

Graham Independent School District



Districts of Innovation Plan for Exemptions From Provisions of the Texas Education Code Under House Bill 1842

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to amend certain state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. Graham ISD (GISD) intends to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. GISD's Local Innovation Plan is comprehensive and touches numerous areas in the TEC, and because GISD seeks to maximize local control of educational decisions for students, GISD seeks exemption from the permissible provisions of the TEC included and explained in this Local Innovation Plan. GISD's Local Innovation Plan will begin with the 2022-2023 school year and conclude at the end of the 2027-2028 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Graham Independent School District Board of Trustees in accordance with HB1842. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

District Improvement Team

Sonny Cruse	Superintendent
Don Davis	Assistant Superintendent
Robert Loomis	Assistant Superintendent
Gary Browning	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Natalie Husen	Special Programs Director
Joe Gordy	GHS Principal
Ginger Robbins	GJHS Principal
Audra Barrett	Woodland Principal
Amanda Townley	Crestview Principal
Donna Gatlin	Pioneer Principal
Anne Routon	Educational Support Staff
Sam Perry	GHS Assistant Principal
Marva Thomas	Graham Learning Center Teacher
Erin Mazy	Pioneer Elementary Teacher
Elizabeth Rose	Pioneer Elementary Teacher
Julia Crelia	Crestview Elementary Teacher
Kay Berru	Crestview Elementary Teacher
Hayley Langford	Woodland Elementary Teacher
Koby Andrews	Woodland Elementary Teacher
Amanda Mullens	GJHS Teacher
Hugh Grubbs	GJHS Teacher
Stephen Hunter	GHS Teacher
Josh Kidd	GHS Teacher

Dana Weldon	SPED Teacher
Stephanie Davis	Non-Teaching Professional
Heather Williams	Parent
Terri Beamon	Parent
Shana Wolfe	Business Member
Open	Business Member
Charlie Bazan	Community Member
Open	Community Member

District of Innovation Renewal Timeline

Wednesday, January 26, 2022- District Improvement Team Meeting

- The GISD District Improvement Team (DIT) discussed the renewal of the District of Innovation Plan, reviewed the existing plan and made suggested edits to the plan.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022- School Board Meeting

- The GISD Board of Trustees discussed the DOI renewal process and reviewed the proposed District of Innovation Plan.

Thursday, February 17, 2022- Draft Renewal Plan Posted on the GISD Website

Sunday, February 23, 2022, and Wednesday, February 26, 2022- District Improvement Team Public Meeting Date/Time Advertisement Ran in Local Newspaper

Wednesday, March 2, 2022- District Improvement Team Public Meeting

- The GISD DIT will meet to consider approval of the District Innovation Plan.
- The plan must be approved by a majority vote.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022- School Board Meeting

- The Board unanimously approved the District of Innovation Plan.

Thursday, March 10, 2022- TEA Notification

- The District of Innovation plan is sent to the Commissioner of Education (TEC 12A.005(a)(2)) with the required checklist.

Goal 1: The Graham ISD Board of Trustees and Graham ISD Administration will make governance decisions based on the unique needs of the district's students and community.

1-2. Uniform School Start Date - (TEC §25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)

Currently:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August.

The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Innovation Strategies:

This exemption will allow the GISD the flexibility to make a local decision annually regarding the year start date that best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date could also let the GISD start classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff. GISD will not start school prior to the 2nd Monday of August.

Goal 2: The Graham ISD Board of Trustees and Graham ISD Administration will make teacher certification decisions based on district qualifications that meet the unique needs of the district's students and community.

2-1. Teacher Certification - General (TEC §21.003a) (DK LEGAL)

Currently:

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 does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

Innovation Strategies:

For grades PK-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject or grade level in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

Whenever possible, lesson plans for the uncertified teacher will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field or grade level.

The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.

Each school year the district will report to the board and post online a report of all teaching personnel who are teaching a class or grade level that is outside their certification.

A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

All certification actions of the superintendent will be reported to the Board of Trustees in open session prior to the teacher's employment. The Board Agenda, Meeting, Minutes, and related reports are available to the public and will serve as parent notification.

2.2 Teacher Certification: Teachers for CTE, Fine Arts, Health Science, Law Enforcement, etc. (TEC §21.003) (DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT)

Currently:

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Innovation Strategies:

This exemption from the current state teacher certification requirements that inhibit the GISD's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill teaching positions will allow the district to establish local qualification and training requirements. GISD will have the flexibility to hire external or internal applicants that do not have traditional state certifications. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject out of their certified field.

An individual with experience in a CTE field may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate.

The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials.

The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying this individual to teach this subject.

The superintendent will then submit this action to the Board of Trustees for Board approval prior to the individual beginning any employment.

Local teaching certificates will expire at the end of each school year and may be renewed at the superintendent's discretion.

An employee working under a local teaching certificate will not receive a contract but will be employed on an at-will basis.

If currently certified teachers are used to fill the position a Chapter 21 contract will be issued.

Each school year the district will report to the board and post online a report of all teaching personnel who are teaching a class that is outside their certification.

All certification actions of the superintendent will be reported to the Board of Trustees in open session prior to the teacher's employment. The Board Agenda, Meeting, Minutes, and related reports are available to the public and will serve as parent notification.

Special Note Regarding Certification for Special Education and Bilingual/ESL Teachers- Per TEC 21.003 special education and bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be SBEC certified and thereby are exempt from being considered for this DOI provision.

2-2. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102) (DCA LEGAL)

Currently:

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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. This time period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to state assessment results.

Innovation Strategies:

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a

probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the last date of district employment.