



**District of Innovation Plan  
Renewal**

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### **District of Innovation Overview:**

The District of Innovation (DOI) concept, passed into state law by the 84th Texas Legislature, provides Texas public schools the opportunity to access operational flexibilities in an effort to improve the way that students are served, as determined by local needs.

The Aledo Independent School District believes that this level of local control adds flexibility and empowers our district to think and act in innovative ways to meet our District's priorities. Through DOI opportunities, Aledo ISD can leverage the freedom and flexibility afforded as a District of Innovation to ensure all students are provided with a exceptional experiences. The current DOI plan works in alignment with our district instructional focus to ensure a culture of excellence that supports teaching and learning.

In February 2019, the Board of Trustees approved the current Aledo ISD Innovation Plan. Local innovation plans must be renewed every five years to maintain a District of Innovation Status. In Fall, 2023, Aledo ISD began the process to review and renew the District of Innovation Plan. Based on input from the Board, administration, and various stakeholders, the District-wide Effectiveness Improvement Committee (DWEIC) proposed this plan.

Aledo ISD's Innovation Plan aligns to the District's priority of ensuring all students demonstrate yearly progress at expected levels. The Innovation Plan is also aligned to our district instructional priorities which include:

1. What We Teach: Teaching to depth of the standards
2. How We Teach: District-wide instructional priorities to increase rigor, relevance, and engagement in the classroom.
3. Authentic Literacy: Ensuring that all students are proficient readers and writers
4. Culture of Excellence: Committing to continuous improvement district-wide

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning February 16, 2024, and ending February 2029, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. DWEIC will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and will review it annually. That committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications, including addendums, to the plan.

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## **DOI Renewal Timeline**

### **November 8, 2023**

#### DWEIC/DOI Meeting

- Committee introduced to DOI renewal process.
- Committee reviewed current Aledo ISD district DOI plan.
- Committee discussed regarding educational changes since plan implementation in 2019.

### **December 11, 2023**

#### DWEIC/DOI Meeting

- Committee members were presented the proposed changes and additions to current DOI plan.
- Committee reviewed each proposed change and discussed various points surrounding each.
- Committee members were provided information regarding next steps to solicit feedback from groups/teams/campuses.

### **January 10, 2024**

#### DWEIC/DOI Meeting and Public Meeting

- Committee members reviewed feedback received and discussed current recommendations.
- New proposed exemption was discussed for feedback as presented to the committee.
- Committee members were provided information regarding next steps to solicit feedback from groups/teams/campuses.

### **January 12, 2024**

#### DWEIC Voting

- Committee members voted on current recommendations.

### **January 16, 2024**

#### Board of Trustees Meeting

- The draft plan will be presented to and discussed with the Board of Trustees. The draft plan will be posted on the district website to begin the 30-day public comment/feedback timeframe (January 16, 2024, through February 16, 2024). Feedback will be collected via online google form.
- Ongoing review all the feedback received from the January 16, 2024, board meeting and the 30-day website posting to date.
- Notify Commissioner of Education of Board of Trustees' intent to renew the DOI plan.

