Amarillo Independent School District

Local Innovation Plan

INTRODUCTION

The 84th Legislative Session, through House Bill 1842, created “Districts of Innovation” in Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code. The new law allows independent school districts, such as Amarillo ISD, to access many of the flexibilities available to Texas’ open enrollment charter schools. To take advantage of these new opportunities, a school district’s board of trustees must adopt an “innovation plan.” Only districts with acceptable performance ratings are eligible to be a District of Innovation. Amarillo ISD has an acceptable performance rating and is eligible to be a designated as a District of Innovation.

As a District of Innovation, AISD will have:

- Greater local control over the educational and instructional model for Amarillo ISD scholars;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, while maintaining accountability for results; and
- The ability to innovate and think “outside the box,” to the benefit of Amarillo ISD scholars, educators and staff.

AISD’s District of Innovation Committee is focused on three (3) areas of innovation:

1. School calendar start date;
2. School calendar end date; and,
3. Required annual minutes of instruction for pre-kindergarten.

BACKGROUND & PROCESS

On November 21, 2016, AISD’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) passed a Resolution to initiate the process to be designated as a District of Innovation. At that same meeting, the Board conducted a public hearing to receive comments from the public about becoming a District of Innovation. Following the public hearing, the Board named the District-wide Educational Advisory Council (commonly known as “DEAC”) to serve as AISD’s District of Innovation Committee (“Committee”) and develop the innovation plan (“Plan”). The Committee/DEAC is comprised of key stakeholders, including elementary and secondary teachers, district-level non-teaching professional staff, parents, community representatives, business representatives, and a Board member. The DEAC/Committee members are:

TERM

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning February 27, 2017, and ending February 27, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board 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 Board will appoint a committee to 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. AISD may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

INNOVATIONS¹

Amarillo ISD seeks exemption from the following Texas Education Code provisions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earliest Possible School Start Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Education Code §25.0811</td>
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Innovation:

Texas Education Code Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year:

Texas Education Code §25.0811 prohibits school districts from starting school before the fourth Monday of August. In 2017-2018 school year, this legal requirement would force a calendar for Amarillo ISD scholars and staff that has minimal opportunity for teacher professional development, requires the semester to end after the winter break, may result in school being in session after Memorial Day, and provides very little time for summer school before state mandated assessment re-takes in the summer. By starting school earlier, AISD can minimize the negative impacts in these areas. Starting early will provide for innovative scheduling, allowing for more intentional teacher professional development throughout the school year, and providing scholars and teachers a schedule that is more beneficial for learning.

Rationale/Benefit:

¹ See attached chart (19 T.A.C. § 102.1307(d) Figure).
Relief from this statute will allow the following opportunities:

- Balanced semesters (student instructional days)
- The first semester to be finished before winter break
- The opportunity for a first semester professional development and/or a parent conference day, to increase parent communication and fulfill current Title I requirements
- Increased flexibility for professional development days
- Maximize the instructional days before the state mandated assessment

The District of Innovation Plan Committee has determined the above-listed benefits justify AISD seeking exemption from Texas Education Code § 25.0811, and that said statute inhibits the goals of the District.

Policy Impact:

The Committee is not aware of any locally-adopted Board policies that will be impacted by this proposed exemption.

Other Considerations/Local Guidelines:

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the District of Innovation Committee encourages future DEAC Committees to consider the following as they develop future school calendars:

- Desire school year to be August-May for instruction with teachers not beginning before August 1
- Prefer a minimum of ten days of instruction at the beginning of the year before first holiday
- Be mindful of community holiday needs while continuing to maximize instruction
- Build instructional minutes into the calendar to provide four emergency closings days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Day of School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Education Code § 25.0812</td>
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Innovation:

Texas Education Code Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year

Texas Education Code § 25.0812 states that, with certain exceptions not applicable to AISD, school districts may not schedule the last day of school for students before May 15. This law
restricts innovation in the development of AISD school calendars.

**Rationale/Benefit:**

Relief from this statute will allow the following opportunities:

- Maximize flexibility when developing the school calendar
- Future consideration of shorter calendar with longer daily minutes

The District of Innovation Plan Committee has determined the above-listed benefits justify AISD seeking exemption from Texas Education Code § 25.0812, and that said statute inhibits the goals of the District.

**Policy Impact:**

The Committee is not aware of any locally-adopted Board policies that will be impacted by this proposed exemption.

