

SANFORD-FRITCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Amended
District of Innovation Plan
2022 – 2027

Purpose

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school district to become District of Innovation (DOI) and to obtain exemption from certain provision of the Texas Education Code. The SFISD Board of Trustees believes in supporting innovation and local initiatives through the use of local District control. The adoption of the District of Innovation plan allows District flexibility to improve the educational environment for the benefit of students and the community.

Term

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning August 01, 2022 and ending July 31, 2027, unless terminated or amended by the SFISD Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemption in the form of an amendment. Amendments adopted by the Board will adhere to the terms of the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans.

SFISD District of Innovation Committee

Jason Garrison, Superintendent
Richard Hein, Business Manager
Stephen Vanderpool, High School Principal
Phillip Wiggins, High School Teacher, Athletic Director
Pam Walker, High School Teacher, UIL Academic Coordinator
Dwight Kirksey, Community Member, District Advisory Committee
Gina Moos, Teacher, Elementary Campus Advisory Committee
Kayla Deatherage, Junior High Teacher, Campus Advisory Committee
Aimee Lyles, Counselor, High School Campus Advisory Committee
Tonya Stephenson, Secretary, At-will Representative, District Advisory Committee

SFISD PROPOSED INNOVATIONS

School Start Date/Last Day of School *[EB (LEGAL), TEC 25.0811, 25.0812]*

- **Current:** Student instruction cannot start before the fourth Monday of August. Waivers are no longer allowed to alter start date. The last day of instruction may not occur before May 15 of any year. Again, no waiver is allowed. These changes occurred through the lobby of tourism groups which argued the loss of business due to local control of school calendars.
- **Plan:** To meet local community needs and offer a more balanced calendar through the design of the instructional periods, start dates and end dates. Instruction will not begin before the first Monday of August and end the school year on or prior to the fourth Friday in July. Advantages:
 - Balance Six-week grading periods and semester schedules.
 - Allow for first semester to end before holiday break.
 - Align curriculum of dual credit courses through neighboring Frank Phillips College.
 - Align curriculum of extended courses from Amarillo ISD AACAL campus.
 - Allow calendar to be more efficient following May STAAR/EOC assessments.

- Allow a campus the flexibility to go to a modified year-round schedule to meet the needs of the students.

Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003) (TEC 21.053) (TEC 21.057) (DK LEGAL) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local)

- **Current:** TEC 21.003 states that “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.” The current certification requirements inhibit the District from hiring professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technology Education (CATE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) and foreign language courses
- **Plan:** In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain possible professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. The District does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. Advantages:
 - Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses
 - Greater number of CATE courses offerings resulting in more opportunity for students
 - Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching
 - Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses
 - Allows the school district to utilize technology to implement on-line courses (CTE, foreign languages, general courses)

Teacher Contract Days [DCB(LEGAL), DCB(LOCAL, TEC 21.401]

- **Current:** TEC Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.
- **Plan:** Allow local control over the teacher contract days. Requirements and advantages:
 - Teachers will be required to attend a minimum of 7 days beyond the scheduled student instruction days.
 - Staff development will include professional development and workdays for teachers.
 - Increased daily rate on professional salary scale (teachers only).
 - Enhance teacher recruitment and retention.
 - Improve teacher morale.

Contract Employees [TEC Chapter 21]

- **Current:** The definition of teacher for purposes of Chapter 21 is a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, counselor or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued by the State Board for Educator Certification (as well as educational diagnosticians and nurses). Superintendents may receive term contracts, but not probationary or continuing contracts.
- **Plan:** Allow local control over the issuance of a probationary or term contract. Advantages:
 - The district will have the option to increase a probationary contract out to three years for incoming teachers that were currently on a term contract in another district. This will allow the district to mentor a teacher before moving the teacher to a term contract.
 - District may offer a term contract to an incoming teacher for the purposes or recruitment as long as the teacher meets the needs of the district and is certified in the needed area.

Transfer Students [FDA LOCAL and TEC 25.036]

- **Current:** Under TEC Chapter 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be

for a period of one school year. Sanford-Fritch ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (LOCAL) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district.

- **Plan:** Allow local control to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. Advantages:
 - Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfers may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the state's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.
 - Campus Principal will refer requests to rescind transfer students to the Superintendent who will make the final decision to retain or rescind a transfer student.

DAEP Teacher Certification Requirement [FOCA (LEGAL), FOB LEGAL), TEC Chapter 37.006, 37.007, 37.008]

- **Current:** TEC 37.006 states that an elementary student may not be placed in a DAEP with any other student who is not an elementary student. However, students younger than 10 may only be placed in a DAEP if they commit an expellable offense under TEC 37.007. TEC 37.008 DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. Requires each school district to provide a DAEP that provides for the students who are assigned to that program to be separated from students who are not assigned to the program. (a) Each school district shall provide a DAEP that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21;
- **Plan:** Allow local control over DAEP requirements. Advantages:
 - The district will have the option to better utilize staff and facilities by allowing junior high and high school DAEP students to attend the same classroom as In School Suspension students when necessary.
 - The district will have the option to make common sense decisions about which students are age appropriate to be in the same room together and allow the district to better utilize staff and facilities in the event of an elementary DAEP placement.
 - Sanford-Fritch ISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer-based instruction and/or blended instructional model. It is not necessary to have certified teachers on site. The campus administrator will ensure that the staff of DAEP has support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.