



District of Innovation

Joshua ISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. Joshua ISD feels this is a great opportunity for our local district to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community. All exemptions were chosen to provide opportunities for Joshua ISD to personalized and enhance learning for students. The Board of Trustees will work with the Superintendent of Schools to approve changes to school year calendars, instructional minutes, and other areas included in this plan. Adjustments will be made in the best interests of students and teachers. This plan will be in effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year and may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

District of Innovation Committee

Fran Marek
Margaret Johnson
Joan Boyd
Rebecca Metzger
Susan Haertner
Jo Lynn Augsburger
Celeste Neal
Mick Cochran
Damon Patterson
Kenneth Bodine
Lance Cathey
Somer Yocom
Brandy Hicks
David Layman
Emily Owen
Amanda Burns

Superintendent
Executive Director of Technology
Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Executive Director of Finance
Director of Special Services
Director of Elementary Curriculum & Instruction
Director of Secondary Curriculum & Instruction
Joshua High School Principal
Loflin Middle School Principal
New Horizon High School Principal
Elder Elementary Principal
North Joshua Elementary Principal
Teacher
Community Member
Parent
Parent

Innovations:

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

First Day of Instruction and Last Day of Instruction

The Texas Education Code currently prohibits school districts from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August or scheduling the last day of school before May 15. Local control of the instructional calendar provides the District with a number of advantages and is necessary for purposes of implementing the following innovations:

- Eliminating imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break.
- Aligning the District's calendar to better accommodate Hill College, Advanced Placement Exams, and STAAR/EOC timelines.
- Adjusting the instructional calendar to ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses.

TEC Codes Requiring Exemption:

- TEC 25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.
- TEC 25.0812: A school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

Innovation: Allows Joshua ISD to begin school earlier than fourth Monday in August.

Class Size and Notice of Class Size

The Texas Education Code currently prohibits a school district from enrolling more than 22 students in a kindergarten - fourth grade class. When circumstances require this limit to be exceeded, districts must apply to the Commissioner of Education for a waiver and follow a specific procedure to provide notification to the parent of each student affected by the exception. Local control of the maximum enrollment for kindergarten-fourth grade classes and the procedure for notifying parents of exceptions to the District determined class size would benefit students and the District by minimizing disruptions to established classes, reducing administrative costs associated with the waiver and notification process and providing flexibility to adjust the maximum class size when it is determined to be in the best interests of the students. The District seeks local control to implement innovations in the following areas for student/teacher ratios.

- Joshua ISD will determine the maximum class size for each grade level.
- Joshua ISD will develop procedures for determining when to add a teacher to a kindergarten – fourth grade when enrollment exceeds the locally developed class size limitation. This procedure will focus on student success.
- Joshua ISD will develop a local letter to notify parents when class size exceeds the district determined maximum number of students.
- The district will not have to apply for a waiver with TEA each time enrollment exceeds 22 students in kindergarten – fourth grade classes.

TEC Codes Requiring Exemption:

- TEC 25.112: A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.
- TEC 25.113: A campus or district that is granted an exception under TEC 25.112(d) shall provide written notification of the exception to the parent of each student affected by the exception.

Innovation:

Face to Face Instruction (In person): Kindergarten – Fourth Grade Classrooms: When one classroom reaches 24 students and the other sections in that grade level are consistently at 23 students, an additional teacher will be added to that grade level.

Face to Face Bilingual Instruction (In person): Kindergarten – Fourth Grade Bilingual Classrooms: When one bilingual classroom reaches 24 students a bilingual paraprofessional will be added to the classroom.

Virtual Instruction: Kindergarten – Fourth Grade Classrooms: When one classroom reaches 30 students and the other virtual sections in that grade level are consistently at 29 students, an additional virtual teacher will be added to that grade level.

Probationary Contract Period

Under existing law, a probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The Education Code generally allows such probationary contracts to be renewed for two additional one-year periods (for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three years) and even provides the Board with the authority to make a probationary contract for a fourth consecutive school year if it determines that it is doubtful whether the teacher should be given a continuing or term contract. However, the probationary contract period for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years is limited to a single year. This limited period of time is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Relief from TEC 21.102(b) will permit the District to adopt local rules allowing for probationary contracts to be issued in a consistent manner to all newly hired teachers, counselors or nurses regardless of past employment history. This consistency will ensure that the District has sufficient time to evaluate whether it is in the District's best interest to continue the employment relationship before offering a continuing or term contract.

TEC Codes Requiring Exemption:

- TEC 21.102(b): The probationary contract period 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 by the district.

Innovation: A teacher with five or more years of teaching experience who is hired to teach in Joshua ISD could receive a probationary contract for three years.

District of Innovation Timeline

- December 19, 2016
 - Information regarding becoming a District of Innovation is presented to the Board of Trustees in the Board Workshop.
- January 23, 2017
 - Board of Trustees receives petition signed by a majority of the members of the district-level committee at the January Board Workshop.
 - Public Hearing to consider developing an Innovation Plan no later than 30 days from date of receiving the petition.
 - At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Board of Trustees may pursue or decline the opportunity to become a District of Innovation and appoint an Innovation Plan Committee if pursuing the opportunity.
- January 24, 2017
 - Committee develops the District of Innovation Plan.
- January 25, 2017
 - Post proposed Joshua ISD District of Innovation Plan on the district website for at least thirty days (January 25 - February 24).
 - Board of Trustees notifies the Commissioner of Education of intent to vote on the adoption of the proposed District of Innovation Plan.
- March 21, 2017
 - District-level committee holds a public meeting to consider the final version of the District Innovation Plan and approves the plan by a majority vote of the committee members.
- April 17, 2017
 - Board of Trustees may adopt a proposed local innovation plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.
- April 18, 2017
 - The District shall notify the Commissioner of approval of the plan along with the list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the TEA form.
- August 2017 – June 2022
 - Joshua ISD is designated as a district of innovation for the term specified in the plan but no longer than five calendar years (TEC 12A.006).
 - District begins operation in accordance with the plan.
 - District is exempt from state requirements identified under (TEC 12A.003(b)(2)).

Additional Information

[District of Innovation Public Meeting Presentation](#) (January 23, 2017)

Please direct all questions/comments regarding the District of Innovation opportunity to Jo Lynn Augsburger, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, at augsburgerj@joshuaisd.org.