

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislature Session in spring 2015. This bill provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities a school must adopt a District of Innovation Plan.

Districts of Innovation provides opportunities for:

- Greater local control;
- Increased flexibility governing education programming and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statues related to curriculum, graduation requirements, nor academic and financial accountability.

District of Innovation (DOI) Committee

Member	Role
Jerod Neff, <i>Chair</i>	Assistant Superintendent
Geoffery Bowdoin	Elementary Principal
JD Foley	Junior High Principal
Jaw Winn	High School Principal
Erin Horne	Elementary Counselor
Rachael Robinson	Junior High Counselor
Elise Watson	High School Counselor
Ann McCoslin	Elementary Teacher
Becky Brown	Junior High Teacher
Julie Neyland	High School Teacher

I. AMENDMENT TIMELINE	
January 19, 2017	Board Information The Leon ISD Board of Trustees will be provided an overview and introduction to District of Innovation
January 19, 2017	Adopt Resolution The Leon ISD Board of Trustees we be asked to approve a resolution to explore the opportunity for Leon ISD to become a District of Innovation.
March 6, 2017	Public Hearing The Leon ISD Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing for public input on the District of Innovation opportunity.
March 6, 2017	Appoint Committee The Leon ISD Board of Trustees will appoint a district-wide committee to develop a District of Innovation Plan
March 7, 2017	Develop Innovation Plan The appointed committee will explore and develop a District of Innovation Plan according to HB 1842 of the 84th Texas Legislature.
March 7, 2017	Propose Innovation Plan The appointed committee will propose a District of Innovation Plan.
March 7, 2017	Post Proposed Innovation Plan The Leon ISD District of Innovation Plan will be posted on the Leon ISD website for at least 30 days.
March 21 & April 6	Proposed Amendments to Innovation Plan The appointed committee will discuss any additions to the District of Innovation
April 7	Post Proposed Amendments to Innovation Plan The Leon ISD District of Innovation Plan will be posted on the Leon ISD website for at least 30 days.
April 10, 2017	Approve Innovation Plan The Leon ISD Board of Trustees will be asked to discuss and approve the Leon ISD District of Innovation Plan. A copy of the approved District of Innovation Plan will be provided to the Texas Education Agency for posting on its website.
April 11, 2017	Notify Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency The Leon ISD District of Innovation Committee will notify the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency regarding the vote on the District of Innovation Plan made by the Leon ISD Board of Trustees.
May 8, 2017	Approve Amendments to Innovation Plan The Leon ISD Board of Trustees will be asked to discuss and approve the Leon ISD District of Innovation Plan. A copy of the approved District of Innovation Plan will be provided to the Texas Education Agency for posting on its website.
May 9, 2017	Notify Commissioner of Texas Education Agency The Leon ISD District of Innovation Committee will notify the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency regarding the vote on the Amendments to the District of Innovation Plan made by the Leon ISD Board of Trustees.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

IV. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Current Policy:

TEC §21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED

(a) 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 or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

TEC §21.0031. FAILURE TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION; CONTRACT VOID

(a) An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee:

(1) does not hold a valid certificate, or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification;

(2) fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend the employee's temporary, probationary, or emergency certificate or any other certificate or permit issued under Subchapter B; or

(3) fails to comply with any requirement under Subchapter C, Chapter 22, if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate under Section 22.0831(f)(2).

TEC §21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES

(a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

(b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposed Policy:

In addition to the current policy, Leon ISD will also develop local professional qualifications as a possible third option to required certification. Employees qualifying for employment using local professional qualifications must be reviewed and approved by both the superintendent and the school board of trustees.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- Leon ISD will have authority to determine appropriate professional qualifications and terms of such contracts .
- Leon ISD will have the flexibility to hire qualified candidates that best fit district needs and goals.
- Leon ISD will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area.
- When necessary, Leon ISD will have the flexibility to temporarily reassign teachers in areas outside their certification.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

V. TEACHER & PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS

Current Policy:

TEC §21.352. LOCAL ROLE.

(a) In appraising teachers, each school district shall use:

(1) the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner; or

(2) an appraisal process and performance criteria:

(A) developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251;

(B) containing the items described by Sections 21.351(a)(1) and (2); and

(C) adopted by the board of trustees.

(b) The board of trustees may reject an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees but may not modify the process or criteria.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, appraisal must be done at least once during each school year. A teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and the teacher's most recent evaluation rated the teacher as at least proficient, or the equivalent, and did not identify any area of deficiency. A teacher who is appraised less frequently than annually must be appraised at least once during each period of five school years. The district shall maintain a written copy of the evaluation of each teacher's performance in the teacher's personnel file. Each teacher is entitled to receive a written copy of the evaluation promptly on its completion. After receiving a written copy of the evaluation, a teacher is entitled to a second appraisal by a different appraiser or to submit a written rebuttal to the evaluation to be attached to the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. The evaluation and any rebuttal may be given to another school district at which the teacher has applied for employment at the request of that district.

