



Alvord Independent School District
Proposed District of Innovation Plan

Alvord ISD

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 26, 2017, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum, graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Timeline of Events for Renewal with Amendment:

1. **November 10, 2021** - District of Innovation Committee developed Alvord ISD District of Innovation Plan Renewal with Amendment.
2. **December 7, 2021** - Board of Trustees vote to notify the Commissioner of Education of the District's plan to renew the DOI Plan with an Amendment.
3. **December 7, 2021** - Day 1 of timeline for posting proposed plan to District Website
4. **January 6, 2022** - Day 30 of timeline for posting proposed plan to District Website
5. **February 9, 2022** - DEIC will hold a Public Meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan.
6. **March 1, 2022** – Board of Trustees vote to adopt the final renewed plan.
7. **March 2, 2022** - Texas Education Agency Commissioner notified of Board of Trustees adopted plan.
8. **March 2, 2022** – Final adopted plan posted to District Website.

District of Innovation Plan

1. District Calendar

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Proposal: To best serve the students of Alvord ISD, we propose to create a school calendar which serves the needs of our local community. We propose moving the mandatory start date earlier than the fourth Monday. Waiting to start classes until the fourth Monday in August forces semesters to be significantly unequal in length, with second semester being approximately four weeks longer than the first semester. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable our district to better balance instruction time in each semester as well as making an effort to end our first semester prior to Winter Break.

2. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC 21.102 (b)-TEC 21.102 (b) states that a probationary contract 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 with the district.

Proposal: This period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom data and/or student data. Upon exemption from TEC 21.102 (b), all new contract employees will be probationary for three one-year periods, allowing more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

3. Teacher Certification

Exemption from: TEC §21.003(a) TEC §21.053, TEC §21.057

TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC §21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator or teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Alvord ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE and languages other than English. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Local certification of teachers in non-core subject areas must also be approved by the Alvord ISD Board of Trustees.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

3a. Amended Proposal Approved April 27, 2020:

These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE, languages other than English and certified social studies teachers. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. In addition, certified social studies teacher can be eligible to teach social studies subjects outside of their certification through a local teaching certification. The Alvord ISD Board of Trustees must also approve local certification of teachers in non-core subject areas and social studies. This proposal does not include the following core subject area certifications: Math, ELAR, or Science. Bilingual and Special Education teacher certifications are excluded by federal law.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and hiring of teachers and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry-recognized certifications.

3b. Amended Proposal Approved May 24, 2022:

Alvord ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE and languages other than English. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Local certification of teachers must be approved by (or reported to) the Alvord ISD Board of Trustees. Bilingual and Special Education teacher certifications are excluded by federal law.

This process will allow more flexibility in our hiring of teachers.

4. Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.

Exemption from: 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 Alvord 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. This provision is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Texas Education Code 22.004 is not in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to Texas Education Code 12A.004 and the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.

Proposal: Increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs.

5. Interdistrict Transfers

Exemption from: TEC 25.036 states that 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.

FDA (Local) states that Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time.

Proposal: On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Alvord ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Local Guidelines:

1. AISD will continue to accept transfers as space and local policy allows.
2. An interdistrict transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent 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.
3. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Name	Relationship to AISD
Dr. Randy Brown	Superintendent
Courtney Archa	Elementary Parent
Rebecca Berend	Middle School Teacher
Darla Cole	Elementary Teacher
Kaysi Hamilton	Middle School Teacher
Sandra Kostelecky	High School Teacher
Kelly Martin	High School Parent
Karen Moore	Elementary Teacher
Kathy Jo Nance	High School Teacher
Tracy Parker	Middle & High School Parent
Michelle Rasmussen	Elementary Parent
Jessica Sands	Middle School Parent
Carrie Walker	Elementary Teacher
Bridget Williams	Elementary Principal
Shana Worthington	Elementary Parent
Mechelle Wright	High School Teacher

Alvord ISD

Term of Plan: 04/27/2022 - 04/27/2027

Plan applies to: Entire District
 Campus (list) _____
 Other (please describe) _____

Chapter 11 – School Districts

Subchapter D. Powers and Duties of Board of Trustees of Independent School Districts

- §11.1511 (b)(5), (14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board
- §11.162 School Uniforms

Subchapter F. District-Level and Site Based Decision-Making

- §11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process
- §11.252 District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
- §11.253 Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision-Making
- §11.255 Dropout Prevention Review

Chapter 21 – Educators

Subchapter A – General Provisions

- §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts
- §21.003 Certification Required
- §21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void

Subchapter B – Certification of Educators

- §21.051 Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships.
- §21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates
- §21.057 Parental Notification

Subchapter C – Probationary Contracts

Subchapter D – Continuing Contracts

Subchapter E – Term Contracts

Subchapter H – Appraisals and Incentives

- §21.352 Local Role
- §21.353 Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance
- §21.354 Appraisal of Certain Administrators
- §21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

Subchapter I – Duties and Benefits

- §21.401 Minimum Service Required
- §21.402 Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff
- §21.4021 Furloughs

- §21.4022 Required Process for Development of Furlough Program or Other Salary Reduction Proposal
- §21.403 Placement on Minimum Salary Schedule
- §21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records
- §21.4032 Reductions in Salaries of Classroom Teachers and Administrators
- §21.404 Planning and Preparation Time
- §21.405 Duty-Free Lunch
- §21.406 Denial of Compensation Based On Absence for Religious Observance Prohibited
- §21.407 Requiring or Coercing Teachers to Join Groups, Clubs, Committees, or Organizations: Political Affairs
- §21.408 Right To Join or Not To Join Professional Association
- §21.409 Leave Of Absence for Temporary Disability
- §21.415 Employment Contracts
- Subchapter J – Staff Development**
- §21.451 Staff Development Requirements
- §21.452 Developmental Leaves of Absence
- §21.458 Mentors

Chapter 22 – School District Employees and Volunteers

Subchapter A – Rights, Duties, and Benefits

- §22.001 Salary Deductions for Professional Dues
- §22.002 Assignment, Transfer, or Pledge of Compensation
- §22.003 Minimum Personal Leave Program
- §22.006 Discrimination Based on Jury Service Prohibited
- §22.007 Incentives for Early Retirement
- §22.011 Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

- §25.0811 First Day of Instruction
- §25.0812 Last Day of School
- §25.083 School Day Interruptions
- §25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Subchapter D – Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size

- §25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios
- §25.112 Class Size
- §25.113 Notice of Class Size
- §25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes; Class Size

Chapter 37 – Discipline; Law and Order

Subchapter A – Alternative Setting for Behavior Management

- §37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
- §37.002 Removal by Teacher

Chapter 44 –Fiscal Management

Subchapter B – Purchases; Contracts

- §44.031 Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0331 Management Fees Under Certain Cooperative Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0352 Competitive Sealed Proposals
- §44.042 Preference to Texas and United States Products
- §44.043 Right To Work
- §44.047 Purchase or Lease of Automated External Defibrillator

Subchapter Z – Miscellaneous Provisions

- §44.901 Energy Savings Performance Contracts
- §44.902 Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy
- §44.903 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs in Instructional Facilities
- §44.908 Expenditure of Local Funds

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Subchapter G – School District Depositories

- §45.205 Term of Contract
- §45.206 Bid Or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms
- §45.207 Award of Contract
- §45.208 Depository Contract; Bond
- §45.209 Investment of District Funds

Other

Please list any additional exemption required for your Innovation District Plan:

22.004(i) Uniform Group Coverage Program

25.036 - Interdistrict Transfers