

Spring Branch
Independent School District

District of Innovation

RENEWAL PROCESS

Board of Trustees Meeting
November 17, 2025



Spring Branch Independent School District

District of Innovation Renewal Process

Tonight's Agenda

- **DOI Plan – Process Review**
- **30-day Comment Period Feedback**
- **Discussion and possible vote to approve the proposed DOI Renewal Plan**



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

District of Innovation RENEWAL PLAN Review and Vote



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.



DOI Renewal Process (Fall 2025)

- ✓ **September 8:** Public hearing held on renewal of DOI Plan. Board approved Resolution authorizing the district to move forward to consider renewal of DOI plan and appointed the DIT as the District Advisory Committee established to study the renewal of the DOI Plan in accordance with Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code. DIT reviews/provides feedback to administration on proposed renewal plan.
- ✓ **October 2:** DIT reached consensus on the Proposed DOI Renewal Plan and approved initiation of a 30-day public comment period.
- ✓ **October 3 - November 3:** 30-day public comment period
- ✓ **November 6:** DIT considered public comment period feedback and voted to approve the DOI Renewal Plan and recommend to Board of Trustees for approval
- **November 17:** Board of Trustees hear presentation on 30-day comment period, DIT recommendation of DOI Renewal Plan and opportunity for Board of Trustees to vote on the DOI Renewal Plan.
- **Deadline to renew** – January 25, 2026



District of Innovation Renewal Plan Feedback: 2025

Comentarios del Plan de Renovación del Distrito de Innovación: 2025

- Public comment period was October 3 – November 3, 2025
- Online feedback form in English and Spanish
- Multiple email reminders sent to district stakeholders to solicit feedback
- 8 comments from: 5 parents and 3 employees
 - No available themes based on limited feedback

Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

Proposed Renewal Plan

- Renew District of Innovation status for an additional five years**
- Renew and extend three of five exemptions that have been enacted since SBISD became a DOI and add one new exemption.**



SBISD Proposed DOI Renewal Plan Exemptions

TEC Exemption and Description	Legal Policies Impacted	Local Policies Impacted
TEC 12A.007 Amendment, Rescission, or Renewal of Local Innovation Plan	AF(LEGAL)	AF(LOCAL)
TEC 25.0811(a) First Day of Instruction	EB(LEGAL)	EB(LEGAL)
TEC 21.003 Teacher Certification	DBA(LEGAL) DK(LEGAL)	DBA(LOCAL) DCE(LOCAL) DK(LOCAL) DN(LOCAL) DNA(LOCAL)
TEC 25.036 Admission Transfer and Attendance	FDA(LEGAL) FDA(LEGAL)	FDA(LOCAL)

Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

DISCUSSION



Spring Branch Independent School District
District of Innovation Renewal Process

Request for Approval of SBISD DOI Renewal Plan*

** If approved, the DOI Renewal Plan would be effective January 25, 2026 at the expiration of the current DOI Plan.*



Q2 Please share your comments on SBISD's Renewal Plan./Comparta sus comentarios sobre el Plan de Renovación de SBISD.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Establish a formal advisory council with representatives from community colleges, universities, and workforce organizations to align curricula and streamline transitions from high school to postsecondary education or careers. Increase targeted supports for English Learners, students in poverty, and first-generation college students, including mentorships, early intervention programs, and parent outreach in multiple languages.	11/2/2025 9:57 PM
2	SBISD needs my ride of an equivalent bus app.	11/1/2025 10:52 AM
3	I am opposed to any out of district students being allowed to attend SBISD schools. I am opposed to any provision of the renewal plan that allows the SBISD administration the ability to allow such students to attend SBISD schools while not being a resident with the SBISD boundaries. SBISD taxes should be used to educate students who live in the boundaries. And if there is "extra" anywhere in the budget or services, that extra should benefit students of SBISD who need it and not non-SBISD resident students.	10/31/2025 5:34 PM
4	Due to being a District of Innovation, our classroom sizes do not have follow the State of Texas cap of 22 students. Current classroom sizes are 24+ on many campuses without enough support for behavior and special education supports.	10/21/2025 5:18 PM
5	I have a question on the Admission, Transfer and Attendance exemption. "The District is seeking this added exemption under the District of Innovation Plan to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting inter-district transfer applicants in certain circumstances." Does this mean that inter-district transfers will not to be renewed yearly? I understand the new exemption that it can be revoked for non compliance with the transfer agreement.	10/15/2025 9:07 AM
6	I don't agree with TEC section 25.036 of the renewal plan. As a district employee, I do not think it's right to agree to a policy that makes inter-district transfers just as vulnerable to having their transfers revoked as transfers who live outside of district. If something were to happen to an employee that was beyond their control that required them to leave SBISD (illness, disability, etc), that makes the employee's child's transfer revocable even if the student is still abiding by the guidelines required of transfer students. At that point, how are we then supporting "every child" in achieving success by way of individualized learning? That's a policy that won't serve students- it could conceivably punish them by disrupting their path to success, if not altering it completely. And think about the implications if such a thing were to happen to a senior in high school, for example? A policy like this may not provide school or district leadership with the authority to prevent the statutory consequences that potentially unexpected life changes might bring. I also think that mishandling such a situation just because a statute allows that to happen is treating a former employee's child as though their education isn't just as important as every other child's, both inside and outside the district. Not only does the district then appear cruel to the public at that point, but such a policy may discourage other applicants for an inter district transfer from applying for school choice, and isn't school choice one of the things that SBISD does so well for its students? Finally, to revoke that choice from a student who may very well be the child of an employee with a spotless employment record, up until something life-changing occurs that requires them to resign may look like ingratitude on the district's behalf for that person's service. I hope I'm misinterpreting this part of the renewal plan, but if not, I'd be against it.	10/8/2025 9:55 AM
7	Start school on the fourth Monday in August. Save our summers. Take fewer random days off during the school year to make up the difference. I grew up in Houston and never got off Columbus day or a week for Thanksgiving, for example. End school at the end of May like you do now. It can work.	10/3/2025 5:24 PM
8	TEC §§ 21.104(b) and 21.211(b) require the Board to propose suspension without pay for good cause and offer an opportunity to appeal with TEA before taking action to suspend without pay. The District should be able to take swift action to place employees on leave WITHOUT pay who engage in acts of serious misconduct or allegations covered in the Educator Code of Ethics. As I understand, this was (is?) included in Keller ISD's DOI with no objection from teachers or teacher unions given the limited exemption. Appeals regarding such suspension decisions could be pushed through the DGBA grievance process.	10/3/2025 1:50 PM



**Spring Branch Independent School
District**

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION RENEWAL PLAN

Effective January 25, 2026

Spring Branch Independent School District

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION RENEWAL PLAN

Background: The Evolution of SBISD's Strategic Framework

In 2008, a community-led committee, with input from staff, students, and families, developed Spring Branch ISD's brand promise, *Inspiring Minds. Shaping Lives*. This statement continues to define the district's mission – not just for our students, but also for all staff, families, partners, and stakeholders who are part of the Spring Branch ISD Family.

In 2012, the Board of Trustees approved Spring Branch T-2-4 as the district's single-focused goal for all SBISD graduates to attain a technical certificate or military training, or a 2-year or 4-year degree. This goal was reaffirmed in 2017, with the Board of Trustees extending to 2022 its commitment to T-2-4.

When T-2-4 was adopted, the district also affirmed beliefs that a great school system: Builds on the strengths and gifts of each child; Provides students from poverty the same opportunities for success after high school as students from non-poverty homes; Instills in every student the belief that he or she can achieve more than he or she thinks possible; and Ensures that every adult in the system is committed to the successful completion of some form of higher education for every child.

Following the launch of T-2-4, a district Culture Team spent two years studying, developing, and ultimately recommending, SBISD's Core Values - five non-negotiable ideals and expectations referred to as "The Spring Branch Way" that were Board approved in 2015 and set the district's organizational culture.

