



# District of Innovation

ECTOR COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# What is a District of Innovation?

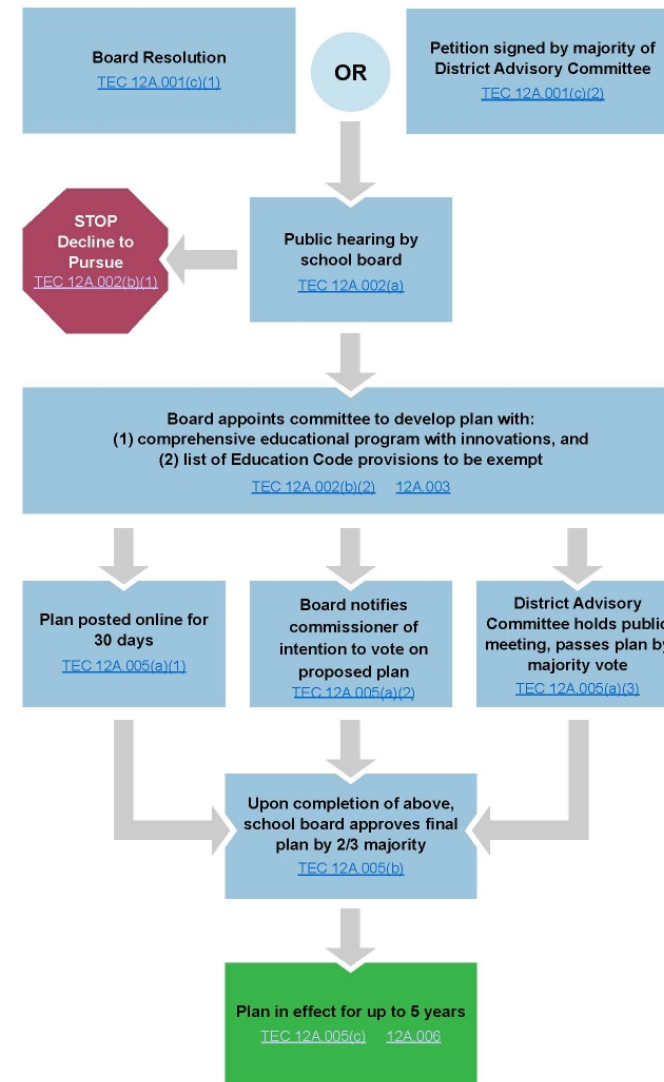
- ▶ The District of Innovation concept was passed into law by the 84th Legislature through House Bill 1842, which created Texas Education Code chapter 12A.
- ▶ The law allows traditional independent school districts to access most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open enrollment charter schools by becoming designated as a District of Innovation.
- ▶ In order to be eligible, a school district must have an accountability rating of met standard.



# How do you become a District of Innovation?

- The process is initiated by adoption of a board resolution or a signed petition from a majority of the District Improvement Team.
- The Board must promptly conduct a public hearing to consider developing an innovation plan.
- At the conclusion of the public hearing the Board can decline to pursue the designation or appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan.

## Process to Become a District of Innovation Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 12A



# What is required in a local innovation plan?

A local innovation plan must be developed that provides for a comprehensive *educational program for the district*, which may include:

- Innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance and parental involvement;
- Modifications to the school day or year;
- Provisions regarding the district budget and sustainable program funding;
- Accountability and assessment measures that exceed the requirements of state and federal law; and
- Any innovations prescribed by the Board of Trustees.

In addition, it should identify requirements imposed by this code that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted upon adoption of the plan.

# What are the benefits for ECISD becoming a District of Innovation?

*Local control, flexibility and autonomy from some laws that prevent ECISD from meeting the needs of its community –*

- ▶ Calendar;
- ▶ Class Size - 22:1 exemption;
- ▶ CTE Certification;
- ▶ Student Performance Factor in Teacher and Administrator Appraisals



# School districts cannot be exempted from statutes related to:

- ▶ Elected boards of trustees/governance;
- ▶ Powers and duties of school boards, superintendents and principals;
- ▶ State curriculum and graduation requirements;
- ▶ Academic and financial accountability, including assessments and PEIMS reporting;
- ▶ Bilingual, special education and prekindergarten programs;
- ▶ Criminal background checks and educator misconduct reporting;
- ▶ Open meetings and public information;
- ▶ Conflicts of interest and nepotism;
- ▶ Other federal requirements and state laws outside of the Texas Education Code.

