



District of Innovation Plan

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2027

DOIC Public Meeting:
May 2, 2022

DOIC Approval of Proposed Plan:
May 2, 2022

Board of Trustees DOI Intent Notification to Commissioner:
May 18, 2022

Proposed Plan Available for Public Comment:
May 18, 2022

Board Adopted DOI Plan:
June 20, 2022

Board of Trustees DOI Plan Adoption Notification to Commissioner:
June 21, 2022

Advisory Committee

Mindy Curran, Assistant Superintendent
Holly Lambert, Director of Special Education
Rachel Boland, ES Teacher
Cullen Holbrook, ES Teacher
George Dixon, MS Teacher
Bobby Leshikar, HS Teacher
Emily Bordovsky, CTE Teacher
Taylor Mayhall, Parent
Amanda Barton, Parent
Tim Thomason, Business Representative
Jame Mundahl, Community Representative

Ingram ISD Vision Statement

Inspiring Student Success from the Inside Out

Ingram ISD Mission Statement

Our purpose is to ensure an environment that provides for rigorous learning and support; where each student masters the curriculum at every level, is continually inspired to ascend to the highest levels of good character, and thoughtfully and diligently prepares for a successful life after high school.

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code that are available to open charter enrollment schools. This designation provides more local control to districts to determine how exactly to best utilize the designation to better serve students.

Term

The term of the Plan is for no more than five years unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. This plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if approved by vote of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees.

First Day of Instruction

Texas Education Code §25.0811

Current Law

The Texas Education Code states a school district may not begin student instruction before the fourth Monday of August (TEC §25.0811).

Innovative Strategy

The district will locally determine the start date, on an annual basis, based on students' and community needs. This flexibility of the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community.

Benefits of Exemption

This empowers the District to personalize learning, increase summer employment opportunities, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff.

90 Percent Attendance Rule

Texas Education Code §25.092

Current Law

A student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered (TEC §25.092).

Innovative Strategy

The District has the flexibility to award credit based on a student's mastery of the course content rather than seat time, allowing counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum.

Benefits of Exemption

Exemption from this requirement provides educational advantages to students of the District by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students. This will accommodate students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, provide access to college-level coursework/learning, reduce dropouts, and increase the number

of qualifying graduates. Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules.

Class Size

Texas Education Code §25.112, Texas Education Code §25.113

Current Law

A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class (TEC §25.112). A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception (TEC §25.113).

Innovative Strategy

The District determines beginning of the year hiring decisions based on projected 22:1 ratios. To the extent possible, each school year will begin with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 in prekindergarten through 4th grade classes. Each section in a grade level receives new students equally. If two or more classes in a grade level exceed the 24:1 ratio at any time during the year, the Superintendent, campus principal, and grade level teachers will have thoughtful communication. The Superintendent will then determine what is in the best interest of the students.

Benefits of Exemption

Enrollment projections sometimes exceed projections at one grade level while being under projections at another, resulting in teachers and/or students being moved from class to class to meet the 22:1 requirement. As a result, students leave behind friends and teacher relationships that have already formed. Being exempt from the 22:1 requirement allows the District the flexibility to contemplate how to move forward in the best interest of students and teachers. Doing so allows the district to consider allowing students to remain with the teacher and classmates that they began the year with, fostering continuity and stability, which supports increased student achievement. Furthermore, the District will not be forced to hire new teachers not accounted for in the local Board of Trustees' adopted budget, unless it is agreed upon that this is the course of action that is best. Ingram ISD remains committed to keeping class sizes at or below the current 22:1 ratio. However, class size must be balanced with the logistics and timing of adding staff, available campus resources or space, and the optimal teacher-to-student ratio given the total number, age, and needs of students. Therefore, we will continue to look at avenues to reduce class sizes, but require the flexibility for staffing decisions that consider multiple variables, including time of year, enrollment projections, and the natural enrollment variations that occur during the school year.

Inter-District Transfers

Texas Education Code §25.036

Current Law

Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer (TEC §25.036). TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Innovative Strategy

The District chooses to exempt the one-year requirement to instill a transfer policy that encourages student success. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have their transfer status revoked by the Superintendent or designee 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. Students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status. In addition, transfer students who are not academically successful through repeated failure to turn in assignments and refusal to participate in available academic tutorials and services may have their transfer revoked.

Benefits of Exemption

Allowing flexibility in the one-year transfer acceptance requirement, allows the District to focus on the best interests of its students and student success in determining whether the inter-district transfer continues for the remainder of the year. Ingram ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) that requires 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 also evaluated. Parents and students understand that students' transfer acceptance is conditional on continuing to follow the District's academic, behavioral, and attendance requirements and expectations.

Student Discipline Provisions

Texas Education Code §37.0012

Current Law

A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator

selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline (TEC §37.0012).

