



Keller Independent School District Local Innovation Plan Renewal

District of Innovation Committee Approved Plan: April 15, 2026

Board of Trustees Adopted Plan: [PENDING]

I. INTRODUCTION

The District of Innovation (DOI) is a concept passed by the 84th Texas Legislature through House Bill (HB) 1842 that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools, including exemption from many requirements mandated in the Texas Education Code.

As a District of Innovation, Keller ISD has:

- 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
- Power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow for exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

Keller ISD's first DOI plan was a five-year plan starting on January 1, 2017. The district renewed the plan for an additional five years, beginning on December 13, 2021. This is Keller ISD's second renewed DOI Plan.

II. OUR PROCESS

Original Plan

On March 8, 2016, the Keller ISD Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation of a District of Innovation Under HB 1842 to increase local

control over KISD operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. A public hearing to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation was held on April 14, 2016.

On September 8, 2016, the Board appointed a District of Innovation District Advisory Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of KISD’s stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, community members, college and university representatives, administrators, and others. On October 19, 2016, the committee came together to consider recommendations of two of the three subcommittees and vote on those components of the plan. On November 3, 2016, the entire committee reconvened to finish discussing subcommittee work and to vote on all remaining components of the plan. The Board of Trustees voted to adopt the original DOI Plan on February 9, 2017. An Amendment to the Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees on February 8, 2018.

1st Renewal

Keller ISD used the structure approved by the Board of Trustees to establish an updated District of Innovation Advisory Committee. The Renewal Committee met virtually with a livestream to YouTube in a public meeting on October 12, 2021. At that meeting, all voting members in attendance voted on renewal of the original plan as well as three additional exemption areas.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved and adopted this Renewed Local Innovation Plan on December 13, 2021.

2nd Renewal

Keller ISD’s Board of Trustees approved on October 23, 2025, the formation of a new District of Innovation Committee to consider renewal ahead of the plan’s five-year expiration date. This new DOI Committee consisted of the following:

Name	Role in KISD
Imma Alexander	Parent
Jokeeta Anderson	Parent
Petra Argil	Parent
Ann Briggs	Community Member
Larry Castleberry	Community Member
Susan Cohen	Employee
Earl Edwards	Parent
Brandon Finnegan	Parent
Allison Fond	Community Member
Gayatri Gopalakrishnan	Parent, Employee
Paige Gibbons	Parent

Megan Guinn	Parent
Lashella Hayes-Scroggins	Parent
Emile Hicks	Employee
Victoria Horton	Community Member
Jodi Kitson	Employee
Nick Loehr	Parent
Lindsey Lopez	Parent
Jennifer Ramsey	Parent
Gobind Raunyar	Parent
Bethany Schaffer	Parent
Angela Shortledge	Employee
Amy Stout	Employee
Cindy Treyger	Parent, Employee
Wendy Trott	Employee
Jeremy Villegas	Parent
Chelsea Kelly	KISD Trustee

The DOI Committee met in the spring of 2026 – on February 3, February 23, and March 30 – to discuss the current innovation plan, to review changes to state law and their impact on the innovation plan, and to collect additional feedback.

On April 15, 2026, the DOI Committee voted to approve the renewed plan, which removed all exemptions that were no longer allowable or relevant by law and to extend all other existing exemptions.

The Board of Trustees approved and adopted this renewed Local Innovation Plan on [PENDING BOARD APPROVAL].

III. TERM

The term of this plan is for five years, beginning on the date of Board adoption – [APPROVAL DATE] – and ending [APPROVAL DATE + 5 YEARS] unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. If, within the term of this plan, other areas of operations are considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the DOI Committee will consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. Keller ISD may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

IV. INNOVATIONS

Keller ISD claims flexibility and exemption in the following areas:

“Ninety Percent Rule” for Class Attendance	
Texas Education Code §25.092	FEC (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: This would provide flexibility for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are unable to attend class in the traditional brick and mortar building because of illness or family concerns; • Would benefit from a different time structure to the school day; • Would benefit from virtual and online classes in addition to or in place of the traditional classroom setting; or • Are pursuing an accelerated program (i.e. music, swimming) and will be traveling extensively 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A). Innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students by promoting engaged learning through innovative methods, locations, and times for instruction, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. To ensure that students are placed appropriately in the new options and receiving the optimal experience, we will implement a process through which counselors and administrators are able to evaluate a student’s potential success in these new program options. Students taking traditional courses not impacted by this exemption would still be required to meet the 90% attendance requirement as it currently exists.</p>	

