

## Keller Independent School District Local Innovation Plan Renewal

District of Innovation Committee Approved Plan: October 12, 2021

Board of Trustees Adopted Plan: December 13, 2021

## I. INTRODUCTION

The District of Innovation (DOI) is a concept passed by the 84th Texas Legislature through House Bill (HB) 1842 that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools, including exemption from many requirements mandated in the Texas Education Code.

As a District of Innovation, Keller ISD 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
- power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow for exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

Keller ISD's first DOI Plan was a five-year plan starting on January 1, 2017. This is Keller ISD's renewal DOI Plan.

## II. OUR PROCESS

## Original Plan

On March 8, 2016, the Keller ISD Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation of a District of Innovation Under HB 1842 to increase local control over KISD operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. A public hearing to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation was held on April 14, 2016.

On September 8, 2016, the Board appointed a District of Innovation District Advisory Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the KISD's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, college and university representatives, administrators, and others. On October 19, 2016, the Committee came together to consider the recommendations of two of the three subcommittees and vote on those components of the Plan. On

Keller ISD Local Innovation Plan

November 3, 2016, the entire Committee reconvened to finish discussing subcommittee work and to vote on all remaining components of the Plan. The Board of Trustees voted to adopt the original DOI Plan on February 9, 2017. An Amendment to the Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees on February 8, 2018.

## Renewal

Keller ISD used the structure approved by the Board of Trustees to establish an updated District of Innovation Advisory Committee, which consisted of the following:

Name	Connection to KISD
Mark Basham	Campus Administrator
Amanda Burruel	Campus Administrator
Katie Wawak	Campus Administrator
NaMicha Williams	Campus Administrator
Lindsay Anderson	Area Superintendent
Dr. Kevin Hood	Area Superintendent
Dr. Leanne Shivers	Area Superintendent
Cory Wilson	Area Superintendent
Jennifer Fox	Community/Local Business
Dr. Robert Wright	CTE
Justin Walker	CTE
Reci Brooks	Educational Support
Leigh Cook	Educational Support
Chrissy Greeling	Educational Support
Donna Hodge	Educational Support
Marjorie Martinez	Educational Support
Suzanne McGahey	Educational Support
Jennifer Price	Educational Support
Leslee Shepherd	Educational Support
Kim Blann	Fine Arts
David Wright	Fine Arts
Dustin Blank	Student Services
Aaron Rister	Technology
Johjania Najera	Workforce
Beth Eaves	Parent
Rosie Flippin	Parent
Rebecca Hurlbut	Parent
Kristen Mangus	Parent
Leslie Maxwell	Parent
Cherie Moeller	Parent
Matt Strong	Parent
Bobbi Van Reet	Parent

Heather Baldwin	Teacher (NRES)
Taylor Boston Romero	Teacher (TCHS)
Jamie Fieldhouse	Teacher (VRMS)
Mindy Ingram	Teacher (LSES)
Penny Peoples	Teacher (PHIS)
Mandy Schneider	Teacher (FES)
David Williams	Teacher Professional Organization
David Janeski	Teacher Professional Organization
Ad Hoc	
Dr. Rick Westfall	Superintendent (Non-Voting)
Amanda Bigbee	General Counsel (Non-Voting)
Bryce Neiman	Director of Communication and Legislative Affairs (Non-Voting)
John Allison	Administrative Cabinet (non-voting)
Cecil McDaniel	Administrative Cabinet (non-voting)
Dr. Tracy Johnson	Administrative Cabinet (non-voting)
Scott Wrehe	Administrative Cabinet (non-voting)
Shellie Johnson	Administrative Cabinet (non-voting)
Karina Davis	Board of Trustees (Non-Voting)
Bev Dixon	Board of Trustees (Non-Voting)
Ruthie Keyes	Board of Trustees (Non-Voting)
Cindy Lotton	Board of Trustees (Non-Voting)
Chris Roof	Board of Trustees (Non-Voting)

The Renewal Committee met virtually with a livestream to YouTube in a public meeting on October 12, 2021. At that meeting, all voting members in attendance voted on renewal of the original plan as well as three additional exemption areas.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved and adopted this Local Innovation Plan on December 13, 2021.

## III. TERM

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning December 13, 2021, and ending December 13, 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Committee will consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. KISD may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

## IV. INNOVATIONS

Keller ISD claims flexibility and exemption in the following areas:

	"Ninety Percent Rule" for Class Attendance	
Texas Education Code §25.092		FEC (Legal)

Rationale:

This would provide flexibility for students who:

- are unable to attend class in the traditional brick and mortar building because of illness or family concerns
- would benefit from a different time structure to the school day
- would benefit from virtual and online classes in addition to or in place of the traditional classroom setting
- · are pursuing an accelerated program (i.e. music, swimming) and will be traveling extensively

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement

Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students by promoting engaged learning through innovative methods, locations, and times for instruction, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. To ensure that students are placed appropriately in the new options and receiving the optimal experience, we will implement a process through which counselors and administrators are able to evaluate a student's potential success in these new program options. Students taking traditional courses not impacted by this exemption would still be required to meet the 90% attendance requirement as it currently exists.

