

VIDOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Local Innovation Plan January 21, 2019 - June 30, 2022

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation. Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

VIDOR ISD
DISTRICT OF INNOVATION (DoI)
PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Dates and times subject to change.

September 14, 2018 - Assistant Superintendents' Meeting

- Initial meeting with Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to discuss District of Innovation plan

September 18, 2018 - District Administrative Team Meeting

- Initial meeting with Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Campus Principals to discuss District of Innovation plan

October 15, 2018 - DoI Resolution signed by Board to Consider Designation as District of Innovation

November 6, 2018 - Assistant Superintendents' Meeting

- Meeting with Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to discuss District of Innovation plan timeline and forming of DoI Committee

November 27, 2018 - Vidor ISD School Board approves District of Innovation Committee

December 4, 2018 at 3:45 PM - VISD Boardroom - Initial meeting of the District of Innovation Advisory Committee

December 10, 2018 at 3:45 PM - VISD Boardroom - Second meeting of the District of Innovation Advisory Committee

December 13, 2018 at 3:45 PM - VISD Boardroom - Public Hearing for DoI Plan

December 13, 2018 - VISD Boardroom - Third meeting of the District of Innovation Advisory Committee. (Planned) Vote to bring to Board.

Innovations Recommended for Vidor ISD

I. Uniform Start Date (TEC §25.0811) (EB LEGAL)

Current Provision:

TEC §25.0811 requires that a district not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption:

Vidor ISD is seeking local control of the instructional calendar to afford the following advantages:

- Balancing the number of semester days while still finishing the first semester before the holiday break in December.
- Number of instructional days that will support Advanced Placement Exams, STAAR/EOC timelines and local colleges for dual credit.
- Partial or full days available for professional learning.
- Capability to honor classroom preparation time for high quality instruction.
- Built in additional time for inclement weather days.
- Better opportunities for summer school, internships, and professional certification experiences.
- The local control and flexibility to develop innovative scheduling for a variety of programs for students.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

- Based on parent and staff input, VISD will have the option to allow for a district calendar that fits the local needs of the community and considers the option of moving the mandatory start date required by the state. In order to accommodate the need for balanced instructional time during the fall and spring semesters, Vidor ISD may begin school prior to the fourth Monday in August.

II. Teacher Certification (TEC. §21.003) (DBA LEGAL)

Current Provision:

TEC §21.003 requires a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exempting from TEC §21.003 would allow Vidor ISD the flexibility needed to:

- Allow for local certification and flexibility in hiring hard to find positions in areas designated by the superintendent.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

- Exemption would allow Vidor ISD to hire non-certified but qualified educators for hard-to-find positions limited to high need areas at the secondary level (6-12) to be annually designated by the superintendent. The Board of Trustees will consider the superintendent's recommendations and designate the high need areas for that school year.
- The District will require non-certified instructional staff members to hold an undergraduate degree prior to employment and enrollment in a program to earn a Texas teaching certification prior to offering the teacher a contract for an additional year.
- The District may recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience.
- For grades 5-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.
- Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations

and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

III. Class Size - Student-Teacher Ratio (TEC §25.111, §25.112, and §25.113) (EEB LEGAL)

Current Provision:

TEC §25.111 requires that districts employ a sufficient number of teachers certified to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance except as provided by §25.112.

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten - 4th Grade classes.

TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exemptions to class size limits.

Benefit of Exemption:

- Vidor ISD will have the ability to exceed the student to teacher ratio of 22:1 without the requirement of a waiver application to TEA.
- Vidor ISD will apply the flexibility granted by the District of Innovation in limited circumstances depending on the needs of the students at each campus.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

- The district seeks to maintain student/teacher ratios without requirement of a TEA waiver submission.
- The district will aim to begin the school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 homeroom. As new families/students move into our area, principals will evaluate factors such as enrollment totals, number of teachers, individual student needs, and time of year to determine which campus the student should attend.
- The intent of the District is to immediately post an opening in an attempt to hire an additional teacher for K-4 when one grade level class reaches 24 students. If the class reaches 24 students from March 1st through the end of the school year, the District will hire a paraprofessional to help with the grade level. Open Enrollment students may be transferred from a campus

of higher enrollment to a campus of lower enrollment in order to maintain recommended student to teacher ratios.

- Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continue to be notified as per TEC 25.113

While Vidor ISD intends to remain within the guidelines of the current education code as much as possible, the district seeks flexibility to provide the best learning environment for our K-4 students.

IV. Probationary Contracts (TEC §21.102(b)) (DCA LEGAL)

Current Provision:

TEC §21.102(b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exemption from this statute would allow Vidor ISD the flexibility needed to provide additional time to continue training and teacher evaluation.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

- The District seeks relief from this rule so that experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the District who have been employed as a teacher for at least five of the eight previous years may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years. All other teachers hired in the District will not be placed on probationary status for more than three years in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

V. Removal of Student Achievement from T-TESS (TEC 21.352(1))

Current Provision:

TEC §21.352(1) - In appraising teachers, each school district shall use:

1. The appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exempting would allow Vidor ISD the flexibility needed to:

- emphasize the growth-focused coaching model of the T-TESS evaluation system.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

- Vidor ISD evaluators will continue to support and guide teacher proficiency by following the cycle for individual teacher growth as prescribed by T-TESS. The District will continue to use the T-TESS evaluation rubric and cycle without the added dimension of considering student growth as a factor in appraising teachers. The district considers the T-TESS instrument robust enough without the addition of student achievement to the teacher evaluation. Administrators already take into account student achievement whether it is retention rates, passing rates, state and other standardized test measures.

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

Current Provision:

TEC § 22.004(i) - 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.

Benefit of Exemption:

Exempting would allow Vidor ISD the flexibility needed to:

- Design 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 would give the District the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would be potentially more attractive to prospective employees.

Proposed Innovative Strategies:

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).