

Executive Summary

Prepared for Board of Trustees Meeting

October 26, 2021

Discussion and Review: Denton ISD District of Innovation Update and Renewal

Purpose of Report

On September 1, 2021, the Denton ISD Educational Improvement Council passed a motion to amend the current Denton ISD District of Innovation Plan by adding American Sign Language as an exception to the certification requirements of Texas Education Code Section 21.003 and 21.044. This amendment does not technically add an additional exemption to the District of Innovation Plan, it does add an area excepted under these exemptions which was not previously discussed. Accordingly, the Denton ISD Board of Trustees will consider this proposal for approval at the meeting on November 16, 2021. New District of Innovation language will include:

Denton ISD believes school district leadership should decide what is best for its students in determining the candidate best suited to teach certain courses, including American Sign Language, and career and technical education (CTE) courses; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses; dual credit coursework; etc. By claiming exemption from Sec. 21.044 the district shall have the right to recruit individuals from certain skill sets including individuals with expert knowledge of sign language, trades, industries, and vocations with industry knowledge and real-world experience and consider qualifications based on experience, industry certification, etc. District leadership including principals, CTE administrators, human resource department members, etc. shall determine whether it is in the best interest of its students to certify individuals based on these factors rather than appeal to the Commissioner of Education as stated in Sec. 21.055. Further, the district shall establish local criteria for training and locally certifying individuals rather than adhere strictly to mandates outlined in Sec. 21.053. In doing so, parental notification of “inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers” under Sec. 21.057 would no longer be necessary. Regardless of whether any adjustments or changes are made to the certification laws, Denton ISD believes this issue to be a local decision as opposed to a state mandate.

Additionally, for Denton ISD to continue to remain a District of Innovation, it is required to renew the District of Innovation plan every five years. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Board move to renew the District’s DOI current plan with the above updated exemption in place.

Operational Impact

The District of Innovation Plan offers flexibility and local control which in turn, benefits students, personnel, and overall instruction. It is important to review and revise this designation as the need arises.

Results

Upon approval of this update and renewal of the District of Innovation Plan, Denton ISD will continue to pursue local control as it benefits curriculum, instruction, governance, parent and community involvement, budgeting, and any other areas deemed necessary to maintain our commitment to the success of every child and to preserve flexibility within our District.
