



District of Innovation Plan

Huntsville Independent School District

Introduction

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to promote systematic improvement and allow for more local control, Huntsville ISD elected to become a District of Innovation. The initial five year plan expires at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

A district of innovation plan may be renewed if the action is approved by a majority vote of the District Advisory Council and a two-thirds majority vote of the board of trustees. The term of the designation as a district of innovation may not exceed 5 years.

District of Innovation Renewal Timeline

October 2020	District level personnel will review and update the current District of Innovation plan.
November 2020	The Huntsville ISD District of Innovation plan will be posted on the district website for 30 days. A public meeting will be held prior to the District Advisory Council (DAC) meeting to review the plan. The DAC must pass the District of Innovation renewal plan by a majority vote.
December 2020	The Commissioner of Education will be notified of the Board of Trustees' intent to vote on renewing the Huntsville ISD District of Innovation plan.. The Huntsville ISD Board of Trustees must approve the District of Innovation plan by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

District Advisory Council

Name:	Role:
Marcus D. Forney	Council Chairman
Cindy Gallen	Teacher Representative
Catherine Greeves	Non-Teacher Professional
Shiloh Crocker	Parent
John Nepveux	Teacher Representative
Shelley Petkovsek	Teacher Representative
Deanna Jamison	Non-Teacher Professional
Sheetal Patel	Parent
Chris Sinski	Teacher Representative
Micheal Vossler	Teacher Representative
Stacy Godby	Non-Teacher Professional
Nicky Harrell	Parent
Dorthy Elder	Teacher Representative
Lara Varnal	Teacher Representative
Toxie Oliphant	Non-Teacher Professional
Aimee Voiles	Teacher Representative
N'Kayla Mitchell	Teacher Representative
Emily Craft	Non-Teacher Professional
Julie Cooper	Parent
Marshika Johnson	Teacher Representative
Gena Holder	Teacher Representative
Melissa Hunziker	Non-Teacher Professional
Kristen Berry	Parent
Laura Garcia	Teacher Representative
Amanda Jenkins	Teacher Representative
Tiffany Matchett	Non-Teacher Professional
Christie Coy	Parent
Maria Rhodes	Teacher Representative
Michelle Blair	Teacher Representative
Amy Courtney	Parent
Ray Hernandez	Business Representative
Nelson Amaya	Business Representative
David Standlee	Community Representative
Glen Andrus	Community Representative
Gene Roberts	Community Representative
Danielle Jordan	District Representative

Term

The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as outlined by the Texas Education Agency, is five years; therefore, the plan shall commence with the 2021-2022 academic year and conclude at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law.

Innovations

To meet district needs and address Board Goals, flexibility is required to exert local control, at both the District and campus levels to create the following benefits:

1. An academic calendar to address the needs of students (TEC §25.0811)
 - Allow students to enroll in college courses that start in early June.
 - Allow for flexible start and end dates.
 - Allow for more instructional time.
2. Alternative Education Considerations (TEC §25.092)
 - School start and ending time for alternative school settings.
 - Offering a learning environment that is not bound by age, but is based off of students mastering specific competencies (ex. reading).
 - State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.
 - Exempting from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Huntsville ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule to meet the needs of students enrolled in an alternative education or dropout recovery programs.
 - Exempting the minimum attendance requirement for students in the alternative education system will allow students to accelerate course completion and graduate as soon as all graduation requirements are met.
3. An innovative practice for addressing teacher certification so as to enhance any area of the curriculum (TEC §21.003)
 - Hire credentialed community college instructors/professors to teach dual credit courses which will allow more dual credit courses.
 - Hire professionals in certain trade and vocational areas to teach CTE courses (such as health science, HVAC, etc.) and expand our current CTE offerings.

House Bill 5 has added significant support for the need to expand college and career opportunities for students. However, this call for increased opportunities does not adequately accommodate the special challenges faced by school districts as they seek to find individuals with the education or work-related experience needed to adequately educate students in specialized areas of instruction.

Districts must often compete with industries that pay substantially more than education. In addition, industry professionals interested in education, often face increased costs from participation in alternative certification programs. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as:

- Professional work experience.
- Formal training and education.
- Relevant industry license, certification, or registration.
- Any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credential related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching.

At the present time, Huntsville ISD would focus on academic and non-academic CTE courses. However, in the future, the district may choose to exercise this option in other courses including core courses. For example, a practitioner with expertise such as computer science coding may be able to provide relevant coursework on a part-time basis. Additionally, an elementary certified literacy specialist may be able to serve in a secondary school with struggling and non-readers.

All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught. *A bachelor's degree would not be a requirement for CTE courses.*

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the district would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. This would require the superintendent to certify to the board of trustees that the individual has undergone a criminal history background check and is capable of proper classroom management. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain a set number of hours in classroom management training. Any school district permit would only be valid in the Huntsville Independent School District.

4. Teacher Employment Contracts for New Hires (TEC §21.002)

Under the current education code, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. This does not allow enough time to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Flexibility in employment contract will allow the District to:

- issue a probationary contract for two years to teachers that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.
- evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher over the course of multiple school years.

5. Maximum Class Size Exceptions Waiver(TEC 25.112 and 25.113)

The district proposes the option to waive the class size limit specifically for online or distance learning courses and requests relief from the requirement of a Class Size exemption and notification to parents .