



Taft ISD

**District of Innovation
Plan**

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools. Specifically Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum, graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability. Taft Independent School District is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas and obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. This provides an opportunity for our local district to create plans based on the needs of our students and community.

Term

The District of Innovation plan will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year, upon Board approval. This plan will remain in effect for five years, August 2020 through May 2026, unless amended, rescinded, or renewed earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District of Innovation Committee (DEIC) will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the plan. Changes recommended would be posted on the website for 30 days and require approval of the Innovation Committee and the School Board.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Elementary Principal	Joshua Rombs
Junior High Principal	Christine Acosta
High School Principal	Matthew Lohse
Teacher	Samantha Baumgardner
Teacher	Monica Hernandez
Teacher	Samantha Herring
Teacher	Crystal Aparicio
Teacher	Amber King
Teacher	Carlos Munoz
Teacher	Pete Bosquez
Teacher	Antony Griffith
Teacher	William Worthington
Parent	Mike Mendoza
Parent	Jessica Driver
Parent	Lee Ann Goben

Community Member	Pastor Scott Patton
Business Member	Donnie Riojas
Administrative Office	Brenda Meyer
Superintendent	Ricardo Trevino

District of Innovation Timeline

Requested Texas Education Code Exemptions

District Calendar (TEC §25.0811)

Current Law

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district cannot begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August unless it is a year-round district.

Proposed

Taft ISD would choose a school start date that best meets the needs of the students and may include a start date prior to the 4th Monday of August.

Rational

Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable our district to better balance instruction time in each semester as well as ending our first semester prior to Winter Break. This will balance fall and spring semester minutes and ensure the school year will end prior to June. Furthermore an earlier start date will allow teachers to have more instructional time with students prior to STAAR/EOC exams.

Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003)

Current Law

TEC 21.003 states that 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 issued by the appropriate state agency. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses, including CTE and STEM related courses.

Proposal

- Allow certified teachers to teach classes out of their certification in a related area or field. The principal may make such a request to the superintendent and must specify in writing the reason for the request and document the credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying him/her to teach the proposed subject. Parents will be notified.

- Individuals with skills in CTE including industry professionals, those with proven skills, and trade-related professionals may be eligible to teach vocational classes. Real-life experience and industry certifications may also qualify candidates for a local teaching certificate.
- Funds for certified teachers should not be reduced, especially in core academic subjects, to make available compensation for the non-certified professionals.
- All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the TEKS for the course to be taught.
- Qualification criteria would include professional work experience, formal training and education, relevant industry license, certification, or registration; or any combination of these
- All teachers will still be required to complete the criminal background check in compliance with State Board of Education rules.

Rational

- Allow for greater flexibility in staffing for limited application pools or teacher shortages in subject areas.
- By claiming exemption from TEC §21.003(a), it will make it possible to hire industry experts and post-secondary instructors to teach CTE courses, and increasing the number of students able to receive such instruction.