

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature passed HB 1842 which allows Texas public school districts in Texas the option of pursuing a District of Innovation Designation. The law allows school districts the opportunity to access most of the flexibilities available to charter schools. In order to access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Chapter 12A.

## **PROCESS**

On November 16, 2021, Liberty-Eylau Independent School District's District Leadership Team (DLT) met to consider the renewal of designation as a District of Innovation. The meeting was open to the public and the DLT reviewed and approved the proposed renewal plan by a majority vote. The DLT is composed of teachers, campus and district level administrators, parents, and business and community leaders.

The plan was posted on the district website for 30 days beginning November 16, 2021 and the plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval on December 16, 2021.

The Commissioner of Education was notified that LEISD plans to adopt a District of Innovation plan on December 17, 2021.

## **TERM**

The Liberty-Eylau ISD District of Innovation Plan will begin January 2022 and remain in effect for five years through December 2027, unless the Board of Trustees desire to terminate or amend the plan.

## TIMELINE

TIMELINE	Activity/ Task	Date Completed
November	DLT Meeting to consider renewal of DOI Plan	16-Nov-21
November	Post District of Innovation Plan on District website	16-Nov-21
December	Board of Trustees vote to adopt the DOI Plan	16-Dec-21
December	Notify Commissioner of Education	17-Dec-21

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	CAMPUS	Category
King	Kayla	Early Childhood	Parent
Bell	Korie	Early Childhood	Parent
Dean	Gaytha	Early Childhood	Parent
Hoover	Jessica	Early Childhood	Non Teaching Professional
Robinson	Teresa	Early Childhood	Non Teaching Professional
Davis	Vickie	Early Childhood	Classroom Teacher
Overmyer	Jennifer	Early Childhood	Classroom Teacher
Thompson	Pamela	Early Childhood	Classroom Teacher
Keener	Carlia	Elementary	Parent
Montgomery	Jesse	Elementary	Parent
Sangalli	Amanda	Elementary	Parent
Brown	Kristi	Elementary	Non Teaching Professional
Savage	Jarnisha	Elementary	Classroom Teacher
Trotter	Auburn	Elementary	Classroom Teacher
Walker	Regina	Elementary	Classroom Teacher
Griffith	Lamond	Middle School	Parent

Medus	Erica	Middle School	Parent
Mixon	Alisha	Middle School	Parent
Byrdsong	Marlon	Middle School	Non Teaching Professional
Oliver	Carolyn	Middle School	Non Teaching Professional
Clardy	Toya	Middle School	Classroom Teacher
Cornett	Brandi	Middle School	Classroom Teacher
O'Neal	Dana	Middle School	Classroom Teacher
Blackwell	Teresa	High School	Parent
Dollarhide	Regina	High School	Parent
Hodgson	Darica	High School	Parent
Keith	Marietta	High School	Parent
Phillips	Roshea	High School	Non Teaching Professional
Mitchell	Daniel	High School	Classroom Teacher
Nard	Mercedes	High School	Classroom Teacher
Walker	Dana	High School	Classroom Teacher
Block	Linda	High School	District Level Professional
Ganter	Debra	High School	Community Representative
Price	Chuck	High School	Business Representative
Royal	Mary	High School	Business Representative
Floyd	Jo Anne	Administration	Non Teaching Professional
Gill	Earl	Administration	Non Teaching Professional

## EXEMPTIONS

The district requests exemptions in the following areas:

### First Day of Instruction

*TEC 25.0811 First Day of Instruction states a district may not begin instruction for students before the fourth Monday in August.*

#### **Proposed**

Exemption from TEC 25.0811 will allow Liberty-Eylau ISD a flexible start date in order to develop a calendar that fits the needs of the students, staff, and community. The district will determine when each school year will begin. This calendar would provide:

- A better balance of instructional days in first and second semesters.
- Additional instructional days prior to state assessments.

### Class size

*TEC 25.112 Class Size states a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with TEA annually. TEC 25.113 Notice of Class Size states a campus or district granted a class size waiver to exceed the 22:1 ratio shall provide written notice to parents of each student that a waiver has been submitted.*

#### **Proposed**

By seeking exemption from TEC 25.112 & TEC 25.113, the district would have flexibility for all campuses and classrooms for the duration of the District of Innovation Designation and would not be required to seek waivers annually or notify parents. Liberty-Eylau ISD will attempt to keep all the core K-4 classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. The Board of Trustees will be notified of K-4 classrooms that exceed 22:1.

### Certification

*TEC 21.003 Certification Required states 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. TEC 21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates states a person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. TEC 21.044 Educator Preparation states the board shall propose rules establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. The board shall specify the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.*

## **Proposed**

These statutes make it difficult for the district to recruit, employ, and retain persons who have appropriate expertise, experience and/or industry certifications or knowledge that render them qualified to fill such positions. This system also limits the applicant pool further in this time of a teacher shortage. The availability of certified teachers causes the district to have to limit course offerings. Through exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, Liberty-Eylau ISD will have the flexibility to hire highly skilled professionals if certified teachers are not available.

Liberty-Eylau ISD will continue its commitment to hire certified professionals and will continue to seek highly effective, certified educators for all teaching positions. However, where that is not possible, the district will have the flexibility to issue a local innovation permit and hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and are fully equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position based on local certification criteria without requesting a permit or waiver from the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

## **Innovation Strategies**

LEISD will handle all certification and assignments locally. Certification waivers, state permit applications and fees will not be submitted to TEA.

LEISD will continue its goal to find effective, certified teachers, but in the event that a certified teacher or administrator cannot be secured, the district may issue a local innovation permit based on skills and experiences outside the traditional certification pathway based on the following criteria:

- An individual with certain qualifications who is not state certified as a teacher or administrator can be eligible to fill positions including, but not limited to:
  - Career and Technology Education
  - Dual Credit
  - Languages other than English
  - Math
  - Science
  - Counselor
- Individuals hired under the LEISD DOI Plan exemption will:
  - Be issued a local innovation permit;
  - Receive a one-year, non-certified contract that must be renewed annually;
  - And be appraised using the same teacher, principal or local administrator appraisal system.
- The principal/director must submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee a request for a local innovation permit outlining all of the individual's qualifications.
- Qualifications that may be considered include, but are not limited to:
  - Professional work experience

- Formal training and education, including an Associate's degree (CTE) and Bachelors/Masters/Doctoral degrees
- Active/Relevant industry license or certification
- Combination of work experience, training and education
- Demonstration of successful experience working with students
- If approved by the Superintendent, the candidate will be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration.
- Local innovation permits will expire at the end of each school year and may be renewed at the Superintendent's discretion. An employee working under a local innovation permit will work under a contract for professional non-certified employees that may be renewed annually. When possible, lesson plans will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field.
- Employees working under the local innovation permit will have two years to obtain certification in the area which they are hired to work in. If they have not successfully completed this requirement or if they have reached the maximum number of attempts for the certification test in the area they were hired, their position will be reopened to be filled by a certified applicant. Current employees may reapply for the position, and the District has the option to retain this employee in that position if no certified or more qualified applicant applies for the opening. These requirements will apply to all future and current employees who have not satisfied certification requirements for the position for which they have been hired.

## **Employment Contracts**

*TEC 21.002 **Teacher Employment Contracts** state a school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under:(1) a probationary contract, as provided by Subchapter C. TEC 21.102. **Probationary Contract (B)** states 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.*

### **Proposed**

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Exemption from the current guidelines, will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired to Liberty-Eylau ISD.