

Louise ISD District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

The 84th Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1842 which gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. HB 1842 provides Louise ISD an opportunity to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of our student population in order to prepare them for success and life-long learning. Louise ISD is driven by the goals and objectives outlined in our district improvement plan: Board goals, district mission statement, and community input. These factors drive all decisions regarding teaching and learning in LISD. We have developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan to provide opportunities that allow the LISD Superintendent and Board of Trustees to use their experience and judgment to make decisions regarding the students of Louise ISD. LISD is a community with diverse students and unique challenges. Giving the Board and administration local control of these decisions will offer solutions specifically suited to our students, parents, and community. The District of Innovation Plan targets five areas including first and last day of instruction, teacher certifications, minimum minutes of instruction, probationary contracts, and minimum service requirements for teachers.

District of Innovation Plan Term: The term of the plan is for five years, beginning August 1, 2020 and ending July 31, 2025, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the terms of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

District of Innovation Team

Administration

Dr. Garth Oliver—Superintendent, Donna Kutac—High School Principal, Mary Trochta—Junior High School Principal, Brady Peterson—Elementary School Principal, Kathryn Peterson—Curriculum and Behavior Intervention

Board of Trustees

Linda Alderson—President, Fred Ochoa, Jr.—Vice President, Mark Bain—Secretary, Amanda Cox—Secretary Pro Tem, Chris Faas—Member, Jay Heard—Member, Marco Munoz—Member

District of Innovation Timeline

- December 9, 2019—Louise ISD Superintendent and prospective District of Innovation Plan committee members met to consider Innovations which would meet the needs of Louise ISD
- December 16, 2019—Louise ISD Superintendent presents a District of Innovation Plan for consideration by the Louise ISD Board of Trustees. Amendments and suggestions for

deletions or additions will also be considered at this time. Board of Trustees may appoint the District of Innovation committee suggested by the superintendent to develop the Innovation Plan

- February 11, 2020—Proposed DOI Plan to Campuses. Feedback will be requested.
- During the month of February and March—the DOI committee will meet to consider amendments to the Plan.
- March 16, 2020—Board of Trustees will consider a resolution to become a District of Innovation.
- April 27, 2020— The Board will conduct a public hearing with regard to becoming a District of Innovation and approves the Committee.
- May 8—post online
- May-June—Plan reviewed by public, school administrators, and District Site Based Committee. District advisory committee works on possible amendments
- June 15—Board of Trustees vote to approve the District of Innovation Plan. The plan must be approved by a 2/3 majority vote.
- June 17—Post Louise ISD Innovation Plan on district website and submit the Louise ISD website link and the letter stating the date that the Board adopted the plan to the TEA and the Commissioner of Education.

Innovations

Louise ISD, in conjunction with the District of Innovation Committee, proposes the following flexibilities with the Texas Education Code to provide the best educational opportunities for students at LISD.

1. First and Last Day of Instruction

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811 and TEC §25.0812

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule. However, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier.
- TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community.

Proposal: The district will develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in LISD by incorporating the flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June.

By ending the school year earlier, LISD can support students who need remediation as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier school start date allows these

students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

2. Teacher Certification Requirements

Exemption from: TEC §21.003(a) and TEC §21.053

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher or other certified position unless the person holds an appropriate certificate.
- TEC §21.053(b) states that an educator may not be paid for teaching or work done before the issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every effort to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position needed. This proposal affects all teaching areas with the exception of Special Education and Bilingual/ESL teachers.

When that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

Louise ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to, CTE and languages other than English. Special Education teachers will continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Additionally, Louise ISD will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications and following Programs of Study. Certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local) Exemption from TEC 21.003, 21.053, & 21.057 Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal/Local); DK (Legal/Local)

3. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract 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 with the district.

This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data.

Proposal: Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract certified employees subject to T.E.C. Chapter 21, will be subject to a two year probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

4. Minimum Service Required

Exemption from: TEC §21.401(a) and TEC §21.401(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.401(a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months service.
- TEC §21.401(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposal: Louise ISD seeks the freedom to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days and move to a 10 month contract for teachers from August-May, with a focus on minutes of instruction, instead of days of instruction; without an anticipated reduction in salary. The move to minutes of instruction will better align teacher contracts to the minutes of instruction requirement.

The teachers will fulfill the required 75,600 minutes of instruction and additional minutes and staff development as determined locally by the Louise ISD Board. This strategy will provide opportunities for teachers to seek out beneficial content area staff development during summer months and may improve teacher morale.