

AMENDMENT TO THE DEVINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Devine Independent School District, a designated District of Innovation, proposes the following amendments to its Local Innovation Plan. These amendments are intended to provide the district with additional local flexibility to address instructional, staffing, enrollment, operational, and community needs.

The amendments below do not alter the existing term of the district's designation as a District of Innovation.

Amendment 1: Class Size at Intermediate Campus

Exemption Requested:

Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.112 – Class Size

Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.113 – Notice of Class Size

Related Board Policy: EEB (Legal)

Current Law

TEC §25.112 generally prohibits a school district from enrolling more than 22 students in a prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class, except as otherwise authorized by the statute.

TEC §25.113 requires a campus or district that receives an exception under TEC §25.112 to provide written notice to the parent or person standing in parental relation to each affected student.

Under current law, a district that exceeds the statutory class-size limitation must request an exception from the Texas Education Agency in accordance with the requirements established by law and agency rules.

Manner in Which the Statute Inhibits the Goals of the District

The statutory class-size limitation restricts the district's ability to make timely, locally determined staffing and instructional decisions based upon actual enrollment, staffing availability, classroom capacity, student needs, and available financial resources.

Enrollment can fluctuate throughout the school year, and circumstances may arise in which strict application of the 22-student limitation would require the district to create an additional

classroom or make staffing changes that may not represent the best use of available personnel and financial resources or may unnecessarily disrupt established classroom assignments.

The requirement to obtain a state exception also limits the district's ability to respond promptly to changes in enrollment and staffing. The district believes that decisions regarding appropriate class size can, in appropriate circumstances, be made more effectively at the local level by district and campus administrators who are directly familiar with the instructional, staffing, and operational circumstances of each classroom.

Proposed Innovation

Devine Independent School District seeks an exemption from TEC §§25.112 and 25.113 in order to provide the district with greater local flexibility in establishing and managing class sizes in third and fourth grade.

The district will continue to recognize the educational value of appropriate class sizes and will make reasonable efforts to maintain class sizes at or below the statutory 22-student limit whenever practical. However, when circumstances warrant, the district may exceed the 22-student class-size limitation without obtaining an individual class-size exception from the Texas Education Agency.

Class-size decisions will be made locally based upon factors that may include enrollment, staffing availability, classroom space, instructional needs, student needs, grade-level considerations, financial resources, and the overall educational needs of the campus and District.

The district will establish administrative procedures and local guidelines for monitoring class sizes and determining when a class may appropriately exceed 22 students. The Superintendent or designee will oversee implementation of this flexibility and may establish reasonable administrative limits and review procedures.

The district's exemption from TEC §25.113 will allow the district to establish local procedures for communicating with parents regarding class-size decisions rather than being subject to the statutory notice requirement associated with a state-granted exception under TEC §25.112.

This exemption is intended to provide the district with local flexibility while maintaining a commitment to appropriate instructional environments and sound educational practices.

Amendment 2: Academic Calendar

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Exemption to TEC §25.0811 – First Day of Instruction

Current Law:

TEC §25.0811 generally provides that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August, except as otherwise provided by law.

Considerations:

The statutory restriction on the first day of instruction limits the District's ability to develop an academic calendar that is responsive to the educational, staffing, operational, and community needs of Devine ISD.

Local flexibility in establishing the academic calendar allows the District to consider enrollment, staffing, professional development, instructional time, student needs, community needs, extracurricular activities, and other operational considerations when determining the most appropriate calendar for each school year.

Innovation Strategy:

Devine ISD will exempt itself from the requirements of TEC §25.0811 relating to the first day of instruction in order to provide the district with greater flexibility in establishing its annual academic calendar.

The district will have the authority to establish the first day of instruction for students on a locally determined date, including any date in the month of August, based upon the educational and operational needs of the District.

The Board of Trustees will approve the annual academic calendar in accordance with applicable law and District policy. The district will continue to comply with all applicable requirements concerning the number of instructional days, instructional minutes, state assessment requirements, and other applicable instructional-time requirements.

This exemption provides the district with the flexibility to establish an academic calendar that best serves its students, staff, and community without being restricted to the statutorily prescribed fourth Monday in August.

Possible motion for both:

I move that the Devine Independent School District District-Level Committee approve the proposed amendments to the Devine ISD District of Innovation Plan, including:

1. the addition of an exemption from Texas Education Code §§25.112 and 25.113 relating to class-size limitations and notice of class size; and
2. the revision of the District's existing exemption from Texas Education Code §25.0811 relating to the first day of instruction, providing the District with flexibility to establish the first day of instruction on a locally determined date, including any date in August;

and recommend the amended District of Innovation Plan is taken to the Devine ISD Board of Trustees for consideration.