

SHALLOWATER **ISD**

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN



ADOPTED 2021

Introduction and Summary of Events:

During the 84th session of the Texas Legislature, House Bill 1842 amended Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code, which authorizes school districts to pursue designation as Districts of Innovation (DOI). As such, this provides school districts greater flexibility and local control to better meet the needs of the students, staff, and community.

On October 19th, 2020, upon receipt of a petition from the district site-based committee, the Shallowater ISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to begin the process of becoming a DOI. At that time, the Board of Trustees authorized the site-based committee to develop a DOI plan.

On November 9th, 2020, the committee met to discuss possible Texas Education Code exemptions and associated innovations and to begin developing a district plan. On December 7th, 2020, the committee met once again to review the plan and voted to submit it to the SISD Board of Trustees for consideration. After a review by the board members, updates were made by the committee before submitting the plan once again for consideration. On January 18th, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved the plan to be posted to the district website for public review. On February 15th, 2021, the board voted to formally approve the plan.

Unless discontinued by the Shallowater ISD Board of Trustees, the DOI plan will be followed for a term of five years beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and may be amended anytime by the district to add additional exemptions/innovations if it is determined to be in the best interest of Shallowater ISD and the local community.



District Site Based Committee/ District of Innovation Team

Kella Beach	Parent
Jane Blackburn	Community Member
Marie Garcia	Community Member
Tammy Hamersley	Community Member
Aprill Hudson	Business
Mark Taylor	Business
Denae McLellan	Teacher
Morgan Castillo	Teacher
Michelle Gray	Teacher
Marchelle Moore	Teacher
Teresa Shires	Teacher
Candace Wilkins	Teacher
Tiffany Bair	Teacher
Jordynne Grantham	Teacher
Kamber Smith	Counselor
Julio Hernandez	Assistant Principal
Sheila Burt	Principal
Sherry Lusk	Principal
Kacie Waller	Principal
Craig Nell	Principal
Mary Hughes	Assistant Superintendent
Aron Strickland	Assistant Superintendent



Key Dates:

October 12th, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Site Based Committee Approves DOI Exploration Petition
October 19th, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Consideration & Approval of Petition
November 9th, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Meeting to Discuss Development of DOI Plan
December 7th, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Meeting to Discuss Development of DOI Plan and to Vote on Submitting to SISD Board of Trustees for Consideration
December 14th, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present DOI Plan to SISD Board of Trustees for Review
January 18th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Meeting to Discuss, Review, and Vote on Final DOI Plan
January 18th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Final Draft of DOI Plan to SISD Board of Trustees for Review and Formal Approval
January 18th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Board Approved Plan to District Website for 30 Day Public Review
February 15th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SISD School Board Votes to Formally Adopt the Final DOI Plan
February 24th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA Commissioner Notified of Trustees' Adoption of the Final DOI Plan
April 26th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Site Based Committee Approves DOI Amendment for Board Consideration
May 17th, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SISD School Board Approves Proposed DOI Amendment



1. School Start and End Date

Current Requirement:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15th.

Proposed Innovation:

Currently, Texas Education Code requirements limit Shallowater ISD's flexibility in developing its academic calendar. By starting school earlier, SISD can take greater advantage of innovative scheduling options that will have a positive impact on student learning and on teacher professional development throughout the school year.

Rationale:

Greater flexibility when determining the school start date will allow the district to better meet the needs of students, staff, and the community of Shallowater. Starting school earlier in August would help balance instructional time between the fall and spring semesters and would allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

- Will lead to balanced semesters with a more equal distribution of instructional days across all grading periods
- Will lead to more effective management of scope and sequence/curriculum maps in all classes, especially in single semester courses
- Will lead to greater flexibility in scheduling professional development days for Shallowater ISD staff throughout the school year

Related Board Policies:

EB (Legal), EB (Local)



2. Group Health Benefits for School Employees

Current Requirement:

TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverage for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.

Proposed Innovation:

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a district's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the opportunity to offer additional benefits plans to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the district to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district proposes that the District of Innovation Plan exempt Shallowater ISD from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).

Rationale:

The current system offers no flexibility in the design of group health plans. Currently, the district is unable to explore other options that may provide better, more cost-efficient coverage for employees. Offering an alternative plan will provide employees with more options to fit their specific needs and may allow for substantial savings on cost.

- Will lead to a bigger menu of plans to fit employee needs
- Will lead to greater potential for savings due to expanded options

Related Board Policies:

The committee is not aware of any policies that will be impacted by this proposed exemption.



3. Minimum Minutes and Days of Instruction

Current Requirement:

TEC §25.081 states that districts are required to provide 75,600 minutes of instruction per school year. TEC §25.092 states that students must be in attendance for at least 90% of the days that a class is offered in order to earn credit or a final grade for the course.

Proposed Innovation:

The intent of the legislature is to standardize the amount of seat-time that students spend learning in the classroom. While Shallowater ISD aims to meet the required 75,600 minutes per year, and the 90% attendance minimum, it seeks to do so in a more flexible and innovative manner by making greater use of blended learning opportunities. Relief granted from 25.092 does not constitute a substantive exemption, but rather affords SISD greater flexibility in meeting the requirements for awarding attendance and course credit.

Rationale:

By incorporating blended learning as a means of awarding attendance and course credit, we can personalize learning and more effectively meet the unique needs of our students.

- Will lead to the opportunity for blended learning to assist us in meeting the 75,600 minutes requirement in the event of incremental school closures that are due to weather, illness, etc.
- Will lead to the opportunity to award remote attendance credit to individual students so that we may better assist them in meeting the 90% attendance rule that is required for course credit
- Will lead to expanded blended learning options that can better assist staff members in managing student “absences” in a more flexible, timely, and efficient manner

Related Board Policies:

EB (Legal), EHBL (Legal), FEC (Legal), FEC (Local)



4. CTE Teacher Certification Requirements

(Amendment to Original Plan-Approved 5/17/21)

Current Requirement:

TEC §21.003 mandates that districts that wish to hire an uncertified staff member must submit a request to TEA and wait on approval or denial. TEC §21.051 provides that before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities. TEC §21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed Innovation:

In order to best serve the students of Shallowater ISD in the innovative areas of Career and Technology Education (CTE), the district must actively seek out qualified professionals with high levels of technical expertise. By establishing and following local alternative certification guidelines instead of requirements set in the Texas Education Code, SISD will be able to recruit experienced professionals in highly technical areas even if they are not certified under the traditional pathway.

With this innovation, decisions on teacher certification and assignments in the area of CTE programming will be handled locally. The principal may submit to the superintendent and/or the designee a request for a District Teaching Permit (local certification) outlining the individual's credentials/qualifications. Qualification for local certification could include, but is not limited to:

- Professional work experience
- Formal training/education in the content area
- Active/relevant professional industry certification/registration
- A combination of work experience, training, and education
- Demonstration of successful experience working with students

The superintendent or his/her designee will then consider the request for approval if the individual possesses the knowledge, skills, and



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experience required of the position and the superintendent or his/her designee feels that the individual could be an asset to the students.

Under this innovation, teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.

An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers, and will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all traditionally certified teachers. Also, when applicable and appropriate, employees working under a District Teaching Permit will be encouraged to seek state certification in the area that they are teaching.

Rationale:

Shallowater ISD fully intends to maintain its commitment to recruit and hire employees with appropriate certifications. However, the allowance of certification exemptions, and District Teaching Permits in the area of CTE programming, would provide SISD greater flexibility when making local staffing decisions for innovative CTE course offerings.

Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal), DBA (Local)

