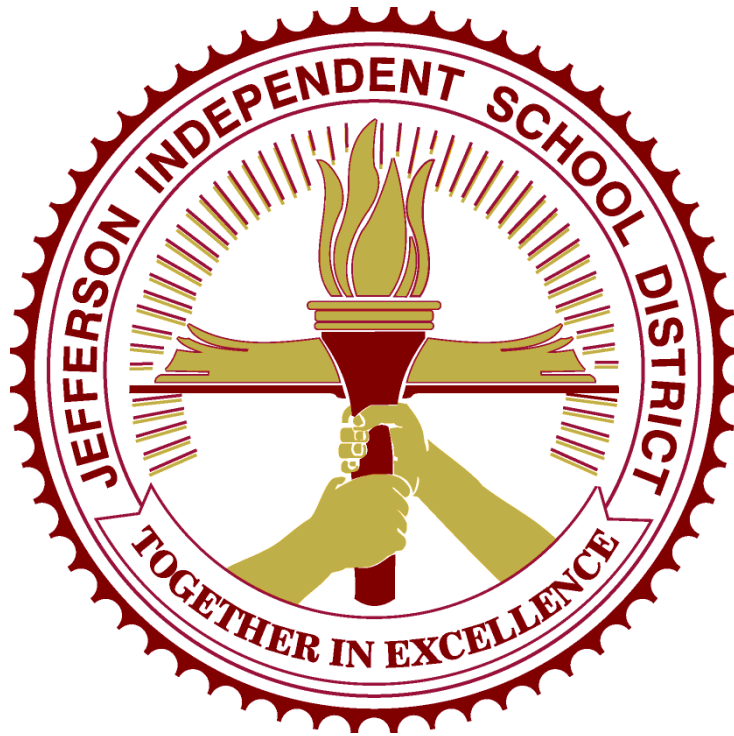




Jefferson ISD

***District of
Innovation Plan***

December 2026-November 2031

INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

PROCESS

On December 13, 2016 the Jefferson Independent School District's Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On January 10, 2017, the Jefferson ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District Site Based Committee (DSBC) to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration and local business owners. The committee met initially on January 11, 2017, to discuss and develop the plan.

The plan was posted on the District website for 30 days before being presented to the DSBC on February 13, 2017. Jefferson ISD notified the Texas Commissioner of Education of the District's final District of Innovation Plan and the plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval on February 14, 2017.

On October 12, 2021, a public meeting was held to review the District of Innovation Plan and gain feedback prior to district site based review and board approval.

On November 3, 2021, the district site based committee took public input into consideration when making final revisions to the plan.

On November 9, 2021, the plan received JISD Board of Trustees approval.

On April 20, 2022, the district site based committee took public input into consideration in regards to an amendment to teacher contract days.

On May 10, 2022, the plan will be taken before the JISD Board of Trustees for approval.

On May 2, 2024, the district site based committee took public input into consideration in regards to an amendment to teacher contract days.

On May 14, 2024, the plan will be taken before the JISD Board of Trustees for approval.

TERM

The renewed District of Innovation Plan will become effective in December 2021 and will remain in effect for five years, through November 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DSBC will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

TIMELINE

Timeline	Activity/Task
 December 13, 2016	Board of Trustees passed Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan
 January 10, 2017	Board of Trustees hold public hearing and appointed DSBC to draft Plan
 January 11, 2017	DSBC discuss, finalize, & approve District of Innovation Plan
 January 12, 2017	Post District of Innovation Plan on JISD website
 February 13, 2017	DSBC vote on District of Innovation Plan
	District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
February 14, 2017	Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan

Amendment Timeline	Activity/Task
 April 11, 2017	Board of Trustees hold public hearing and appointed DSBC to draft amended plan
 April 12, 2017	DSBC discuss, finalize, & approve amendment to District of Innovation Plan
 April 13, 2017	Post amended District of Innovation Plan on JISD website
 May 15, 2017	DSBC vote on amended District of Innovation Plan
	Amended District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
June 13, 2017	Board of Trustees vote on amended District of Innovation Plan

