

Overton Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas Independent School Districts to seek District of Innovation status. Districts of Innovation are allowed to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On November 17, 2016, the Overton ISD Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation plan to allow for increased local control over District operations and to support innovative and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and the greater Overton community. The board appointed a 14 person committee comprised of a diverse group of Overton ISD stakeholders including teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders. The committee met on February 9, 2017 and March 2, 2017 to hear from the public, discuss, and draft the Local Innovation Plan.

Timeline for the District of Innovation process:

October 10, 2016: Overton ISD Board of Trustees discusses District of Innovation Plan during regular monthly board meeting.

November 17, 2016: Overton ISD Board of Trustees approve a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation Plan

December 12, 2016: Overton ISD Board of Trustees holds an open forum to discuss the District of Innovation Resolution

January 9, 2017: Overton ISD Board of Trustees appoints a committee to study the possibility of a District of Innovation Plan and to pursue writing of a plan if practical.

February 13, 2017: District of Innovation Committee meets and decides to continue to study a District of Innovation plan and present preliminary ideas towards an earlier start date, waivers of certifications for Career and Technology instructors and hard to find teaching positions, and removing the requirement to have a Campus Behavior Coordinators.

March 2, 2017: District of Innovation Committee meets to discuss and amend three areas of innovation as presented in a preliminary plan with more detailed information. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the areas of innovation and post the plan as required.

March 6, 2017: Overton ISD's Innovation Plan is posted on the District's website, on each campus, sent to all OISD employees and board members as well as all usual media outlets.

April 10, 2017: Board will be presented the Innovation Plan for their approval.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Mary Pat Eaves

Melissa Lee

Jamie Shepherd

Kevin Smith

Susan Bobbitt

Cindy Bundrick

Julie Rawlinson

Leann Mackey

Stephen DuBose

Janel Williams

Donna Phillips

Jennifer Mauldin

Nikki Fenter

Kim McKinney

Overton Independent School District's Innovation Plan

1) School Calendar

Overton ISD emphasizes the importance of an innovative learning environment, college and career readiness, along with leadership, social, and emotional development. Texas Education Code 25.0811 inhibits these goals by prohibiting Overton ISD from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin earlier in the calendar year will enable the district to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters, which will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness.

In addition to the start date, Overton ISD will also seek exemptions from the restriction on the number of early release days allowed. The flexibility to use the 75,600 minute requirement for academic instruction without a limit on the number of early release days will provide the district with more opportunities to provide quality professional development and time designated for Professional Learning Communities, academic alignment meetings, peer mentoring support, and general trainings as required by state statutes and TEA policies. Early release days will be strategically placed to maximize the professional development support for staff and provide additional support for at risk students. Exemptions will include requirements pursuant to Texas Education Code Sections 25.081, 25.0811, 25.082, 25.083, and 25.084.

2) Teacher certification for dual credit, career and technical instructors, and hard to fill classroom positions

While always striving to provide engaging and challenging learning, the district seeks to improve college and career readiness options. These goals: development of post high school plans, improvement of workforce skills, and expansion of dual credit programs could be inhibited by Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.053, 21.044, and 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231 to the extent these laws limit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach hard to fill classes, high demand dual credit and career and technical courses when high quality certified teachers are not available.

In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such dual credit and career/technical course offerings, the district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in the laws cited.

By obtaining exemptions from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit, career and technical courses and hard to fill content areas, the district will have the flexibility to hire credentialed persons and professionals in certain trades and vocations to teach the crafts of those trades and vocations in career and technical courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. This will also apply to content area teachers for hard to fill positions.

3) Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

Embedded in multiple strategies within Overton ISD is the idea to help students become socially and emotionally intelligent individuals. Social and emotional learning is inhibited by Texas Education Code Section 37.0012 which constrains campus governance by requiring one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the district's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program in which the schools, along with the community provide social and emotional supports to students. By obtaining exemption from section 37.0012, the district will be better able to focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibility toward the community.

4) Terms of District of Innovation Plan

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2017-2018 school year and ending at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated and amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with statute. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the plan.

Activation of the exemptions from the TEC will require the revision and/or addition to local policies. Any exemptions from TEC or amendments to the District of Innovation Plan will be reflected in Policy AF (LOCAL) Innovation Districts following board action pursuant to law.

**Summary of Exemptions from TEC Sections/TAC Chapters for Overton ISD District of
Innovation Plan**

TEC 25.081

TEC 25.0811

TEC 25.082

TEC 25.083

TEC 25.084

TEC 21.003

TEC 21.053

TEC 21.044

TEC 37.0012

19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231