

Farmersville ISD
District of Innovation Plan
Amended January 23, 2023

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	December 6, 2016
December 14 – January 14, 2107	Posted the District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days
January 23, 2017	Sought 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
December 13, 2022	Discuss, review, and amend FISD District of Innovation Plan with District Educational Improvement Committee
December 13, 2022 - January 23, 2023	Posted amended District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days
January 23, 2023	Sought approval of amended FISD District of Innovation Plan

III. District Educational Improvement Committee

- A. Micah Taylor - District Administrator
- B. Jeremy Posey - District Administrator
- C. Carrie King - Teacher
- D. Angela Arnett - Teacher
- E. Bradley Arledge - Teacher
- F. Bryon Wiebold - Community Stakeholder
- G. Candace Coffee - Parent
- H. Candy Delorantis - Teacher
- I. Emily Dillard - Parent / Community Stakeholder
- J. Harold Davis - Teacher
- K. Jessica Phelps - Teacher
- L. Jill Cooper - Counselor
- M. Julie Simpson - Teacher
- N. Kiel Cathey - Parent
- O. Karen Osinski - Teacher
- P. Meagan Gates - Teacher
- Q. Nicole Hicks - Campus Administrator
- R. Sandy Hemby - Teacher
- S. Sandy Jacobs - Teacher

Applicable Education Code
TEC 25.0811
TEC Language
<p>Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August. For years, this was strictly a local decision.</p> <p>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.</p>
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>To develop a calendar that fits the needs of the community of Farmersville. We have developed a calendar that meets the students, community, and staff needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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.

Applicable Education Code

TEC 21.203, TEC 21.352

TEC Language

The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state 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.

Local Innovation Strategy

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.

Applicable Education Code

TEC 21.003

TEC Language

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.

Local Innovation Strategy

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.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. A person seeking District Teaching Permit (local certification) should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Professional work experience
 - 2. Formal training and education
 - 3. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration
 - 4. Combination of work experience, training, and education
 - 5. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.

6. Out of state teaching certification
- f. 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.
 - g. Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - i. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
 - ii. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
 - iii. 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.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 21.102
TEC Language
<p>Teacher Employment Contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>Probationary Contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.

Applicable Education Code

TEC 25.111, TEC 25.112, TEC 25.113

TEC Language

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 students 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.

Local Innovation Strategy

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.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 21.401
TEC Language
Teachers employed on a ten-month contract are required to provide a minimum of 187 days of service
Local Innovation Strategy
The number of contract days will be dependent on need, and FISD will reserve the right to lessen contract days for teachers with no effect on teacher salaries. The District believes this will allow it to be more competitive with other districts' contract days, allow for better teacher recruitment and retention, and improve overall district culture.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 21.404
TEC Language
Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation.
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>The District will utilize the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The District shall have the flexibility as to when and how it provides planning and preparation time to its teachers to align with a four-day week. - Educators will continue to have daily time for planning and preparation. - The District will allow teachers to waive their planning and preparation time to teach additional courses. Teachers that elect to waive their planning and preparation time to provide student instruction will be provided additional compensation.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 25.081
TEC Language
For each school year, each school district must operate for at least 75,600 minutes, including time allocated for instruction, intermissions, and recesses for students.
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>The District will utilize the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The District shall have the authority to develop a calendar that meets the required 75,600 minutes via a non-traditional schedule. - A non-traditional schedule may include the implementation of multiple four-day school weeks throughout the school year. - The District will utilize a multitude of strategies, including, but not limited to, lengthened school days, regularly-spaced PD opportunities for teachers, extended learning opportunities, and increased time with extra-curricular activities, to ensure students are receiving a quality education regardless of how the required 75,600 minutes are distributed throughout the year.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 25.087 b-2(1)(2)
TEC Language
Students are excused for a limit of two days junior year and two days senior year for college or university visits.
Local Innovation Strategy
The District will allow students three documented college or university visits junior year and three documented visits senior year.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 21.402
TEC Language
All districts when hiring a retired teacher must pay their salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale; in addition, the districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge.
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>As FISD faces budget constraints and teacher shortages in hard-to-fill positions, local control for negotiating salaries for retirees would benefit the district. In the negotiation, the salary may be modified from the posted salary schedule to allow districts funds to be available to pay the surcharge to TRS. Exempting from TEC 21.402 will have the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Retired teachers can be employed and reap the benefits from a salary in addition to their retirement compensation,- Students will benefit from the experience and knowledge of retired teachers,- The district can hire retired teachers without an increase to the budget,- The funds to pay the TRS surcharge would be available through the negotiated salary. <p>Local guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Negotiated salary will only be for the hiring of retired educators.- The salary will be negotiated between the District and the retired educator.- The negotiated salary will be in writing.- The negotiated salary will involve decreasing the salary factor of the retired educator to an amount equivalent to the standard salary schedule minus the surcharge percentage the district pays to TRS.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 21.451
TEC Language
Staff development provided by the school district to an educator other than a principal must be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district and designed to improve education in the district.
Local Innovation Strategy
Mandating annual compliance training only serves to add redundancy to back-to-school work that can be better utilized in preparing for the students to return. The District will require all staff to review and retrain on required compliance training every two years.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 25.036
TEC Language
Requires transfer to be for a one-year period.
Local Innovation Strategy
<p>The district transfer agreement specifies that students must follow all rules and regulations of the district. A safe and orderly environment is one of the most important features of the district, and one of the main reasons that a student might wish to transfer to the district. Students who do not follow rules and regulations may disrupt this environment, and it is in the best interest of the district to retain the right to revoke a transfer agreement during the school year.</p> <p>The transfer may be revoked during the school year by the superintendent or designee if the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is assigned discipline consequences of suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion; - Does not meet the state's 90% attendance; - Fails to meet academic standards.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 22.004
TEC Language
Requires districts to use TRS as the sole healthcare option for employees.
Local Innovation Strategy
To have the option to offer additional health benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the District proposes to be exempt from the health insurance requirements in TEC 22.004(i).

Applicable Education Code
TEC 37.005(c)
TEC Language
Students in grades below 3rd cannot be placed in out-of-school suspension except in specific circumstances.
Local Innovation Strategy
With the consent of the Superintendent or designee, campus administrators will be provided the authority to suspend students below third grade out of school for no more than three days when the students are not responsive to other disciplinary consequences and continue to disrupt the educational environment.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 37.008, TEC 37.0082
TEC Language
A district alternative educational program shall be provided in a setting other than the students' regular classroom.
Local Innovation Strategy
With the consent of the Superintendent or designee, campus administrators will be provided the authority to assign students to a DAEP located on the students' regular campus. This will provide the district the flexibility to provide students with the most appropriate educational setting.

Applicable Education Code
TEC 37.008(a)(7)
TEC Language
Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21 of the TEC.
Local Innovation Strategy
The District will have flexibility in scheduling teachers and aides as needed for DAEP placements. The campus administrators will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.