



LAKE TRAVIS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LTISD Plan of Innovation

Effective Dec. 13, 2016 – Dec. 13, 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a District of Innovation?

The District of Innovation concept was passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 and has been codified in the Texas Education Code Chapter 12a. A District of Innovation designation gives traditional school districts most of the flexibility currently available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools. It gives a district more local control and increases a district's ability to decide what best suits the district's needs. Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should exempt on adoption of the plan."

What are the benefits to Lake Travis ISD becoming a District of Innovation?

A District of Innovation will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools and exercise local control over certain decisions about education and governance that are more appropriate for the individual needs of the District. A District of Innovation is given empowerment to innovate and think differently based on the unique needs of the school, students, and staff. Becoming a District of Innovation allows a district to customize appropriate plans district-wide, a grade level, or a single campus.

What are the proposed areas of innovation for Lake Travis ISD?

- First day of instruction
- Class size in grades K-4
- Teacher Appraisal System
- Teacher Certifications
- Probationary Teacher Contracts

What areas is Lake Travis ISD prohibited from seeking exemption?

A District of Innovation cannot seek exemption from state or federal requirements applicable to an open enrollment charter school; state requirements for curriculum or graduation; and academic and financial accountability. Additionally, a District of Innovation cannot be exempt from statutes, including but not limited to, election of board of trustees; powers and duties of school boards, superintendents, and principals; criminal history record checks and educator misconduct reporting; bilingual education; special

education; prekindergarten; academic accountability including student assessment; open meetings, open records; financial accountability and related reporting; and nepotism.

What is the process for developing and approving LTISD's Innovation Plan?

On September 20, 2016, the Lake Travis ISD's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of considering the designation of LTISD as a District of Innovation. The Board of Trustees appointed an innovation plan committee to explore and develop a local innovation plan. The innovation plan committee is comprised of key district stakeholders including, senior leadership, administration, staff, parents, board members, and community members. The innovation plan committee met in September, October, and November to draft, review, and prepare a final proposed Innovation Plan. The final proposed Innovation Plan will be posted on the District's website for at least 30 days and can be accessed from the homepage at <http://www.ltidschools.org/>. The District's Advisory Committee for Education (ACE), established pursuant to Texas Education Code §11.251, will hold a public meeting on December 13, 2016 to consider and vote on the final version of the proposed plan. If the final proposed innovation plan is approved by a majority of the District's ACE, the Board of Trustees will vote on whether to adopt the final proposed plan during the December 13, 2016 board meeting. If two-thirds of the membership of the board vote to adopt the plan, the District will be designated as a District of Innovation under Chapter 12a of the Texas Education Code and will begin operation in accordance with the plan.

How long is the District of Innovation Plan effective?

The plan will be in effect for a term of five years from the date of adoption (December 13, 2016 – December 13, 2021). The District of Innovation Plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed only by a majority vote of the Innovation Plan Committee and the board of trustees in the same manner required for initial adoption.

Timeline

Action	Responsibility	Date
Consideration of a designation by adoption of a resolution	Board	9/20/16
Vote to adopt a resolution to consider designation	Board	9/20/16
Hold a public hearing	Board	9/20/16
Appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan	Board	9/20/16
Innovation Plan Committee meeting	Committee	9/22/16
Innovation Plan Committee meeting	Committee	10/6/16
Innovation Plan Committee meeting	Committee	11/2/16
Innovation Plan Committee meeting	Committee	11/10/16
Post proposed local innovation plan on website	District	11/11 – 12/12/16
Send notification to Commissioner of intention to vote on local innovation plan	Board	11/11/16
First reading for local innovation plan	Board	11/15/16
ACE public meeting to consider final version of the proposed plan; ACE to vote on final plan	Committee	12/13/16
Board to vote on approval of final plan	Board	12/13/16
Notification to Commissioner of approval of plan	District	12/14/16

