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# District of Innovation

Natalia ISD - Community - February 7, 2022



# 4 Natalia High School students selected for All- State Band

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## Vision

The **BLUE** Way: Challenging and empowering students for global success.



Sergio Mendez, Natalia High  
2nd time All-State Band



Kate Robinson, Natalia High  
1st time All-State Band



Isaiah Santoya, Natalia High  
1st time All-State Band

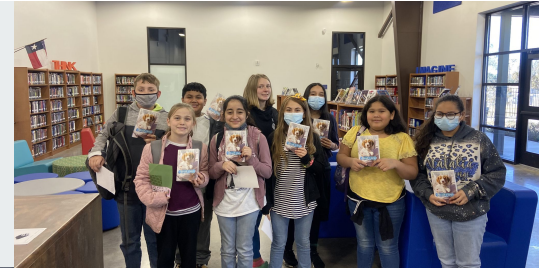


Thomas Ventimiglia, Natalia High  
1st time All-State Band

# Mission



Natalia Independent School District, in partnership with the community,



is committed to providing a safe and challenging environment that



promotes productive and successful life-long learners.

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# Tagline

Building **L**ives **U**tilizing **E**ducation



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# Overview

During of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled to.

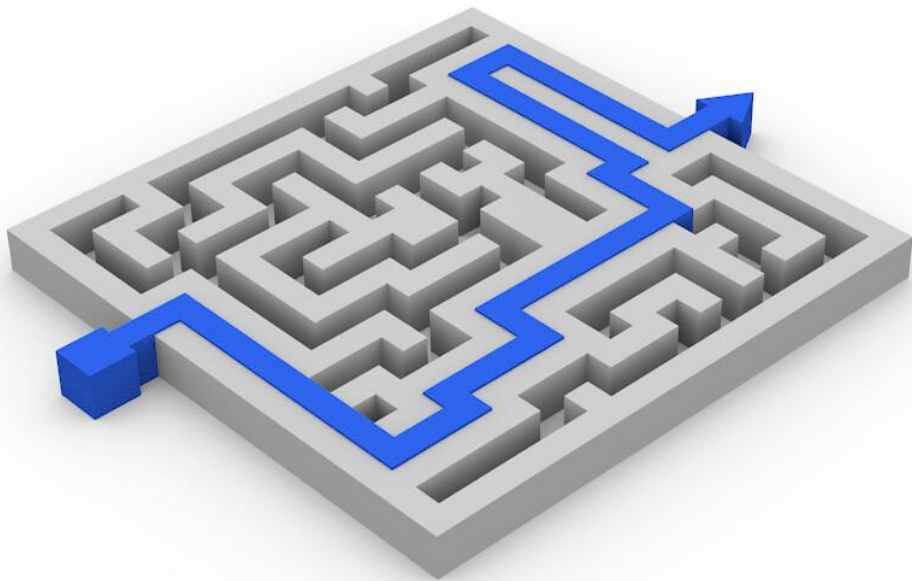


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# Our Community

We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community that will remain in effect for the next five years (2022-2027).





**What if?  
Instead of this...**



...what if we  
could do this?

**HB1842**

Districts of Innovation



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# HB 1842

## Districts of Innovation

HB1842 provides NISD with the [opportunity](#) to design an innovation plan according to the [needs and resources](#) of our district while maximizing local control.





# Timeline

<b>DOI TIMELINE</b>	<b>Action Step</b>
January 24, 2022	Board of Trustees to pass a resolution to begin District of Innovation Process/Plan Development
January 24, 2022	Board of Trustees to hold a public hearing on the District of Innovation
January 24, 2022	Board of Trustees to ratify the DOI Committee
<b>February 7, 2022</b>	Hear about DOI and create DOI Committee (changed because bad weather closed the district)
February 10, 2022	DOI Plan Voted on by DOI Committee
February 14, 2022	DOI Plan Posted on the District Website for 30 Days
February 15, 2022	Notify the Commissioner of Education of the Board of Trustees' intent to approve the DOI Plan at the March 28 Board Meeting
March 21, 2022	Public Hearing by the District Innovation Plan Committee on the published District of Innovation Plan-DOI Committee Votes on the DOI Plan and passes plan by majority vote
March 28, 2022	Board of Trustees Vote on the DOI Plan by 2/3 majority vote. Post on website for community to access
March 30, 2022	DOI Plan and Figure 19 TAC 102.1307(d) Checklist sent to the Commissioner of Education
March 31, 2022	Update all policy changes with TASB



**What flexibilities are available?**

## Prohibited exemptions include (but not limited to):

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- District Governance
- Curriculum
- State Assessment System
- State Accountability System
- School Finance
- Federal Requirement
- A state or federal requirements applicable to open-enrollment charter schools
- Other requirements in state law outside of the Education Code