Earliest Possible School Start Date	
Texas Education Code §25.0811, §25.0812	EB (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First semester complete before Winter Break for more beneficial instructional pacing; • More instructional days before state assessments providing flexibility for different types of learners and learning needs; • More professional development opportunities during the school year for teachers; • Full days for professional development opportunities as opposed to half days; • Flexibility the first week of school – students would not have a full week; and • The calendar could be more aligned with college schedules, providing students with additional opportunities. <p>While the district seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of starting early (e.g. cooling costs in August); 	

- All administrative regulations and policies would be followed in relation to extreme heat during recess;
- Adjustments to professional development calendars will need to be addressed; and
- Preference that students do not have a full week the first week of school.

Innovation:

TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B). Modifications to the school day or year

Current law prohibits the district from starting school before the third Monday of August, forcing districts into a calendar that has minimal opportunity for teacher professional development, requires the semester to end after the Winter Break, and provides negligible time for summer school before state-mandated assessment re-takes in the summer. Starting school even one week earlier can help minimize the negative impacts the district sees in these areas. Starting earlier will allow for creative scheduling that allows for more intentional teacher professional development throughout the school year and allows students to have a schedule that is more conducive to their learning.

Minimum Days of Attendance

Texas Education Code §25.081

EB (LEGAL)

Rationale:

Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Eliminate credit denial, 90% rule, and Saturday school;
- Additional credit options for alternative campuses;
- Additional credit options for working students and students who are parents;
- Flexibility for different learners – ADHD, GT, etc.;
- Elimination of TEA waivers; and
- Potential options for half-day kindergarten.

While the district seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Flexible scheduling could be a challenge, especially for working parents
- Any potential cost to the district, especially relating to Pre-Kindergarten

Innovation:

TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A). Innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement

Exemption from this requirement will provide the district with the flexibility it needs to consider instructions and gaining credits in ways that make sense for students, especially our students who have unique needs. This exemption can be used for craft programs for nontraditional students, students with special needs, and even our youngest students to best meet their needs. Instruction does not always have to take place in a classroom seat, and this exemption will allow the district to explore more

online options, project-based learning outside the classroom, and the structure of programming for various groups of students.

Planning and Preparation Periods	
Texas Education Code §21.404	DL (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: By exempting the district from this law, the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have flexibility for special days on campus (state testing, field trips, etc.); • Will have flexibility in time for more collaboration during the school day; and • Will allow for administration flexibility based on student needs by campus. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A). Innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement.</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide each campus with the local control needed to determine how to best use staff time, especially as it pertains to collaborative planning and best meeting the needs of students. The overall number of minutes that a teacher receives for planning preparation should not be reduced, but the flexibility to distribute the minutes in an innovative way provides opportunities for secondary scheduling – like a modified block schedule that provides 90-minute high school planning periods every other day instead of 45-minute planning periods each instructional day. Keller ISD’s District of Innovation Committee emphasized that campus and district administration should take efforts to ensure that teachers receive the full length of their scheduled planning periods.</p>	

State Certification Requirements for Teachers and Other Educators	
Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.053	DBA (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: By exempting the district from this law, the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have the flexibility to hire experts in their field even if they don’t yet have a teaching certificate; • Will have the flexibility in hiring “hard to fill” positions; and • Will have the flexibility to hire those with industry expertise (e.g. HB 5 courses). 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E). Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide much needed flexibility to hire the most qualified candidate for teaching positions. With an increasing number of innovative courses created after implementation of HB 5 (83rd Session), finding exceptionally qualified applicants in specific fields who are also certified teachers is increasingly difficult, if not impossible. This flexibility will allow the district to hire individuals who best meet the needs of students and provide the content knowledge our students need</p>	

to enter an increasingly innovative world. This innovation does not exempt the district from requiring certification for foundation curriculum courses as specified in HB 2 (89th Session).

