



Jefferson ISD

***District of
Innovation Plan***

December 2021-November 2026

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

PLANNING COMMITTEE

First Name	Last Name	Member Category
		Business Member 1
Gary	Endsley	Community Member 1
Elnora	Phillips	Primary Teacher 1
Peggy	Holt	Special Programs Classroom Teacher
Lindsey	Whitaker	NonTeacher/Primary Administrator
Lacy	Green	Elementary Teacher 1
Rayanna	Walker	Elementary Teacher 2
Michelle	Wagner	Primary School Teacher
Shatoria	Wright	Elementary Paraprofessional
Amanda	Henry	NonTeacher/Elementary Administrator
Whitney	McCoy	Middle School Teacher 1
Lori	Cherry	Middle School Teacher 2
Melissa	Coker	Middle School Teacher 3
Tim	Phy	NonTeacher/Middle School Administrator
Alma	Rivera	High School Teacher 1
Blair	McGuire	High School Teacher 2
		High School Teacher 3
Jerry	Brannen	NonTeacher/Secondary Administrator Middle School
		Special Programs Classroom Teacher
Kathi	Burney	NonTeacher/Counselor
Tami	Whittington	Non-teaching professional (campus-based)
Alisha	Smith	Parent 1
		Parent 2
Michael	Walker	District Level
Lynn	Phillips	District Level
Clint	Coyne	District Level

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.

§37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator - TEC 37.0012(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. (b) The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of this subchapter. (c) Except as provided by this chapter, the specific duties of the campus behavior coordinator may be established by campus or district policy. Unless otherwise provided by campus or district policy: (1) a duty imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter shall be performed by the campus behavior coordinator; and (2) a power granted to a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter may be exercised by the campus behavior coordinator. (d) The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent or guardian as provided by this subsection if under this subchapter the student is placed into in-school or out-of-school suspension, placed in a disciplinary alternative education program, expelled, or placed in a juvenile justice alternative education program or is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer. A campus behavior coordinator must comply with this subsection by: (1) promptly contacting the parent or guardian by telephone or in person; and (2) making a good faith effort to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action is taken, for delivery to the student's parent or guardian.*

Proposed

Delete the requirements in this section, as they are redundant.

Local Guidelines

This recent legislative requirement to designate someone on each campus is a political solution to a non-existent problem. Obviously, the Principal and Assistant Principals already serve in this capacity and it is unnecessary to "designate" one of them as such.

AMENDED

§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

Jefferson ISD remains committed to hiring highly qualified professionals with appropriate certifications, and will continue to seek certified teachers to best serve its students. Through an exemption from existing Texas teacher certification requirements, Jefferson ISD, will be granted flexibility to hire non-certified professionals to teach in hard-to-fill and/or high demand positions, teachers certified in other states and countries, and professionals with experience in specialized industries in areas of needed expertise for courses. This exemption permits these professionals to meet standards designated by the State of Texas and permits the District to obtain the same weighted funding as would be available should the professional hold a traditional teaching certification for the course.

Local Guidelines

When hiring teachers, the District shall ensure the following actions:

- Qualified candidates with a Texas Certification will be given priority.
- All core content area, fine arts, and physical education candidates for local certification will be required to obtain their Texas Educator certification within a predetermined timeframe. At the expiration of the timeframe, the teacher will be non-renewed, or may be renewed for an additional school year based on classroom evaluation and student growth (for all core subjects), but will still be expected to obtain Texas Educator Certification.
- Core content area candidates, fine arts, and physical education may be eligible to participate in the district's Grow Your Own Program which provides the candidate a timeframe to obtain their teacher certification. Application must be submitted and accepted.
- All CTE candidates will be provided a local teaching permit based on experience in the related field.
- Candidates are thoroughly vetted to ensure they have not surrendered any teaching certificates in the past or been terminated from a teaching position for reasons unacceptable to the District.
- Candidates attend new teacher orientation and are supported by a mentor. In addition, candidates receive pedagogy and classroom management training to ensure they can reach students and scaffold information appropriately.
- All candidates are required to complete the criminal background check in compliance with State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) rules mandated by TEC §22.0833 for a non-certified employee.
- 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.

NEW

§37.006 DAEP for E-Cigarettes (and other vape devices) *Currently, Texas Education Code § 37.006 requires that a student must be removed from class and placed in a disciplinary alternative education program if the student possesses, uses, or distributes an e-cigarette (or other vape device). Also, Texas Education Code 37.006(a) requires that students who possess, use, or are under the influence of, or sell, give, or deliver to another person marijuana or electronic cigarettes shall be sent to DAEP.*

Proposed

This requirement restricts Jefferson ISD's ability to assess an appropriate disciplinary consequence based on the unique circumstances of each student, including consideration and application of the mitigating factors as required under Texas Education Code section 37.001(a)(4). Exemption from this requirement allows Jefferson ISD to implement meaningful consequences while also giving due consideration to all relevant circumstances as they pertain to each individual student and to each specific disciplinary incident considered by Jefferson ISD.

With the new requirement to place students in DAEP for the use, possession, or distribution of e-cigarettes (vaping devices or similar), Jefferson ISD has experienced an increased demand for placement in the DAEP facility and have incurred additional costs due to staffing along with a facility that stays at capacity. Additionally, Jefferson ISD has had success in handling disciplinary situations with e-cigarettes (vaping devices) using its own resources in a locally-determined disciplinary setting and process.

Local Guidelines

Exemption from this requirement allows Jefferson ISD to implement meaningful consequences for while also giving due consideration to all relevant circumstances as they pertain to each individual student and to each specific disciplinary incident considered by Jefferson ISD.

- Jefferson ISD will use discretion in disciplinary placement for students possessing, using, or delivering e-cigarettes on or near public school property or at certain school events.
- A student may be placed in a DAEP if the student possesses, uses, or is under the influence of, or sells, gives, or delivers to another person marijuana, as defined by Section 481.002, Health and Safety Code, or tetrahydrocannabinol, as defined by rule adopted under Section 481.003 of that code.
- A student may be placed in a DAEP if the student possesses, uses, sells, gives, or delivers to another person an e-cigarette, as defined by Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code.

Innovation Strategies: Jefferson ISD will determine the best course of action for discipline of students using, possessing, or distributing e-cigarettes (vaping devices or similar). This will allow the District to determine the best allocation of financial and staffing resources for students, based on District disciplinary methods and experience. This will provide additional financial resources that can be used on innovative and enriching educational programs for all District students.

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

Thank you