

Dublin Independent School District



2022-2027

District of Innovation Plan

District of Innovation

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed, allowing Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation. This designation allows school districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Dublin ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and community.

Dublin ISD took the first step in exploring this opportunity when the Dublin ISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution initiating the process in March, 2017 and approved the plan in May, 2017. In February of 2022 the District began the process of renewing the plan and posted online for at least 30 days. Following the 30 days online, the District's Renewal of the Plan of Innovation will go back to the Board for approval.

The term of the Renewed Local Innovation Plan will begin at the start of the 2022-2023 school year and end with the 2026-2027 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will revisit the plan annually to ensure that the recommendations are still in line with the needs and wishes of the District.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Raymond Salinas	Board of Trustees, Vice President
David Leatherwood	Mayor
Melissa Summers	Superintendent
Terri White	Assistant Superintendent
Kassi Eads	Business Manager
Kalley Mitchell	Director of Special Education
Dr. Norma Briseno	High School Principal
Paige Johnson	Junior High School Principal
Amanda Lisso	Intermediate School Principal
Brandy Carr	Elementary School Principal
Maegan Ralston	Intermediate School Counselor
Celinda Journey	Community Member
Reyna DeLeon	Parent
Cassidy Miller	Elementary Teacher
Brenda Juarez	Intermediate Teacher
Susan DiCiccio	Jr. High School Teacher
Lisa Weaver	High School Teacher

Areas of Innovation

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules of regulation promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

1. Uniform School Start and End Date Exemption

(EB LEGAL) (TEC § 25.0811, TEC § 25.0812)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- increased flexibility in determining the start and end of the instructional calendar will increase student achievement, improve attendance, and better allow the District to meet the social and emotional needs of the students.
- The instructional days of the fall semester (finishing before the Christmas holidays) could be increased, making the number of days closer to equal the days of the spring semester. This allows for a more balanced approach to the scope and sequence of all classes, but greatly benefits single semester courses.
- Allows for a more equal distribution of the number of days in each grading period
- More options for professional development opportunities during the school year.
- Flexibility the first week of school-students would not have a full week.
 - Start date would be no earlier than August 1st.
 - End date would be no earlier than May 1st.

2. State Certification requirements for Teachers and Other Educators

(DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL) (TEC § 21.003, TEC § 21.053)

Rationale: By exempting the District from this law, the District could allow the following:

- The flexibility to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand dual credit, career and technical/STEAM courses.
- **Note: This does not include an exemption from the requirements under TEC § 21.0032, which limits a District's ability to exempt from certain certification requirements for foundational subject teachers under TEC § 21.003.**

3. Instructional Minutes/Length of Instructional Day/ Early Release Days
(EC LEGAL) (TEC § 25.081)

Rationale:

- Exemption from the 420 minute day or the 75,600 minutes per year requirement would allow Dublin ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days, whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the District and its stakeholders. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of a natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.
 - The District seeks relief from this section in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development. The District seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and District needs.

4. Teacher Employment Contracts
(DC LEGAL) (TEC § 21.401)

Rationale: With the implementation of TEC 25.081, which changed the required number of “days of instruction” to “minutes of instruction,” the law did not address contract days for teachers to better align with the “minutes of instruction” requirement.

- DISD would like to have the freedom to consider the reduction in contract days to better align teacher contracts with the number of days students are in attendance.

5. Probationary Contracts
(DCA LEGAL) (TEC § 21.102)

Rationale: Current law states that a probationary contract 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 with the District. This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data.

- For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the District that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers, new to the profession or with less than five years of experience, hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

6. School Health Advisory Council Meetings

TEC § 28.004

Rationale: Currently TEC § 28.004 states that a school district shall establish a local school health advisory council (SHAC). In the 89th Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 12, which prevents a District from exempting from the requirement to establish a SHAC. DISD has established a SHAC and is not providing for an exemption from this requirement. However, the District will claim an exemption to other requirements regarding the SHAC contained in TEC § 28.004. An exemption would allow local control by the Board of Trustees, District administration, and the SHAC committee members to make determinations regarding the SHAC, such as the required number of meetings per year, the notices and retention of meeting minutes, the appointment and make-up of SHAC members and officers, the recording of meetings, and the adoption of curriculum material for the District's health education instruction.

- The SHAC will meet twice per year-once in the Fall and once in the Spring.
- The Board will be kept informed following each SHAC meeting.
- Increased local control of the SHAC processes and procedures will allow Dublin ISD to be adaptive to the District's local community values regarding the District's health education instruction.

7. School Counselor Responsibilities

(TEC § 33.006)

Rationale: To best serve Dublin ISD students, decisions on counselor duties and allocation of work time will be locally determined.

- This exemption will grant Dublin ISD greater flexibility in appropriately allocating limited resources to accomplish necessary District goals and to better meet student needs.

