



McLean Independent School District

Home of the Tigers

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District of Innovation Plan 2022 – 2027

School Board Members:

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<i>Katy Magee</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Derek Jones</i>	<i>Member</i>

District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members:

<i>Johnny James</i>	<i>Superintendent</i>	<i>Crissy Simpson</i>	<i>Parent</i>
<i>Brad Rainer</i>	<i>Principal</i>	<i>Jenifer Hanes</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
<i>Sheri Copenhaver</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Misty Hannon</i>	<i>Counselor</i>
<i>Brooke Skipper</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Katie Sorrells</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
<i>Shelli Long</i>	<i>Reading Specialist</i>	<i>Larenda Stalls</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
<i>Cindy James</i>	<i>Education Aide</i>		

Background

House Bill (HB) 1842 passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 16, 2017, the McLean Independent School District Board of Trustees (the “Board”) unanimously passed a Resolution to initiate the process under Education Code Chapter 12A for the McLean Independent School District (the “District”) to become a District of Innovation.

The term of this plan is for five years, beginning December 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2027. If, within the term of this plan, the District determines that additional innovations are necessary, the District may make modifications to this plan in the form of an amendment(s), which amendment(s) shall be adopted in the manner required by law. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District's adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community.

Timeline of Events

Eligibility – Rating Acceptable

- 7/25/2022 Board of Trustees adopts resolution to initiate the process under Education Code Chapter 12A to Renew McLean ISD as a District of Innovation.*
- 8/16/2022 District wide stakeholder meeting to consider the district as a Designated Innovated District.*
- 9/14/2022 Public hearing to consider whether the district should develop a local innovation plan for the designation for the district as a district of innovation.*

Innovations

The District proposes the innovations below by exempting itself from the requirements of the Texas Education Code (“TEC”) in the following areas:

Exemption 1 – First Day of Instruction TEC § 25.0811

Current Law TEC § 25.0811

TEC § 25.0811 states that “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the third Monday in August.”

Innovation Strategy

Under the plan, the District will begin instruction for students no earlier than the third Monday in August. This will give the District the following advantages:

- 1. It may improve student success by allowing the District to balance the number of days in the fall and spring semesters.*
- 2. Starting school before the fourth Monday in August will also provide extra instructional days prior to state assessments.*

Exemption 2 – Length of School Day TEC §§ 25.081, 25.082

Current Law TEC § 25.081 currently defines a day of instruction as 420 minutes of instruction. TEC § 25.082 currently requires that a school day be for at least seven hours, including intermissions and recesses. While there is a waiver process available to request exemption from these requirements, the waiver is limited to a 6-day maximum number for the school year.

Innovation Strategy

Exemption from the “420 instructional minutes” and “seven hour day” requirements provides McLean ISD with the flexibility needed to alter the length of the school day on selected days, whenever locally determined necessary or beneficial to the District and its stakeholders. These exemptions will also give the District a significant amount of local control over scheduling and will, in turn, give the District the added flexibility to work non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for our teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development. This plan gives the District the flexibility to reach the

annual goal of 75,600 minutes of instruction without being limited by the “420 instructional minutes” and “seven-hour day” requirements of the statutory provisions listed above.

McLean ISD does not have any intentions to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose, but reserves the right to shorten days as may be required or permitted by law and as the Board determines to be in the best interest of the District and its students, staff, and the community. To the greatest extent possible, “early release” days will be planned ahead of time and noted in the District calendar, which is approved by the Board and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

Exemption 3 – Teacher Certification TEC § 21.003

Current Law TEC § 21.003 provides that “a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district, unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B [of Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code].” In the event the District cannot locate a certified person for a position or where a teacher will teach a subject outside of his or her certification, the District must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Innovation Strategy

In order to best serve District students, the District would like to have more flexibility in the hiring process. Under this plan, decisions regarding District employee certification will be handled locally as follows:

- 1. The campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject(s) out of his or her certified field, without seeking approval from TEA. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and provide written documentation of the credentials that the certified teacher possesses, which qualify him or her to teach the relevant subject(s). The superintendent will then determine whether to allow the certified teacher to teach the relevant subject(s) outside of his or her certified field.*

2. *The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow an uncertified individual to teach a particular class or classes, without seeking approval from TEA. The principal must provide written documentation of the reasons for the request and the credentials that the uncertified individual possesses, which qualify him or her to teach the relevant subject(s). The superintendent will then determine whether to recommend to the Board that the Board hire the individual to teach the relevant subject(s). The Board retains final authority for the employment of uncertified individuals as teachers.*

Under the plan, an individual with experience in a CTE field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The plan will also give the District the flexibility to honor Bachelor's degrees and certifications from neighboring states.

Exemption 4 – Probationary Contracts TEC § 21.102(b)

Current Law TEC § 21.102(b) provides that “[a] probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. 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.”

Innovation Strategy

This period of one year is not sufficient to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since current timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data. Under this plan, new staff members to Mclean ISD that have been in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District, may be issued probationary contracts for each of the first two years they are employed by the District. This extension will not be mandatory, but may be utilized when deemed appropriate by the District.

Exemption 5 – Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401)

Current Law TEC § 21.401 requires a teacher who is on a 10 – month contract to work a minimum of 187 Days.

Innovation Strategy

In an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required by students, the District would have the option to reduce the amount of contract days with no effect on teacher salaries.