# Next Steps?

If the Board appoints the committee, the committee will be notified and then begin its work to develop the plan.

Prior to voting on the innovation plan:

- ▶ The final version of the plan must be available on the district's website for **at least 30 days**;
- ▶ The Board must have **notified the commissioner of education** of the board's **intention to vote** on the adoption of the proposed plan; and
- ▶ The **District Improvement Team** must have held a **public meeting** to consider the final version of the proposed plan and have **approved the plan** by a majority vote of the committee members.
- ▶ Upon **adopting the local innovation plan** by an **affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board**, and notification to TEA, the District is designated as a District of Innovation for no longer than five years from that date.

# Does TEA have to approve the plan?

- ▶ No, but TEA has rulemaking authority regarding the implementation of Districts of Innovation. Those rules were finalized and went into effect on September 13, 2016.
- ▶ The Board must notify the Commissioner of the intent to vote on the proposed plan and after approving the plan, the district must notify the Commissioner of that approval along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing a form provided by the Agency. The Commissioner is required to maintain information about the statutory exemptions adopted by districts in their innovation plans and must report to the Legislature about those exemptions.



# Once approved, can it be changed?

- ▶ The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by a majority vote of the district level committee established under the TEC 11.251 (District Improvement Team) or a comparable committee if the District of Innovation is exempt from that section, along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board.
- ▶ An amendment to an approved plan does not change the date of the term of designation as an innovation district. Exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed.
- ▶ A district must notify the TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC, but no later than the start of the following school year.
- ▶ 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 along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates.

# How long does the innovation plan stay in effect?

- ▶ The plan may have a term ***not to exceed*** five years.
- ▶ Districts may choose to review the plan more frequently on an annual or biannual basis. A district may only have one innovation plan in place at a time, especially if the plan is tied to specific district goals or strategic plans.
- ▶ Please note that the designation of the District as a District of Innovation may require changes to LOCAL policies and adjustments to the District's LEGAL policies.

# Can the designation be revoked?

- ▶ The Commissioner may terminate the innovation plan or require the district to amend its plan if the innovation district receives unacceptable academic and/or financial performance ratings two years in a row. It must terminate after three consecutive years of these ratings.
- ▶ Upon termination, the district goes back to complying with all areas of the TEC on a date determined by the Commissioner and this cannot be appealed.



# ECISD Timeline

Timeline	Task	Deadline
February	<u>Board Work Study</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Trustees discusses rules and process for being a District of Innovation</li> <li>Board reviews Resolution to initiate consideration for being designated as a District of Innovation</li> <li>Board discusses appointment of DIT members*</li> </ul>	February 14, 2016
February	<u>Board Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board votes to adopt Resolution to initiate consideration for being designated as a District of Innovation</li> <li>Board holds public hearing to consider whether the district should become a District of Innovation</li> <li>Board appoints the DIT to develop a Local Innovation Plan</li> <li>Board votes to notify Commissioner of its intention to vote on adopting final Local Innovation Plan on March 28, 2017*</li> </ul>	February 21, 2016
February	DIT meets to draft Innovation Plan. Public is invited to attend. Final Draft is created during this meeting.	February 23, 2017
February	Final Draft is posted onto the District Website for 30 days for public review and comment	February 27, 2017
March	<u>Board Work Study</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIT presents the Final Draft of the Local Innovation Plan to Board</li> </ul>	March 7, 2017
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIT hosts public meeting to consider final version of Innovation Plan</li> <li>DIT votes (majority vote) to approve the final draft</li> </ul>	March 28, 2017
March	<u>Board Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Trustees votes for approval of final draft of Local Innovation Plan with 2/3 vote</li> <li>District sends approved plan to Commissioner of Education</li> </ul>	March 28, 2017