

LAMAR CISD

A PROUD TRADITION | A BRIGHT FUTURE

LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

District of Innovation





District of Innovation

Lamar CISD Innovation Plan

January 2023

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed in 2015 in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, in part amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The District of Innovation designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the Texas Education Code, providing more flexibility and control in locally meeting the needs of students and the communities served.

The Districtwide Student Improvement Council (DSIC) met on Wednesday, November 9, 2022. Part of the agenda included discussion on the potential of initiating the process of becoming a District of Innovation (DOI). Upon review of what the District of Innovation designation is and is not, and the possible impacts for Lamar CISD students and staff, a majority of the DSIC members signed a petition to initiate consideration of designation as a District of Innovation as provided by TEC 12A.001(c)(2). The petition was presented to the Lamar CISD Board of Trustees at the November 15, 2022, Regular Board Meeting.

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 December 13, 2022, prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board approved the Lamar CISD Districtwide Student Improvement Council as the Local Innovation Committee to develop a local innovation plan in accordance with TEC Section 12A.003. The DSIC met on January 10 and January 31, 2023, to consider potential innovations and to draft the Local Innovation Plan.

Terms

By law, the term of the designation as a District of Innovation may not exceed five years. The term of the Lamar CISD Local Innovation Plan begins on March 21, 2023, and ends on March 21, 2028, unless rescinded or further renewed by the Board in accordance with law or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by a majority vote of the district-level committee established under the TEC 11.251 (Districtwide Student Improvement Council) along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An amendment to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an innovation district; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify the TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates. The Local Innovation Plan Committee will annually review the plan, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the Lamar CISD Strategic Plan efforts.

Committee

Districtwide Student Improvement Council members are each elected to represent a district stakeholder group for a three-year term. More than two-thirds of the committee members are classroom teachers, and the others represent non-teaching campus and district professional staff, parents, business representatives, and community members. For the development of the Lamar CISD Innovation Plan, the Districtwide Student Improvement Council (DSIC) served as the Lamar CISD Local Innovation Committee. Prior to and between each Innovation Committee meeting, committee members were encouraged to seek input and feedback on the plan components from the stakeholders they represent.

Core Beliefs & Goal Alignment

The Lamar CISD Innovation Plan is aligned with the district's mission, strategic plan and promise to parents. It is guided by our core beliefs and district goals. The LCISD Innovation Plan reflects our instructional priorities and provides a framework for meeting the needs of all students.

Mission

To educate all students by ensuring access to a superior education through inspired leadership among parents, teachers, administrators, and staff, allowing students to achieve their full potential to participate in future social, economic and educational opportunities in their community.

PROMISE TO PARENTS

Lamar CISD's Promise to Parents outlines District values through a list of things we will always do and things we will never do. Lamar CISD is dedicated to providing a safe, engaging learning environment where every student feels supported, celebrated and encouraged.

