



**NEW HOME INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

District of Innovation Plan



District of Innovation Overview

The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Customization:** Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g., only high schools), grade level, or a single campus.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.
- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:
 - School start date
 - 90% attendance rule
 - Class-size ratios
 - Site-based decision-making processes
 - Certain student discipline provisions
 - Use of planning and preparation periods
 - Teacher appraisal requirements

The New Home Independent School District feels that this level of local control would add flexibility and empower our district to think and act in innovative ways.



District of Innovation Timeline

Monday, February 20th, 2017

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

Monday, February 20th, 2017

Board Meeting

- Board of Trustees approve resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation

Monday, April 10th 2017 –

Public Hearing

- Public hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation.

Regular Meeting

- Approve a motion to pursue local “District of Innovation” plan.
- Board of Trustees approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee.

Tuesday, April, 25th 2017 –

2nd Meeting with DOI Committee

Tuesday, May 2nd 2017 –

3rd Meeting with DOI Committee – Final Plan for Presentation

Monday, May 8, 2017 – Present District of Innovation Plan to the School Board

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

Notify Commissioner of Education of the board’s intention to vote on adoption of proposed plan

Monday, June 12, 2017, Regular Board Meeting

Approve the District of Innovation plan

Tuesday, June 13, 2017: Update all policy changes with TASB

Monday, January 20, 2020, Regular Board Meeting

Approve Update to the District of Innovation Plan

Resolution to adopt the District of Innovation Plan

WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of trustees of the district; and

WHEREAS the New Home Independent School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of New Home Independent School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12 to become a District of Innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that after the public hearing the Board of Trustees of New Home Independent School District shall appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 20th day of February 2017, by the Board of Trustees.

President of the NHISD Board

Secretary of the NHISD Board



District of Innovation Committee Member

Superintendent, Shane Fiedler

Principal, Koby Abney

Principal, Kelly Baum

Elem. Teacher, Deena Ballard

HS/JH Teacher, Ramon Benitez

Elem. Parent, Beki Burk

HS/JH Parent, Amie Smith



District of Innovation Plan – Proposed Guideline

First Day of Instruction

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC 25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- District Advisory Committee will have the flexibility to start school one week early, the third Monday in August or a mid-week start sometime that week.
- Starting one week earlier will better balance the two semesters with a natural Winter Break, set exams prior to Winter Break, and create more instructional time before STAAR/EOC/AP exams.
- The balanced semesters will align with college semesters as well, allowing more opportunities for summer school, internships, and industrial certification opportunities.

Local Guidelines:

- The District Improvement Committee will receive parent and staff input, then decide, subject to School Board approval, the school start date.

Teacher Certification

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- The statutory certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE), STEM Courses and non-core electives.
- Local Qualifications will allow the district to :
 - Allow experienced teachers to pick up an elective in an area they are qualified
 - Hire community college instructors
 - Offer dual credit opportunities in CTE courses
 - Recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience

New Home Independent School District

- The District will establish Local Criteria (See Appendix A.), such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate.
- Principals, along with the department supervisor, will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials. The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment.
- At the present time, NHISD would focus on elective courses including CTE courses. However, in the future, the district may choose to exercise this option in other courses. Our local board of trustees would be able to issue the school district teaching permit for an individual teaching these courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as
 - Professional work experience
 - Formal training and education
 - Relevant industry license, certification, or registration
 - Any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credential related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching.

All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught.

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the district would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain a set number of hours in classroom management training and work with a mentor teacher the first year of employment. The individual would be employed on an at-will basis with the district.

Special Education teachers and Bilingual teachers must continue to meet SBEC certification requirements.

Teacher Contract Days

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days. Specifically, “the commissioner, as provided by Section [25.081](#)(b), may reduce the number of days of service required by this section. A reduction by the commissioner does not reduce an educator's salary.”

Benefits of Exemption for NHISD:

Proposal would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- Will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers

New Home Independent School District

- Enhance teacher recruitment
- Improve teacher morale

Local Guidelines for Teacher Contract Days:

- NHISD will present a recommendation to the NHISD School Board regarding the number of contract days as a part of the total compensation and benefits program.

Employee Benefits

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

22.004 Precludes a school district from providing an alternative uniform group coverage program after the school district implements coverages under Chapter 1579.

Benefits of Exemption for NHISD:

To offer additional benefit 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.

This District of Innovation Plan is valid for five years from the date it is approved by the Board.

Appendix A:

Local Teaching Certificate Criteria:

1. 12 college credit hours in the subject area or closely related being taught and 1 year of prior instruction in the assigned subject.
2. 2 years of industry experience in the subject/field to be taught.
3. 2 years of prior teaching experience in the specific course to be taught. Preference would be given to prior experience occurring at a public education institution, but employment at a private institution, charter school, or collegiate level will be considered.
4. Other criteria that would indicate mastery of the subject/course to be taught.

Candidates must meet at least one of the aforementioned qualifications to be considered to teach under New Home ISD's District of Innovation Plan.