

I. 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. House Bill 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. In an effort to transform systemic improvement to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including students, staff, and parents and community members, Farmersville ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

A resolution to initiate the process of Farmersville ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 28, 2016. At such time, a District of Innovation Committee was established and charged with crafting a cohesive local innovative plan to improve the outcomes of all stakeholders. The District of Innovation Committee met on November 30, 2016 to discuss and craft the plan. The District of Innovation Committee considered multiple data points in an effort to construct a local innovation plan to bring about systemic change in Farmersville ISD.

The first Farmersville ISD local innovation plan was for five years, beginning the 2017-2018 school year, and ending the 2022-2023 school year. The renewed Farmersville ISD local innovation plan will be in effect for five years, beginning the 2022-2023 school year and ending the 2026-2027 school year. The local innovation plan may be terminated or amended by the FISD Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The District Innovation Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the local innovation plan and provide updates and/or necessary modifications to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

II. Timeline

September 14, 2016

Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Committee

November 15, 2016

Meeting with administrative staff to further discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Committee

November 28, 2016

Board Meeting/Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation

December 1, 2016

Initial meeting of the FISD District Innovation Committee

December 5, 2016

District Advisory Committee Meeting

December 6, 2016

District-wide Faculty Meeting

December 14 – January 14, 2107

Post the District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days

January 23, 2017

Seek final approval of the FISD District of Innovation Plan

October 28, 2021

Discuss, review, and amend FISD District of Innovation Plan with District Educational Improvement Committee

November 15, 2021

Sought final approval of updated FISD District of Innovation Plan

III. District Educational Improvement Committee

- A. Jason Gomez, Deputy Superintendent
- B. Micah Taylor, Assistant Superintendent
- C. Jeremy Posey, Director of Innovative Curriculum
- D. Harold Davis, Teacher
- E. John Gregoriew, Teacher
- F. Sandra Hoge, Teacher
- G. Angela Arnett, Teacher
- H. Duston Brown, Teacher
- I. Clinton Cox, Teacher
- J. Michelle Anderson, Teacher
- K. Jennifer Salazar, Teacher
- L. Beverly Lewicki, Teacher
- M. Jessica Phelps, Teacher
- N. Carrie King, Teacher
- O. Phil Baker, Parent
- P. Cynthia Craddock-Clark, Community Member

- Q. Chase Smith, Community Member
- R. Bryon Wiebold, Community Member
- S. Lisa McLaughlin, Community Member

IV. Farmersville ISD District of Innovation Plan School start date (EB LEGAL) (TEC 25.0811)

Current Law

Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August. For years, this was strictly a local decision.

The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed

To develop a calendar that fits the needs of the community of Farmersville. We have developed a calendar that we fill meets the students, community, and staff needs.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August.
- b. This start date will provide more educational days prior to state testing.
- c. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- d. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation (DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL) (TEC 21.203) (TEC 21.352)

Current Law

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state, beginning this year, has transitioned to a new teacher appraisal system the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Farmersville ISD teachers are formally evaluated annually.

Principals are evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

Proposed

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

- a. Farmersville ISD will utilize a locally developed teacher evaluation tool rooted in the State adopted T-TESS model.
- b. This instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, and any other relevant best practices.
- c. All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every two years. These evaluations will reflect the suggested State adopted T-TESS framework
- d. Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year.
- e. Principals will reserve the right to determine if a term contract teacher is in need of annual formal evaluations
- f. Every teacher will receive a minimum of six, documented informal walk-throughs per year.
- g. All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals.
- h. Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on the State adopted T-PESS model.
- i. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Farmersville ISD.

Teacher certification (TEC 21.003, DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)

Current Law

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Proposed

Farmersville ISD will continue its quest for highly effective educators.

- a. In order to best serve Farmersville ISD students, all decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be handled locally.
- b. Notification of District Teaching Permits (local certification) shall not be necessary.
- c. The campus principal may submit to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified.
 - a) The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the subject/field of study.
 - b) Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
- d. When possible, lesson plans for the uncertified teacher will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field

- e. Farmersville ISD will allow District Teaching Permits (local certification) based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.
- a) A degreed/career certified individual with certain qualifications who is not certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions including, but not limited to, TEA approved shortage areas such as special education, mathematics, science, Languages Other than English (LOTE), Career & Technical Education (CTE), etc.
 - b) A person seeking District Teaching Permit (local certification) should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfil the requirements of the position.
 - c) The principal may submit to the superintendent and/or the superintendent's designee, a request for District Teaching Permit (local certification) outlining all the individual's credentials/qualifications.
 - d) Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - i. Professional work experience
 - ii. Formal training and education
 - iii. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration
 - iv. Combination of work experience, training, and education
 - v. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.
 - vi. Out of state teaching certification
 - e) The superintendent or his/her designee will then approve the request if they believe the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students.
 - f) Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - a. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
 - b. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
 - c. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)

Current Law

Teacher Employment Contracts- Currently, 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.

Proposed

Probationary Contracts- Experienced teachers and counselors new to FISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to three years from the last date of district employment. This will allow the district more time to evaluate a staff member's effectiveness.

Submitting waivers for Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4 class size (EEB LEGAL) (TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)

Current Law

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.

Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

Proposed

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. FISD will attempt to keep all PK-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a PK-4th core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a PK-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives FISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.