



District of Innovation Plan

June 2021 – June 2026

*Learning to Lead
Leading to Serve*

Adopted by RISD Board of Trustees
June 21, 2021

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, HB 1842 became law during the 84th Texas legislative Session and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

A District of Innovation is able to obtain exemption from certain sections of the Texas Education Code, providing an increase in local control and allowing districts to better serve the needs of their students and community. Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

PROCESS

On January 10, 2017, the Redwater ISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to become a District of Innovation. The Board of Trustees appointed a District of Innovation Committee composed of teachers, district and campus staff, parents, and community members on January 23, 2017. This committee met on January 24, 2017 and January 31, 2017 to draft the Local Innovation Plan.

The plan was posted on the District website for a period of thirty (30) days and presented to the District Site-Based Decision Making Committee on March 15, 2017. It was approved by the Board of Trustees on March 20, 2017.

AMENDED PLAN

On May 4, 2021, the District of Innovation Committee voted to approve an amendment to the existing District of Innovation plan. The amended plan will be posted on the District website for a period of thirty (30) days. In June, the District Site-Based Decision Making Committee will convene a public meeting to review the plan. Following approval by the District's SBDM Committee, the Innovation Plan will be presented for final approval by the Board of Trustees.

RENEWAL TERM

The term of a District of Innovation designation may not exceed five years according to state law. The renewal term of Redwater ISD Local Innovation Plan will become effective in June of 2021 and remain in effect for five years, through June of 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. The District of Innovation Committee will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan and will ensure the recommendations of the plan are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended.

District of Innovation Timeline

✓	Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss initial thoughts of pursuing DOI plans	Tuesday, January 10, 2017
✓	Board approval of Resolution that will begin the DOI decision process (TEC 12A.001(c)(1))	Tuesday, January 10, 2017
✓	Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a DOI (TEC 12A.002(b)(2))	Monday, January 23, 2017
✓	Board appoints members of District of Innovation Committee (TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003))	Monday, January 23, 2017
✓	First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee	Tuesday, January 24, 2017
✓	Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee	Tuesday, January 31, 2017
✓	District of Innovation plan posted on district website for 30 days (TEC 12A.005(a)(1))	Wednesday, February 1, 2017
✓	Commissioner notified of Board's intent to vote on District of Innovation plan (TEC 12A.005(a)(2))	Wednesday, February 7, 2017
✓	District Site-Based Decision Making Committee Public Meeting (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))	Wednesday, March 15, 2017
✓	District Site-Based Decision Making Committee passes the plan by majority vote (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))	Wednesday, March 15, 2017
✓	Board of trustees adopt District of Innovation plan by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote (TEC 12A.005(b))	Monday, March 20, 2017

✓	Notify Commissioner of plan approval	Tuesday, March 23, 2017
✓	Notify TASB of policy changes	Tuesday, March 23, 2017
✓	District of Innovation Committee reconvenes to develop proposed amendments to plan	May 4, 2021
✓	Amended District of Innovation plan posted on district website for 30 days (TEC 12A.005(a)(1))	May 11, 2021
✓	Commissioner notified of Board's intent to amend and renew District of Innovation plan (TEC 12A.005(a)(2))	May 11, 2021
✓	District Site-Based Decision Making Committee Public Meeting (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))	June 16, 2021
✓	District Site-Based Decision Making Committee passes the amended plan and renewal by majority vote (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))	June 16, 2021
✓	Board of trustees adopt renewal of an amended District of Innovation plan by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote (TEC 12A.005(b))	June 21, 2021
✓	Notify Commissioner of plan approval	June 21, 2021
✓	Notify TASB of policy changes	June 21, 2021

District of Innovation Committee

Stephanie Brooks	Parent
Dr. Kelly Burns	Superintendent
Tanya Calhoon	Classroom Teacher
Kim Cody	JH Principal
Paula Coggin	Community Member
Kasey Coggin	ES Principal
Lee Ann Corbin	Assistant Superintendent C & I
Clint Edmonds	HS Teacher
Shaun George	JH/HS Asst. Principal

