

LEAKEY ISD: DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

**Developed in cooperation with and approval by the District Site
Based Decision Making Committee**



Introduction

In April 2020, the Leakey ISD Board of Trustees charged the administration to work with the District Site Based Decision Making Committee to develop a “District of Innovation Plan” as permitted by the Texas Legislature under HB 1842 (TAC Chapter 102).

The District of Innovation Plan, as developed, is intended to enhance the educational environment in Leakey ISD. The SBDM Committee that developed this plan is substantially composed of teachers. The ultimate goals of the plan are to advance innovative curriculum, instructional methods, community participation, governance of campuses, and parental involvement by eliminating onerous compliance requirements and focusing district resources on what matters most.

Committee charged with developing the District of Innovation Plan

Member	Representation
Katherine Antes	Business Manager
Vicki Goebel	Principal
Lorri Gonzalez	Elementary Coordinator/Teacher
Mindy Harmison	Secondary Teacher
Wendi Hightower	Parent
Rachel Marlin	Elementary Teacher
Nina Martinez	Pre-K
Kim St. Clair	Parent
Christopher Yeschke	Superintendent

Term

The term of the plan is for five years beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2025, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications.

Immediate Advantages Resulting From the Exemptions Sought

- Hiring the best teachers / staff available.
- Providing greater flexibility in assigning teachers in hard-to-fill areas.
- Providing greater flexibility in ensuring new teachers will be effective in the classroom.
- Removing barriers that prevent students from fully exploring their post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Eliminating state reporting that takes time but delivers no advantage to the district.
- Eliminating unnecessary local notices that takes time but delivers no advantage to the district.
- Providing greater flexibility in meeting the requirements of mandated committees.
- Removing academic barriers that prevent students from completing courses that meet their individual needs and fulfill their graduation and endorsement plans.
- Eliminating redundant requirements that serve no purpose.
- Improving teacher morale by eliminating bureaucratic rules.
- Streamline processes to allow local planning efforts take precedence over state compliance activities, eliminating hours of work that could be better spent on the needs of the district's students.

District of Innovation Plan: Areas of State Law Considered for Exemptions

Leakey ISD will consider ALL permitted exemptions as described in the District of Innovation legislation (TAC 102) of 2020. The following items identify exemptions that the District will seek immediately. Leakey ISD reserves the right to examine and approve exemptions in all areas identified in statute or Commissioner rules.

Timeline:

February 17, 2020	Board Conducts a Public Hearing to consider moving toward an innovation plan
February 17, 2020	LISD Board passes a resolution to consider a designation as a District of Innovation (DOI)
April 6, 2020	District Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (DSBDMC) met to discuss possibility of being charged with development of DOI
April 13, 2020	Board Conducts a second Public Hearing to consider developing an innovation plan
April 13, 2020	LISD Board Selects the DSBDMC as the committee charged with developing the LISD District of Innovation Plan
April 22, 2020	DSBDM meeting discussed options for the DOI
May 21, 2020	DSBDM developed and reviewed draft of DOI
May 27, 2020	Proposed DOI Plan posted on District website
June 1, 2020	LISD Board reviewed proposed DOI
June 28, 2020	Notify the Commissioner of the intent to adopt the final version of the DOI
June 29, 2020	DSBDM Votes to approve the final version of the DOI Plan
June 29, 2020	LISD Board Votes to approve the final version of the DOI Plan
June 30, 2020	LISD notifies the Commissioner after the adoption by the SBDMC and LISD Board via the Link to adopted plan (no longer than 15 days from the date of adoption) and the Exemptions checklist (Figure 19 TAC §102.1307(d))

Current Statute and Proposed Changes for Leakey ISD

Chapter 21: Educators Teacher Certification

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.003

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the requirements which limit the district's ability to hire the best candidate for a job based solely on certification issues.

There are rare instances when an uncertified person is the best individual for the job. There are professionals from various academic or vocational fields that can be the best candidate to teach a particular course even if they are not yet certified to teach. LISD will continue to seek and employ fully certified teachers.