L	ength o	of S	School	Da

Texas Education Code §25.082

EC (Legal)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Individual campus flexibility, independence and creativity
- Additional opportunities for teacher professional development and collaboration.
- Reduced number of minutes for Early Learning Center students without the need for a TEA waiver.
- Individualized, flexible opportunities for Alternative High School students

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Limiting the number of shortened school days to no more than two per year.
- There should be guidelines to establish minimum/maximum school day lengths

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year

Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses with the ability to make creative decisions regarding professional development and teacher collaboration time. Flexibility in this area will also give the district the ability to consider options for individualized plans for students who have life circumstances that prevent them from attending traditional high schools (e.g. full time work, pregnancy/parenting, etc.).

### **Earliest Possible School Start Date**

Texas Education Code §25.0811 and 25.0812

EB (Legal)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- First semester complete before Winter Break; instructional pacing is more beneficial
- More instructional days before State Assessments; flexibility for different types of learners and learning needs
- More professional development opportunities during the school year for teachers
- Full days for professional development opportunities as opposed to half days
- Flexibility the first week of school Students would not have a full week
- The calendar could be more aligned with college schedules, providing students with additional opportunities

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Cost of starting early (e.g. cooling cost in August) should be considered
- All Administrative Regulations and policies would be followed in relation to extreme heat during recess.
- Adjustments to professional development calendar will need to be addressed.
- Start date should be no earlier than August 14<sup>th</sup> and preferably no earlier than the third week of August.
- Prefer that students not have a full week the first week of school

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year

The current law that prohibits the district from starting school before the third Monday of August forces the District into a calendar that has minimal opportunity for teacher professional development, requires the semester to end after the winter break, and provides negligible time for summer school before state mandated assessment re-takes in the summer. Starting school even one week earlier can help minimize the negative impacts the district sees in these areas. Starting early will allow for creative scheduling that allows for more intentional teacher professional development throughout the school year and also allows students to have a schedule that is more conducive to their learning.

## **Minimum Days of Attendance**

Texas Education Code §25.081

EB (Legal)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Eliminate credit denial, 90% rule, and Saturday school
- Additional credit options for Alternative Campus
- Additional credit options for working students and students who are parents
- Flexibility for different learners ADHD, GT, etc.
- Elimination of TEA waivers
- Potential options for half day kinder

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Flexible scheduling could be a challenge, especially for working parents
- Any potential cost to the district, especially relating to pre-K.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement

Exemption from this requirement will provide the District with the flexibility it needs to consider instructions and gaining credits in ways that make sense for students, especially our students who have unique needs. This exemption can be used to craft programs for nontraditional students, students with special needs, and even our youngest students to best meet their needs. Instruction does not always have to take place in a classroom seat, and this exemption will allow the district to explore more online options, project-based learning outside the classroom, and the structure of programming for various groups of students.

# Requirement to Have In-School Disciplinary Placements for Students Including Minimum Academic Requirements for Disciplinary Placements

Texas Education Code §37.008, 37.0082 FOCA(Legal)

## Rationale:

- Currently states "A DAEP Shall be provided in a setting other than the students' regular classroom. It may be located on or off a regular school campus."
- Students occasionally need to stay connected to their courses such as choir, band, athletics, a dual credit course, CTE course, or AP course.
- There are barriers to learners always being able to take the course at the DAEP building.
- Relief from this law would look at rewording the location section of the policy to provide some exceptions for learners to be able to continue in specific courses in their regular classroom while assigned to DAEP.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide campus staff freedom in terms of choosing discipline techniques that best suit the situation and the student. This change will provide greater opportunities for academics (Extra-Curricular, Dual Credit, and Advance Placement Courses on Campus). It is the district's desire to allow students to maintain rigorous coursework while in a disciplinary placement and this exemption will allow the district to think about academics and extracurricular opportunities in a disciplinary placement in new ways.

