

# SLIDELL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"On track and leading the pack"*



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## Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan

### Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB1842 passed that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which would allow them to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Slidell ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and will request the following exemptions from the Texas Education Code.

### Potential Benefits

- Local control: Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- Customization: Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g. only high schools), grade level, or a single campus.
- Autonomy: Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.
- Flexibility: Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:
  - School start date
  - 90% attendance rule
  - Class-size ratios
  - Site-based decision-making process
  - Certain student discipline provisions
  - Use of planning and preparation periods
  - Teacher appraisal requirements

Slidell ISD feels that this level of local control would add flexibility and empower our district make innovative decisions for our students.

### Term

Slidell ISD's Innovation Plan will begin with the 2021-2022 school year and conclude at the end of the 2025-2026 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Slidell ISD Board in accordance with HB1842. If at any time within this 5 year plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

## Innovations

**Goal #1:** Kindergarten - Grade 4 Class Size (TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL)

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten - 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

TEC 25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

**Innovation Strategies:**

1. At the beginning of each school year, Slidell ISD will meet the suggested student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. The determination of whether to add another teacher to bring the class under the 22:1 mandate will be made by the campus administration and this recommendation will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

**Goal #2:** First Day of Instruction/School start date (TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

**Innovation Strategies**

1. Slidell ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August. This change will create better flexibility in the creation of the district calendar as well as allowing more opportunities in scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.
2. The earlier start date will allow the district to move instructional days that occur after state mandated testing dates to the front of the school year.
3. The earlier start date will provide more balance to the first 3 six weeks grading periods during the first semester.

**Goal #3:** Length of School Day (TEC §25.082a) (SAAH 3.8.1)

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions.

SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement. The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.

### **Innovation Strategies**

1. The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
2. This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
3. The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff. This flexibility will be used to create a unique bell schedule instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate.
4. The district will provide teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.

### **Goal #4: Teacher Certification – General (TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)**

#### **Statutes that relate to this goal:**

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.

### **Innovation Strategies**

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
2. The current certification requirement severely limits the districts options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CATE and STEM related courses along with other required courses needed throughout the district. In order to maximum the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a).

This exemption will allow the district to:

- a. Consider part time professionals to teach courses

- b. Opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession.
  - c. Increase the number of CATE and STEM type courses available.
  - d. Trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses.
3. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.
4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

**Goal #5:** Uniform Group Coverage Program - General (TEC 22.004(i) and Related Board Policies- CRD (LEGAL) and CRD (LOCAL), TEC 22.004 (i)

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

TEC 22.004(i) and Related Board Policies- CRD (LEGAL) and CRD (LOCAL), TEC 22.004 (i) 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 Slidell ISD employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost.

TEC 22.004 (i) is not in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a school district's Innovation Plan pursuant to TEC 12A.004 and the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the TAC Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.

**Innovation Strategy**

1. Increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow Slidell ISD and the Board of Trustees to be responsive to employee and community needs.

**Goal #6:** Teacher Contract Days

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days.

**Innovation Strategy**

1. Proposal would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.
  - Will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers
  - Enhance teacher recruitment
  - Improve teacher morale

2. SISD will present a recommendation to the SISD School Board regarding the number of contract days as a part of the total compensation and benefits program.

**Goal #7: Discipline Options**

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

TEC 37.0012- Senate Bill 1-7 requires the designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator on each campus. This person is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A

**Innovation Strategy**

1. To best serve the needs of the students and staff at SISD, we propose the district abstain from designating only one person as the Campus Behavior Coordinator. Our district has two administrators who serve in this capacity to ensure compliance with Chapter 37, Subchapter A. Our district believes in the collaborative approach to discipline, with multiple people providing emotional and social supports to students.

**Goal #8: Interdistrict Transfers**

**Statutes that relate to this goal:**

FDA (LOCAL)-TEC 25.036-students attending a district through an interdistrict transfer may apply for transfer annually. This is interpreted that the interdistrict transfer must be for a term of one school year.

**Innovation Strategy**

1. If student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in DAEP, expulsion, or student attendance drops below the 90% TEA standard, SISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment and an interdistrict transfer student may have transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time if any of these apply.
2. SISD will continue to accept transfers as space and local policy allows.

## Slidell ISD District of Innovation Committee Members

Name	Relationship to SISD
Taylor Williams	Superintendent
Marty Hair	Assistant Superintendent/Special Programs
Theresa Stevens	Principal
Brad Hayhurst	Assistant Principal
Michelle Pruett	District Secretary
Irene Wilson	Business Manager
Cheryl Bostick	High School Teacher
Sarah Fortenberry	Junior High Teacher/CTE
Ashley Fulfer	Elementary Teacher
Veronica Gonzalez	Instructional Paraprofessional
Gina McCullough	Instructional Interventionist
Elizabeth Shelton	Junior High/High School Teacher/CTE
Karen Vanover	Junior High Teacher
Rhonda Weathers	Parent
Courtney Fletcher	Parent
Todd Stevens	Parent

## Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan Timeline

### March 6th, 2016 – 5:00 pm – March 2016 Board Meeting

- Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003)
- Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))
- Resolution attached.

### April 24th, 2016 – 5:00 pm – April 2016 Board Meeting

- Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003)

### May 5th, 2016 – 3:30 pm

- First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

### May 26th, 2016 – 3:30 pm

- Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

### June 2nd & 6th, 2016 – 9:00 am

- Teacher staff development meetings to discuss specific exemptions of TEC as it relates to HB 1842.

### June 10th, 2016 – 9:00 am

- Final meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.
- Creation of the Proposed Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan.

### June 10th, 2016 – 10:30 am

- Proposed Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan approved by the District Site Based Committee.

### June 10th, 2016

- Proposed Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan posted to [www.slidellisd.net](http://www.slidellisd.net)

### June 20th, 2016 – 6pm Regular June Meeting

- Proposed SISD District of Innovation Plan is reviewed by the SISD Board of Trustees.
- Slidell ISD Board of Trustees notification to the TEA Commissioner of the District's intention to vote on the District of Innovation Plan.

### July 10th – 5:00pm, Regular July Board Meeting

- Approve the District of Innovation plan by a vote of ( 4 - 0 ) (TEC12A.005(b))
- District of Innovation Plan along with the TEA form relating to the specific TEC exemptions in the plan is submitted to TEA and the Commissioner.

## **Timeline of Events for Uniform Group Coverage Program Amendment**

**April 2020** - Amendment formation by District DOI

**May 21, 2020** - Slidell ISD Board of Trustees takes action to pursue Amendment to current District Of Innovation Plan and requests for SBDM/DOI members to review proposed Amendment

**June 11, 2020** -SBDM/DOI Members review and approve proposed amendment

**June-July 2020** - Proposed Amendment posted for public view for 30 days and Slidell ISD Board of Trustees notifies Commissioner of Education of intent to vote on Amendment

**July 20, 2020** - Board approves the amendment to current Slidell ISD District of Innovation Plan. District notifies Commissioner of Education of approval of Amended District of Innovation Plan.

## **Timeline of Events for District of Innovation Renewal**

**June 2021** -SBDM/DOI Members review renewal and amendments to SISD DOI Plan

**June 25, 2021**- Slidell ISD posts final version of the proposed plan on the district's website and notifies Commissioner of Education of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.

**July 29, 2021**- Slidell ISD Board of Trustees takes action to pursue renewal and amendments to District Of Innovation Plan.