

District of Innovation Plan Amendments 2025-2026

September 2025



Southwest
Independent School District

Current District of Innovation Plan

District of Innovation Plan with Proposed Amendments
for DIT 09.09.2025



4. Grievance Policy

Texas Education Code §26.011 requires that the board of trustees of each school district shall adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Chapter 26A under which the board shall address each grievance that the board receives concerning violation of a right guaranteed by this chapter, of a board of trustees policy, or of a provision of this title. Beginning September 1, 2025, changes were ushered in that allowed for the submission and consideration of additional documentation related to a grievance, extended timelines for addressing and responding to grievances, and imposed other requirements affecting districts' existing grievance policies.

4. Grievance Policy (cont.)

Southwest ISD has and will continue to adhere to established grievance policies, procedures, and timelines as outlined in its local Board's policies DGBA, FNG, and GF. 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. The District 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 complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Southwest 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. Southwest ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26.002 and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted 28 within 15 district business days from the date the grievant either knows, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance



4. Grievance Policy (cont.)

ensures prompt attention and resolution of concerns. In cases where the grievant does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district-provided form, within ten (10) district business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level. The District's current local board policies FNG and GF, which govern student, parent, and public complaints, provide for a Level Three grievance to the board of trustees, except for grievances related to extracurricular activities. With this proposed exemption, Southwest ISD will provide for a grievance to the board at Level Four for students and parents. The District's current local board policy DGBA governing employee complaints provides for a Level Four grievance to the board of trustees. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed and addressed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response. The district will continue to protect the privacy of individuals who submit grievances by limiting or restricting access to such information.



5. GPA Calculation

TEC Texas Education Code §28.0252: Requires the Commissioner of Education to develop a standard method of computing a student's high school grade point average, which a public school district will be required to utilize.

COMPUTATION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE.

- (a) The commissioner shall develop a standard method of computing a student's high school grade point average that provides for additional weight to be given to each honors course, advanced placement course, international baccalaureate course, OnRamps dual enrollment course, or dual credit course completed by a student.
- (b) A school district shall use the standard method developed by the commissioner under Subsection (a) to compute a student's high school grade point average.

Rationale:

SWISD believes that in order to avoid a situation in which a student who may be halfway through their high school career and has been operating under the district's current GPA calculation is negatively impacted by the sudden utilization of the Commissioner's standard method.



6. Board Approval of Library Materials

Current Statutory: (TEC §33.021 & SB 13)

Under the current statute, districts must submit proposed library material acquisitions to the Board of Trustees for approval at least 30 days prior to procurement.

Instead, SWISD will:

- Maintain the District Library Services vetting process, which includes professional reviews, district librarian Administrator review, and age/grade-level alignment checks.
- Continue to post proposed acquisitions on the SWISD Library Services website for a 30-day community review window, ensuring transparency and parental input.
- Preserve parent access to library catalogs, checkout history, and opt-out/preference options for individual families.
- Provide an annual summary report of library acquisitions and reconsideration activity to the Board of Trustees.



7. Appraisal & Professional Development System for Professionals

TEC Texas Education Codes §21.352 & §21.354: Requires the school district to appraise each professional, including non-principal administrators, annually. In addition the district must use a system of appraisal developed by the commissioner or shall develop a system in consultation with district-level and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251; and adopted by the board of trustees.



7. Appraisal & Professional Development System for Professionals

In Southwest ISD, the formal appraisal process of employees consumes a significant amount of resources, including time, and can divert those resources from areas of greater need. Additionally, supervisors are expected to work collaboratively with their teams throughout the year to ensure that employees are meeting expectations, performing at an acceptable level, and exhibiting growth. As a result, annual appraisals can become perfunctory for employees who have consistently met performance expectations throughout the year over multiple years and who serve in high rated schools. Southwest ISD recognizes the importance of continuing to annually, formally appraise new employees, employees who need a higher level of support, and in campuses where the campus is rated below a B in state accountability. Allowing for less-than-annual appraisals will provide flexibility for administrators to devote resources, including time, to more formally support employees based on need while continuing to monitor all staff for satisfactory performance and growth.



7. Appraisal & Professional Development System for Professionals

Teachers who qualify for this exemption will still have comprehensive walkthroughs during the school year, must establish student learning objectives, and can request for a formal evaluation to improve their performance ratings for themselves or to qualify for a higher effectiveness rating towards the Texas Incentive Allotment qualifications.

Therefore, the district shall establish procedures and criteria to allow for less-than annual appraisals for all non-principal, professional staff under contract. The criteria will include specific procedures for appraisals, including the conditions under which a non-principal, professional employee must be appraised annually.



8. Teacher Certifications

Texas Education Code Section 21.003(a). 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; 21.003(a). An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee:

- Does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by SBEC
- Fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew; fails to comply with any requirements under Chapter 22 if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate

8. Teacher Certifications (cont.)

Texas Education Code 21.057: A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. (Board Policy Ref: DBA Employment Requirements and Restrictions: Credentials and Records).



8. Teacher Certifications (cont.)

Southwest ISD will continue to seek traditionally certified candidates for all teaching positions. However, for those vacancies in specific settings, including career and technical education (CTE) settings, librarians, non-core content, and dual credit courses for which a traditionally certified and qualified candidate is not identified, the District will follow the plans listed below. [Core content is considered all courses aligned to reading, English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science required for promotion or graduation in each grade level.]

SWISD considers the persons hired for these positions to be appropriately qualified and thus will not provide special notification to parents of students in their classes that state the instructor does not hold a traditional teaching certificate. Offering access, enrollment, and quality education in college/career readiness and core content areas with strong instructors is one of the key pieces of the District Strategic Plan.