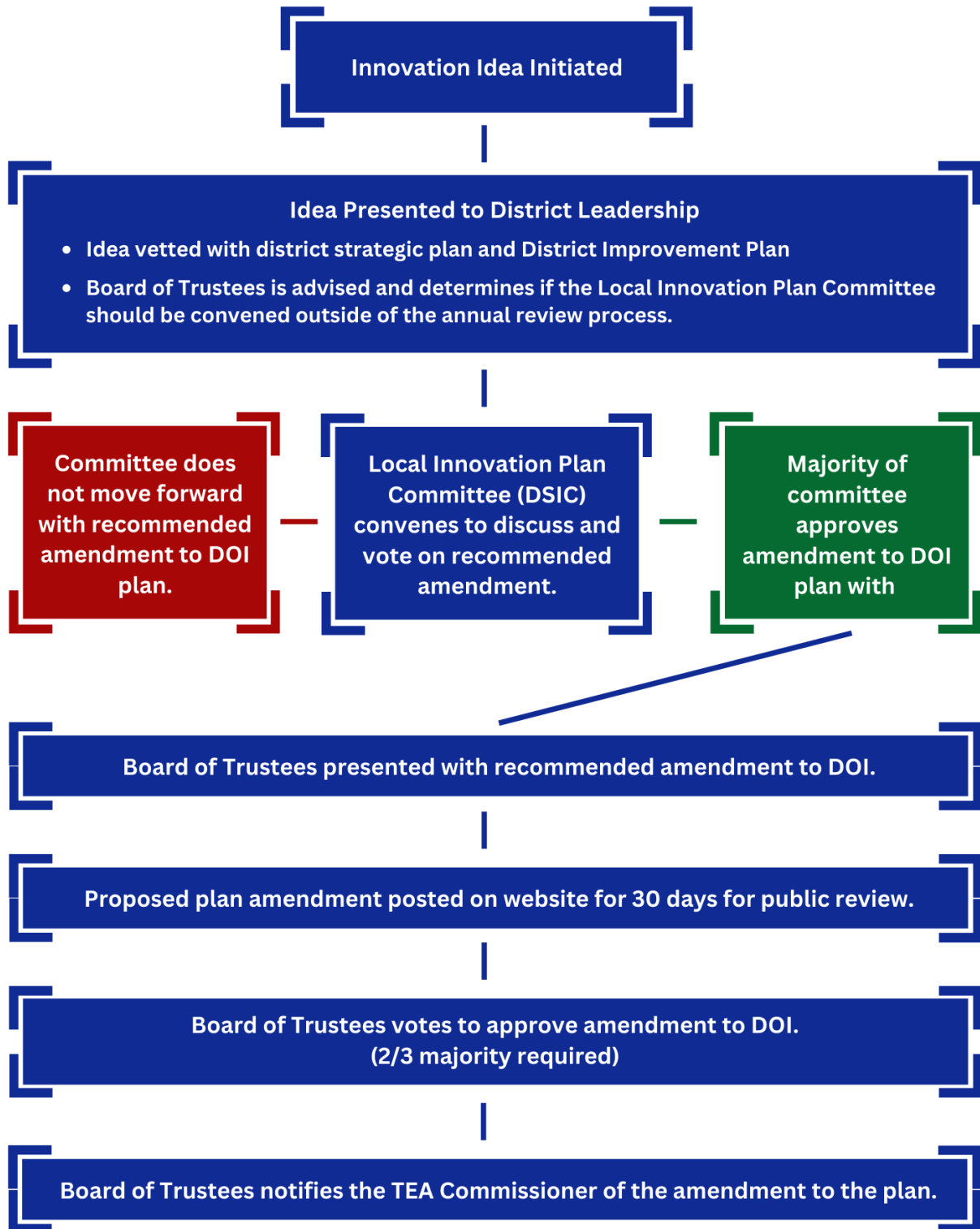
THINGS WE WILL ALWAYS DO

- Personally model the character traits that we wish for our students to develop.
- Demonstrate our faith in people by setting high goals.
- Hold ourselves accountable for the results we achieve.
- Act as learners ourselves by relentlessly pursuing new information, strategies and approaches.
- Laugh. Be joyful. Sing.
- Support each other by celebrating success, circling the wagons, or giving encouragement during a struggle.
- Act as though we were spending our own money.
- Focus on the right thing.
- Be the family for those who have none.

THINGS WE WILL NEVER DO

- Allow race, culture, economic status or intellect to dictate the opportunities of our students.
- Ignore or rationalize the data and evidence in order to maintain the comfort of the status quo.
- Avoid risks for fear of failure.
- Compromise the trust of our parents by abusing the faith they have in us to love their children.