Dr. Jennifer Blaine became Superintendent of Schools in July 2019. Her deep review of student performance data affirmed the need to refine the systemwide focus to achieve T-2-4 for Every Child. To bring clarity to all stakeholders, Dr. Blaine identified Superintendent Priorities. Signaling the alignment of the Board and the Superintendent, these also are the Board of Trustees Priorities. At the elementary level, these include literacy, numeracy, and student supports, with a focus on the needs of English Learners. At the secondary level, these priorities remain, with the addition of Career and Technical Education.

Over the next six months, the opportunity to refine and to better articulate clarity and focus for the system led to alignment of the key components described below into a graphic framework showing clearly how each informs the others. In the process of developing this strategic framework, Dr. Blaine, district leaders and Trustees recognized that T-2-4 had clearly defined what we want our students to achieve when they graduate. However, the district had never defined who we want our students to become as they matriculate through our system.

This realization led the Board to charge a Visioning Committee of students, staff, parents, community members and partners to develop what became the six Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate. The Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate were incorporated into the Framework in February 2021.



In February 2022, Trustees once again affirmed T-2-4 for Every Child, this time as the district's Vision Statement. At the same time, Trustees embedded the SBISD Strategic Framework into Board Policy AE Local (Educational Philosophy) to define how the work of the system aligns so the district delivers on the Vision of T-2-4 for Every Child. The strategic framework incorporates district and campus improvement plans and related goals, Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate, four Belief statements, five Core Values, Board Priorities, Superintendent Priorities, and Key Performance Indicators, with T-2-4 at the center.

The district has six goals in the District Improvement Plan that serves as the annually updated strategic action plan to move the system forward.

The district renews its current District of Innovation Plan to support the vision of T-2-4 for Every Child, and to support the actions, initiatives and structures that support Every Child in developing the Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate.

Background: SBISD as a District of Innovation

Districts of Innovation and Exemptions from Provisions of the Texas Education Code under House Bill 1842

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, and contained in the Texas Education Code (TEC) at Chapter 12A, provided **an unprecedented opportunity** for Texas public school districts to challenge the status quo. In Fall 2015, SBISD began the process to become a District of Innovation, and the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to become a District of Innovation on April 25, 2016. The District of Innovation Plan was renewed for an additional five years on January 25, 2021. Based on the requirements in TEC, Chapter 12A and implementing regulations in the Texas Administrative Code, Texas public school districts are required to renew their District of Innovation status every five years. This document serves as Spring Branch ISD's District of Innovation Local Innovation Renewal Plan (Renewal Plan) for an additional five-year period.

As a District of Innovation, Spring Branch ISD has the **increased flexibility and freedom necessary to move Every Child toward T-2-4 success with the ability to make important educational decisions for our students at the local level.**

SBISD also is able to **maximize our responsiveness on behalf of our students as their needs change and as the world around us continues to evolve.** The 14 to 15 years children spend in our system necessitate that we continue to have the flexibility to prepare them for a world that does not yet exist. We must remain positioned to **minimize the barriers** that could otherwise preclude us from doing our best work on their behalf. Leveraging the freedom, flexibility, and local control afforded as a District of Innovation assures we are empowered to continue to do so.

Under TEC, Chapter 12A, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . ." (TEC § 12A.003(b)(2)). However, because T-2-4 requires a comprehensive approach, potentially touching numerous areas in the TEC, and because SBISD needs maximum flexibility and local control of educational decisions for students to reach its T-2-4 goal, SBISD organized its Innovation Plan to be exempt from all permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute with implementation of specific exemptions to occur over time through adoption of policies by the Board of Trustees. In compliance with TEC, Chapter 12A and its implementing regulations, SBISD does not seek exemption from the following TEC sections:

- 1) A state or federal requirement, imposed by statute or rule, applicable to an open-enrollment charter school operating under the TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapter D, including,

but not limited to, the requirements listed in the TEC, § 12.104(b);