Brett Haugh	HS Principal
Gary Hill	ES Asst. Principal
Kim Hornbuckle	GT Coordinator
Sonya Kesterson	JH Teacher
Nicholas Minton	Technology Director
Erika Purtle	MS Asst. Principal
Audrey Shumate	MS Principal
Jay Sutton	Band Director
Taylor Windham	Teacher/Administrative Intern
Brandy White	MS Teacher

EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

The Local Innovation Plan aligns with the District’s vision, mission, motto, and values.

Vision

Our vision is to empower our students by inspiring high expectations to reach high levels of learning and rise above.

Mission

Providing superior education with traditional values

Motto

Learning to Lead, Leading to Serve

We value:

- Integrity*
- Transparency*
- Trust*
- Leadership*
- Pride and Tradition*
- Loyalty*
- Faith*
- Achievement and Results*
- Safety*
- Inclusion and Family*

INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTIONS

It has been determined that the following Texas Education Code requirements hinder the pursuit of the goals of Redwater ISD, thus inhibiting the needs of all students to be met.

Uniform School Start Date

Inhibiting statute:

TEC §25.0811 Uniform School Start Date

A school district must delay the beginning of instruction for students for a school year until the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed innovation strategies:

The flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally what best meets the needs of the students and local community. In addition, it provides the following opportunities:

- Provide consistency in the amount of days from the fall semester to the spring semester. The 2016-2017 school calendar has semesters of drastically different lengths, with 78 days in the fall and 94 days in the spring. This becomes problematic for teachers and students.
- Allow professional development and collaboration among teachers and staff to be embedded in the school year calendar.
- Provide flexibility for summer school options, internships, and professional certification experiences for students.
- Provide additional instructional days to prepare for state tests.
- Align with Advanced Placement and Dual Credit semester requirements.

Local Guidelines:

On an annual basis, the district will determine when each school year will begin.

INNOVATION PLAN EXEMPTION AMENDMENTS

Inter-District Transfers

Inhibiting Statute:

TEC 25.036 Inter-district Transfers

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.

Proposed innovation strategies:

Redwater ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident 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 evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.36 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 cases, Redwater ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Local Guidelines:

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year in the event of exceptional circumstances, which include, but are not limited to:

- Student behavior warranting suspension (in or out of school),
- Placement in a disciplinary alternative program (DAEP) or expulsion
- Attendance which falls below the TEA truancy standard including absences from school and/or multiple instances of late arrival, early dismissal, or late pickup.

Probationary Employment Contracts

Inhibiting Statute:

TEC 21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts

Currently, experienced teachers and counselors new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Proposed innovation strategies:

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors 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 staff member’s effectiveness. The District seeks relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 by permitting the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Redwater ISD.

Local Guidelines:

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

Teacher Certification**Inhibiting Statute:**

TEC 21.003 Certification

TEC 21.003(a) 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. TEC21.057 requires districts to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

Proposed innovation strategies:

Decisions on certification will be handled locally to best serve Redwater ISD students. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need.

The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology, assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings, and staffing difficult to fill positions such as foreign language. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Additionally, there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs.

Local Guidelines:

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification:

- An individual with experience in a Career and Technology field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course.
- An individual holding a teaching certification in another state after local review of credential, education, and experience
- An individual with background, experience, skills or work related/ industry experience to work full time or part time in a designated area.

The principal will submit a request to the superintendent for local certification. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

A local permit will expire at the end of each school year and may be renewed at the discretion of the superintendent.

SUMMARY

Upon approval from the Board of Trustees, the DOI committee, staff, and the Board of Trustees will monitor the proposed exemptions. Adjustments will be made, as necessary, to better meet the needs of the District.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Redwater ISD District of Innovation Plan, contact Lee Ann Corbin at lcornin@redwaterisd.org.