

Spring Branch
Independent School District

District of Innovation

RENEWAL PROCESS

Presentation to SBISD
Board of Trustees
September 8, 2025



Spring Branch Independent School District

District of Innovation Proposed Renewal Process

Purpose

To provide an overview of:

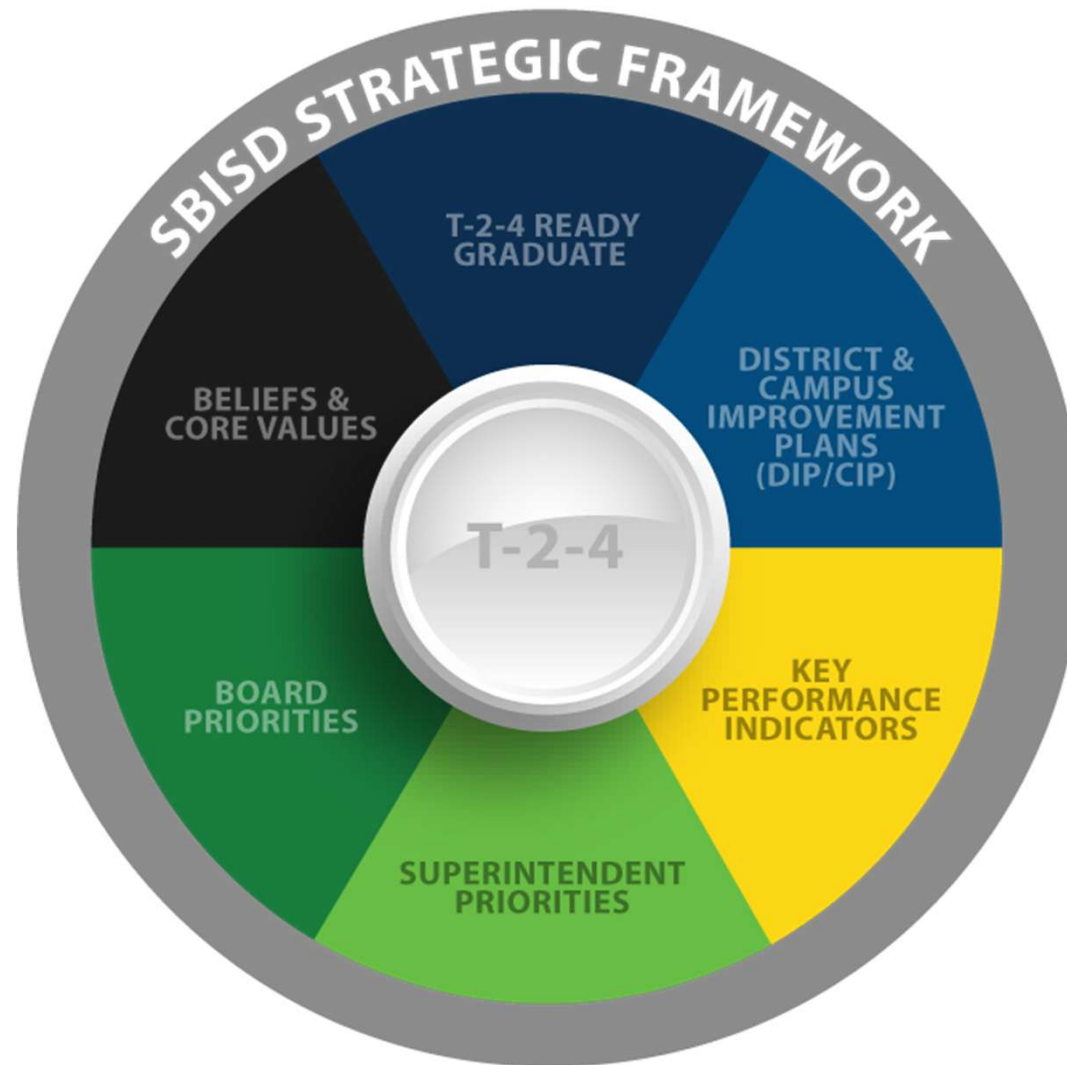
- **SBISD Strategic Framework**
- **Districts of Innovation**
- **Proposed DOI Renewal Plan & Process**
- **SBISD's Ten Years as a District of Innovation**
- **Discussion and Feedback**



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

SBISD's Strategic Framework





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How DOI Impacts the Strategic Framework



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

District of Innovation **OVERVIEW**



What is a District of Innovation?

- The District of Innovation concept was passed into law when the 84th Legislature created Texas Education Code Chapter 12A Districts of Innovation in 2015
- The law allows traditional independent school districts to access most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open enrollment charter schools. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Chapter 12A and Texas Education Agency (TEA) rules.



The Connection between Law and Policy



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

SBISD District of Innovation Overview



SBISD DOI Overview

- On April 25, 2016, the Spring Branch ISD Board of Trustees (Trustees) voted unanimously for SBISD to become a District of Innovation (DOI), enabling SBISD to exempt itself from certain state laws that pose barriers to innovation related to curriculum, instruction, parent or community involvement, school calendars, budgeting, and governance.
- On January 26, 2021, the SBISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to renew the district's DOI Plan for five years.
- **January 25, 2026**, is SBISD's deadline to renew the district's DOI status.



Spring Branch Independent School District
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District of Innovation RENEWAL PROCESS & PROPOSAL



The role of the District Improvement Team

- It is recommended that, as a broad-based stakeholder committee, the SBISD District Improvement Team once again serve as the district advisory committee to consider and recommend to the SBISD Board of Trustees the SBISD District of Innovation Renewal Plan.



