

Leverett's Chapel Independent School District of Innovation Plan

I. Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. As a District of Innovation, Leverett's Chapel ISD will be able to implement our new strategic plan with the increased flexibility and obtain exemptions from certain provisions from the Texas Education Code. The District intends to continue to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If amendments to this plan are considered in the future, the District will reconvene the innovation plan committee to initiate the appropriate process, as defined in Chapter 12a of the Texas Education Code. Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Districts of Innovation may seek exemption from a number of state statutes and will have:

II. Resolution

III. District of Innovation Timeline

May 12, 2022	Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of planning team
July 19, 2022	12:00 pm – Called board meeting to consider resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation. 12:15 pm – PUBLIC HEARING held to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation. 12:30 pm – REGULAR BOARD MEETING: approved motion to pursue developing a plan to become a District of Innovation.
July 2022	District of Innovation committee meeting to develop plan.
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Post the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days.Notify Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on adoption of proposed plan.
August 17, 2022	Approve the District of Innovation plan.
August 18, 2022	Notify Commissioner of Education District of Innovation Plan approved.
August 18, 2022	Effective Date.
May 14, 2024	DOI Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the proposed amendment to the District of Innovation Plan.
May 22, 2024	Leverett's Chapel ISD Board of Trustees voted to adopt the proposed local innovation plan by an affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of the membership on the Board.

May 22, 2024	The District notified the commissioner of the approval of the plan along with the list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the approved agency form.
May 22, 2024	The District posted a copy of the proposed Amendment to the local innovation plan to the District's website for the term of the designation as an innovation district.
May 22, 2024	Not later than the 15 th day after the date on which the Board finalizes the local innovation plan, though amendment, the district shall provide a copy of the local innovation plan to the Texas Education Agency for posting on the agency website.

IV. LCISD District of Innovation Advisory Committee Members

Name	Relationship to LCISD
Robbie Waller	Board President
Matt Everett	Superintendent
Nikki Saxton	Principal
Wayne Borden	Principal
Carmen Chavez	PEIMS Coordinator
Jennifer Gough	Business Administrator
Brenda Smith	ESL Teacher
Marcia Rogers	Interventionist
Amanda Johnson	Parent

V. TERM

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning August 18, 2022 and ending August 18, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board of Trustees will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. Leverett's Chapel ISD may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

VI. Local Innovation Strategies

Uniform Start Date TEC §25.0811 and §25.0812	
Law	Local Innovation Strategies
<p>The Texas Education Code §25.0811 states a school district may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the third Monday, some even going as early as the second Monday. The start-date waiver was eventually removed when legislature determined school districts should begin the first semester no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. The current process allows no flexibility in the design and balancing of instructional semesters to meet the needs of the students. Texas Education Code Section §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community.2. Personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness.3. Alignment of calendar with STAAR/EOC timelines.4. More flexible professional development opportunities for our staff throughout the school year.5. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the district the flexibility to end the school year prior to May 15, should the district deem it necessary and appropriate.

Class Size Ratio TEC §25.112 and §25.113 Class Size and Notice of Class Size	
Law	Local Innovation Strategies
<p>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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. 2. LCISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. 3. In the event a K-4 core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.

Teacher Certification TEC §21.003 , TEC §21.053 Certification and Required Field-based Experience	
Law	Local Innovation Strategies
<p>TEC §21.003 states that “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”.</p>	<p>1. In order to best serve LCISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.</p> <p>2. The flexibility in allowing LCISD to make local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer innovation in course selections for CTE courses as well as hard to fill, high-demand academic and dual credit courses. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, experts in a profession or industry, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This Innovation Plan component will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take CTE, dual credit, and some unique academic courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses</p>

Teacher Contract Days TEC §21.401 Minimum Service Required	
Law	Local Innovation Strategies
Texas Education Code requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverett's Chapel ISD will better align the number of teacher days to the 75,600 minutes of required of students. 2. Allow for a reduction of teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. 3. The proposal would increase the daily rate the district pays the teachers. 4. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts. 5. Improve overall morale.

Inter-district Transfer Students

TEC §25.036

Law	Local Innovation Strategies
Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.	<p>1. LCISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA(LOCAL) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the rules and regulations of the District. TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applications for the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion;b. late pick-up, attendance, or not remaining in good academic standing.c. Student has not attended required interventions (if needed).

Teacher Probationary Contracts TEC §21.102(b)	
Law	
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.	1. 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 and student data. For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians or nurses new to LCISD who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a second probationary contract may be offered when needed to benefit the teacher and students served. This action requires principal recommendation, and consideration and approval by the superintendent.