Teacher Instructional Assignment

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.003

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the requirements which limit the district's ability to assign staff to

meet local needs.

Current requirements sometimes limit the ability of LISD to staff hard-to-fill positions. While LISD will continue to seek and employ fully certified teachers, exemptions from these requirements will allow the district to meet its staffing needs. Examples of these exemptions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Allow an elementary certified teacher with expertise in early grades (e.g. 1st/2nd grade) to teach kindergarten.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach through 6th grade to teach courses in grades seven and/or eight.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach elementary reading to be the reading teacher of record for middle and/or high school students.
- Allow a teacher certified in middle school and/or high school mathematics to teach elementary grades such as fourth and/or fifth.
- Allow a teacher to teach one or two classes out of their certified field in an area or areas that the teacher has college course work and/or expertise.
- Allow for greater flexibility in determining appropriate CTE experience in order to teach a CTE course.

Probationary Contracts

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.102

Currently:

The Texas Education Code mandates only allow for one year on a probationary contract for an experienced teacher, defined as one who has taught five of the last eight years, who is new to the district.

Proposed:

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the limit on the maximum number of years an experienced teacher, new to the district, may be extended a probationary contract as outlined in TEC 21.102 (b) and (c).

- For the first-year teacher (and teachers with less than five years experience) the district will continue to offer probationary contracts for a period of three years.
- For experienced teachers (those with more than five years experience in the past eight years) the district may extend the one-year probationary contract for a maximum period of three years.

This exemption will allow LISD greater flexibility to determine if the new/ experienced teacher will be effective in the classroom. A teacher may be offered a term contract or have their employment terminated earlier with administrative recommendation and board approval. This exemption is for teachers hired beginning July 1, 2020 and does not apply to staff members hired before this date.

Inter-District Transfers

Statutory citation: TEC 25.036

Current

Currently, under Texas Education Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed

Leakey ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the district. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in and or out of school), placement in disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, and following reasonable corrective measures, Leakey ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

Guidelines

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Class Size Ratio

Statutory Citation: TEC 25.112

Currently:

The Texas Education Code states that Leakey ISD will adhere to a 22:1 ratio of students to teachers in grades K-4 as listed in TEC 25.112.

Proposed:

After the district has made a good faith effort to maintain the required 22:1 ratio in grades K-4, the district should not be required to seek an expedited waiver through the Commissioner's waivers process. Leakey ISD will continue to strive to meet the required 22:1 class size ratio for grades K-4. LISD central office administrators, campus administrators, and teachers will determine if classes exceeding the 22:1 ratio should be divided or allowed to exceed the TEC limit. The exemption will allow LISD flexibility and eliminate the requirement to seek an expedited waiver from the Texas Education Agency.

Notice of Class Size

Statutory Citation: TEC 25.113

Currently:

Any time the 22:1 ratio is exceeded Leakey ISD must inform parents of the excess to the state mandated limit.

Proposed:

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the requirement to notify parents when class sizes exceed the 22:1 requirement. Parents who want information concerning their child's class size may ask for it at any time. In many cases, these required notifications cause unnecessary friction between parents and the school. As stated in the intent to seek exemption from the 22:1 requirement, LISD has no intention to exceed the state mandated limit. However, in the event that the 23rd student moves into the district, and absent a parent request for the information, the district should not be required to post a notification.

Absences for College/University Visits

Statutory citation: TEC 25.087

Currently:

The Texas Education Code states that there is the two-day limit does not allow students a visit to out-of-state or some in-state colleges and universities and receive an excused absence.

Proposed:

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the two-day excused absence limit for students visiting institutions of higher education.

Chapter 37: Discipline; Law and Order Campus Behavior Coordinator

Statutory Citation: TEC 37.0012

Currently:

The Texas Education Code states that each campus designate a campus behavior coordinator

Proposed:

Leakey ISD will be exempt from the requirement to for the campus. LISD utilizes an administrator approach for student discipline. The campus administration already serves as the "behavior coordinators" and it is unnecessary to designate one of them as such.