- 2) TEC, Chapter 11, Subchapters A, C, D, and E, except that SBISD may implement an exemption from the TEC, § 11.1511(b)(5) and (14) and § 11.162;
- 3) TEC, Chapter 13;
- 4) TEC, Chapter 37;
- 5) TEC, § 28.004;
- 6) the employment of uncertified classroom teachers under Section 21.0032;
- 7) Parental notification requirements under Section 21.057;
- 8) TEC, Chapter 22, Subchapter B;
- 4) TEC, Chapter 25, Subchapter A, §§ 25.001, 25.002, 25.0021, 25.0031, and 25.004;
- 5) TEC, Chapter 28, §§ 28.002, 28.0021, 28.0023, 28.005, 28.0051, 28.006, 28.016, 28.0211, 28.0213, 28.0217, 28.025, 28.0254, 28.02541, 28.0255, 28.0258, 28.0259, and 28.026;
- 6) TEC, Chapter 29, Subchapter G;
- 7) TEC, Chapter 30, Subchapter A;
- 8) TEC, § 30.104;
- 9) TEC, Chapter 34;
- 10) TEC, Chapter 37;
- 11) TEC, Chapters 39 and 39A;
- 12) TEC, Chapter 41;
- 13) TEC, Chapter 42;
- 14) TEC, Chapter 44, §§ 44.011, 44.002, 44.003, 44.004, 44.0041, 44.005, 44.0051, 44.006, 44.007, 44.0071, 44.008, 44.009, 44.011, 44.0312, 44.032, 44.051, 44.052, 44.053, and 44.054;
- 15) TEC, Chapter 45, §§ 45.003, 45.0031, 45.005, 45.105, 45.106, 45.202, 45.203;
- 16) TEC, Chapter 46;
- 17) TEC, Chapter 48;
- 18) TEC, Chapter 49; and
- 19) A provision of Title 2 of the Texas Education Code establishing a criminal offense.

Since becoming a District of Innovation, SBISD has phased in implementation of specific exemptions from TEC in the current Innovation Plan and **activated five specific exemptions as outlined in the chart below. (Board Policy AF Exhibit A) The district will renew three of these five exemptions and add one new exemption for inclusion in our DOI Renewal Plan that will be effective as of January 25, 2026.**

District of Innovation:

List of Texas Education Code (TEC) Exemptions Activated by the SBISD Board of Trustees under TEC, Chapter 12A

The following list specifies TEC statutes from which the Board has activated exemptions pursuant to the current Innovation Plan, and indicates the legal and local policies impacted by each exemption:

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 § 25.082(a) Length of School Day*	December 12, 2016	EC(LEGAL)	EC(LOCAL)
TEC § 25.0811(a) First Day of Instruction	December 12, 2016	EB(LEGAL)	EB(LOCAL)
TEC § 25.092* Minimum Attendance to Earn Credit or a Final Grade	September 25, 2017	FEC(LEGAL) EI(LEGAL)	FEC(LOCAL)
TEC § 21.003 Teacher Certification	April 22, 2019	DBA(LEGAL) DK(LEGAL)	DBA(LOCAL) DCE(LOCAL) DK(LOCAL) DN(LOCAL) DNA(LOCAL)

- The exemption of TEC § 25.082 (a) is no longer required due to changes in the TEC over the past five years. Thus, this exemption is not included in this Renewal Plan.
- The exemption of TEC § 25.092 is no longer required due to the Board of Trustees' approval of an update to Local Policy FEC(L).

SBISD's Innovation Plan requires exemption from a provision of the TEC to be activated by the revision of SBISD policies. SBISD created an enhanced local policy development process that is rigorous, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholder input. Policy changes that activate an exemption from a provision in the TEC must be approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the membership of the

Board of Trustees. Unless and until the SBISD Board of Trustees takes action to enact a particular exemption from the TEC and related regulations through a policy revision, nothing changes in the district's compliance with state laws and local policies. When the Board takes action under the current Innovation Plan to activate an exemption from the TEC, the fact that SBISD is enacting an exemption as a District of Innovation is clearly noted in the legal and local policies affected. A list or index of exemptions enacted as a District of Innovation is maintained in Policy AF(LOCAL) – INNOVATION DISTRICTS.