Innovation Plan Committee Members

Ashley Gallenkamp	Teacher*
Stephanie Williams	Teacher*
Deb Dolmanet	Teacher*
Alicia Martinez-Duran	Assistant Principal*
Eloisa Cernicky	Teacher*
Denise Hamilton	Parent*
Colleen Serfoss	Teacher*
Cindy Allen	Teacher*
Cara Cooper	Parent*
Vanessa Malone	Teacher*
Lauren Chambers	Teacher*
Courtney Trimmer	Counselor*
Jill Bryant	Teacher*
Mary Nascimbeni	Teacher*
Karen Frey	Teacher*
Kelly Freed	Principal*
Perris Yates	Teacher*
Mindy Plante	Teacher*
Adeliza Tiffany	Parent*
Katie Thompson	Teacher*
Shannon Voges	Teacher*
Michael Berry	Community*
Beatriz Lopez	Teacher*
Kevin Malandrucolo	Assistant Principal*
Heather Wright	Teacher*
Sharon Smith	Teacher*
Jenny Sones	Teacher*
Gordon Butler	Principal*
Darnell Horton	Assistant Principal*
Amber Forgey	Teacher*
Janice Bech	Teacher*
Kathleen Hassenfratz	C&I*
Sallie Ingle	Business/Community*
Jodie Villemaire	Principal*
Kathy Burbank	C&I*

Mary Patin	Administration*
Chief Todd Radford	Business/Community*
Holly Morris-Kuentz	Administration
Amber King	Administration
Marco Alvarado	Administration
Johnny Hill	Administration
Chris Woehl	C&I
Liz Sims	C&I
Rachel Benke	C&I
Brandy Belk	Athletics
Charles Aguillon	Fine Arts
Angela Frankhouser	Principal
Sam Hicks	Principal
April Glenn	Principal
Amanda Prehn	Principal
Alex Alexander	Board Member Ex-Officio
Lisa Johnson	Board President Ex-Officio

*Current Advisory Committee on Education Members

Innovation Plan

As a District of Innovation, Lake Travis ISD seeks to maximize local control over educational and governance decisions for students and staff. To carry forward that mission, LTISD seeks exemption from the following provisions of the Texas Education Code. The District intends to continue to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If amendments to this plan are considered at some point in the future, the District will reconvene the innovation plan committee to initiate the appropriate process, as outlined in Chapter 12a of the Texas Education Code.

FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION

(Texas Education Code § 25.0811) (EB LEGAL, EB LOCAL)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan

The Texas Education Code requires that students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin school earlier. The waiver process was eliminated several years ago, mandating that all schools begin school no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. This requirement inhibits the District's flexibility to develop a calendar that best meets students', staff's, board of trustees', and community members' needs and desires. It also inhibits the District from creating a calendar that better balances the instructional semesters.

Category of innovation

Modifications to the school year

Innovation strategies

1. To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, the District will determine on an annual basis the local starting date for the first semester of each school year.
2. Students will begin no earlier than the second Monday in August of any given year.

These strategies provide the District the benefits of additional time for staff to plan and students to learn; additional time for staff to prepare for summer school; equitable allocation of the days in the two semesters; additional professional learning community time for staff; flexibility to end the school year earlier, which in turn, allows staff and

students starting college the ability to access the first summer semester of college courses.

CLASS SIZE IN GRADES K-4

(Texas Education Code §§ 25.112, 25.113) (BF LEGAL, EEB LEGAL)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan

The Texas Education Code currently requires the District to maintain a class size of 22 students or less in each kindergarten through fourth grade class. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). These waivers are rarely rejected by TEA, making the process of applying for a waiver no more than an administrative step of putting TEA on notice. Along with the waiver, the District is required to notify parents of the waiver or exception to the class size limit. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and the class returns to a size at or below 22 students, thus negating the need for the waiver or notification to parents.

