

Matagorda ISD

District of Innovation Plan



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Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in spring 2015. This bill affords districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. This designation grants access to flexibilities for greater local control, which means our district can tailor a plan best suited for our Matagorda students, staff, and community. This plan will take effect starting with the 2020-21 school year and continue through the 2025-2026 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Susan Phillips Superintendent

Ashley Nixon Teacher

Tina Keen Board Member

Moira Gesford Teacher

Kyle Thurman Associate Principal

Sylvia Barber Parent

Michelle Ottis Teacher

Stephanie Martin Parent

District of Innovation Timeline

Date 6/24/2020 Adoption of resolution by Board of Trustees, Public Hearing for public input on the District of Innovation opportunity, Board of Trustees appoints the District Level Committee to develop a District of Innovation Plan.

Date 7/13/2020 District of Innovation Committee meets to develop and approve a plan.

Date 7/13/2020 Post proposed plan on district's website for 30 days.

Date 7/16/2020 Notify the Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on the adoption of proposed plan.

Date 7/30/2020 District of Innovation Committee presents plan in a public hearing.

Date 8/13/2020 Board of Trustees formally approve the District of Innovation Plan. Formal notification to Texas Commissioner of Education that plan has been adopted.

1. Teacher Certification

(DK Legal, DK Local, DK Exhibit) (TEC 21.003)

Currently: In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency and provide notification to parents of each student assigned to a classroom taught by the non-certified teacher. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork in this process.

Proposed: In order to best serve Matagorda students, decisions on certification requirements will be handled locally. With that in mind, this exemption it allows certified educators to teach a subject in a related field for which she/he is not certified by the state. It will also afford the district the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations.

2. School Start Date

(EB Legal) (TEC 25.0811)

Currently: Districts may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed: We would annually determine the school start date that fits the needs of our students, faculty, and community. This flexibility would allow us to balance the number of days in each semester and provide more instructional days before state assessment. In addition this would allow us to start school on Wednesday or Thursday, as a short week, easing the transition for students beginning a new school year.

3. Teacher Contract Days

(DCB Legal, DCB local) (TEC 21.401)

Currently: Texas Education Code 21.401 currently requires a contract between the district and an educator to be for a minimum of 10 months. Additionally, an educator employed under a 10 month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed: This proposal will allow the district to reduce the contract of a teacher by two to five days. Depending on the adopted calendar and number of instructional days, teachers may be on a

contract anywhere from 182 to 185 days. This is an attempt to provide flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days.

4. Probationary Contracts

(DCA Legal) (TEC 21.102)

Currently: A probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the District.

Proposed: This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Relief from Texas Educational Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses newly hired in Matagorda ISD.

5. Campus Behavior Coordinator

(FO Legal) (TEC 37.0012)

Currently: The current TEC Code requires there to be one administrator who assumes all of the responsibilities for the Campus Behavior Coordinator.

Proposed: This exemption would allow Matagorda ISD to abstain from the state requirements that each school have a Campus Behavior Coordinator and allow campus principals and assistant principals who already serve in this capacity.

6. Transfer Policy

(FDA LEGAL, FDA LOCAL)(TEC 25.036)

Currently: Any child other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.

Proposed: Matagorda ISD administration would be allowed to review and possibly rescind a student's transfer at any time during the school year based on the Student Transfer Out of District Agreement.

7. Class Size

(BF Legal, EEB Legal) (TEC 25.112, TEC 25.113, TEC25.111)

Currently: Based on current state law, classes in kindergarten through 4th may not exceed a ratio of 22 students to 1 teacher. When an individual class exceeds this ratio, the district must either add a new teacher, reassign teachers from other schools with lower student enrollment, or submit a waiver request to the Texas Education Agency. In addition to the waiver request, it is required that a letter be sent to each parent in the class that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted and the class exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed: Matagorda ISD will attempt to keep all K-4 core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. In the event that a classroom exceeds this ratio, the district will decide at the local level on how to best handle the situation without having to submit a TEA waiver request.