8. Requirement to Post Full Course Syllabus

(TEC § 26.0062)

Rationale: DISD is opting out of this provision in order to preserve instructional flexibility. The District already ensures transparency through readily available curriculum resources, open parent communication, and established procedures for reviewing instructional

materials. This decision supports our goal of fostering innovation while maintaining strong parent partnerships and academic accountability.

9. Grievance Processes

(TEC § § 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003)

Rationale: Current law in TEC Chapter 26A requires each school district to adopt a standardized complaint policy with several burdensome requirements, including extended timelines for filing and compressed timelines for holding conferences at each level. The law requires a policy allowing 60 calendar days for a parent to file a grievance from the date on which the parent or person knew or had reason to know of the facts giving rise to the grievance, unless the parent engaged in informal attempts to resolve the grievance, in which case the parent could have up to 90 calendar days to file a grievance. The law further requires that such complaints be heard within ten calendar days of the complaint being filed. Moreover, in contradiction of existing law in the Texas Government Code, the recently adopted provisions in the Education Code would allow the person bringing the complaint to decide if it is heard in open or closed, rather than the person against whom the complaint is brought. Finally, parents and other grievants would be allowed to add issues and claims at any point during the grievance process, making it difficult to resolve concerns at the lowest possible level.

Innovation Strategy:

Dublin ISD has always and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines outlined in local Board policy. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provide adequate time for complaints to be filed and for complaints to be heard. All records related to grievances; including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions; are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. Dublin ISD is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all parent complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response. Dublin ISD's long-standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies. Dublin ISD seeks to be exempt from a statewide grievance policy, established under Chapter 26A of the Texas Education Code and will continue to follow established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy. This will allow the district to hear and consider parent and employee complaints in an orderly and responsive manner and to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible.

The exemption from Texas Education Code §26.011 is limited to the following language in Section 26.011(a) which requires the board of trustees to adopt a grievance procedure "that complies with Chapter 26A". To effectuate the exemption discussed above for Texas Education Code §§ 26A.001–26A.004, the District should also be exempt from the

language in Section 26.011(a): “that complies with Chapter 26A”. This exemption allows the District to maintain local control over its grievance policies, procedures, and process.

10. Library Review/Parent Council

(TEC § 33.025(b))

Rationale: DISD has procedures to address library acquisitions to appropriately identify the needs of the District in alignment with District values. With relief from this statute, the District maintains flexibility to review procedures to campus needs while continuing to ensure that materials are age-appropriate, educationally relevant, and aligned.

11. Acquisition of Library Materials

(TEC § 33.026)

Rationale: DISD has chosen to opt out of this statute in order to allow greater local control and efficiency in the selection and acquisition of library materials. While the District supports the intent of the statute to ensure community standards are considered, the required formal approval process can delay access to high-quality, relevant resources that support instruction and literacy.

12. Challenge or Appeal of Library Materials

(TEC § 33.027)

Rationale: DISD will maintain local control over the processes for challenging or appealing library materials. Opting out allows the District to respond more efficiently and effectively to concerns while preserving the flexibility to tailor the process in a way that reflects community expectations and educational priorities.

Timeline for Dublin ISD District of Innovation Plan

Date	Action
March 24, 2017	Initial Meeting with Leadership Team to discuss preliminary thoughts on District of Innovation
March 31, 2017	Board Approval of Resolution
April 5, 2017	District Site-Based meeting to discuss District of Innovation
April 17, 2017	Public hearing by School Board to consider pursuing District of Innovation Plan
April 17, 2017	Board appoints committee to develop a Plan of Innovation
April 18, 2017	District of Innovation Committee meets for training and creation of a plan
April 20, 2017	District SBDM committee to approve the plan
April 21, 2017	District of Innovation plan posted online
April 21, 2017	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner
May 22, 2017	Board of Trustees approval of plan
March 5, 2020	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
June 15, 2020	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
June 22, 2020	District of Innovation plan posted online
April 7, 2021	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
May 17, 2021	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
May 18, 2021	District of Innovation plan posted online
May 18, 2021	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner
February 18, 2022	District of Innovation Committee meets for renewal of plan
February 18, 2022	District of Innovation plan for renewal posted online
February 18, 2022	Intent to Renew submitted to commissioner
February 23, 2022	District SBDM committee to approve the renewal of plan

March 22, 2022	Board of Trustees approval of renewal of plan
April 4, 2022	Notice of Adoption of Renewal submitted to commissioner
August 25, 2022	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
August 29, 2022	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
September 1, 2022	District of Innovation plan posted online
September 1, 2022	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner
August 23, 2023	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
August 28, 2023	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
August 29, 2023	District of Innovation plan posted online
August 29, 2023	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner
February 23, 2024	District SBDM committee to approve amendment
February 26, 2024	Board of Trustees approval of amendment to plan
February 28, 2024	District of Innovation plan posted online
February 28, 2024	District of Innovation plan submitted to commissioner