Category of innovation

Campus governance

Innovation strategies

The average class size in kindergarten through fourth grade in LTISD is 20.6. However, numerous circumstances each year necessitate applying for class-size waivers. While LTISD certainly believes that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, research does not support a negative effect when only one or two more students are added. Class size must be balanced with the logistics of funding, availability of resources and space, parental requests or desires, and adding staff. LTISD's purpose is not to disregard the intent of class size ratios, but rather to allow the District more flexibility and control in determining appropriate class sizes based on the unique facts and circumstances.

1. LTISD will establish local ratios for all K-5 classes and will attempt to keep all K-5 classes sufficiently staffed, but will allow local consideration in placing students.
2. A TEA waiver will no longer be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
3. The board of trustees will be notified of all class sizes that exceed the locally established ratios.

TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM

(Texas Education Code § 21.352(c)) (DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL, DNA REGULATION)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system since 1997. Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the state has issued a new teacher appraisal system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). LTISD is currently using T-TESS. While this system is designed to meet the needs of the entire state, LTISD seeks to customize certain aspects of the system to better meet the needs of its teachers.

Category of innovation

Accountability and assessment measures that exceed the state and federal law

Innovation strategies

The District seeks to allow teachers who have demonstrated high-quality performance the opportunity to be exempt from a full appraisal under certain circumstances that are locally established. Starting the 2017-2018 school year, a non-probationary teacher may be exempt if he/she meets the local criteria.

These innovation strategies offer local benefits including increased opportunities for more unannounced walk-throughs, which are more reflective of what is happening in a teacher's classroom than a scheduled observation. This flexibility will increase an administrator's ability to focus on struggling or new teachers, and will continue to allow administrators to have meaningful professional interactions with all campus staff.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

(Texas Education Code §§ 21.003(a), 21.057) (DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT, DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan

The Texas Education Code requires a public school employee to have the appropriate certification for his or her current assignment unless the appropriate permit has been issued. The credentials appropriate to each assignment are set forth in the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules at 19 Administrative Code Chapter 231. In the event an appropriately certified teacher cannot be found, the District must request an emergency certification from TEA and SBEC. These rules are burdensome and do not take into account the unique needs and circumstances of the district. Certain subject areas, in

particular, are often very difficult to find properly-certified teachers.

Category of innovation

Other innovations prescribed by the Board of Trustees

Innovation strategies

In order to best serve LTISD students, certain decisions on certification will be handled locally. Campus administrators will have the ability to consider out-of-state educator certifications and professional qualifications or credentials of candidates, as well as to review the strengths and qualifications of campus staff to make local recommendations for teaching outside of certain certification areas in hard to fill positions, as allowed by locally established policy. The Superintendent or designee will approve all local certifications and will report to the board of trustees.

PROBATIONARY TEACHER CONTRACTS

(Texas Education Code 21.102(b)) (DCA LEGAL)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan

The Texas Education Code requires that teachers newly-hired by the District who have five years of experience in public education in Texas within the last eight years can only be placed on a one-year probationary contract, and after the first year, must be placed on a term contract. In contrast, newly-hired teachers without the 5 of 8 years of experience can be hired by the District on a one-year probationary contract for a total of three years. This law limits the District's ability to sufficiently assess and determine whether a newly-hired teacher is a good fit for the District. The one-year probationary period is insufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom because the teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made before the end of the school year.

Category of innovation

Other innovations prescribed by the Board of Trustees

Innovation strategies

To create equity in new hires, to give LTISD the opportunity to serve students better, to allow administrators time to evaluate performance, and to provide opportunities for improvement, growth and professional development, the District will implement the following contract requirements:

1. Beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year and beyond, all new teachers hired in Lake Travis ISD are issued a one-year probationary contract for a total of three years,

and may be issued a fourth year probationary contract under the same rules as applied in Texas Education Code 22.102(c).

2. Teachers who are employed by Lake Travis ISD prior to the 2017-2018 school year are not subject to the proposed contract changes.