



Alvord Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan

Alvord ISD

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On January 26, 2017, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum, graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Timeline of Events

January 26, 2017	Alvord ISD School Board held District of Innovation Public Hearing and Approved Resolution to initiate District of Innovation process and approved a District of Innovation Committee
February 16, 2017	District of Innovation Committee developed Alvord ISD District of Innovation Plan
March 6, 2017	District Educational Improvement Committee approved DOI plan developed by District Of Innovation Committee
March 8, 2017	Day 1 of timeline for posting plan
March 23, 2017	District of Innovation Plan presented to Board of Trustees for approval
April 7, 2017	Day 30 of timeline for posting of finalized plan
April 10, 2017	Board-approved plan submitted to Commissioner

District of Innovation Plan

1. District Calendar

Exemption from TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th 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.

Proposal: To best serve the students of Alvord ISD, we propose to create a school calendar which serves the needs of our local community. We propose moving the mandatory start date earlier than the fourth Monday. Waiting to start classes until the fourth Monday in August forces semesters to be significantly unequal in length, with second semester being approximately four weeks longer than the first semester. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable our district to better balance instruction time in each semester as well as making an effort to end our first semester prior to Winter Break.

2. Probationary Contracts

Probationary Contracts-Exemption from TEC 21.102 (b)-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.

Proposal: This period of time may not be 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 data and/or student data. Upon exemption from TEC 21.102 (b), all new contract employees will be probationary for three one-year periods, allowing more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

3. Teacher Certification

Teacher Certification-Exemption from: TEC §21.003(a) TEC §21.053, TEC §21.057
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 §21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator or teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Alvord ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE and languages other than English. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Local certification of teachers in non-core subject areas must also be approved by the Alvord ISD Board of Trustees. This proposal does not include core subject area certifications.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

Name	Relationship to AISD
Dr. Randy Brown	Superintendent
Rebecca Berend	Elementary Teacher
Darla Cole	Elementary Teacher
Sonja Edwards	Middle School Teacher
Lynnette Edwards	Elementary Parent
Kaysi Hamilton	Middle School Teacher
Michele Hardee	Middle School Parent
Sandra Kostelecky	High School Teacher
Karen Moore	Elementary Teacher
Kathy Jo Nance	High School Teacher
Tracy Parker	Elementary & High School Parent
Melanie Parr	High School Parent
Michelle Rasmussen	Elementary Parent
Shelly Tefertiller	Elementary, Middle & High School Parent
Michael Thurman	High School Principal
Bridget Williams	Elementary Principal
Shana Worthington	Elementary Parent
Mechelle Wright	High School Teacher