

# Ezzell Independent School District

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## District of Innovation Plan

Lavaca County, Texas

Proposed Term: 2026–2031

### I. Introduction

Ezzell Independent School District seeks to operate as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control and provide flexibility in meeting the educational needs of its students. Ezzell ISD is a small rural district serving students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 on a single campus. Flexibility from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code will allow the district to recruit and retain high-quality staff, provide innovative instructional opportunities, and maximize limited resources.

### II. Comprehensive Educational Program

The innovation plan supports the district mission of providing a high-quality comprehensive education through efficient use of available resources. The following goals guide the implementation of this plan:

- Maintain small class sizes and individualized instruction.
- Expand dual credit and college readiness opportunities.
- Increase career and technical education partnerships.
- Provide flexible scheduling for extracurricular and community activities.
- Improve teacher recruitment and retention.

### III. Innovation Strategies and Exemptions from Texas Education Code

#### 1. First Day of Instruction (TEC §25.0811)

Current Requirement: Districts may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

Innovation: Ezzell ISD may begin the school year earlier in August if determined beneficial by the Board of Trustees.

Rationale: Flexibility in the school start date allows the district to align with nearby districts and college schedules, complete the first semester before winter break, and provide additional instructional time before state assessments.

#### 2. Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003 and §21.057)

Current Requirement: Teachers must hold state certification for assigned subject areas.

Innovation: The Superintendent may authorize qualified individuals who do not hold traditional certification to teach specific courses when appropriate.

Rationale: This flexibility assists the district in addressing teacher shortages in rural areas and allows the district to employ professionals with relevant subject matter expertise, particularly in Career and Technical Education and specialized electives.

### **3. Probationary Contracts for Experienced Teachers (TEC §21.102)**

Current Requirement: Experienced teachers hired from other districts may only be placed on a one-year probationary contract.

Innovation: Ezzell ISD may issue probationary contracts for up to two years for experienced teachers newly employed by the district.

Rationale: This flexibility provides the district additional time to evaluate performance and determine long-term compatibility.

### **4. Flexible Scheduling (TEC §25.081)**

Innovation: The district may implement flexible scheduling options including modified weekly schedules, early release for staff development, or enrichment opportunities for students.

Rationale: Flexible scheduling allows a small district to maximize shared staffing, coordinate extracurricular travel, and provide meaningful professional development.

### **5. Class Size Flexibility (TEC §25.112)**

Current Requirement: Kindergarten through fourth grade classes are limited to 22 students per teacher.

Innovation: Ezzell ISD may locally manage class size limits when necessary without seeking a state waiver.

Rationale: In a small rural district with multi-grade instructional settings, flexibility allows the district to utilize staff efficiently while still maintaining quality instruction.

## **IV. Accountability and Evaluation**

The district will monitor the effectiveness of the innovation plan through review of student performance data, graduation rates, college and career readiness indicators, teacher retention data, and community feedback. The Board of Trustees will review the plan annually.

## **V. Term of the Plan**

This District of Innovation Plan will remain in effect for five years (2026–2031) unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law.

## **VI. Plan Development Process**

1. Board of Trustees adopts a resolution or receives a petition to consider becoming a District of Innovation.
2. A public hearing is held to discuss the potential development of a local innovation plan.
3. A committee develops the proposed innovation plan.
4. The proposed plan is posted publicly for at least 30 days.
5. The District Advisory Committee approves the plan by majority vote.
6. The Board of Trustees adopts the plan by a two-thirds vote.
7. The adopted plan is submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

## **VII. Amendment of the Plan**

The Board of Trustees may amend the District of Innovation Plan during the term of the plan in accordance with the procedures established in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.