DOI Renewal Process

- District Advisory Committee established by Board Resolution (DIT)
- DIT reviews/provides feedback to administration on proposed renewal plan
- Once DIT reaches consensus on the Proposed DOI Renewal Plan, a 30-day public comment period is initiated
- Upon opening of the 30-day public comment period, the Board of Trustees notifies the Texas Education Agency of district intent to renew DOI status
- Following the 30-day public comment period, comments received are provided to DIT and Trustees
- DIT considers feedback and either (1) votes to approve the renewal plan and recommend to Trustees for their approval, or (2) recommends modifications to the plan, requiring a new 30-day comment period
- Deadline to renew – January 25, 2026
- *Board of Trustees provided updates on progress along the way*



Proposed Renewal Plan

- Renew District of Innovation status for an additional five years
- Renew and extend exemptions enacted over the first five years, and renewed for the second five years, except for the Length of School Day exemption [TEC 25.082 (a)] which is no longer needed due to change in the law and possibly the Minimum Attendance to Earn Credit or Final Grade [TEC 25.092]*
- No new exemptions have been taken since the DOI plan was renewed in January 2021.

* *Pending Board consideration and approval of updated language for Board Policy FEC (Local). Policy update is based on updated guidance and interpretations of statutory language.*



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

SBISD's Ten Years as a District of Innovation



TEC 12A.007 Exemption & SBISD Innovation Plan & Processes

TEC12A.007 Exemption

SBISD exempted itself from the requirements of TEC §12A.007, to the extent that this section of the TEC would require the approval by the district-level committee or comparable committee of any policies that the SBISD Board of Trustees may adopt by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board to implement and activate specific exemptions permitted by law during the term of this Plan.

SBISD Exemptions Process

- Designation of administrator identified as project manager and develop proposal
- Proposal presentation to Sr. Staff
- Meeting with Policy/TEC Committee for review
- Recommendation to Board on Timeframe and Public Engagement Pathway
- Public Engagement Period
- Board approval of Innovation Exemption and revised Local Policy



REMOVE FROM PLAN- NO LONGER NEEDED

TEC 25.082 (a) Length of School Day

- SBISD determined that TEC § 25.082(a), which defines a school day in terms of a 7-hour day, restricts the flexibility of campuses to schedule early release or late arrival days that support students and teachers by allowing, for example, additional time for staff development or parent-teacher conferences. Added flexibility in defining the school day removes the barrier of time to enable innovation in student learning experiences, programs and opportunities.



TEC 25.0811 (a) First Day of Instruction

- SBISD determined that TEC § 25.0811(a), which says a district cannot begin school until the fourth Monday in August, restricts the flexibility for the district to recommend academic calendars that meet the needs of students, provide professional development opportunities for teachers, and best serve SBISD families. Allowing the district more flexibility on the school start date also enables the district to better balance the number of instructional days in each semester and allows more time earlier in the school year for additional instructional days prior to state and national exams.

First School Days:

- 2021 – August 16
- 2022 – August 15
- 2023 – August 16
- 2024 – August 15
- 2025 – August 13



TEC 25.092 Minimum Attendance to Earn Credit or a Final Grade

- SBISD determined that TEC § 25.092 which requires a student to attend a class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered in order to earn credit for the class, defines learning by seat time rather than learning; treats all student situations the same, regardless of the unique circumstances of each; creates an academic penalty (withholding of credit) for non-academic behavior (attendance) and assigns non-academic consequences (ALA hours) to resolve, typically at the end of the semester; and creates burdensome implementation procedures for campus staff. Enacting an exemption of TEC § 25.092 shifted the control of the 90% attendance rule from the state to the district, to better serve our students by enabling (1) a focus on learning over seat time; (2) allowing more timely interventions by campus administration and teachers; and (3) ensuring a whole child approach to intervening in cases of excessive absences.

**POSSIBLE REMOVAL FROM FINAL PLAN-PENDING BOARD
CONSIDERATION OF POLICY UPDATE**



TEC 21.003 Teacher Certification

- SBISD determined that TEC § 21.003 restricted flexibility in hiring teachers needed for certain courses, specifically its Career & Technical Education (CTE) and Dual Credit courses. Enacting an exemption of TEC 21.003 exempts the District from the certification requirements for new teachers of CTE courses, when an individual holds industry credentials and/or has work experience in the area(s) of the course(s) he or she is hired to teach. It also exempts the District from the CTE certification requirements of current SBISD teachers who are certified to teach non-CTE courses but have industry credentials and/or work experience that qualifies them to teach specific CTE courses, including some special education teachers. The exemption of TEC § 21.003 additionally exempts the District from the certification requirements for teachers of Dual Credit courses when those individuals hold credentials to teach the course at the college level.

Since 2021, SBISD has hired approximately 45 CTE teachers under this District of Innovation exemption.

The district notifies parents if their child is served by a non-certified teacher in a CTE or dual credit course.



SBISD DOI Overview

TEC Exemption and Description	Date of Board Decision	Legal Policies Impacted	Local Policies Impacted
TEC 12A.007 Amendment, Rescission, or Renewal of Local Innovation Plan	April 25, 2016	AF(LEGAL)	AF(LOCAL)
TEC 25.0811(a) First Day of Instruction	December 12, 2016	EB(LEGAL)	EB(LEGAL)
TEC 25.092 Minimum Attendance to Earn Credit or a Final Grade	September 25, 2017	FEC(LEGAL)	FEC(LOCAL)
May be removed as exemption pending possible Board action on update to Board Policy FEC (L)			
TEC 21.003 Teacher Certification	April 22, 2019	DBA(LEGAL) DK(LEGAL)	DBA(LOCAL) DCE(LOCAL) DK(LOCAL) DN(LOCAL) DNA(LOCAL)

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DISCUSSION