Renewal Timeline	Activity/Task
 October 1, 2021	Final version of renewed District of Innovation Plan posted on JISD website
 October 4, 2021	Notice of Intent to renew District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
 October 12, 2021	DSBC holds public meeting to review and consider the renewed plan
 November 8, 2021	DSBC discuss, finalize, & approve renewed District of Innovation Plan
 November 9, 2021	Board of Trustees vote on renewed District of Innovation Plan
 November 10, 2021	Renewed District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education

Amendment Timeline	Activity/Task
April 20, 2022	DSBC discuss, finalize, & approve amendment to District of Innovation Plan
May 10, 2022	Board of Trustees vote on amended District of Innovation Plan
May 11, 2022	Post amended District of Innovation Plan on JISD website
May 11, 2022	Amended District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education

Amendment Timeline	Activity/Task
May 2, 2024	DSBC discuss, finalize, & approve amendment to District of Innovation Plan
May 14, 2024	Board of Trustees vote on amended District of Innovation Plan
May 15, 2024	Post amended District of Innovation Plan on JISD website
May 15, 2024	Amended District of Innovation Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education
Renewal Timeline	Activity/Task
	Public Meeting held to consider proposed District of Innovation Plan renewal
	Board of Trustees vote on amended District of Innovation Plan
	Final version proposed renewal District of Innovation Plan on JISD website
	District notifies commissioner of approval of plan

EXEMPTIONS

§25.0811 Uniform School Start Date

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the below opportunities:

- With starting school 5 to 10 days earlier, our instructional calendar would be split more evenly between the Spring and Fall semesters.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align more closely with our local colleges.
- An early start date permits students an additional instruction prior to state assessments.

Local Guidelines

The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

§21.401 Teacher Contract Days

Current education law defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

Manner in which the law inhibits:

A recent change in school law has converted required student instructional and attendance days to 75,600 minutes. This change has resulted in the possibility of decreasing the number of days students must attend school, but does not address a similar need to decrease the number of days required for teachers if a district deems it appropriate to do so.

Benefit of exemption:

- The proposal would better align the number of teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.
- Reduces teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries.
- The proposal would increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- Enhances teacher recruitment.
- Improves teacher morale

Local Guidelines

The district will determine, on an annual basis, the length of teacher contracts in accordance with number of instructional days on the district calendar.

§21.102 Probationary Contracts

Currently, 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

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Jefferson ISD.

Local Guidelines

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

§21003 Certification - *TEC 21.003(a) states 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. TEC21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.*

Proposed

In order to best serve Jefferson ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow experienced certified teachers in our district to teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of their field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach the subject. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

- 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.
- All candidates will require final approval from the Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer.

§44.902 Long Range Energy Plan to reduce consumption - *TEC 44.902(a) The board of trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district's annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district's energy plan. (b) The plan required under Subsection (a) must include: (1) strategies for achieving energy efficiency that: (A) result in net savings for the district; or (B) can be achieved without financial cost to the district; and (2) for each strategy identified under Subdivision (1), the initial, short-term capital costs and lifetime costs and savings that may result from implementation of the strategy. (b-1) For purposes of Subsection (b), a strategy for achieving energy efficiency includes facility design and construction. (c) In determining under Subsection (b) whether a strategy may result in financial cost to the district, the board of trustees shall consider the total net costs and savings that may occur over the seven-year period following implementation of the strategy. (d) The board of trustees may submit the plan required under Subsection (a) to the State Energy Conservation Office for the purposes of determining whether funds available through loan programs administered by the office or tax incentives administered by the state or federal government are available to the district. The board may not disallow any proper allocation of incentives.*

Proposed

Delete the requirements for districts to reduce annual electric consumption by 5 percent and to develop plans for that purpose.

Local Guidelines

5% is an arbitrary number. It is a “one size fits all” awkward law. Energy consumption and savings are a building by building, district by district calculation. Therefore, the requirements to develop plans and other bureaucratic steps to meet this arbitrary goal are unnecessary.

§25.036 Inter-district Transfers--*Under Texas Education Code, 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.*

Proposed

Jefferson ISD 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, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance 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 applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Jefferson ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

COMMENTS

If you have any comments or concerns regarding the JISD District of Innovation Plan, we want to hear from you.
Please email us your thoughts to: mfwalker@jeffersonisd.org