

**Elysian Fields ISD  
District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)**

**Introduction:**

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and allows them to obtain and utilize the exemptions in educational law that charter schools currently are entitled to. Our school district and community feels that this is a great opportunity for us to create a plan based on the needs of our students and faculty. This plan will remain in effect for 5 years (2017-2022).

1. **School Start Date:** (EB Legal) Education Code 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. The Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

**Proposed**

To develop a calendar that fits the needs of our community in Elysian Fields.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of August.
  - b. This start date will provide more educational development before state assessments.
  - c. This will also add more balance to the first and second semesters. Provides equal number of days in each semester.
  - d. To improve the overall attendance rate with the change in the calendar.
2. **Teacher and Principal Evaluation** (DNA Legal, DNA Local) (Education Code 21.203) (Education Code 21.352)

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), a teacher appraisal system, since 1997. The state is issuing a new appraisal system in 2016-2017 that will be called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. EFISD teachers are evaluation every three years. New teachers to the district are evaluated annually up to two years

Principals are evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

**Proposed**

A committee of administrators and the superintendent would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices. This local instrument and/or process would best fit the needs and goals of EFISD.

- a. EFISD will utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.

- b. The instrument will be developed through a collaborative of the central office and campus administrators. We will also accept input from staff and faculty.
  - c. All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every three years. Every teacher will receive a minimum of three to six informed walk-throughs per year. Teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals unless they choose to opt out.
  - d. Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year.
  - e. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.
  - f. All plans will reflect the strengths, areas of concern and goals for EFISD.
3. Teacher Certification (DK Legal, DK Exhibit) 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 a temporary permit from the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Proposed

In order to best serve EFISD students, a decision on certification will be made locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of his/her certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which would qualify him/her to teach this subject.
  - b. 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 or deny the request based on the credentials and whether or not this individual would be an asset to the 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. The employee will be at will.
  - c. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.
4. Teaching Contract Days (DCB Legal, DCB Local) Current education laws located in Chapter 21 define a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

This proposal reduces teacher's contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This makes an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- a. This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
  - b. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.
  - c. Overall morale will improve.
  - d. This should also provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek better staff development that relates to their teaching area.
5. Class size ratio (EEB Legal) (TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)

Texas Education code section 25.112 addresses the number of students that may be in a single kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth or fifth grade class and limits that number to 22. The intent of this statute was to ensure that classrooms maintained a small teacher/student ratio under the belief that smaller classes led to improved achievement for students who benefitted from more individual teacher attention. While the maximum number of students in K-5 classrooms may be addressed by a state waiver, waivers must be applied for by each district annually.

Proposed

By seeking an exception from TEC section 25.112, the district would have flexibility for all campuses and classrooms for the duration of the District of Innovation and would not be required to seek waivers annually. The district does not traditionally seek waivers in this area and will strive to maintain a ratio of 22-1 or less.

Implementation

In order to offer students additional opportunities, this innovation plan has been created with guidelines in which the district will operate. Campuses and departments in the district will develop specific implementation plans. Adjustments to Board Policy will be adopted when appropriate.

Local Innovation Committee Members:

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Maynard Chapman

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Martin Cobb

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Leslie Parker

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