## Allowable exemptions include (but not limited to):

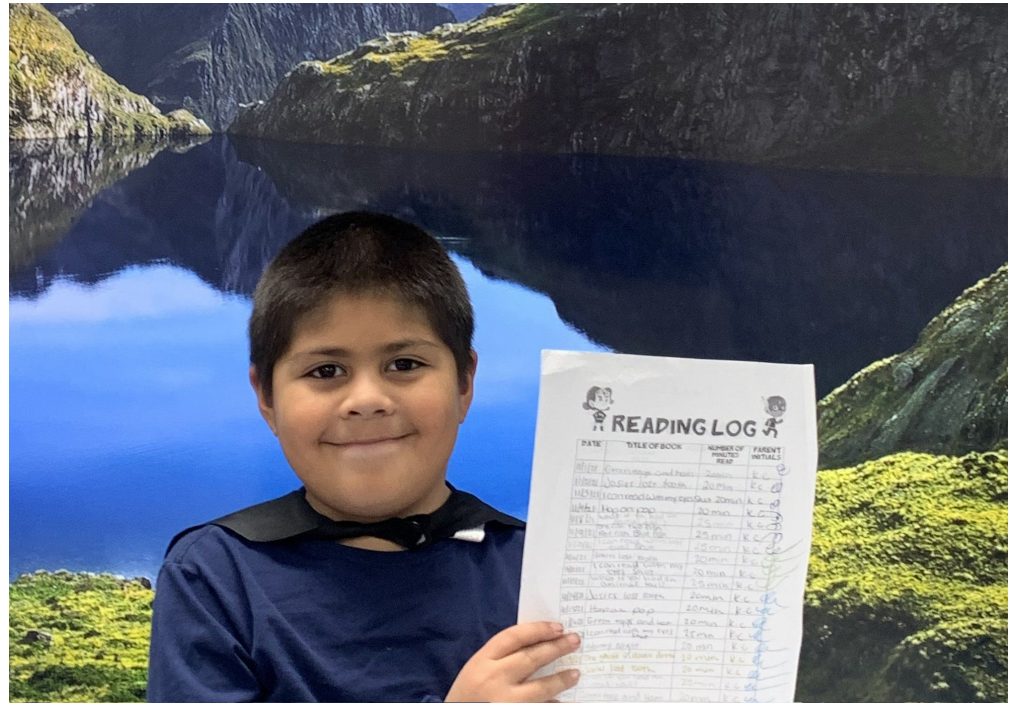
- Educator Certification
- Teacher Contracts
- First and Last Day of School
- Length of School Day\*
- Class Size
- Certain Purchasing and Contract Requirements

\*Length of School Day requirements under TEC §25.081(e) [420 minutes] and §25.082(a) [7 hours] were repealed in the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

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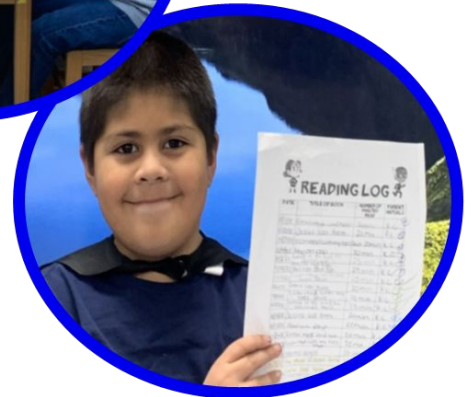
# Across the State

According to the TEA website, over 908 districts are approved as District of Innovations. These districts vary in size, geographic location, and exemptions requested. Over half of the students in Texas are served by these districts.



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What could some of those Allowable Exemptions look like for **Natalia**?



## **Teacher certification**

*(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)*

### Current Law

*In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.*

### Proposed

In order to best serve XXX ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subjects out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses in which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.
- c. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.
- d. The Superintendent will notify the Board annually of the District's exercise of this flexibility.



## **Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4 class size**

*(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)*

### Current Law

*Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.*

### Proposed

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. XXXX ISD will attempt to keep all K-4<sup>th</sup> core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a K – 4<sup>th</sup> core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K – 4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives XXX ISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

## **School start date**

*(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)*

### Current Law

*Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August. For years, this was strictly a local decision.*

*The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, with no exceptions.*

### Proposed

To develop a calendar that fits the needs of the community of XXX. We have developed a calendar that we feel meets the students, community, and staff needs.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of August.
- b. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- c. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.
- d. This would allow more time in June for summer school.

## **Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions**

*(TEC §37.0012) (FO LEGAL, FO LOCAL)*

### Current Law

*Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.*

### Proposed

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. XXX ISD approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person through our efforts with PBIS and restorative discipline. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline.

# LOCAL SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL AND HEALTH EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

*(TEC §28.004)(BDF LEGAL)*

## Current Law

*Sec. 28.004 of this code requires The Board of Trustees of each school district shall establish a local School Health Advisory Council to assist the District in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's health education instruction. This section requires the establishment of a School Health Advisory Council and outlines the duties of this council.*

## Proposed

- a. The District takes exemption from the requirement to establish a School Health Advisory Council and the subsequent duties of that council.
- b. The District will appoint a District Health Coordinator. The District Health Coordinator will collaborative with the District and campus improvement committees to seek feedback regarding health related curriculum, food service, budget, and other related items as needed.