Innovative Strategy

The District chooses to use a collaborative approach to student discipline, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students.

Benefits of Exemption

Exempting the requirement of a single campus behavior coordinator provides a more effective and thorough approach to student discipline.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

Texas Education Code §37.008

Current Law

Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (1) is provided in a setting other than a student's regular classroom; (2) is located on or off of a regular school campus; (3) provides for the students who are assigned to the disciplinary alternative education program to be separated from students who are not assigned to the program; (4) focuses on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline; (5) provides for students' educational and behavioral needs; (6) provides supervision and counseling; and (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21 (TEC §37.008).

Innovative Strategy

The superintendent will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program. Campus administrators of students assigned to DAEP will ensure that the assistance of teachers with specific certification is provided, as needed. To the extent possible, the superintendent will ensure the physical separation of DAEP and ISS students within the same space.

Benefits of Exemption

Exemption from this requirement allows the District to better utilize staff. The District has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and classes are often provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model. As such, it is not necessary to have certified teachers permanently assigned to DAEP. Furthermore, exemption from this requirement would allow the District to better utilize staff and facilities by allowing DAEP students to attend the same classroom as In School Suspension students, when necessary.

Teacher Certification

Texas Education Code §21.003

Current Law

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 (TEC §21.003).

Innovative Strategy

The District is committed to placing a life changing educator in every classroom. In order to best serve IISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to acquire teachers who teach hard-to-fill positions such as but not limited to: high demand dual credit, foreign language, CTE (career & technical education), and STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses.

Benefits of Exemption

By exempting existing teacher certification requirements, the District has the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or high-quality applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This enriches the district's applicant pools in specific content areas and affords more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption affords the District the flexibility to hire professionals to teach those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Teacher Probationary Contracts

Texas Education Code §21.102

Current Law

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. (TEC §21.102)

Innovative Strategy

For all experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Ingram ISD that have been employed as a teacher (or other role) in public education for at least five of the eight

previous years, Ingram ISD requires a minimum two-year probationary period with probationary contracts issued for each of the two years.

Benefits of Exemption

This exemption allows the District to provide the teacher with an additional year of probationary contract. The one-year probationary period is insufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom because the teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made before the end of the school year.

Teacher Contract Days

Texas Education Code §21.401

Current Law

An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. If a school district anticipates providing less than 180 days of instruction for students during a school year, as indicated by the district's academic calendar, the district may reduce the number of days of service required by this section proportionately. A reduction by the district does not reduce an educator's salary.

Innovative Strategy

The District's current school calendar is less than 180 instructional days. Rather than using a proportional reduction, the District chooses to reduce the number of teacher contract days based on the students' safety and academic needs.

Benefits of Exemption

Flexibility in this area will allow the District to continue providing days spread throughout the year for teachers to have additional planning time focused on student needs and refining their practice, as well as time for professional learning related to student growth and outcomes during the year, while affording teachers expanded time to pursue self-selected professional learning activities during the summer months. Additionally, flexibility allows the district to focus the number of contractual days around student and district needs rather than meeting a specific minimum number.

Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary

Texas Education Code §21.402, and §21.415

Current Law

All districts, when hiring a retired educator, must pay them their salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale; in addition, the districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge.

Innovative Strategy

Ingram ISD would like the opportunity to hire an eligible retired educator and pay them below the TEA minimum pay scale while also paying the required TRS surcharge.

Benefits of Exemption

We believe that by hiring an eligible retired educator our students, campuses, and district will reap the rewards of having a veteran educator who is still involved and passionate in the education process. In addition, the district will be able to have an experienced educator at a significantly lower cost than had we paid them based upon the TEA minimum pay scale plus the TRS surcharge. Thus, by hiring an eligible retired educator Ingram ISD will be adding value in the schools and will be making sound fiscal decisions for our district's stakeholders.

Site-Based Decision-Making

Texas Education Code §11.251, §11.252, and §11.253

Current Law

Texas Education Code mandates specific guidelines and procedures for the membership of these committees which limits flexibility for districts to collaborate and make decisions in an effective and timely manner.

Innovative Strategy

Return Site-Based Decision-Making back to the local district/campus by allowing the local district to determine the makeup of the committee and which decisions will be referred to the committee.

Benefits of Exemption

While there are concentrated efforts to ensure that all required stakeholders are represented, due to the size of our community and availability of local businesses, it is often a difficult task to secure appropriate community and business representatives for each committee. The required committee membership limits the degree of parent involvement in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the limited number of professional staff members available to serve makes it unnecessary to nominate and elect members. Flexibility in TEC §11.251 allows the District and campuses to establish committee membership that ensures that the most effective decisions are made, to create opportunities for greater parental involvement, and to be released from the unnecessarily cumbersome process of nominating and electing professional staff members.