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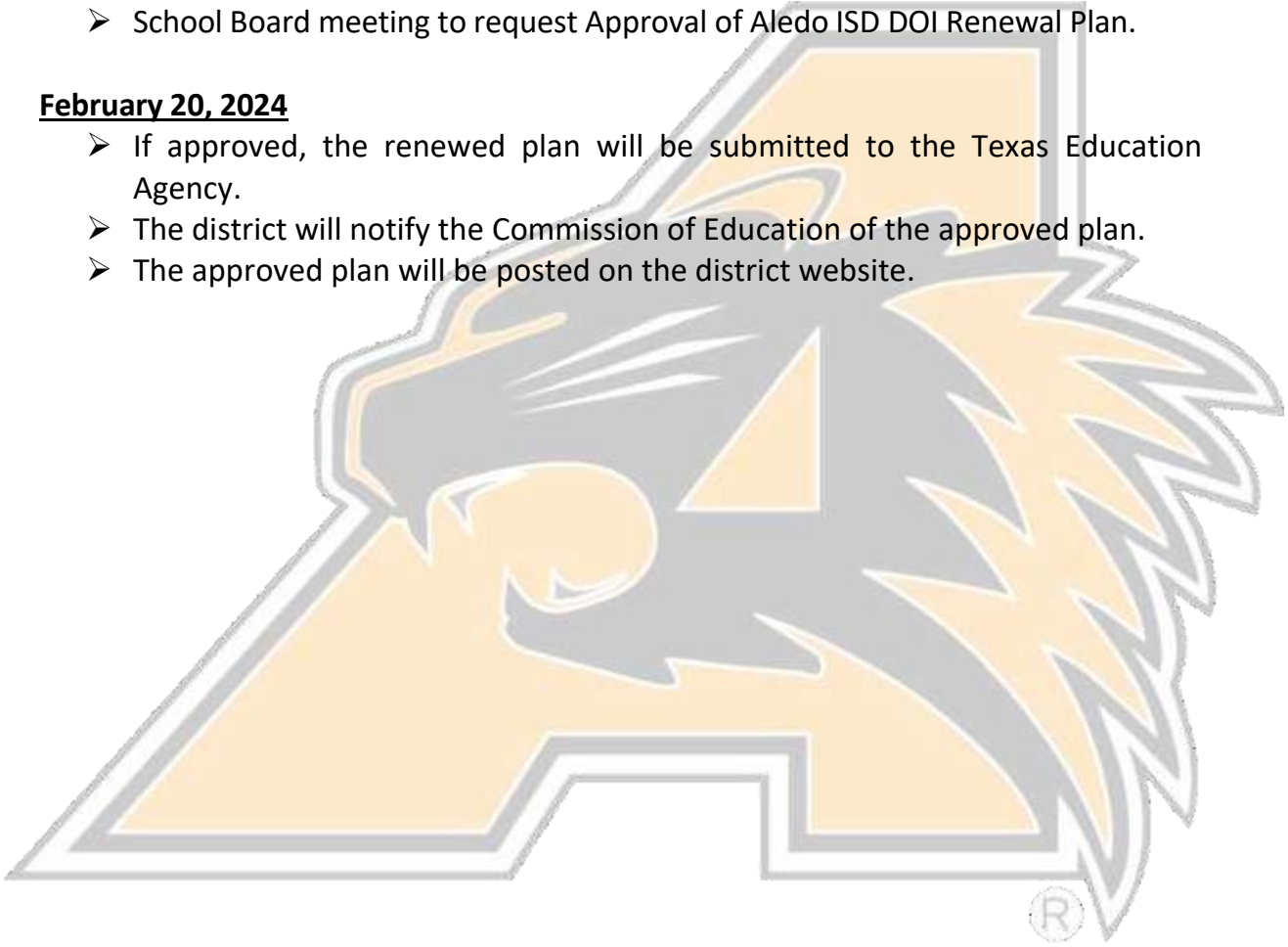
**February 19, 2024**

Board of Trustees Meeting

- School Board meeting to request Approval of Aledo ISD DOI Renewal Plan.

**February 20, 2024**

- If approved, the renewed plan will be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
- The district will notify the Commission of Education of the approved plan.
- The approved plan will be posted on the district website.



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Committee Member Name	Campus	Position/Role
Jamie Rinehart	AHS	Teacher
Emily Robison	AHS	Teacher
Brandy Roye	AHS	Teacher
Gayla Fernandez	ALC	Teacher
Mandy Musselwhite	AMS	Principal
Robin Newkirk	AMS	Teacher
Renee Pokrifcsak	AMS	Teacher
Kayla Cope	Annetta	Teacher
Kelly Price	Annetta	Teacher
Carly Kinchen	Coder	Teacher
Laura West	Coder	Teacher
Carma Chisam	Business Representative	Business
Christina Donnelly	Business Representative	Business
Heather Cohea	Parent Representative	Parent
Kelly Stevens	Parent Representative	Parent
DeAnne Younkin	Community Member	Community
Valerie Kerr	Aledo Education Foundation	Community
Randall Bruton	D9GC	Teacher
Elisha Woodson	D9GC	Teacher
Tina Shoptaw	McCall	Teacher
Elizabeth Garcia	McCall	Teacher
Amanda Douglas	McAnally	Teacher
Patience Johnson	McAnally	Teacher
Kimberly Martin	Stuard	Teacher
Stefanie Story	Stuard	Teacher
Jake Bean	Vandagriff	Principal
Katie Gemmel	Vandagriff	Teacher
Tonya Hardin	Vandagriff	Teacher
Audrey Mann	Walsh	Teacher
Grace St John-Staver	Walsh	Teacher
Susan Bohn	Administration	Superintendent
Kim Raymond	Administration	Deputy Superintendent
Ingia Saxton	Administration	Assistant Superintendent
Amber Crissey	Administration	Assistant Superintendent

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## **Exemptions**

### **Teacher and Principal Evaluations**

**Exemption from:** Tex. Educ. Code §§ 21.352, 21.3541

**Related Board Policies:** DNA (LEGAL), DNA (LOCAL), DNB (LEGAL), DNB (LOCAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the State issued a teacher appraisal system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and a principal appraisal system called the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). While these systems are designed to meet the needs of the entire state, Aledo ISD seeks to customize certain aspects of the system to better meet the unique needs of its teachers and administrators.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:** Aledo ISD is seeking flexibility within the recommended Texas appraisal process for teachers and administrators evaluated using the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal and Support System (T-PESS). Aledo ISD seeks to continue utilizing portions of the T-TESS and T-PESS models as the evaluation appraisal instrument, while desiring exemption from the Student Growth Measure. Data provided from district and campus local assessments will continue to be utilized to determine overall student growth and performance.