**Other Considerations/Local Guidelines:**

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the District of Innovation Committee encourages future DEAC Committees to consider the following as they develop future school calendars:

- For graduation purposes, the calendar should end on a Friday
- Correlating the last day to maximize instruction and to conclude the school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation of Schools/School Day – Minutes of Instruction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Education Code § 25.081 § 25.082(a)</td>
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</table>

**Innovation:**

Texas Education Code Ch. 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the school day or year:

Texas Education Code § 25.081 requires school districts to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses, in a school year. There is no exception in this law for pre-kindergarten students, which has forced AISD to seek waivers from the state to accommodate half-day pre-kindergarten students.

Texas Education Code § 25.082(a) requires the school day last at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.
To the extent these statutes limit AISD's ability to offer half-day pre-K or early student release and therefore limits calendar flexibility, AISD seeks exemption.

**Rationale/Benefit:**

Relief from this statute will allow the following opportunities:

- Flexibility to have an AM and a PM Pre-Kindergarten class
- Continue to honor duty-free lunch and planning periods for all Pre-K teachers
- Commitment to be financially cost effective
- Calendar flexibility (including early release)

The District of Innovation Plan Committee has determined the above-listed benefits justify AISD seeking exemption from Texas Education Code § 25.081 and Texas Education Code §25.082(a), and that said statutes inhibit the goals of the District.

**Policy Impact:**

The Committee is not aware of any locally-adopted Board policies that will be impacted by this proposed exemption.

**Other Considerations/Local Guidelines:**

While the District seeks freedom from this law, the District of Innovation Committee encourages future DEAC Committees and the Administration to consider the following as they develop future school calendars and school schedules:

- Provide for a minimum of 30,000 minutes of Pre-K instruction per year
- Build instructional minutes into the calendar that allows Pre-K minutes to include up to four emergency days
- Include maximum instruction of pre-k students

**IMPLEMENTATION**

This Local Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the AISD will operate in order to provide improved scholar and educator opportunities. This Plan sets out the laws from which AISD seeks exemption, so that it can develop more innovative programming and better meet the needs of its students, educators and community. While this Plan sets out those parameters, it does not and cannot establish the full scope of innovative practices within the
AISD. Specific implementation plans will be developed in order to fully realize the work of the Committee (e.g., future DEACs will develop calendars as permitted by these innovations).

If needed, adjustments to Board Policy will be researched, developed, and presented to the Board of Trustees. It is the expectation of the Committee that all Board Policy language will reflect the spirit of the Committee work and honor the parameters and limitations expressed in this Plan.

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.

- 1st Committee Meeting: January 10, 2017
- 2nd Committee Meeting: January 17, 2017
- Dates Proposed Plan Posted on District Website (minimum of 30 days): January 20 – February 21, 2017
- Texas Education Agency Notified of Board’s Intent to Vote: January 31, 2017
- 3rd Committee Meeting (included public hearing): February 21, 2017
- DEAC Approved Plan Posted on Internet (with signatures): February 22, 2017
- School Board Meeting/Public Hearing: February 27, 2017
- Texas Education Agency Notified of Plan Approval: February 28, 2017

Approved by a Majority of Amarillo ISD's District of Innovation Plan Committee:

Attest: [Signature] 2-21-17
Sandy Whitlow, Executive Director for Student Performance

See signature page (attached)
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<th>NAME</th>
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<td>Armstrong, Michael</td>
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# DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN – BOARD VOTE

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<th>NAME</th>
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<td>Jim Austin, President</td>
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<td>Renee McCown, Vice President</td>
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<td>James Allen</td>
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<td>John Betancourt</td>
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<td>Scott Flow</td>
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Innovation District

Please submit, on district letterhead, a letter to the commissioner of education stating the date that the board of trustees adopted a resolution to develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as an Innovation District.

A local innovation plan must be developed for a school district before the district may be designated as an Innovation District. A local plan must provide for a comprehensive educational program for the district, which may include:

1) Innovative Curriculum
2) Instructional Methods
3) Community Participation
4) Governance of Campuses
5) Parental Involvement
6) Modifications to the school day or year
7) Provisions regarding the district budget and sustainable program funding
8) Accountability and assessment measures that exceed the requirements of state and federal law; and
9) Any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees.

A local innovation plan must identify requirements imposed by the Education Code that inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. The local innovation plan should specify the manner in which a particular statute inhibits one or more goals of the plan. Please use the form below to check the statutes specifically identified in your district’s local innovation plan as inhibiting a goal of the plan. Checking a specific statute does not necessarily indicate eligibility for an exemption from all subsections of the statute. The local innovation plan controls with regard to the specific exemptions adopted by a district. The form below provides a reporting mechanism to fulfill the reporting requirements of the statute. Entire sections of code may not be eligible for exemption and each district should consult its legal counsel in developing its innovation plan.

