

Yantis ISD

District of Innovation Plan (HB1842)

February 2022-2023

To

February 2026-2027

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- Increased flexibility, with accountability: Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform start date and required minutes of instruction.
- Greater local control: Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- Autonomy: District submits a District of Innovation Plan to the commissioner of education, but commissioner approval is not required.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum requirements, graduation requirements, academic accountability, and financial accountability.

PROCESS

On March 19, 2018, the Yantis ISD Board of Trustees passed a resolution to explore/initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over district operations and to support innovation and local initiatives.

On March 19, 2018 the Yantis ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussions on whether the district should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as a District of Innovation. There were no objections coming from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the Site Based Decision Making Team to discuss and draft a local innovation plan. Yantis ISD Board of Trustees passed the plan at its meeting in June 2018.

The proposed renewal plan will be posted on the district website for at least 30 days beginning November 11, 2021. Yantis will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of the district's proposed District of Innovation Plan and that the plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration on December 12, 2022.

TERM

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning February 2023 and will remain in effect through February of 2026-2027 school year 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 will appoint the same committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The district may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

TIMELINE

| | |
|----------------|--|
| February, 2018 | Introduced the idea of becoming District of Innovation |
| March 19, 2018 | Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate District of Innovation |
| April 11, 2018 | Initial meeting of SBDM Team to discuss District of Innovation Plan |
| April 17, 2018 | Meeting of SBDM Team to finalize District of Innovation Plan |
| April 18, 2018 | Post District of Innovation Plan on Yantis ISD website |
| April 18, 2018 | Plan submitted to the Commissioner of Education |
| May 21, 2018 | SBDM Team will hold meeting to finalize plan |
| June 11, 2018 | Board of Trustees vote on District of Innovation Plan |
| June 12, 2018 | Update all policy changes with TASB (if plan is approved by board). |

| Timeline | Activity/Tasks |
|-------------------|--|
| March 19, 2018 | Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Consider Designation of District of Innovation |
| April 11, 2018 | Initial Meeting of SBDM Team of discuss District of Innovation Plan |
| April 17, 2018 | Meeting of SBDM Team to finalize District of Innovation Plan |
| April 18, 2018 | Posted District of Innovation Plan on website |
| May 21, 2018 | SBDM team hold meeting to finalize plan |
| June 11, 2018 | Board of Trustees voted to pass District of Innovation Plan |
| October 27, 2022 | Meeting of SBDM Committee to discuss District of Innovation renewal of District of Innovation Plan |
| November 10, 2022 | Meeting of SBDM Committee to vote on the renewal of District of Innovation Plan |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| February 9, 2022 | Post District of Innovation Plan Renewal on Yantis ISD website |
| March 13, 2023 | Board of Trustees meeting to consider approval of District of Innovation Plan |

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Christi Wade | Curriculum Director |
| Lauren Hudson | Teacher |
| Christie Quinn | Teacher |
| Megan Roberts | Teacher |
| Kay Glenn | Teacher |
| Jessica Kennemer | Teacher |
| Marla Gilbreath | Teacher |
| Judy Jetton | Non- Teaching |
| Emily Davis | Non- Teaching |
| Diana Forward | Parent |
| Kendra Wise | Parent |
| Janan Straznicky | Elementary Principal |
| Amanda Galyean | Secondary Principal |
| Tracey Helfferich | Superintendent |

AREAS OF INNOVATION

The purpose of the innovation plan is to achieve the district's vision and mission, to align the district's practices and operations, and to meet the expectations of the strategic goals. The district requires local flexibility in the areas addressed in order to support each student in attaining the skills needed to succeed in the college/career pathway of their choice. The innovation plan ensures a system aligned to the needs of our graduates as they enter the postsecondary world.

School Start Date – Flexible Calendar

Exempt from: TEC 25.0811

Relevant Board Policy: EB LEGAL

CURRENT

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

PROPOSED

Flexibility of start date would allow the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community.

- An improved balance in the instructional calendar between fall and spring semesters, and among nine week periods, which allows teachers to better pace and deliver instruction.
- Students participating in dual enrollment opportunities will work with a more balanced semester, which more closely aligns with local colleges.
- Permits students additional instructional days prior to state assessments.
- Students and staff will be afforded more opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts
- Improved flexibility to build in required instructional minutes based on local needs (e.g. COVID-19 response).

Yantis ISD will start no earlier than the first Monday in August in order to better balance the days between semesters and among the nine weeks reporting periods.

Certification Requirements

Exemptions from TEC§21.003

Related Board Policy: DBA Legal

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 by the appropriate state agency.

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification. Rationale for innovation House Bill 5 has added significant support for the need to expand college and career opportunities for students. However, the current certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction. Additionally, in the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of his or her certification area, the district must request emergency certification from TEA and/or the State Board of Educator Certification. These requests may be denied. This process is time consuming, burdensome, and it may not allow the district to meet its instructional needs in a timely fashion. With the growing teacher shortage in Texas, this process may prevent the district from being able to hire the best teacher available.

Flexibility to establish its own teacher certification requirements for instructors directly benefits students in the following ways:

- Expert industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses
- Greater number of course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students
- Greater opportunity for students to obtain professional certifications
- Innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs
- Added flexibility to hire the best candidate for each position

Yantis ISD does not wish to be exempted from any existing statutes relating to certified teacher contracts or teacher benefits.

The district will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification and skills for the position available; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the teaching position in question. The district's Board of Trustees would be able to issue an innovation permit for individual teaching courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent.

Inter- District Transfers

Exemptions from TEC 25.036

Related Board Policy: FDA Local

CURRENT

According to Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

PROPOSED

Yantis ISD maintains a transfer policy requiring non-resident students wishing to attend YISD to file an application each school year. In approving transfer requests the district takes into account the availability of space, instructional staff, the students' disciplinary history and attendance records.

Yantis ISD seeks the ability to revoke transfer status at any time during the year for non-resident students who have been assigned discipline consequences of suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. Transfer students are expected to meet the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of YISD. TEC25.036 has been interrupted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the district.

The flexibility to revoke transfer status if a student is not meeting YISD standards allows the district to maintain high expectations of all students. Local-Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsions. In addition, students not meeting the state's 90% compulsory attendance requirements may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.s 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of transfer status.

Additions to the Renewal Application

Class Size: Prekindergarten - Grade 4

Exemption from TEC 25.113

CURRENT

A district may not enroll more than 22 students in a prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. A district seeking an exception must apply for an exception with the commissioner and provide written notice of the exception to the parent of each student affected by the exception.

PROPOSED

If a district has students enroll during the school year which creates a student teacher ratio greater than 22: 1, the district will notify the commissioner in writing that the district is claiming an exemption for the period stated in the notice. This process is time consuming, burdensome, and it may not allow the district to meet its instructional needs in a timely fashion. TEC 25.113 requires a district that is granted an exception under TEC 25.112 to provide written notice of the exception to parents of each student affected by the exception. If there is not a requirement for an exception to be claimed, then there will not be a need to notify parents.

Yantis ISD believes that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom and will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to at least a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees and will make decisions regarding education decisions based on the best interest of the students and district. In the event a K-4th core classroom reaches 24: 1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.

Minimum Service Required (Contracted Days for Teachers)

Exemption from TEC 21.401

CURRENT

Defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.

PROPOSED

House Bill 2610, passed by the 84th Texas legislature, amends the Texas Education Code §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts to operate for a minimum of 75,600 minutes. The law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. A reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make Yantis ISD salaries more competitive with area schools by increasing the daily rate the district pays teachers. This flexibility benefits students by improving recruitment and retention practices of quality teachers.

This plan reduces teacher contract days from 187 with no effect on teacher salaries. Yantis ISD Board of Trustees will review the effectiveness and benefit of reduction of teacher contract days on a yearly basis.

Thank you for your consideration regarding Yantis ISD District Of Innovation Plan.