### **School Calendar**

**Exemption from:** Tex. Educ. Code § 25.0811

**Related Board Policies:** EB (LEGAL), EB (LOCAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** The Texas Education Code requires that students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule. However, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin school earlier. The waiver process was eliminated several years ago, mandating that all schools begin school no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. This requirement inhibits the District's flexibility to develop a calendar that best meets students', staff, and community needs.

Additionally, the school districts surrounding Aledo ISD begin school prior to the fourth Monday in August. As stipulated by state law regarding educator contracts, the first day of school impacts when educators may resign without penalty, impacting the District's hiring processes. Aledo ISD seeks this exemption in an effort to not disadvantage itself in the employment market as compared to surrounding districts.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:** Research has found that a catalyst to accelerating student learning and improving teacher practice is allowing for structured time for educators to prepare, lesson plan, and engage in professional learning. A more flexible school calendar will allow for timely and meaningful staff development. Before the school year begins, teachers will have ample professional development and teacher preparation and planning time. In addition, the calendar will provide for additional designated time for professional development throughout the year.

When Aledo ISD has flexibility with respect to the instructional calendar start date, and is able to start school earlier, the District has access to more qualified educators because they will still be in the time frame in which they are permitted (under state law) to resign from any contract they may have with another school district.

### **Teacher Certification**

**Exemption from:** Tex. Educ. Code §§ 21.003, 21.053; 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 231

**Related Board Policies:** DBA (LEGAL), DBA (LOCAL), DK (LEGAL), DK (LOCAL), DK (Exhibit)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** State law and regulation require that all teachers be fully certified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) / State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), regardless of previous work experience and/or demonstrated knowledge and skills in their area of specialty. Although it is possible to seek an emergency certificate, certification is dependent upon TEA approving the request. The current statute limits the ability to hire teachers in highly specialized or hard-to-fill areas.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:** Aledo 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, Aledo 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.

DRAFT

## **Behavior Coordinator**

**Exemption from:** Tex. Educ. Code § 37.0012

**Related Board Policies:** FO (LEGAL), FO (LOCAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** State law requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. Districts are required to name one individual per campus to serve as behavior coordinator. Due to the number of students on any given campus, it is unrealistic for the role of Campus Behavior Coordinator to be assigned to one person.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:** Aledo ISD is seeking a more collaborative approach to behavior management through the utilization of a coordinated team of professionals collaborating to address student behavior needs.

## **Student Transfers – Children of Peace Officers**

**Exemption from:** Texas Education Code (TEC 25.0344)

HB 1959, passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, created certain district and campus transfer provisions specific to the children of peace officers. After a request by a “peace officer,” Texas Education Code §25.0344 states that a board of trustees or designee “shall transfer the student to another district campus or to another school district under an agreement under Section 25.035” of the Texas Education Code.

**Related Board Policies:** FDA (LEGAL) FDA(LOCAL); FDB (LEGAL) FDB (LOCAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** The ability for a school district, including Aledo ISD, to adequately prepare and plan for enrollment within the district is vital. As a fast-growth school district, Aledo ISD is faced with the challenge of properly staffing and resourcing its campuses to serve the students who reside in the district as the number of students who live in the district grows rapidly and throughout each school year.

The creation of campus attendance zones assists the District in planning for each school year, including the assignment of appropriate resources to individual campuses. Given the fast growth of the district, compliance with the requirement to transfer a peace officer’s child(ren) from one campus in the district to another campus in the district (intradistrict transfer) has the potential to overcrowd classrooms/schools, require the hiring of additional staff when class sizes increase beyond state required and board approved ratios, and even prompt the need for additional space on campus to serve students.

Note: The requirement in Texas Education Code Section 25.0344 that a school district shall transfer a student to another district under an agreement under Section 25.035 is inapplicable in Aledo ISD due to the fact that Aledo ISD does not have such an agreement with any other school district. In fact, Board Policy FDA (LOCAL) expressly



prohibits out-of-district (interdistrict) transfers into Aledo ISD.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:**

Board Policies FDA (LOCAL) and FDB (LOCAL) address processes and requirements for intradistrict and interdistrict transfers. Although the District seeks to exempt itself from the requirements of Section 25.0344, the District will continue to process student transfer requests in compliance with applicable Board Policy.