SBISD's exemptions enacted as a District of Innovation included in this Renewal Plan.

SBISD incorporated the exemption from TEC § 12A.007 in its initial vote to become a District of Innovation. Since that time, the district implemented four additional exemptions, detailed below.

TEC § 12A.007 Amendment, Rescission, or Renewal of Local Innovation Plan

SBISD determined that certain requirements of TEC § 12A.007 and other provisions of the Texas Education Code hinder the goals of its current Innovation Plan. To address this, the district seeks to maximize local control over the education of its students, provide greater flexibility to meet the diverse needs of its student population, and ensure effective implementation of the Innovation Plan through the incremental adoption of Board policies that activate specific exemptions from the TEC as permitted by law. In particular, SBISD determined that regarding each such implementing policy as an "amendment" to the District of Innovation Plan is inconsistent with the overall Plan design and would require an unwieldy and time-consuming process that is not in the best interests of the district's students. Therefore, SBISD specifically exempted itself from the requirements of all allowable TEC requirements available through 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 the Innovation Plan. The district has determined that activation and implementation of specific exemptions from the TEC through adoption of board policies continues to provide maximum local control over the education of its students and maximum flexibility to adapt to the needs of Every Child. In this Renewal Plan, the district continues to exempt itself from TEC, Chapter 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 the 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 Renewal Plan.

TEC § 25.082(a) Length of School Day

This exemption is no longer required as the school year is now determined based on total annual minutes rather than a required number of school days with a defined length of day. This exemption is not included in this Renewal Plan.

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. (For additional information, including considerations and safeguards, view the District of Innovation Archive [here](#)). The district has determined that the considerations which resulted in its exemption from TEC, Chapter 25.0811(a) are still present and necessitate the district's continued exemption from TEC, Chapter 25.0811(a) in this Renewal Plan.

TEC § 25.092 Minimum Attendance to Earn Credit or a Final Grade

This exemption is no longer required based on updated guidance that led to SBISD Board approval of an update to Local Policy FEC(L) that aligns with current SBISD practices as established under our DOI.

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. (For additional information, including considerations and safeguards, view the District of Innovation Archive [here](#)). The district has determined that the considerations which resulted in its exemption from TEC, Chapter 21.003 are still present and necessitate the district's continued

exemption from TEC, Chapter 21.003 in this Renewal Plan. This exemption does not exempt the District from hiring certified teachers under TEC, Section 21.0032 (courses in the foundation curriculum).

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

TEC § 25.036 Admission, Transfer and Attendance (NEW EXEMPTION)

Under Texas Education Code TEC § 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who do not live within the geographic boundaries of SBISD and are therefore not entitled to enroll in the district (inter-district transfer). An inter-district transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one year.

Inter-district transfers are considered based on availability of space, instructional staff, programs and services. The District is seeking this added exemption under the District of Innovation Plan to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting inter-district transfer applicants in certain circumstances. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfers may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent for noncompliance with the transfer agreement at any time during the year (i.e., excessive absences or disciplinary concerns, etc.). In addition, employee transfers may be revoked upon the employee no longer being employed as stated in the student transfer agreement and/or for noncompliance with the transfer agreement.”

Closing

The renewal of the SBISD District of Innovation status for an additional five years, including the extension of three of the five exemptions enacted to date enables us to best prepare our students according to their individualized needs and their unique gifts and talents so that **Every Child is equipped to attain T-2-4 success**. As an open enrollment district, the addition of one new exemption provides the flexibility needed for SBISD to accept inter-district transfers while not being bound to a year-long transfer for any student that does not comply with the transfer agreement at any time during the year.

Through this Renewal Plan, SBISD leverages increased flexibility to make the best decisions for our children because we are able to make them locally. The district will continue to have the flexibility to design and refine the educational environment to support the vision of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate at critical stages in their educational experience.

Propelled forward by our collective commitments as a community in support of our children, we will continue to focus our collective efforts to ensure that Every Child achieves his or her unique and optimal potential. *Our children deserve it. Their future demands it.*