Student Discipline while in DAEP

Statutory Citation: TEC 37.007c, 37.010b

Currently:

The Texas Education Code states that a student placed in a District Alternative Educational Program (DAEP) who engages in documented serious misbehavior while in DAEP despite documented behavioral interventions may be removed from class and expelled. These “serious misbehaviors” include violent behavior, extortion, coercion (according to Penal Code 1.07), public lewdness, indecent exposure, criminal mischief, personal hazing, and harassment. This makes no provision for students who are assigned to DAEP but continue to disrupt the learning environment and/or fail to follow the rules to be expelled if the behavior continues despite documented interventions.

Proposed:

In addition to serious misbehavior, a student placed in a DAEP that engages in documented persistent misbehavior while in DAEP, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled.

Site-Based decision making/ SHAC

Statutory Citation: TEC 11.251 28.004

Currently:

The Leakey ISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision-making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth for by the Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 and 28 are burdensome, time consuming and ultimately cause a the direction of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students.

Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of this district, school and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one size fits all approach as detailed in the TEC 11.251 and TEC 28.004. This innovative practice will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees, as well as make better use of community, parent and business members required to be on those committees, that is required by law and it will better serve this community.

Proposed:

In place of the Campus Improvement Teams and the SHAC, a single District Improvement Team committee will be established, meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district/campus’ success and most importantly, students’ success. This committee will fulfill all the federal requirements for comprehensive needs assessments for each campus but will do it as a district committee. The committee will convene at least three times per year and generate direction of the district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will yield greater opportunity for one council to address a multitude of needs as opposed to having one meeting after another throughout the year.

Requirements and Configuration of the District/Site Based Management Committee

Statutory Citation: TEC 11.251, 11.252, 11.253, 11.255

Currently:

Site-based decision making is a process for improving the educational outcomes at the campus and district level. Through a collaborative effort of a team of principals, teachers, campus staff, district staff, parents, and community representatives, educational outcomes are reviewed and evaluate to determine goals, strategies, and interventions to ensure improvement in student achievement. The education code and board policy require members to address areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, school organization as well as a host of other responsibilities identified in additional sections of the education code.

Proposed:

Benefit of Exemption Leakey ISD shall determine the processes and memberships of its site-based management committees. Leakey ISD acknowledges the importance of developing district and campus improvement plans based upon a comprehensive needs assessment. The district feels that claiming exemption from the specific mandates of these sections is a local issue and not a state mandate. The district also feels that it will provide for greater parental involvement and better-informed parents.

Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.

Statutory Citation: TEC. Code 22.004(i)

Currently:

Texas Education Code 22.004(i) states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all District employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision does not give the District the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially more attractive to prospective employees.

Proposed:

In order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees, the District proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the District from the health insurance requirements in Texas Education Code 22.004 (i).

Long Range Energy Plan

Statutory Citation: TEC 44.902

Currently:

The board of trustees of a school district shall establish a long-range energy plan to reduce the district's annual electric consumption by five percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and consume electricity in subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the district's energy plan.

Proposed:

This exemption will allow LISD to avoid unnecessary redundancies. There is no research-based evidence supporting the arbitrary number of five percent and LISD has already embraced an aggressive energy management plan.

BOARD's RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER A DESIGNATION AS DISTRICT OF INNOVATION



Leahey Independent School District

BOARD RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER DESIGNATION AS DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

At a lawfully called meeting on February 17, 2020, of the Leahey Independent School District Board of Trustees, the following Resolution was proposed and approved by the Board:

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 Leahey 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 Leahey Independent School District, by adoption of this resolution, initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A 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 Leahey 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 17th day of February 2020, by the Board of Trustees.

Presiding Officer

Date

Secretary