Three-Day Limitation on Suspensions	
Texas Education Code §37.005	FOB(Legal)

#### Rationale:

- Currently states "A suspension may not exceed three school days." This exemption is desired to be change the maximum number of days of suspension allowed.
- The law has been interpreted to apply to both in and out of school suspensions. This limitation minimizes the options a campus has for discipline without sending a student to DAEP.
- Committee discussed additional days on campus in suspension could provide a way for a campus to avoid excessive discretionary DAEP placements. It is beneficial to allow students to stay on campus and closer to their normal educators and services.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Because of the law's three-day limit for suspensions, campus staff is limited in the choices of discipline that can be applied to students for moderately serious offenses. Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses with the option of keeping students on campus and closer to their regular teachers during a disciplinary placement rather than always opting to send students to the disciplinary alternative educational placement. Providing a range of options for the campus is a new and innovative way of thinking about discipline and more fully meeting a student's needs while they are being disciplined.

Campus Behavior Coordinator		
Taxas Education Code 837 0012	FO (Legal)	

## Rationale:

- Currently legal policy states "A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC). The person may be the campus principal or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The CBC is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of education Code Chapter 37."
- On large campuses (high school 2,900 students; middle school 1,200 students) one individual is designated at CBC to manage discipline.
- It is necessary to have additional administrators provide notice to parents about disciplinary incidents.
- Exception to law sought to no longer require a single administrator, but allow multiple administrators. This would allow for CBCs to be used with fidelity.
- The recommendation is to change wording in Campus Behavior Coordinator, Duties, and Notice to Parents section, and to change the number/who on each campus.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses the opportunity to allow campus administrators to fully understand and get to know the students in their caseload rather than sourcing all discipline matters to one employee designated as a campus behavior coordinator. While it is imperative that all employees work together and be informed as to the discipline that is occurring on a campus, it is just as crucial for students to depend on an administrator they know and trust in all facets of their education, including their discipline. Each campus should have the freedom to designate more than one campus behavior coordinator to best meet the needs of their students and teachers.

## Suspension Limitation for Students Below 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Texas Education Code §37.005

FOB(Legal)

Under the new law a student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property, the student engages in:

- 1. Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05;
- 2. Conduct that contains the elements of a violence related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.011, 22.02, 22.021; or
- 3. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of:
- a. Marihuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.;
  - b. A dangerous drug, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483; or
  - c. An alcoholic beverage, as defined by Alcoholic Beverage Code 1.04.

School and student needs will be best met by allowing some discretion in assigning limited OSS days. This innovation area will allow the campuses to utilize out of school suspension for students below grade 3 within clear parameters that are similar to the protections provided to special education students under federal and state law.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

It is foreseeable that elementary campuses and students could be adversely affected by the strict limitation on suspensions. If a student's behavior reaches a level of such disruption that the school cannot function properly, immediate action should be taken to maintain the effectiveness and safety of the educational environment for all students. There are instances in which a student needs specially designed plans and supports in order to be successful in his or her learning environment. At those times, the student's needs can be met if the staff has even a day or two to prepare a plan for the child's needs. If additional staff will be needed to help control behavior, for example, central office may need a day to find and place staff for that purpose. In these limited instances it serves the best interest of the student and the campus to briefly suspend the student.

Planning and	Preparation	Periods
--------------	-------------	---------

Texas Education Code §21.404 DL (Legal)

## Rationale:

By exempting the District from this law, the District:

- will have flexibility for special days on campus (state testing, field trips, etc.).
- will have flexibility in time for more collaboration during the school day.
- will allow for administrative flexibility based on student needs by campus.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, *campus governance*, and parental involvement

Exemption from this requirement will provide each campus with the local control needed to determine how best to use staff time, especially as it pertains to collaborative planning and best meeting the needs of the students. The number of minutes that a teacher receives for planning and preparation must not be reduced but the committee discussed the possibility of 900 minutes over a 20 day period. The Committee did emphasize a minimum increment of no less than 30 minutes per day. The recommendation is that the amount and increment of time is to be consistently implemented throughout the District.

State certification requirements for teachers and other educators
---

Texas Education Code §21.003, §21.053 DBA (Legal)

## Rationale:

By exempting the District from this law, the District:

- will have the flexibility to hire experts in their field even if they don't yet have a teaching certificate.
- will have the flexibility in hiring "hard to fill" positions.
- will have the flexibility to hire those with industry expertise (e.g. HB 5 courses).

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide much needed flexibility to hire the most qualified candidate for teaching positions. With an increasing number of innovative courses created after implementation of HB5, finding exceptionally qualified applicants in specific fields who are also certified teachers is increasingly difficult if not impossible. This flexibility will allow the District to hire individuals who best meet the needs of the students and provide the content knowledge our students need to enter an increasingly innovative world.