Amendment and Review Process



Lamar CISD Innovations

Innovation #1 – Teacher Certification	
Current State Requirement	All teachers must hold an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the state. In the absence of the certification, districts can request emergency certification from the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). When a teacher does not have certification, the district must provide written notification to parents within 30 days.
Texas Education Code	§21.003
Challenge(s)	Traditional certification requirements for hard to fill positions are not aligned with the realities of the current educational environments. There is a need to hire industry experts to teach many of the "hard to fill" course offerings like career and technology and world languages such as French, ASL, and Chinese. Without a traditionally certified teacher, there could be limited availability of these courses.
District Recommendation	<p>LCISD will continue to seek certified educators for teaching positions and maintain expectations for employee certification. When search efforts have been exhausted, the district will be able to recruit, hire, and locally certify, individuals who are knowledgeable and are fully equipped to perform the duties of the following hard to hire teaching positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career & Technical Education • World Languages <p>The district will develop minimum required qualifications. Qualification criteria may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional work experience • Formal training/education in the content area • Active/relevant professional industry certification • A combination of work experience, training, and education • Demonstration of successful experience working with students <p>Qualification criterion will vary by position.</p> <p>The district must provide teachers hired under this option with the training necessary to carry out the expectations of their positions.</p>

Innovation #2 – First Day of Instruction	
Current State Requirement	A district cannot begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.
Texas Education Code	§25.0811
Challenge(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts with current need to provide strategic breaks for staff and students throughout the year. • A challenge to balance the days in each semester, particularly at the secondary level when participating in a one-semester course. • 45-day penalty free period for contract release • Limited calendar options
District Recommendation	The first day of instruction may be scheduled prior to the 4th Monday in August, but not prior to the 2nd Monday of August. The scheduled start date will be set to best meet the needs of LCISD students, staff, and community.

Innovation #3 – Required Staff Development	
Current State Requirement	TEC Section 21.451 outlines the mandatory staff development topics that the state requires educators to receive annually.
Texas Education Code	§21.451
Challenge(s)	Lamar CISD faculty are well trained in required staff development. Annual mandated trainings serve only to add redundancy to back to schoolwork that can be better utilized in preparing for the students to return.
District Recommendation	Required professional development as outlined in Education Code 21.451 (annual compliance training outlined in DMA Legal) may be completed on a three-year rotation rather than completed annually.

Innovation #4 – Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator	
Current State Requirement	A person at each campus 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.
Texas Education Code	§37.0012
Challenge(s)	By placing this duty on one administrator creates great inefficiencies and limits the effectiveness of Lamar CISD administrators. The assistant principals build relationships with the students and families assigned to them and are best equipped to handle discipline concerns and the management of behavior issues and consequences.
District Recommendation	The principal may delegate the duties of the Campus Behavior Coordinator to campus administrator(s) to best serve the needs of students and families, and the District will provide the training and guidance necessary for them to execute the expectations, practices and protocols of LCISD that also meet all other provisions of the applicable code. This will ensure consistency and adherence to policy and legal requirements.

Innovation #5 – Limitations on Student Suspensions	
Current State Requirement	Students below grade three may not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless the student engages in behaviors that include weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence.
Texas Education Code	§37.005
Challenge(s)	There are times when students engage in behaviors that do not necessarily fit into the categories of weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence, but warrant removal from the instructional setting. An example might include students who engage in “persistent misbehaviors” that are deemed to be harmful to the student, other students, and staff. Currently students in these situations sometimes fail to understand the seriousness of their behaviors due to administrative limitations in responding to their behaviors.
District Recommendation	Students in grades two and below may receive up to three days of out-of-school suspension for behaviors that do not necessarily fit into the categories of weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence, but warrant removal from the instructional setting.
Innovation #6 – Discipline Placement for Students Under Age 10	
Current State Requirement	Students below grade three may not be placed in a disciplinary alternative education program unless the student engages in behaviors that include weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence.
Texas Education Code	§37.006(1); §37.007(e)(2)
Challenge(s)	There are times when a student under age 10 engages in serious misbehavior that does not fit into the categories of bringing a weapon to school and/or other violent offenses but nonetheless poses a risk to other students and/or staff.
District Recommendation	If a student under the age of 10 has engaged in persistent misbehavior that is deemed by district leadership to put other students and/or staff in danger of bodily harm, the student may be placed temporarily in a non-traditional classroom setting. For a student receiving special education or 504 services, a manifest determination ARD would also be required for a change of placement. While at the non-traditional classroom setting, staff will implement restorative practices and social skills in a structured environment with the goal to transition the student successfully back to the traditional classroom environment.