

Lone Oak ISD

District of Innovation Plan



Plan Approved

District of Innovation Committee 1/11/2017

Board of Trustee Final Approval 4/17/2017

Amended 8/2/2021

I. Introduction

The 84th legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allowed traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas' open enrollment charter schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation." On Monday, December 5, 2016, the Lone OakISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation.

II. Mission

Lone Oak ISD will create a supportive learning environment that nurtures positive self-esteem and physical well-being while enabling students to reach their fullest academic and social potential. The district accepts the responsibilities for preparing students to be productive citizens and lifelong learners in our changing world.

III. Expectations

- Lone Oak ISD will achieve the highest accountability rating by TEA
- All students will experience highly engaging and rigorous lessons to help them attain their academic potential.
- Parent and community members will be partners with the Lone Oak ISD staff in meeting needs of our students.
- School facilities will be safe, well maintained and disciplined environments conducive to student learning.
- An appropriate overall financial condition of the district will be maintained through effective planning and efficient management of the budget.

IV. Process

On December 5, 2016, the LOISD Board of Trustees appointed a District of Innovation Committee which is comprised of administrators, teachers, parents and community members. The committee met on January 11, 2017 to discuss and draft a Local Innovation Plan (LIP). The committee researched Texas education codes in which the district could benefit from modifying in order to make the education process more effective/efficient for Lone Oak ISD. The committee discussed the codes and voted for those the committee wished to pursue as part of the LIP. The plan was posted on the District web page for public input on January 13, 2017 for 30 days before the Board of Trustees voted on the plan on April 17, 2017.

V. Committee Members

Amanda Taylor

Lance Campbell

Jeff Hicks

Shannon Wilhite

Beth Luhn

Jared Smith

Cassie Pinkston

Jeff Jaco

Cindy Calk

Andi Wooten

Anne Taliaferro

Charles Melancon

Lisa Kelley

Susannah Williams

Linda Ross

Elizabeth Tanoos

Craig Standifer

Committee Chair

Superintendent

High School Principal

Middle School Principal

Elementary Principal

College Street Director

Technology Director

Elementary Vice-Principal

Elementary Teacher

Elementary Teacher

Middle School Teacher

Middle School Teacher

High School Teacher

High School Teacher

High School Teacher

High School Teacher

Community Member

VI. District of Innovation Timeline

Monday, December 5, 2016

6:45pm, Special Board Meeting

*Board of Trustees approve resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation.

7:00pm, Regular Board Meeting

*Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation

*Approve a motion to pursue developing a District of Innovation plan, parameters and members for the District of Innovation Committee.

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

District of Innovation Committee Meeting to develop plan.

Friday, January 13, 2017

Post District of Innovation Plan on website for 30 days

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

District Improvement Committee Public Hearing

District Improvement Committee Votes on Local Innovation Plan

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Post the final District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days for public input.

Monday, April 6, 2017

Notify Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on adoption of proposed plan.

April 17, 2017

Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

*Vote to approve District of Innovation Plan

April 18, 2017

Notify Commissioner of Education of Approval of Local Innovation Plan

Update all policy changes with TASB.

VII. Term of Plan

As determined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the District of Innovation Plan is five years. Thus, the plan will begin April 2017 and end April 2022 unless terminated by the Board of Trustees. The District Improvement Committee will monitor the Local Innovation Plan annually and provide feedback to the Board in regards to the effectiveness of the plan.

VIII. Innovations

Calendar (EB Legal, Local) (TEC §25.0811)

Under current Texas state law, “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

Innovation Strategy

School start dates is an area in which the district should be able to determine locally and on an annual basis to determine what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week.

Class Size Waiver (EEB Legal) (TEC §25.112, §25.113)

State law requires that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. If classes are going to exceed this cap, a waiver is required from the Texas Education Agency. If approved, the district must then notify parents by “specifying the class for which an exception from the limit imposed by Section 25.112(a) was granted; (2) state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted. (§25.113, 1-2).

Innovation Strategy

Lone Oak ISD is a growing district with one elementary campus that has reached capacity. As we look to build a new facility, the number of students per class is anticipated to exceed the 22:1 ratio dictated by law. In the event the cap of 22:1 is exceeded, the superintendent will report these findings to the board. If class sizes reach a 25:1 ratio, the superintendent will report to board and the district will notify parents. Lone Oak ISD is committed to keeping class sizes at or below the current 22:1 ratio. Therefore, we will continue to look at avenues to reduce class sizes, but need to have the flexibility to exceed this cap during the expansion process.

Probationary Contracts (DCA Legal) (TEC §21.102)

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one-year probationary period is not a sufficient amount of time to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. Currently, contracts for Lone Oak ISD employees occur in March which demands that employment decisions must be made with very little time for evaluating teacher effectiveness and prior to state assessment results.

Innovation Strategy

For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the first day of employment with Lone Oak ISD.

Teacher Certification (DBA Legal, Local, DK Legal, Local, Exhibit) (TEC §21.003)

As a small school district it is sometimes difficult to find qualified applicants for certain fields. When an applicant is unavailable it occasionally becomes necessary for a teacher to teach outside their certified teaching field. In order for a teacher to teach outside their teaching field, the district is required to submit a request to TEA. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Another area in which flexibility would benefit Lone Oak ISD would be the ability to hire employees, with industry experience, for innovative, dual credit, or new classes in which we are unable to find certified teachers for a position.

Innovative Strategy

In order to best serve Lone Oak ISD students by allowing more flexibility in scheduling and more course offerings, decisions on certification will be handled locally. For grades 6-12, in all subjects except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual:

a) The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one or more courses in a field for which s/he is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify him or her to teach the proposed courses.

b) An individual with college teaching or industry experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certificate. The campus principal would make a request to the superintendent and make all credentials available. The superintendent would have the capability to hire this person on a local certification and the employee would obtain an at-will contract.

Inter-District Transfers (FDA Local) (TEC §25.036) Amended August 2, 2021

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Lone Oak ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring non-resident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District.

TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Lone Oak ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Innovative Strategy

Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

IX. Summary

The Local Innovation Plan results from the collaboration between multiple stakeholders. The needs of the District were investigated, and the plan created allows Lone Oak ISD the flexibility to make local decisions to best educate our students.