

Dublin Independent School District



2017-2022

District of Innovation Plan

## District of Innovation

During the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed, allowing Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation. This designation allows school districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Dublin ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and community.

Dublin ISD took the first step in exploring this opportunity when the Dublin ISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution initiating the process in March, 2017. The Board then held a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop an innovation plan, at which time the Board decided to move forward in the process appointing a committee to develop an innovation plan. The plan then will be posted online for at least 30 days. Following the 30 days online, the District's Plan of Innovation will go back to the Board for approval.

The term of the Local Innovation Plan will begin at the start of the 2017-2018 school year and end with the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will revisit the plan annually to ensure that the recommendations are still in line with the needs and wishes of the district.

## District of Innovation Committee Members

Pat Leatherwood	Board of Trustees, Vice President
David Leatherwood	Mayor
Dr. Rodney Schneider	Superintendent
Melissa Summers	Assistant Superintendent
Kassi Eads	Business Manager
Kalley Mitchell	Director of Special Education
Keith Owen	High School Principal
Norma Briseno	Junior High School Principal
Chesta Schneider	Intermediate School Principal
Lisa Weaver	Elementary School Principal
Paige Johnson	Intermediate School Counselor
Tammy Teten	Parent Liaison
Ronnie Horton	Community Member
Reyna DeLeon	Parent
Brandy Carr	Elementary Teacher
Mariah Cortez	Intermediate Teacher
Kyla Arendt	Junior High Teacher
Will Parker	High School Teacher

## 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 of regulation 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. Uniform School Start and End Date Exemption

(EB LEGAL)(TEC 25.0811, TEC 25.0812)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- increased flexibility in determining the start and end of the instructional calendar will increase student achievement, improve attendance, and better allow the district to meet the social and emotional needs of the students.
- The instructional days of the fall semester (finishing before the Christmas holidays) could be increased, making the number of days closer to equal the days of the spring semester. This allows for a more balanced approach to the scope and sequence of all classes, but greatly benefits single semester courses.
- Allows for a more equal distribution of the number of days in each grading period
- More options for professional development opportunities during the school year.
- Flexibility the first week of school-students would not have a full week.
  - Start date would be no earlier than August 1st.
  - End date would be no earlier than May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 2. State Certification requirements for Teachers and Other Educators

(DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL)(TEC 21.003, TEC 21.053)

Rationale: By exempting the District from this law, the District could allow the following:

- The flexibility to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit, career and technical/STEAM courses.

### 3. Instructional Minutes/Length of Instructional Day/ Early Release Days

(EC LEGAL)(TEC 25.081)

Rationale:

- Exemption from the 420 minute day or the 75,600 minutes per year requirement would allow Dublin ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days, whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of a natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.
  - The district seeks relief from this section in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development. The district seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and district needs.

**4. Teacher Employment Contracts**

(DC LEGAL)(TEC 21.401)

Rationale: With the implementation of TEC 25.081, which changed the required number of “days of instruction” to “minutes of instruction,” the law did not address contract days for teachers to better align with the “minutes of instruction” requirement.

- DISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align teacher contracts with the number of days students are in attendance.

**5. Probationary Contracts**

(DCA LEGAL)(TEC 21.102)

Rationale: Current law states 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. This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data.

- 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, new to the profession or with less than five years of experience, 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).

**Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.**

(Ed. Code 22.004(i))

**Currently**

Texas Education Code 22.004(i) states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all District employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision does not give the District the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially more attractive to prospective employees.

**Proposed**

In order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees, the District proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the District from the health insurance requirements in Texas Education Code 22.004(i).

## Timeline for Dublin ISD District of Innovation Plan

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
March 24, 2017	Initial Meeting with Leadership Team to discuss preliminary thoughts on District of Innovation
March 31, 2017	Board Approval of Resolution
April 5, 2017	District Site-Based meeting to discuss District of Innovation
April 17, 2017	Public hearing by School Board to consider pursuing District of Innovation Plan
April 17, 2017	Board appoints committee to develop a Plan of Innovation
April 18, 2017	District of Innovation Committee meets for training and creation of a plan
April 20, 2017	District SBDM committee to approve the plan
April 21, 2017	District of Innovation plan posted online
April 21, 2017	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner
May 22, 2017	Board of Trustees approval of plan
March 5, 2020	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
June 15, 2020	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
June 22, 2020	District of Innovation plan posted online
April 7, 2021	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
May 17, 2021	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
May 18, 2021	District of Innovation plan posted online
May 18, 2021	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner

