



**Terrell Independent School District**

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*Where Students Come First*

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**TEA District #129906**

**Terrell Independent School District  
District of Innovation  
Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan  
(First Amended with Revisions)  
2016-2017 through 2021-2022**

*HB 1842, of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session,  
allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation.  
Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations  
that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.*

The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, passed HB 1842, allowing eligible Texas school districts to be designated Districts of Innovation. In accordance with 19 TAC §102.1303, Terrell ISD is eligible to be designated a District of Innovation as the District's most recent performance rating under TEC §39.054 is "Met Standard" therefore representing acceptable performance.

Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control and obtain exemption from certain operations of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Terrell ISD believes that this Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan will allow our local Board of Trustees and district staff to make decisions based on the unique needs of our students and community.

On May 9, 2016, a petition was signed by a majority of members of the Terrell ISD District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC), initiating the process of becoming a District of Innovation. The DEIC voted to pursue this option in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. After receiving the petition of the DEIC, the Terrell ISD Board of Trustees convened on May 16, 2016, to approve a Resolution to pursue and held a Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (TEC§12A.002). The Board on that date also appointed a Local Innovation Committee (Committee) comprised of teachers, principals, administrators, parents, and community members to develop a Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan (Plan) for designation as a District of Innovation (TEC§12A.005).

In a collaborative effort, the members of the Committee met on May 17, May 18, and May 19 to discuss and draft this Local Innovation Plan. Committee representatives will share the Plan with the DEIC on May 26, 2016, in order to secure their approval of the District of Innovation Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan. The Plan will be posted to the Terrell ISD Website from May 19 through June 20, 2016.

**TERM**

In accordance with TEC §12A.006, this Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan shall remain in effect for a period of five years (2016-17 through 2021-22 school years) unless terminated by the commissioner pursuant to TEC §12.A.008. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Terrell ISD Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

**LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Larry Polk        | Assistant Superintendent                      |
| Julie Fisher      | Executive Director of Student Achievement     |
| Cindy Hewlett     | Secondary Curriculum Coordinator              |
| Juan Solis        | Principal, Terrell High School                |
| Renee Jones       | Principal, Kennedy Elementary & Member DEIC   |
| Raquel Villarreal | Principal, Burnett Elementary                 |
| John Chilcoat     | Teacher, Furlough Middle School & Member DEIC |
| Aimee McCullar    | Teacher, Long Elementary & Member DEIC        |
| Leigh Hamilton    | Teacher, Wood Elementary                      |
| Carlton Tidwell   | Community Member & Parent                     |

**DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE 2016**

- Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 p.m., Board Room
  - Initial meeting with DEIC (TEC§11.521) to discuss if District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a “District of Innovation” or decline to pursue this option. Petition to be signed by a majority of the members of a district-level committee to initiate process. (*TEC 12A.001 (c)(1)*)
  - Board receives petition from DEIC requesting to seek designation as a district of innovation (*TEC 12A.002*)
- Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 p.m., Board Room
  - In an abundance of transparency, Board executes Resolution to seek District of Innovation Status
  - Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (*TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*)
  - Board appoints a committee to develop a District of Innovation plan.
  - Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (*TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*)
- Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> – Conference Room A
  - 4:00 p.m. - First meeting of the District Innovation Committee
- Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> – Conference Room A
  - 2:00 p.m. - Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.
- Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> – Conference Room A
  - 10:00 a.m. Innovation Committee approves the plan by a majority vote
  - District of Innovation Comprehensive Educational Plan posted on the district website for 30 days (*TEC 12A.005(a)(1)*)
- Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> – Board Room
  - 3:30 p.m. - District Advisory Committee Public Meeting to consider final District of Innovation Plan (*TEC 12A.005(a)(3)*)
  - Approve the District of Innovation plan by 2/3 majority (*TEC 12A.005(a)(1)*)
  - District of Innovation plan sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*)
- Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup> – Notice of Intent to file District of Innovation sent to Commission of Education
- Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup> – 6:30pm, Regular Board Meeting
  - Approve the District of Innovation plan by 2/3 majority (*TEC 12A.005(b)*)
- Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup> - Notice of Approval of District of Innovation sent to Commission of Education
- Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> – Notice of Intent to file First Amended District of Innovation sent to Commission of Education
- Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>
  - 3:30 p.m. - District Advisory Committee Public Meeting to consider First Amended District of Innovation Plan (*TEC 12A.005(a)(3)*)
- Tuesday, August 30 – Noon, Special Board Meeting
  - Approve the District of Innovation plan by 2/3 majority (*TEC 12A.005(b)*)
  - First Amended District of Innovation plan and list of exemptions sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*)

- Monday, September 19 – 6:30pm, Regular Board Meeting
  - Present recommended revisions from TEA to Terrell ISD Board of Trustees and discuss prohibited exemptions
  - Approve recommended policy changes resulting from Terrell ISD District of Innovation Plan
- Thursday, October 6–
  - TEC exemptions for the First Amended District of Innovation with Revisions sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*)

# TERRELL ISD COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Terrell ISD Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan includes a comprehensive educational program that is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision, Mission, and priorities for the District. The District needs the flexibility to exert local control both at the District and campus levels and the Plan will allow the District's practices and operations to better align with the District's priorities. Therefore, the Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan is as follows:

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**Goal 1:** The Terrell ISD will make governance decisions based on the unique needs of the district's students and community.

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## **1.1 CLASS SIZE -- Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4**

*(TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)  
(EEB LEGAL)*

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §25.111 requires that districts employ a sufficient number of teachers certified to maintain an average ration of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance except as provided by §25.112.*

*TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes.*

*TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.*

Districts are required by state law to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers have never been rejected by TEA. Therefore, represent a bureaucratic step unnecessary for the education of our students. Additionally, a letter must be sent home to the parents of each student in the class informing them that a waiver has been filed. In many cases, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this correspondence.

Additionally, hiring staff mid-year is not best practice. The statute does not take into consideration the impact of students being transferred to new classrooms in the middle of the school year.

### **Innovation Strategies**

It is the philosophy of Terrell ISD that lower class sizes have a positive impact on Kindergarten -4<sup>th</sup> grade students and the district does not seek to unilaterally create higher class sizes. We believe, however, that appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level without the necessity of waivers from the Texas Education Agency.

- a. Hiring decisions will be based on projected 22:1 ratios.
- b. Terrell ISD will, to the extent possible, begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a homeroom student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per Kindergarten-4 homeroom class.

- c. In the event that two or more core classrooms in any given grade level (grades Kindergarten - 4) reaches 24:1 during the first grading period of the year, the District will actively seek an additional teacher.
- d. A teacher may be hired at any time during the school year if the Superintendent determines it to be in the best interest of the students to do so.
- e. A TEA waiver requests and related notifications shall not be necessary when a Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

## **1.2 SCHOOL START DATE & LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**

*(TEC 25.0811)(TEC 25.0812)*

*(EB LEGAL)*

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.*

Students may not begin school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August and may not end before May 15. Districts may not receive a waiver from this restriction. For many years prior this was the rule; however, districts did have the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the state waiver and began the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, some even going as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in August. Several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, with no exceptions. Recent legislation prevents the last day of school prior to May 15. Terrell ISD, however, will provide a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development plan in conjunction with the new instructional minutes rather than instructional days required. Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the flexibility to end the school year prior to May 15, should the district deem it necessary and appropriate.

### **Innovation Plan:**

To allow for a school calendar that fits the local needs of our community, emphasizes active learning, college & career readiness, and social and emotional needs of students, Terrell ISD will:

- a. Provide flexibility to begin instruction earlier and develop a school calendar that meets the needs of the district.
  - a) This will enable Terrell ISD to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in each semester.
  - b) This will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break.
  - c) This will promote social and emotional learning and allow students transitioning from kindergarten to first grade, from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school to receive support to enable them to adjust to their new campus environments.
- b. Terrell ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of August.

### **1.3 STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

(TEC 37.007 (c)) (TEC 37.010(b))

#### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §37 (noted above) states that a student placed in a District Alternative Educational Program (DAEP) who engages in documented serious misbehavior while on the DAEP campus despite documented behavioral interventions may be removed from class and expelled.*

*“Serious misbehavior” includes:*

- (1) Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;*
- (2) Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;*
- (3) Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or*
- (4) Conduct that constitutes the offense of:*
  - a. Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;*
  - b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;*
  - c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;*
  - d. Personal hazing under Penal Code 37.152; or*
  - e. Harassment, under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), of a student or district employee.*

*If the student is expelled, the board or its designee refers the student to the authorized officer of the juvenile court for appropriate proceedings under Family Code Title 3 (Juvenile Justice Code).*

The Terrell ISD DAEP has a structured system of discipline. The Texas Education Code makes no allowance for students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction and is detrimental to the educational environment to be expelled.

#### **Innovation Plan:**

A student placed in a District Alternative Educational Program (DAEP) who engages in documented serious misbehavior (as defined above) while on the DAEP campus, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled.

A student placed in a DAEP who engages in documented persistent misbehavior while on the DAEP campus, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled.

## 1.4 DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR

(TEC 37.0012)

(FO LEGAL) (FO LOCAL)

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC§37.0012 requires that a person be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC) who is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and implementation of Chapter 37 and allows duties imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator to be performed by the campus behavior coordinator.*

This requirement inhibits social and emotional learning because it restricts the District's ability to promote a more collaborative discipline program that provides social and emotional supports to students. It takes the control of the discipline plan out of the principal's control and does not take into consideration situations where discipline is handled by multiple assistant principals.

### **Innovation Plan:**

The District will focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports while encouraging the social and emotional development of each student and his/her responsibility toward the community. The District seeks to help students become socially and emotionally intelligent.

- a. Terrell ISD will restore control and management of maintaining student discipline to the oversight of the campus principal.
- b. The specific duties of the Campus Behavior Coordinator will be given to the campus principal who may divide and/or delegate duties to assistant principals as needed. Examples: parent notification of disciplinary action, notice of law enforcement action, restraint reports, corporal punishment, video recordings, etc.



## 1.5 PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS

(TEC 21.102(b))  
(DCA LEGAL)

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.*

This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data.

### **Innovation Plan:**

For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Terrell ISD that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Terrell ISD shall be for a period of two years with probationary contracts issued for each of the two years.

## 1.6 TEACHER CONFERENCE

(TEC 21.404)

(DL LEGAL)

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §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. For example, an instructional day of 7:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m. cannot have a teacher conference/planning time of 3:15 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Terrell ISD and its teachers place high value on teacher planning, teacher effectiveness and collaboration.

In order to maintain compliance, Terrell ISD teachers must *voluntarily* choose to utilize their conference/planning time to engage in Professional Learning Community (PLC) activities. If any members of the PLC opts to *not voluntarily* participate, the collaboration of the entire group is jeopardized and causes the entire group of teachers to sacrifice after school time for PLC collaboration. This creates a hardship for teachers that otherwise prefer utilizing their conference period to work toward campus goals.

### **Innovation Plan:**

It is the philosophy of Terrell ISD that teachers become more effective educators when they collaborate and share ideas together on a regular and consistent basis and that a teacher is the most important school-related factor impacting student achievement gains. High quality instruction in the classrooms is expected to lead to greater student achievement gains.

- a. To reduce the amount of extended day planning for teachers, Terrell ISD may utilize up to two planning periods per week for the purpose of group planning and collaboration (PLC).
  - a) This would help develop less effective teachers into more effective teachers, ensure continuity of curriculum application in the classroom, and allow for mentoring of new teachers.
  - b) Because teachers vary in effectiveness, collaboration and sharing of ideas among colleagues and teammates is essential to the success of the students.
- b. Teachers may be assigned a conference period that is at the beginning or end of their scheduled workday, regardless of the students' instructional day schedule.
- c. District will continue the TEA allowable practice of being allowed to ask teachers to engage in group-planning during conference periods when a teacher has more than the statutory minimum conference time. For example, when a teacher receives a 50 minute conference period, the administration may require participation in one group planning period every two weeks.

## **1.7 PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Minimum Minutes Required**

(TEC 25.114) (28.002(l))

(EHAB LEGAL) (EHAA LEGAL)

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §25.114 requires the implementation of PE curriculum, to the extent practicable, utilizing student/teacher ratios that are small enough to ensure the safety of students. If the school district establishes a student/teacher ratio greater than 45 to 1 in a PE class, the district shall specifically identify the manner in which the safety of the students will be maintained.*

Facility space and adequate staffing is currently a barrier to Terrell ISD's ability to provide moderate to vigorous physical education to every student for 135 minutes per week. Due to the number of students serviced by one gymnasium facility, even at a ratio of 45:1, the number of students in one location at a time is not small enough to adequately ensure a quality physical education program.

### **Innovation Plan:**

Terrell ISD believes in providing supports to enable students to develop the motor, self-management, and other skills, knowledge, attitudes, and confidence necessary to participate in physical activity throughout life. The District will determine the student: teacher ratio of physical education classes and will consider what is in the best interest of students when making such decisions.

## 1.8 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

(TEC 11.164)

(DLB LEGAL) (DLB LOCAL)

### **Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §11.164 instructs the Board of Trustees to limit redundant requests for information and the number and length of written reports that a classroom teacher is required to prepare. The reports that teachers are required to prepare are limited to a specific list that essentially covers grading, lesson plans, attendance reports, reports related to the health or safety of students, accreditation information or material related to a grievance or other legal matter.*

School boards are required to review paperwork requirements and transfer to non-instructional staff any reporting tasks that could be reasonably accomplished by that staff. At least once each even-numbered year the Commissioner reviews and, if practicable, reduces written reports and other paperwork required of a district by the Texas Education Agency, and to adopt a policy limiting written reports and other paperwork that TEA can require of teachers and principals.

School districts are not precluded from collecting essential information, in addition to information specified, from a classroom teacher on agreement between the classroom teacher and the district.

### **Innovation Plan:**

To ensure the well-being of all students, TERRELL ISD may require of teachers' paperwork related to the social, emotional, and academic well-being of students not currently identified in law.

- a. Progress monitoring, parental contact logs, behavioral documentation and the like are critical when reviewing the needs of the whole child and may be required as determined by administration.
- b. The benefits of such include: more informed instructional decisions, documentation of student progress, more efficient communication with families and other professionals about student progress, higher expectations for students by teachers, and accelerated learning because students are receiving more appropriate instruction.

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**Goal 2:** The Terrell ISD will make teacher certification decisions based on district qualifications that meet the unique needs of the district’s students and community.

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**2.1 TEACHER CERTIFICATION: General Education**

*(TEC 21.003) (TEC 21.055) (TEC 21.057)  
(DK LEGAL) (DK LOCAL) (DK EXHIBIT) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)*

**Manner in which statute inhibits goals of the plan**

*TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher 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 of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.*

*TEC §21.055 A school district may issue a school district teaching permit and employ as a teacher a person who does not hold a teaching certificate issued by the SBOE. To be eligible for a school district teaching permit under this section, a person must hold a baccalaureate degree. Promptly after employing a person under this section, a school district shall send to the commissioner a written statement identifying the person, the person's qualifications as a teacher, and the subject or class the person will teach. The person may teach the subject or class pending action by the commissioner.*

*TEC§ 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.*

Rural, high poverty districts have the hardest time filling positions with quality instructors, especially in subjects where state-wide shortages exist. 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 emergency/local certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEA then approves or denies this request. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district. Furthermore, there have been instances when persons meeting the criteria outlined in TEC§21.057 have been denied local certification because they were actively, yet unnecessarily, pursuing an alternative certification. Additionally, highly qualified standards/notifications have been removed from federal requirements under repeal of the NCLB Act.

**Innovation Plan:**

Terrell ISD will continue its quest for highly effective educators.

- a. In order to best serve Terrell 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. Terrell ISD will allow District Teaching Permits (local certification) based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.
- a) An 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.
  - 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) An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will not receive a contract but will work on an at-will basis and have a separate pay scale from state certified teachers.
  - g) Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
- f. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- g. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
- h. 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.