



## **District of Innovation Plan**

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

# Academy ISD

## DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

*House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, provides the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue the designation of District of Innovation. This allows local school districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code to allow more flexibility and local control for innovative programming. On February 28, 2018, Academy Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation (DOI) in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve the educational opportunities for the benefit of students, staff, and the community.*

### **Local Innovation Committee Members**

Superintendent	Kevin Sprinkles
Assistant Superintendent	Alex Remschel
Elementary Curriculum Director	Carlinda Rex
Secondary Curriculum Director	Callie Poncik
High School Principal	Mistie Dakroub
Middle School Principal	Glenell Bankhead
Intermediate Principal	Dana Coleman
Elementary Principal	Emily Nichols
HS teacher	Milissa Dolgener
HS teacher	Brian Pursche
MS teacher	Thomas Pickerill
MS teacher	Evan Ward
IS Teacher	Corrie Ganger
IS Teacher	Melinda Chavez
ES Teacher	Stacy Shackelford
ES Teacher	Stacy Cospers
Community member/parent	Leah Loesch
Community member/parent	Sheila Stanfield
Community member	Richard Smith
Community member	Randy Hendricks
Business/parent	Jodi Brazeal
Business	Cindy McCray
Business/parent	Becky Riser
Community member/parent	Suzanne Steeves

## **I. Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On February 28, 2018, Academy Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation (DOI). The purpose of passing the Resolution was to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve the educational opportunities for the benefit of students, staff, and the community. The District has no intent to be exempt from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts, teacher benefits, or curriculum. The following dates outline the steps that have been taken to begin development of the plan for Academy ISD:

- Background of the District of Innovation presented to Academy ISD Board of Trustees on February 28, 2018.
- Resolution signed for District of Innovation by the Academy ISD Board of Trustees on February 28, 2018.
- District of Innovation Public Hearing held on March 28, 2018.
- District of Innovation Committee created by the Academy ISD Board of Trustees on March 28, 2018.
- District of Innovation Committee members were contacted and made aware of their selection on April 12, 2018.
- District of Innovation Committee met on April 25<sup>th</sup> to develop the proposed plan.
- The District Site Based Decision Making Committee met on May 10, 2018 and approved the AISD District of Innovation Plan.
- The AISD District of Innovation plan was posted on the district's website on May 13, 2018.
- The Academy ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the AISD District of Innovation Plan at the regularly scheduled board meeting on June 28, 2018.

## **II. Communication**

Communication with all stakeholders is of utmost importance in Academy ISD. The Committee has devised a communication plan, so that accurate and factual information regarding the District of Innovation plan and expectations are clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Each campus in Academy ISD will receive a campus level presentation from DOI Committee Members. The Academy ISD District Site Based Team received a formal presentation on May 10, 2018. The various community groups that reside in Academy ISD

will be presented with the background and information surrounding the District of Innovation Plan for Academy ISD.

### **III. Term**

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2018-2019 school year and concluding at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

### **IV. Requirements of the Education Code that the Local Innovation Plan Exempts the District (Upon Adoption of the Plan by the Academy ISD Board of Trustees).**

#### **A. First Day of Instruction (TEC 25.0811; TEC 25.0812)**

##### ***Current Requirement:***

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 prohibits the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

##### ***Proposal:***

Academy ISD would start school before the fourth Monday in August with the following proposed benefits:

- Balanced grading periods for more equity in instruction of scope and sequence.
- Increased number of days in the fall to create a more natural break in semesters.
- Additional flexibility in professional development days strategically placed throughout the school year.
- Decrease in conflict for students enrolling in summer college courses that begin in June.
- Military families PCSing over the summer have more time to transition as the year would end before June.

#### **B. Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.051, and 21.057)**

##### ***Current Requirement:***

Texas Education Code, sections 21.003, 21.053, 21.051, and 21.057 restrict the District's ability to hire educators outside of the SBEC approved certification fields.

##### ***Proposal:***

Academy ISD would propose the following allowances to the hiring requirements for teacher certification:

- The District is seeking flexibility in hiring professionals in certain vocations such as career and technical courses. This would include, but not be limited to areas such as Science, Technology, and STEM and will enable the district to establish local criteria for such courses when hiring quality personnel.
- Certified educators would be allowed to instruct one section of a course/subject outside of the SBEC documented certification with the approval of the district superintendent.

### **C. Teacher Employment Contracts (TEC 21.102)**

#### ***Current Requirement:***

Texas Education Code, sections 21.102 requires that experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

#### ***Proposal:***

Academy ISD suggests that this amount of time is not always sufficient to evaluate teacher effectiveness and would propose the following:

- Experienced teachers/counselors who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years may be extended a probationary contract for up to two years (to include the initial contract at hiring).

### **D. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator (TEC 37.0012)**

#### ***Current Requirement:***

Texas Education Code Section 37.0012 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline implementation of Chapter 27, Subchapter A.

#### ***Proposal:***

Academy ISD would propose a more collaborative discipline approach with direct connection to adopted district practices as follows:

- Each campus would have multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one designee.
- Each campus would follow the guidelines of Capturing Kids Hearts and the principles outlined in restorative discipline practices.
- Significant discipline determinations will be handled by campus administration.

### **E. Absences for College, University, or Military visits (TEC 25.087)**

#### ***Current Requirement:***

Texas Education Code Section 25.087 b-2 (1) (2) states that students are excused for a limit of two days for college or university visits.

#### ***Proposal:***

Academy ISD would propose an increase in these days by number and specificity as follows:

- Students would be allowed four documented college/university/military visits for the junior year and then again their senior year.
- Students would be allowed to include military testing and recruiting visits as part of these four days for the junior and senior years.

Academy ISD Amendment: Approved July 29, 2020

Teacher Appraisal System (TEC 21.352)

Current Statute:

The district is required to evaluate teachers yearly. AISD utilizes the T-TESS system for this administrative action. AISD will continue to use this instrument, but would like the option to exercise local control of decisions regarding teacher appraisals. This will allow administrators to focus on newly hired and/or struggling teachers and will enhance administrator's time to have professional interactions across the campus.

Proposed Flexibility:

Teachers who have demonstrated high-quality performance in AISD will be evaluated once every three years, rather than annually. Teachers will be identified using local criteria, including a minimum three-year history of high quality performance in the district as exhibited by evaluations, walk-throughs, and student success. All teachers will continue to receive feedback from their supervisors on a regular basis and participate in all data, PLC and grade level meetings.