## **Certified Employee Contract Rights**

## (specifically second probationary year for teachers hired under 5 of 8 rule and suspensions without pay)

Texas Education Code §21.102(b), §21.211(b)

DCA (Legal)

#### Rationale:

By exempting the District from this law, the District:

- will have the flexibility of hiring a probationary teacher for a second year to provide for more growth and coaching when the teacher is hired under the 5 of 8 rule.
- will have the flexibility to suspend without pay when under allegation that is covered in Educator Code of Conduct. Any decisions made regarding suspension without pay would be open to appeal through the grievance process.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide campus administrators and hiring officials with the time needed to fully assess and support a teacher before making decisions regarding moving the employee from a probationary contract when that employee has only been with the district one year. This exemption will also allow the District to make employment and financial decisions that are in the best interest of the District when an employee is alleged to have violated serious provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics or law, including crimes against children. This flexibility from some of the provisions of Chapter 21 of the Education Code will allow the District to approach some employment issues in ways that best meet the needs of the District and take quick action to protect students when necessary.

## 22-to-1 Elementary Class-size Ratios and Notice

Texas Education Code §25.112, 25.113

EEB (Legal)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- The District does not seek to unilaterally create higher class sizes. Appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level.
- More teacher, campus, and local control to make decisions based on the unique needs of each individual classroom and campus.
- Flexibility to move a child that would benefit from a new classroom environment without forcing another student to move, requiring classrooms to be split, and/or submitting a TEA waiver.
- Assist campuses that may not have the room to add a classroom, reducing and/or eliminating the need for portables and forcing transfers.

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

- Staff prior to the beginning of the year at 22:1 for K-4 classrooms. Consider a larger ratio of students based on a campus collaborative process.
- Notify parents when classes exceed 22:1.
- If another teacher will not be hired, consider adding paraprofessional support.
- Ensure policy language clearly sets out process that will be followed and how families and the board of trustees will be notified of class size status to ensure transparency.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses the freedom to make decisions that are best for their students in changing circumstances. This exemption will give campuses the ability to decide when it is best to allow students to remain with a teacher they've grown to know and work with, and when it is best to split a classroom to make two smaller classes without submitting TEA waivers.

## **Teacher Appraisals (Student Learning Objectives)**

Texas Education Code §21.352, 21.353

DNA(Legal)

Rationale: Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Allow Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to be removed from the TTESS process
- Frees up time and resources to execute on the other goal areas in the evaluation that are generally considered either more beneficial than the SLOs or repetitive of the SLOs.

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the following should be considered:

• Student Learning Objectives would only be part of the TTESS evaluation if the teacher opts to include such a goal.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will provide teachers the freedom to make decisions in the evaluation process that they believe will make the biggest impact on student success without spending unnecessary time on compliance pieces that do not provide a significant impact. This exemption will give campus administration and teachers the ability to tighten up the evaluation process.

## **Ejection of Individuals from Facilities**

Texas Education Code §37.105

GKA (Legal)

Rationale: Under the new law, the District must maintain a record of each verbal warning of potential removal from a school facility that is issued, including the name of the person to whom the warning was issued and the date of issuance. At the time a person is refused entry to or ejected from a school district's property, the District shall provide to the person written information explaining the appeal process.

When an individual is so disorderly that he or she is being verbally warned that they may be removed from a building or other district facility, it will be impractical and potentially impossible to get the full name of the individual who received the warning. It is reasonable to believe that requesting that information could also escalate a situation that is already proving to be disruptive. Further, it is impractical to provide written notice of an appeal process at events like football or basketball games when the removal is only for the immediate event and there is not ready access to a computer or printer.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will allow the District to continue with its current processes relating to unruly individuals on campuses and at other facilities. The notice of written appeal requirement at the time of ejection is believed to be ineffective and impractical. Maintaining logs of those who receive a verbal warning may not be manageable in all instances, including athletic events. While the District rarely ejects an individual from a facility, when it does so, there is personal contact with the individual. In most instances, an ejection happens with a written letter from the campus after several warnings over a number of episodes that caused a disruption. Allowing the District to maintain its current practice that has proven to be effective is a better use of resources and allows the District to avoid potential escalation of already difficult situations.

## **Depository Contracts**

Texas Education Code §45.205

BDAE (Legal)

Rationale: Under the law, a depository shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year.

Innovation: TEC Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees

Exemption from this requirement will allow the District to maintain satisfactory working relationships with its depository bank without the need to re-bid for the work at the exact timelines required by law. If the District is satisfied with the service of the depository bank and is getting good rates, requiring the District to re-bid the contract is a waste of resources that can be avoided.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY EXPECTATIONS

This Local Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which Keller ISD will operate in order to provide improved student opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which KISD claims relief so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. While this Plan sets out those parameters, it does not and cannot establish the full scope of innovative practices within KISD.

Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees, where appropriate. It is the expectation of the Innovation Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan. Policy development resulting from this Local Innovation Plan will be provided to the Committee for review and feedback before the policies are presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

Any and all changes that arise from the District of Innovation work will be accompanied by a comprehensive communication plan for students, families, and the community.