## **DAEP Teacher Certification Requirement Exemption**

*(TEC §37.008) (FOCA LEGAL)*

### Current Law

*Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.*

### Proposed

XXX ISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model, it is not necessary to have certified teachers on site. XXXX ISD often does not have certified teachers available when DAEP is needed. The DAEP administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.

## **DISTRICT AND CAMPUS LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING**

Exemption from: TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, TEC §11.253

Relevant Board Policies BQ (LEGAL)/(LOCAL), BQA (LEGAL)/(LOCAL), BQB (LEGAL)/(LOCAL)

### **Current Status**

*Requirements and Configuration of the District/Site Based Management Committee*

*Site-based decision making is a process for improving the educational outcomes at the campus and district level. Through a collaborative effort of a team of principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives, educational outcomes are reviewed and evaluate to determine goals, strategies, and interventions to ensure improvement in student achievement. The education code and board policy require members to address areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, school organization as well as a host of other responsibilities identified in additional sections of the education code.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

XXX ISD shall determine the processes and memberships of its site-based management committees. XXX ISD acknowledges the importance of developing district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment. The district feels that claiming exemption from the specific mandates of these sections is a local issue and not a state mandate. The district also feels that it will provide for greater parental involvement and better informed parents.

## **90 Percent Attendance Rule**

Exemption from: TEC §25.092

Relevant Board Policies: (FEC LOCAL)

### **Current statute: Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan**

*TEC §25.092 requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days on a district calendar to earn credit. The law requires districts to award class credit to students based on the time a student is present in a classroom for instruction, rather than mastery of content and subject proficiency.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Flexibility in the abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class due to enriching activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances that supports XXX ISD's goal to educate the whole child.

To meet the needs of 21st century learners, XXX ISD would like to investigate the option to provide students credit for courses based on content mastery, not the amount of time the student spends in the classroom.

This exemption would allow the district to provide innovative options to promote student engagement in course material in flexible ways, ultimately allowing learning to happen anytime, anyplace apart from the traditional way of delivering instruction.

Additionally, flexibility in this area directly supports XXX ISD's goal of educating the whole child. Our students attain valuable and meaningful learning from extra/co-curricular activities and experiences that currently count against the student's 90% attendance availability if a student has to miss part of the traditional school day.

Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

## **Removal of Individuals from District Property/Facilities**

Exemption from: TEC §37.105

Relevant Board Policies: GKA (Local/Legal)

### **Current statute: Removal of Individuals from District Property/Facilities**

*According to TEC §37.105, the District must maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from district property/facilities, including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of the issuance. At the time a person is refused entry or removed from district property/facilities, the District is also required to provide to the person written information explaining the appeal process.*

### **Proposed Innovation and Benefit of Exemption:**

To better ensure the safety and security of students and staff in XXX ISD, we propose that the District not be required to maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from district property/facilities, nor be required to provide written information explaining the appeal process to those who have been refused entry to district property/facilities or removed from district property/facilities.

The District currently attempts to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities. Should an exemption from TEC §37.105 be granted, the District shall continue to provide written notice to persons who are subject to potential refusal for entry or for removal from district property/facilities in situations where the administrator on site feels it is reasonable and safe to do so. Also, the District would continue to allow those who have been removed from district property/facilities to visit their children's schools or other district facilities to discuss educational needs upon scheduling appointment with campus principal or other appropriate administrator.



## **School District Depository Contract**

Exemption from: Texas Education Code: TEC §45.205 and TEC §45.206

Relevant Board Policies: BDAE (Legal) and BDAE Local)

### **Current statute: Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan**

*The depository bank for the District shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected. A District and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for two additional two-year terms. Per SB 754, passed by the 85th Texas Legislature, effective September 1, 2017, TEC Section 45.205 will allow the District to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the District's fiscal year. Therefore, an extension of the contract is not subject to the rebidding requirements of Education Code 45.206, Education Code 45.205 and Education Code 45.204.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

In a District within a small town, the District's choices for its depository bank are limited to local banks. XXX ISD uses services provided by the local bank on a daily basis. With exemption from these statutes, XXX ISD would be able to allow the District's existing bank contract to be extended if the District determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the District's banking services out to bid.

At the end of each two-year term, the District and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for multiple two additional year periods. The District must review the contract to ensure the best value and support for the District and obtain Board approval for each the two-year periods. Nothing in the process would hinder the District's ability to undertake bidding the District depository bank at the end of any of the two-year periods. Further, this entire Innovation Plan must be reviewed and renewed at the end of five years, including this provision. The District believes it can operate most optimally if it is not limited to two or even three additional two-year extensions of its depository contract and continue its strong relations with the one bank in Natalia.

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**Thank you.**