Proposed Policy:

In addition to the current policy, Leon ISD will also develop a local appraisal system for teachers and principals that reflects district strengths, areas of concern and goals. All teachers with probationary contracts shall be appraised at least twice a school year. Teachers who are evaluated less frequently due to proficiency levels shall be appraised at least once every two school years.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- Leon ISD will be construct a locally developed appraisal system with the input of local district stakeholders.
- Leon ISD will implement a locally developed appraisal system that reflects the strengths, areas of concern, and goals of the district.
- Leon ISD will identify, train, and implement best practices.
- Leon ISD will ensure that teachers with probationary contracts receive the necessary support and professional development to be effective in our classrooms.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

VI. MINIMUM MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION

Current Policy:

TEC §25.081. OPERATION OF SCHOOLS.

(a) Except as authorized under Subsection (b) of this section, Section 25.084, or Section 29.0821, for each school year each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses, for students.

(b) The commissioner may approve the instruction of students for fewer than the number of minutes required under Subsection (a) if disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity causes the closing of schools.

(c) If the commissioner does not approve reduced instruction time under Subsection (b), a school district may add additional minutes to the end of the district's normal school hours as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

(d) The commissioner may adopt rules for the application, on the basis of the minimum minutes of instruction required by Subsection (a), of any provision of this title that refers to a minimum number of days of instruction under this section.

(e) For purposes of this code, a reference to a day of instruction means 420 minutes of instruction.

Proposed Policy:

In each section of the TEC §25.081, Leon ISD would assume authority to determine the minimum instructional time required for daily instruction and any allowable exceptions.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- Leon ISD will have the authority to determine the minimum instructional time required for daily instruction.
- Leon ISD will have the authority to determine permitted circumstances for instructional days with fewer than 420 minutes.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

VII. CLASS SIZE RATIO

Current Policy:

TEC §25.112. CLASS SIZE.

(a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. That limitation does not apply during:

(1) any 12-week period of the school year selected by the district, in the case of a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 42.005(c); or

(2) the last 12 weeks of any school year in the case of any other district.

(b) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of the 12-week period for which a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 42.005(c) is claiming an exemption under Subsection (a), the district shall notify the commissioner in writing that the district is claiming an exemption for the period stated in the notice.

(c) In determining the number of students to enroll in any class, a school district shall consider the subject to be taught, the teaching methodology to be used, and any need for individual instruction.

(d) On application of a school district, the commissioner may except the district from the limit in Subsection (a) if the commissioner finds the limit works an undue hardship on the district. An exception expires at the end of the school year for which it is granted.

(e) A school district seeking an exception under Subsection (d) shall notify the commissioner and apply for the exception not later than the later of:

(1) October 1; or

(2) the 30th day after the first school day the district exceeds the limit in Subsection (a).

(f) If a school district repeatedly fails to comply with this section, the commissioner may take any appropriate action authorized to be taken by the commissioner under Section 39.131.

Proposed Policy:

Leon ISD would assume authority to determine acceptable circumstances for enrolling more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- When necessary, Leon ISD will have the authority to enroll more than 22 students in class for Grades K-4 as the district searches for the best long-term solution.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

VIII. TEACHER CONTRACT DAYS

Current Policy:

TEC §21.401. MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIRED.

(a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service.

(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

(c) 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.

(d) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a contract between a school district and an educational diagnostician.

Proposed Policy:

Leon ISD would assume authority to determine the minimum number of days of a teacher contract. A typical 10-month contract would consist of instructional days meeting the minimum 75,600 minutes of instruction and 7 additional professional development days.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- Leon ISD will be able to reduce the number of days on teacher 10-month contract without a reduction of compensation or benefits, which will encourage teachers to continue at Leon ISD and encourage others to come.
- Leon ISD will be restricted to only require 7 professional development days in their employment contract.
- Leon ISD will have extended summer break allowing teachers more opportunities to find preferred professional development and rest.

Leon ISD

DOI Proposed Amendments

IX. 90 PERCENT ATTENDANCE RULE

Current Policy:

TEC §25.092. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE

(a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.

(a-1) A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case.

Proposed Policy:

When the circumstances occur, Leon ISD would assume authority to determine when to award course credit to students who are in attendance for less than 90 percent of the days class is offered, specifically those involved in extracurricular activities.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- When necessary, Leon ISD will have the authority to award credit to students who are in attendance for less than 90 percent of the days class is offered, especially in circumstances where the district has not previously approved organizations as co-curricular or extracurricular.
- Leon ISD will have students participating in activities and pursuing goals of their own interests.

DOI Proposed Amendments

X. 90 PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS

Current Policy:

TEC §21.102. PROBATIONARY CONTRACT.

(b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

Proposed Policy:

In addition to the current policy, Leon ISD would permit a second year probationary contract period for a teacher who has been employed in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Benefits of Proposed Policy:

- Leon ISD will have an additional year to determine the effectiveness of a teacher before providing a term-contract.
- Leon ISD will have an additional year to gather additional state and local assessment data.