

McKinney Independent School District Local Innovation Plan (Renewal)

Final Version

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas school districts to pursue the designation of ‘District of Innovation,’ a provision that enables traditional independent school districts to access many of the flexibilities that are currently available to open-enrollment charter schools. House Bill 1842 was also intended to generate greater flexibility, local control, and innovation to better meet the needs of Texas students. Through the development and approval of a ‘Local Innovation Plan,’ a district may obtain certain exemptions from the Texas Education Code to advance their local strategic priorities.

On November 14, 2017, the McKinney ISD Board of Trustees officially launched the process of becoming a District of Innovation and later adopted a Local Innovation Plan on February 27, 2018. The plan had a term limit of five years and is now being considered for its first renewal cycle.

TIMELINE

Date	Action
February 14, 16, 2023	Planning meetings held to review research and findings.
March 22, 2023	Joint District Advisory Committee (DAC) and Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) Committee meeting
March 24, 2023	Local Innovation Plan renewal posted online
April 21, 2023	District Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting
April 25, 2023	McKinney ISD Board of Trustees provided a presentation update.
May 16, 2023	McKinney ISD Board of Trustees voted to approve Local Innovation Plan.
May 19, 2023	McKinney ISD submitted Local Innovation Plan to the Texas Education Agency.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

McKinney Independent School District (MISD) continues to be a premier public school system in Texas and the city itself has received national attention as a residential destination. McKinney recently was ranked the second safest city among all U.S. cities according to a study by GoodHire and ranked third nationally for best places to buy a house by WalletHub. Continuing, MISD was once again recognized by the Dallas Business Journal as one of the 'Best Places to Work.' This fall, MISD welcomed nearly 23,400 students from early childhood through grade 12, serving them throughout its 32 campuses (an early childhood center, 20 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 3 alternative school sites). With respect to operations, the district successfully completed several capital improvement projects this past summer with some of the most comprehensive upgrades occurring at Burks Elementary School, Webb Elementary School, and Scott Johnson Middle School, as part of the 2021 Bond Program. Funds will also provide additional resources for classroom technology and school security, as well as additional student opportunities in academics, fine arts, and athletics. The District is quite diverse, with a student population consisting of 45 percent White, 29 percent Hispanic, 15 percent African American, 5 percent Asian, and 6 percent Other. Nearly one third of the students [31 percent] are eligible for free or reduced priced meals and 9 campuses offer Title I schoolwide programs. Within program supports, 14 percent qualify for special education, 13 percent are identified as English Learners (EL), and 11 percent receive gifted and talented services (GT).

DISTRICTWIDE GOALS

Goal #1: McKinney ISD will ensure the faculty, staff, students, and community believe that the school is safe and maximizes collaboration for the enhancement of student learning.

Goal #2: McKinney ISD will engage students in rigorous and relevant experiences that will prepare them for graduation and post-secondary success.

Goal #3: McKinney ISD will continue to have structures and systems in place to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of educational programs to promote the teaching and learning process.

Goal #4: McKinney ISD will continue to promote the social and emotional learning (SEL) and character education through continued implementation of the McKinney ISD Lives Kind Initiative.

LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

The term of the Local Innovation Plan will begin on July 1, 2023, and will end on June 30, 2028, unless terminated, amended, and/or renewed in accordance with the law.

The District proposes exemptions in the following areas:

Uniform School Calendar

{TEC §25.0811, TEC §25.0812 and EB(LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August and Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. To better balance the school year such that the number of days in each semester is more evenly distributed, and each six weeks period is approximately six weeks in length, the District seeks flexibility to begin the school year before the fourth Monday in August. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- More instructional days in advance of standardized assessments, such as Advanced Placement and STAAR exams;
- Additional instructional time after the last official day of school for students retaking a STAAR exam over the summer;
- Completion of fall semester exams before dismissing for Winter Break;
- Opportunity for students to take advantage of the full array of summer dual-credit offerings at institutions of higher education; and
- More balanced distribution of instructional time for one-semester coursework, as students who currently take a one-semester course in the fall have fewer instructional days to master course content than students who take the same one-semester course in the spring.

Teacher Certification

{TEC §21.003, TEC §21.057 and DBA(LEGAL), DK(LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code Section 21.003 and 21.057 outline state certification and notification standards for teachers. It states in part that “a 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...” The current certification requirements prohibit the District from hiring professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses if they do not hold the required certificate or permit under statute. Flexibility in teacher certification when high quality, certified teachers are not available in hard-to-fill and high-demand CTE areas offers the following advantages:

- Ability to hire instructors with industry experience that align to career and technical pathways offered to District students in grades 9 through 12; and
- Opportunity to increase the number of career and technical offerings to students in grades 9 through 12.

This exemption also provides relief when employing substitute teachers long-term when the teacher of record is on extended leave or the position is vacant.

Planning and Preparation Time

{TEC §21.404 and DL(LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code Section 21.404 guarantees each classroom teacher a planning period. Specifically, each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week

period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity. Based upon Commissioner of Education interpretation, all conference period assignments must take place when the students are in instructional attendance.

Due to the uniqueness in scheduling at our early childhood school, planning and preparation time while students are in attendance presents multiple challenges. For example, the school day for pre-kindergarten is shorter in general, with students attending either a morning or afternoon half-day session which spans three hours in length or attending a full-day session. As the morning session ends, the afternoon session begins shortly thereafter and staff are needed to assist in these transitions. Consequently, adult supervision is necessary continuously until all students are dismissed. Local control of the planning and preparation time ensures our youngest students receive the maximum amount of learning time the District can design during the instructional day. It also provides flexibility to structure necessary staff time for instructional preparation which may occur before, during, or after the instructional day for students. The District is still committed to providing a planning period no less than 45 minutes and at least 450 minutes within each two-week period.

Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size

{TEC §25.111, §25.112, §25.113 and BF(LEGAL), EEB (LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code section 25.111 requires school districts to employ a sufficient number of certified teachers to maintain an average ratio of not less than 1 teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. Texas Education Code section 25.112 generally prohibits a district from enrolling more than 22 students in a K-4th grade class unless the district claims an exemption through TEA's waiver procedure. Texas Education Code section 25.113 requires a campus or district that is granted a class size waiver to provide parental notice. This exemption allows the District to utilize a more flexible class size approach when necessary based on student needs and time of year.

Removal of Unruly Visitors

{TEC §37.105 and GKA(LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code §37.105, applies to rejecting unruly visitors from campuses and school events. In 2017, the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he/she can appeal the ejection. This exemption seeks to allow designated staff members the authority to remove parents or visitors whose behavior is deemed inappropriate without warning or written notice.

School District Depositories

{TEC §45.205, TEC §45.206 and BDAE(LEGAL)}

Texas Education Code 45.205 requires each school district to renew its depository contract every two years. The two-year contract term begins and ends in odd-numbered years. Additionally, school districts must use a uniform bid or proposal in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

McKinney ISD seeks an exemption from TEC 45.205 and 45.206. By gaining exemption from these statutes, MISD would be able to allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total eight-year allowable contract term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative and financial burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP). In addition, this would afford the district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships. At the end of each two-year term, the district and the depository bank may agree to extend the contract for an additional two-year period. The district must review the contract to ensure the best value and support for the district and obtain board approval for each extension and contract renewal. This exemption does not hinder the district's ability to release a formal procurement for depository contract services, in lieu of negotiating an extension to the existing bank contract, if deemed necessary based on operational or financial reasons.