EISD Strategic Planning Procedures

	District Level Procedures		Campus Level Procedures
1 .	Appoint a District Strategic Planning Committee that includes representatives from all stakeholders as outlined in TEC §11.251.	1 .	Appoint a Campus Strategic Planning Committee that includes representatives as outlined in TEC §11. 251.
2 .	Learn, study, and analyze the strengths, needs, and challenges of the district through the use of a formal and informal review process. Review will include but is not limited to state, district, campus and classroom assessments.	2 .	Learn, study, and analyze the strengths, needs, and challenges of the campus through the use of a formal and informal review process. Review will include but is not limited to state, campus, and classroom data.
3 .	Design a strategic plan that aligns with the Board's vision and meets the needs of EISD's students, community, and staff.	3 .	Design a strategic plan that aligns with the Board's vision and meets the unique needs of the campus's students, community, and staff.
4 .	Communicate the strategic plan to all stakeholders in various ways.	4 .	Submit campus strategic plan for review and feedback.
5 .	Schedule yearly review of strategic plan and revise and modify based on an ongoing continuous improvement model process.	5 .	Communicate the strategic plan to all stakeholders in multiple ways—post on campus website, faculty meetings, and CIP meetings.
6 .	Report to the Board of Trustees the status of the district strategic plan.	6 .	Schedule yearly reviews of strategic plan and revise and modify based on an ongoing continuous improvement model process.

Term and Implementation of Local District of Innovation (DOI) Plan:

The term for this plan is for five years unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event Evant ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the local DOI committee and Evant ISD Board of Trustees will follow all procedures for amending this plan.

This innovation plan and specific implementation of the plan will be developed by appropriate leadership and stakeholders. Adjustments to Evant ISD Board Policy and other district policies will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees.