

# **DEVINE ISD**



## **DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN**

**2022-2027**

**Board Adopted, March 29, 2022**

**Amended Plan Board Adopted, June 20, 2022**

**Amended Plan Board Adopted, February 19, 2024**

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently utilize. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2022-2027).

Devine ISD took the first step in exploring this opportunity when the DISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution initiating the process in September 2021. 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. A committee was appointed to develop an innovation plan. The committee created a district of innovation plan. The plan then will be posted on-line for at least 30 days.

The Devine ISD Innovation Plan was adopted March 29, 2022. The term for this plan is for five years unless amended or terminated earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas Law. In the event Devine ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, community, and/or students, the Board of Trustees will follow procedures to amend the plan.

**District of Innovation Committee Members:**

<b>Dr. Todd Grandjean</b>	<b>Mandy Cross</b>	<b>Lysandra Reyes</b>	<b>Mark Berg</b>
<b>Daryl Wendel</b>	<b>Gail Duffer</b>	<b>Dianna Jeffers</b>	<b>Delilah Castillo</b>
<b>Abigail Beadle</b>	<b>Tiffany Balencia</b>	<b>Kim Loeffler</b>	<b>Evan Eads</b>
<b>Valerie Dykstra</b>	<b>Jenni Hagdorn</b>	<b>Martha McCulloch</b>	<b>Kirk Wagoner</b>
<b>Martha Wall</b>	<b>Ronda Shelton</b>	<b>Julia Hoog</b>	<b>Yvette Gerlach</b>
<b>Veronica Shaefer</b>	<b>Jeff Stivors</b>	<b>Lisa Conn</b>	<b>Nadia Sulaica</b>
<b>Cindy Morales</b>	<b>Jennifer Toalson</b>	<b>Dan Newburg</b>	<b>Robin Gibson</b>
<b>Misty Houston</b>	<b>LeeAnn Runnels</b>		

**District of Innovation Committee Members for 2/19/24 Amendment Approval**

<b>Dr. Todd Grandjean</b>	<b>Jenni Hagdorn</b>	<b>Lysandra Reyes</b>	<b>Geri Woods</b>
<b>Shannon Ramirez</b>	<b>Evan Eads</b>	<b>Raymond Crisp</b>	<b>Kandi Darnell</b>
<b>Abigail Beadle</b>	<b>David Jordan</b>	<b>Dianna Jeffers</b>	<b>Chief Atkinson</b>

## **District of Innovation Timeline**

September 20, 2021- Board of Trustees approve resolution to develop innovation plan

October 27, 2021 – Board of Trustees hold a public hearing in accordance with the statute/ Board of Trustee give guidance to the Superintendent of whom they would like on the committee - DEIC.

October 14, 2021 – January 26, 2022-- District Educational Improvement Committee will meet to construct a plan.

February 21, 2022 -- Draft to the Board of Trustees for review

February 22, 2022 —Post proposed plan on the district’s website for a minimum of 30 days for all to review. Superintendent notifies the Texas Commissioner of Education of the intention to vote on adoption of proposed plan.

March 29, 2022 —DEIC committee presents plan in a public hearing. Board of Trustees vote to formally approve the innovation plan.

--Superintendent gives formal notification to the Texas Commissioner of Education if/when plan is adopted.

May 13, 2022 - DEIC

## Academic Calendar

### **Current Law:**

Sec. 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.

### **Considerations:**

- School would not start earlier than the third Monday of August
- Creates more balance between fall and spring semesters
- Better aligns with college calendars
- Includes traditional holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break)
- Allows for more Work Days at the beginning of the school year
- Allows additional Professional Development days within the school year
- Includes two Early Release days
- 173 Days of Instruction\*

### **Innovation Strategy:**

The current process does not allow flexibility for our school district to design a calendar that is the best fit for our students, school, and community. The flexibility to make changes locally allows the district to determine, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of our district. Devine ISD would have the ability to create a calendar that would not have instruction start earlier than the third Monday of August.

## **Probationary Contracts**

### **Current Law:**

Sec. 21.102. PROBATIONARY CONTRACT. (b), a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time.

(b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

### **Current Challenges:**

There are times when teachers' probationary programs have not sufficiently prepared them for success in the classroom and/or when their experiences in other districts have not equipped them for the level of performance expected by Devine ISD. Limiting new to the district experienced teachers to one year probationary contracts does not allow for sufficient time to evaluate the employee's effectiveness on the job prior to contract recommendations. This inhibits the administrator's ability to work to improve performance prior to the determination of the issuance of a term contract. In these cases, the limit on the probationary period often forces the district to non-renew probationary contracts as opposed to offering term contracts for teachers who need a longer probationary period for further development.

### **Innovative Strategy:**

Devine ISD will continue to invest heavily in orientation and development of teachers new to the profession and those new to the district. In Devine ISD, an individual new to the profession will have up to a three year probationary period and an individual new to the district, (but not to the profession) will have up to a two year probationary period in the district. Campus and district administrators will retain the option to make annual employment decisions based on teacher proficiency and potential.

Devine ISD employees currently holding a probationary contract for the 2022-2023 school year, that have been employed as a teacher in a public education for at least five of the eight years, may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of employment.

### **Benefits of Exemption:**

Flexibility would have the following advantages:

- Provide more time to support teacher growth
- Provide more time to gather performance data to better evaluate the employee's effectiveness on the job
- Provide employees with extended opportunities to demonstrate the level of mastery expected by Devine ISD
- Assist Devine ISD in retaining teachers in whom the district has invested valuable time and resources.

## Teacher Certification

### **Current Law:**

Sec. 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.

### **Innovation Strategy:**

The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of specialized CTE course offerings, the District will establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the certification requirements set forth in law. A list of these courses is available upon request.

Currently, it is mandated that a person may not be employed as an educator by a school district unless the individual holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a school district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is teaching a subject outside her or his certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or the State Board of Educator Certification. This system is complicated and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district, especially for innovative classes where certification may not exist or educators with those credentials may not be readily available. Additionally, a teacher is required 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.

### **Benefits of Exemption:**

Flexibility would have the following benefits:

1. More ability to provide advanced specialized courses in Career and Technology Education (CTE), dual credit courses, and other non-core areas.
2. Allow the district to take into consideration unique financial and/or instructional needs.
3. Students will have more access to specialized courses to better prepare them for their future, whether college or career.

### **Implementation Guidance:**

When establishing use of this provision, the District shall ensure the following:

1. In exceptional circumstances, when a certified educator is not found for an offered class, the campus principal shall submit to the Superintendent a request for local certification that may allow a non-certified yet highly qualified professional to teach OR a certified educator to teach a subject in a related field for which she or he is not credentialed by the state.
2. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what qualifications the individual possesses to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
3. Whenever possible, lesson plans or curriculum guides to support the uncertified yet highly qualified educator will be developed or provided in partnership with certified teachers.
4. In the event an uncertified yet highly qualified educator or professional is assigned to a course, the superintendent will inform the board of trustees. Parents will also be notified in writing.
5. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
6. All approved requests will qualify the individual for a local teaching certificate for one academic year.
7. If a request is approved for an individual that is not currently SBEC certified, the employee will be at-will.

## **Discipline - Campus Behavior**

### **Current Law**

TEC 37.0012 Campus Behavior Law

(a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.

### **Rationale**

The law requires one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A. Designation of a sole individual for this responsibility is not in alignment with district goals and practices.

### **Innovative Strategy:**

The district's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional, behavioral and social support to students, rather than just one person. The district will continue to utilize the DISD Student Code of Conduct and the Campus Behavior Plan for each individual campus.



# **Student Transfers**

## **Current Law**

Sec. 25.036. TRANSFER OF STUDENT. (a) 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.

## **Current Challenges**

A school district may choose to accept students as transfers, even if they are not entitled to admission in a district. This education code provision has been interpreted to require a school transfer to be for a period of one school year. In approving transfer requests, the Superintendent or designee shall consider availability of space and instructional staff and the student's disciplinary history and attendance records. Under the current law, if a transfer student is in violation of the District's transfer rules for example if the student has excessive absences or an extensive disciplinary history, the District cannot revoke the transfer mid-year.

## **Innovative Strategy**

By exempting the District from Texas Education Code Section 25.036, a transfer student's enrollment status could be revoked at any time of the year when the Superintendent determines that the student has violated the expectations outlined in the transfer process. This innovation would allow the District to revoke a transfer student's enrollment at any time of the instructional calendar. Students would be able to reapply for readmission after one full school year following dismissal. This innovation would allow the school to take immediate action should a student not meet the expectations outlined in the transfer process, instead of waiting until the next school year to take such action.

## **Benefits of Exemption:**

This flexibility would have the following benefits:

1. Ensure that transfer students are staying in compliance with District transfer requirements.
2. Allow the District to immediately address transfer students who are out of compliance with District transfer requirements.
3. Ensure that an available transfer spot is not taken from another possible transfer applicant by a transfer student who is not attending school and has an excessive amount of absences.