



LITTLEFIELD



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOME OF THE FIGHTING WILDCATS

1207 East 14th Street ♦ Littlefield, Texas ♦ 79339
Phone 806-385-4150 ♦ Fax 806-385-6297

Littlefield ISD

Districts of Innovation Plan for Exemptions from Provisions of the Texas Education Code under House Bill 1842

*Approved by DOI Committee May 4, 2017
Approved by School Board May 17, 2017*

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to amend certain state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. Littlefield ISD (LISD) intends to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. LISD's Local Innovation Plan is comprehensive and touches numerous areas in the TEC, and because LISD seeks to maximize local control of educational decisions for students, LISD seeks exemption from the permissible provisions of the TEC included and explained in this Local Innovation Plan. LISD's Local Innovation Plan will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless the plan is terminated or amended by the LISD Board of Trustees in accordance with HB1842. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

LISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robert Dillard, Superintendent

Rick Richards, Assistant Superintendent

Brent Green, Athletic Director

Bonnie Anderson, Band Director

Eric Turpen, Mayor - City of Littlefield

John Castillo, Community Member

David McGehee, Community Member

Jimmy Sokora, Community Member

Jan Richards, Littlefield Primary School Principal

Keely Cristan, Littlefield Primary School Teacher

Stephanie Gast, Littlefield Primary School Parent

Tom Whistler, Littlefield Elementary School Principal

Lacy Adkins, Littlefield Elementary School Teacher

Cindy Laredo, Littlefield Elementary School Parent

Trevor Edgemon, Littlefield Jr. High School Principal

Ray McKinney, Littlefield Jr. High School Teacher

Donna Parker, Littlefield Jr. High School Parent

Ricky Hobbs, Littlefield High School Principal

Jennifer Bundy, Littlefield High School Teacher

Cary Hanlin, Littlefield High School Parent

TIMELINE

February 17, 2017 Board Meeting

Littlefield ISD Board holds public hearing to discuss 2017-2018 LISD School Calendar. Discussion leads to a need to become a District of Innovation in order to enact the preferred calendar/school start date. Superintendent to explore rules and procedures to initiate consideration for becoming designated a District of Innovation.

March 14, 2017 Administrative Team Meeting

LISD Administrative Team meets to discuss District of Innovation procedures, District of Innovation Planning Committee membership, and possible areas of need to be addressed in a Local Innovation Plan for LISD.

March 21, 2017 Administrative Team Meeting

LISD Administrative Team meets to further discuss District of Innovation procedures, District of Innovation Planning Committee membership, and possible areas of need to be addressed in a Local Innovation Plan for LISD.

March 27, 2017 Board Meeting

Littlefield ISD Board holds public hearing to discuss becoming District of Innovation, discusses rules and procedures for becoming a District of Innovation, takes action to approve resolution to initiate consideration for being designated a District of Innovation, and appoints District of Innovation Planning Committee to develop a Local Innovation Plan.

April 7, 2017 DOI Planning Committee Meeting

District of Innovation Planning Committee meets to discuss the Local Innovation Plan procedures and possible areas of need to be addressed in a Local Innovation Plan for LISD. District of Innovation Planning Committee incorporates district needs into a preliminary LISD Local Innovation Plan proposal.

April 7, 2017

Proposed LISD District of Innovation Plan posted on the LISD website.

April 24, 2017 Board Meeting

Board to take action to approve proposed LISD Local Innovation Plan.

Board to take action to approve notifying the Texas Commissioner of Education of their intent to vote on adopting LISD's final Local Innovation Plan.

May 4, 2017 DOI Planning Committee Meeting

District of Innovation Planning Committee conducts a public meeting to finalize and approve the LISD Local Innovation Plan.

May 17, 2017 Board Meeting

Board conducts Public Hearing on the LISD Local Innovation Plan.

Finalized LISD Local Innovation Plan approved by the LISD Board of Trustees.

May 17, 2017

LISD submits approved Local Intervention Plan to the Commissioner of Education.

Littlefield ISD

Local Innovation Plan

Approved by DOI Committee May 4, 2017

Approved by School Board May 17, 2017

I. Teacher Certification

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 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. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed

This exemption from the current state teacher certification requirements that inhibit the LISD's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill teaching positions will allow the district to establish local qualification and training requirements. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). LISD will have the flexibility to hire external or internal applicants that do not have traditional state certifications. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Note: special education and bilingual teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

II. Probationary Contracts
(DCA LEGAL) (Ed. Code Subchapter C Sec. 21.102)

Currently

The 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 exemption from probationary contracts being limited to one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher or administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district will allow LISD extended time for the evaluation and training of new personnel. LISD is committed to effectively managing teacher contracts and this exemption will provide the district with the flexibility to keep all professional employees new to the district on probationary contracts for a maximum permissible period of three school years.

III. Planning and Preparation Time

(DL LEGAL) (Ed. Code Sec. 21.404)

Currently

Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Proposed

This exemption from the mandated teacher planning and preparation requirements will allow LISD teachers to request that a planning and preparation period be altered to meet the individual needs of the teacher (i.e. duration and timing). Only the teacher can make this request.

IV. Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. However, for many years, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to adopt an earlier start date. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed

This exemption will allow LISD the flexibility to make a local decision on each school year start date to best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also allow LISD to start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. This will also allow for more flexibility regarding professional development opportunities for our staff. LISD will not start school prior the 2nd Monday of August.

V. 90 Percent Attendance Rule
(FEC LOCAL) (Ed. Code 25.092)

Currently

State law currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn credit. The law currently requires students to be awarded credit based on "seat time" rather than based on content mastery.

Proposed

The exemption from the 90 percent attendance rule will allow the district to establish local criteria regarding student attendance requirements. LISD will not have to penalize students who miss class due to extra-curricular /co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. It will also allow LISD administrators to award credit to students based on demonstration of understanding of the concepts required for mastery. The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum.

The requested exemption from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or change existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28,0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

VI. Student/Teacher Ratios, Class Size Ratio, Notice of Class Size

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

Currently

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed

This exemption allows LISD the time to staff campuses with effective teachers by granting local control over Student/Teacher Ratio, Class Size Ratio, and Notice of Exceeding Class Size Ratio. We agree that small class sizes enable effective teachers to provide more individualized attention to each student. Having the latitude and time to seek and hire teachers without unduly alarming parents enables us to best serve students with effective student-teacher and class size ratios. Our vision is to have the timing and latitude to hire the “right teacher” for kids and not rush to hire “any teacher” just to fulfill a mandate.

VII. Student Discipline Provisions
(FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (Ed. Code 37.0012)

Currently

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed

This exemption allowing LISD to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator will free the district from this particular legislative requirement that was put into place as solution to a non-existent problem in LISD. Campus principals and assistant principals already serve in this capacity, and a requirement to designate someone for this position is not necessary.

VIII. Long Range Energy Plan

(CL LEGAL) (Ed. Code Sec. 44.902)

Currently

The board of trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district's annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district's energy plan.

Proposed

Exemption of this statute will allow ISD to avoid unnecessary redundancies. LISD already has an effective energy management plan in place.