Certified Employee Contract Rights (specifically second probationary year for teachers hired under 5-of-8 rule and suspensions without pay)	
Texas Education Code §21.102(b), §21.211(b)	DCA (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: By exempting the district from this law, the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have the flexibility of hiring a probationary teacher for a second year to provide for more growth and coaching when the teacher is hired under the 5-of-8 rule; and • Will have the flexibility to suspend without pay when under allegation that is covered in Educator Code of Conduct. Any decisions made regarding suspension without pay would be open to appeal through the grievance process. 	
<p>Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E). Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.</p> <p>Exemption from this requirement will provide campus administrators and hiring officials with the time needed to fully assess and support a teacher before making decisions regarding moving the employee from a probationary contract when that employee has only been with the district for one year. This exemption will also allow the district to make employment and financial decisions that are in the best interest of the district when an employee is alleged to have violated serious provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics or law, including crimes against children. This flexibility from some of the provisions of Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code will allow the district to approach some employment issues in ways that best meet the needs of the district and take quick action to protect students when necessary.</p>	

22-to-1 Elementary Class Size Ratios and Notice	
Texas Education Code §25.112, §25.113	EEB (LEGAL)
<p>Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district does not seek to unilaterally create higher class sizes – appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level; • More teacher, campus, and local control to make decisions based on the unique needs of each individual classroom and campus; • Flexibility to move a child that would benefit from a new classroom environment without forcing another student to move, requiring classrooms to be split, and/or submitting a TEA waiver; and • Assist campuses that may not have the room to add a classroom, reducing and/or eliminating the need for portables and forcing transfers. 	

While the district seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Staff prior to the beginning of the year at 22-to-1 for K-4 classrooms, considering a larger ratio of students based on a campus collaborative process;
- Notify parents when classes exceed 22-to-1 to ensure transparency;
- If another teacher will not be hired, consider adding paraprofessional support;
- Ensure policy language clearly sets out the process that will be followed and how families and the board of trustees will be notified of class size status to ensure transparency.

Innovation:

TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E). Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.

Keller ISD will continue to adhere to its staffing ratios, balancing class size decisions with the logistics of funding, availability of resources and space, and necessary student support. Exemption from this requirement will not, itself, increase class size ratios, but will provide the district and campuses the freedom to make decisions that are best for their students in changing circumstances. This exemption will give the district and campuses the ability to decide when it is best to allow students to remain with a teacher they've grown to know and work with, and when it is best to split a classroom to make two smaller classes without spending administrative time submitting TEA waivers or providing excessive parent communications.

Teacher Appraisals (Student Learning Objectives)

Texas Education Code §21.352, §21.353

DNA (LEGAL)

Rationale:

Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Allowing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to be removed from the T-TESS process; and
- Freeing up time and resources to execute other goal areas in evaluation that are generally considered either more beneficial than the SLOs or repetitive of the SLOs.

While the district seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- SLOs would only be part of the T-TESS evaluation if the teacher opts to include such a goal.

Innovation:

TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E). Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.

Exemption from this requirement will provide teachers the freedom to make decisions in the evaluation process that they believe will make the biggest impact on student success without spending unnecessary time on compliance pieces that do not provide a

significant impact. This exemption will give campus administration and teachers the ability to tighten up the evaluation process.

Depository Contracts	
Texas Education Code §45.205	BDAE (LEGAL)
Rationale: Under the law, a depository shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year.	
Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E). Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees. Exemption from this requirement will allow the district to maintain satisfactory working relationships with its depository bank without the need to re-bid for the work at the exact timelines required by law when there are a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the district's business. If the district is satisfied with the service of the depository bank and is getting good rates, requiring the district to re-bid the contract is a waste of resources that can be avoided. It also mitigates the impact to employees that would have to change direct deposit instructions each time a new depository is approved. This exemption does not, however, prevent the district from bidding for a new depository at any time, should pricing become uncompetitive or other operational or financial reasons necessitate the district to seek a new vendor.	

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY EXPECTATIONS

This Local Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which Keller ISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. The plan sets out the laws from which KISD claims relief so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. While this plan sets out those parameters, it does not and cannot establish the full scope of innovative practices within Keller ISD.

Adjustments to board policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees, where appropriate. It is the expectation of the DOI Committee that all board policy language will reflect the spirit of the committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this plan. Policy development resulting from this Local Innovation Plan will be provided to the DOI Committee for review and feedback before the policies are presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

Any and all changes that arise from the District of Innovation work will be accompanied by a comprehensive communication plan for students, families, and the community.

DRAFT