Exemptions claimed for an Innovation District apply only to the specific provision of the Texas Education Code (TEC) cited, which may or may not be governed by a separate legal requirement. The exemption does not relieve the district of any requirement imposed by other state or federal law or a duty imposed under federal regulation, grant compliance, agency rule applicable to a charter school or a local legal requirement. Each district should consult its legal counsel to ensure adoption of necessary local policies to ensure compliance with all applicable legal requirements.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of exemptions.
Term of Plan: ___February 27, 2017 - February 27, 2022___

Plan applies to:  X  Entire District
☐ Campus (list) ____________________________________________
☐ Other (please describe) _________________________________

Chapter 11 – School Districts

Subchapter D. Powers and Duties of Board of Trustees of Independent School Districts
☐ §11.1511 (b)(5), (14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board
☐ §11.162 School Uniforms

Subchapter F. District-Level and Site Based Decision-Making
☐ §11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process
☐ §11.252 District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
☐ §11.253 Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision-Making
☐ §11.255 Dropout Prevention Review

Chapter 21 – Educators

Subchapter A – General Provisions
☐ §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts
☐ §21.003 Certification Required
☐ §21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void

Subchapter B – Certification of Educators
☐ §21.051 Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships.
☐ §21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates
☐ §21.057 Parental Notification

☐ Subchapter C – Probationary Contracts
☐ Subchapter D – Continuing Contracts
☐ Subchapter E – Term Contracts

Subchapter H – Appraisals and Incentives
☐ §21.352 Local Role
☐ §21.353 Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance
☐ §21.354 Appraisal of Certain Administrators
☐ §21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

Subchapter I – Duties and Benefits
☐ §21.401 Minimum Service Required
☐ §21.402 Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff
☐ §21.4021 Furloughs
§21.4022 Required Process for Development of Furlough Program or Other Salary Reduction Proposal
§21.403 Placement on Minimum Salary Schedule
§21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records
§21.4032 Reductions in Salaries of Classroom Teachers and Administrators
§21.404 Planning and Preparation Time
§21.405 Duty-Free Lunch
§21.406 Denial of Compensation Based On Absence for Religious Observance Prohibited
§21.407 Requiring or Coercing Teachers to Join Groups, Clubs, Committees, or Organizations: Political Affairs
§21.408 Right To Join or Not To Join Professional Association
§21.409 Leave Of Absence for Temporary Disability
§21.415 Employment Contracts

Subchapter J – Staff Development
§21.451 Staff Development Requirements
§21.452 Developmental Leaves of Absence
§21.458 Mentors

Chapter 22 – School District Employees and Volunteers

Subchapter A – Rights, Duties, and Benefits
§22.001 Salary Deductions for Professional Dues
§22.002 Assignment, Transfer, or Pledge of Compensation
§22.003 Minimum Personal Leave Program
§22.006 Discrimination Based on Jury Service Prohibited
§22.007 Incentives for Early Retirement
§22.011 Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance
§25.0811 First Day of Instruction
§25.0812 Last Day of School
§25.083 School Day Interruptions
§25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Subchapter D – Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size
§25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios
§25.112 Class Size
§25.113 Notice of Class Size
§25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes; Class Size
Chapter 37 – Discipline; Law and Order

Subchapter A – Alternative Setting for Behavior Management
☐ §37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
☐ §37.002 Removal by Teacher

Chapter 44 – Fiscal Management

Subchapter B – Purchases; Contracts
☐ §44.031 Purchasing Contracts
☐ §44.0331 Management Fees Under Certain Cooperative Purchasing Contracts
☐ §44.0352 Competitive Sealed Proposals
☐ §44.042 Preference to Texas and United States Products
☐ §44.043 Right To Work
☐ §44.047 Purchase or Lease of Automated External Defibrillator

Subchapter Z – Miscellaneous Provisions
☐ §44.901 Energy Savings Performance Contracts
☐ §44.902 Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy
☐ §44.903 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs in Instructional Facilities
☐ §44.908 Expenditure of Local Funds

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Subchapter G – School District Depositories
☐ §45.205 Term of Contract
☐ §45.206 Bid Or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms
☐ §45.207 Award of Contract
☐ §45.208 Depository Contract; Bond
☐ §45.209 Investment of District Funds

Other

Please list any additional exemption required for your Innovation District Plan:

Texas Education Code §25.081
Texas Education Code §25.082(a)