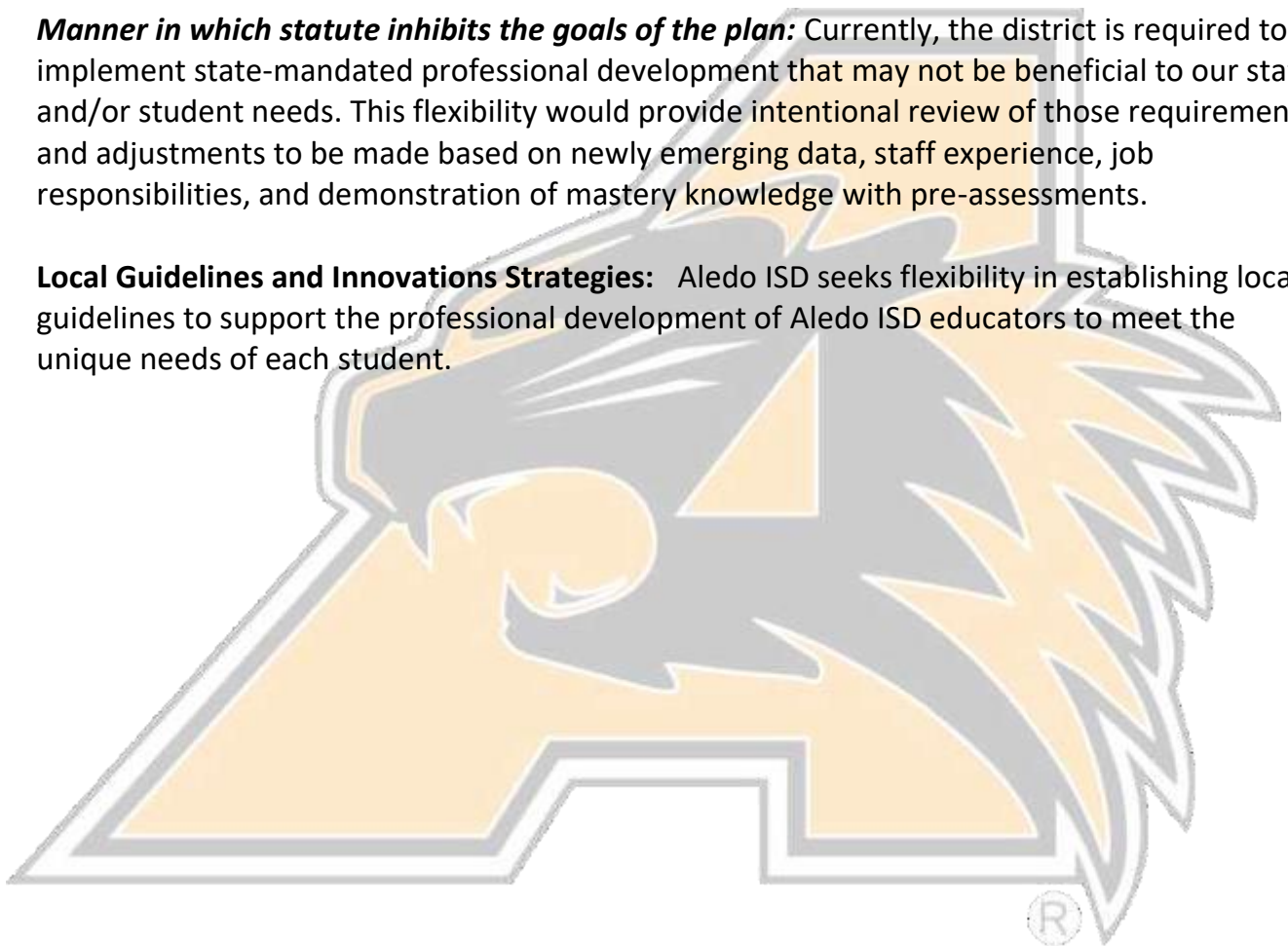
**Staff Development**

**Exemption from** Tex. Educ. Code § 21.451

**Related Board Policies:** DMA(LEGAL), DMA(LOCAL)

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:*** Currently, the district is required to implement state-mandated professional development that may not be beneficial to our staff and/or student needs. This flexibility would provide intentional review of those requirements and adjustments to be made based on newly emerging data, staff experience, job responsibilities, and demonstration of mastery knowledge with pre-assessments.

**Local Guidelines and Innovations Strategies:** Aledo ISD seeks flexibility in establishing local guidelines to support the professional development of Aledo ISD educators to meet the unique needs of each student.



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