

Groveton ISD
DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN
(Updated) May 24, 2022



Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in spring 2015. This bill provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities a school district must adopt a District of Innovation Plan.

Districts of Innovation provides opportunities for:

- Greater local control;
- Increased flexibility governing education programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes related to curriculum, graduation requirements, nor academic and financial accountability

District Innovation Team

Jim Dillard – Superintendent

Rebecca Huff- Assistant Superintendent

Todd Moore - HS / JH Principal

Amanda Stubblefield - Elementary Principal

Wayne Williams – HS / JH Assistant Principal

Krystle Page - Counselor

Groveton Independent School District District of Innovation Timeline

Resolution to the Board of Trustees	February 28, 2022
Committee Meeting Review and Revise Plan	March 2, 2022
Resolution to notify Commissioner	March 2, 2022
Proposed Plan Posted	March 4, 2022
District of Innovation Board Update	March 28, 2022
Board Approval of Plan	May 23, 2022
If approved, the plan will be in effect for up to five years.	

Exemptions:

1. First Day of Instruction (TEC §25.0811)

Currently:

TEC25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

Plan:

To allow for a calendar that fits the needs of our local community, we would like to consider a flexible calendar option which may include an early start date.

- Students may begin earlier than the fourth Monday of August. This earlier start date will allow a better balance between the two semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date that will allow for adequate time to make preparations for summer remediation programs.

2. Submitting Waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size (TEC Code §25.112) (TEC. Code §25.113)

Currently:

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 students to 1 teacher ratio accordingly 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 set home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

Plan:

- a. Groveton ISD has recently seen a growth in our lower elementary classes, making the possibility of surpassing the 22 students: 1 teacher ratio. GISD will attempt to keep all K-4th 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 of a K-4th 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-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

This gives GISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

3. Length of School Day (DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL) (TEC Code §25.081) (TEC Code §25.082)

Currently:

Texas Education Code requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long to count for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes totaling 75,600 minutes per school year.

Plan:

- a. Allow Groveton ISD the flexibility to alter the school day schedule whenever it is deemed locally necessary or beneficial to the District and its stakeholders
- b. Early release days may be used for additional professional development, unique instructional arrangements, teacher collaboration, teacher/parent conferences, safety purposes due to the weather, extracurricular travel needs, etc.
- c. The district will ensure that campus schedules follow the required operational and/or instructional minutes/days as defined in the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH). This will ensure funding for GISD is secure.

4. Teacher Certification Required (TEC §21.003)

Currently:

TEC 21.003 says that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

Plan:

In order to best serve GISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for dual credit, career and technical/STEAM, and hard to fill content teachers, the district will have the flexibility in providing our students an opportunity they may not have otherwise been afforded.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. The district will have the flexibility to hire credentialed community college instructors or university professors in specific content areas in order to afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. The campus principal will submit the request to the superintendent to allow the hiring of the credentialed community college instructor or university professor.
- c. 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.
- d. This will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.
- e. Exception: Special Education and ESL/Bilingual teachers must be SBEC certified.

5. Probationary Contracts (Subchapter C)

Currently:

A probationary contract may not exceed one year for new teachers to our district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district. Under this circumstance, the district must either give the teacher a term contract or terminate their contract after their first year in the district.

Proposed:

Groveton ISD would like to have the ability to renew the probationary contract two additional one-year periods, for a maximum of three school years, for all teachers that are new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of eight preceding employment by the District.

6. Length (number of days) of Teacher Contracts (TEC §21.401)

Currently

Under current education law, a teacher's contract is 10-months or more specifically, 187 days in length.

Proposed

Groveton ISD seeks the opportunity to construct ten month employment contracts for professional, certified personnel to better align with the 75,600 minutes required of students. This flexibility will allow the district to utilize extended work-days and alternative schedules to best meet the professional development needs of its staff.

