

Hermleigh ISD

District of Innovation Plan

2024-2029



Hermleigh ISD Local Innovation Timeline

April 15, 2019	HISD Board of Trustees takes action to approve resolution to initiate consideration of plan for being designated a District of Innovation.
May 14, 2019	HISD Board of Trustees hold a public hearing to discuss becoming a District of Innovation. HISD Board of Trustees appoints a District of Innovation Planning Committee to develop a Local Innovation Plan.
May 17, 2019	HISD District of Innovation Planning Committee meets to discuss procedures and possible areas of need for HISD Innovation Plan to address. HISD District of Innovation Planning Committee draft a preliminary plan.
May 21, 2019	HISD District of Innovation Planning Committee approve final draft of plan.
May 21, 2019	Proposed HISD District of Innovation Plan posted to the HISD website.
June 13, 2019	HISD District of Innovation Planning Committee considers final version of the HISD Innovation Plan.
June 18, 2019	Commissioner notified of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.
June 20, 2019	Proposed HISD District of Innovation Plan presented to the HISD Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.
June 25, 2019	HISD submits the approved plan to the Commissioner of Education.
August 31, 2022	HISD "District Advisory Team" votes to amend the plan as proposed.
July 12, 2021	HISD School Board approves amendment 3.
September 13, 2022	HISD School Board approves amendments 4-10.
March 27, 2024	HISD "District Advisory Team" holds a public hearing and votes to amend and renew the plan as proposed.
March 28, 2024	The proposed final HISD District of Innovation Plan posted to the HISD website.
May 20, 2024	HISD School Board votes by $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to approve renewal of DOI Plan
May 21, 2024	The district notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the agency form.
May 21, 2024	The district final approved DOI is posted on the district's website for the term of the designation as an innovation district.
May 21, 2024	The district provides a link to the current local innovation plan to the Texas Education Agency for posting on the agency website

OUR MISSION:

The mission of Hermleigh ISD, in partnership with parents and community, is to serve all students by providing a well-rounded educational experience to maximize each student's individual potential.

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Hermleigh ISD is a nurturing environment committed to achieving excellence. All students are challenged to reach their maximum potential by learning at their functional level to provide a solid foundation of skills, knowledge, and values enabling each student to productively impact this community and beyond. We believe that a vital partnership between home, school, and community is essential for our students to reach their highest potential.

Hermleigh Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

SY 2024-2028

The 84th Texas Legislature passed HB 1842, providing public school districts the opportunity to become a District of Innovation and access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas open enrollment charter schools. To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Hermleigh ISD is utilizing House Bill 1842 in order to have more local control in certain areas. Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for their students. HB 1842 allows the district increased freedom and flexibility in terms of state mandates that govern educational programs and processes. Because HISD seeks to make the best use of local control of educational decisions for the benefit of our students, we seek exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

1. School Start and End Dates
2. Teacher Contract Days
3. Teacher Certification
4. Probationary Contracts
5. DAEP Teacher Certification
6. 90% Attendance Rule
7. Inter-District Transfers
8. SBDM & SHAC

Hermleigh ISD declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as implementing any rules or regulations pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity. This shall include the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and the State Board of Education.

Local Innovation Committee

Jacklin Allison, Teacher	Heath Gibson, Tech. Dir./Teacher
Jerry Ashley, Dir. Operations	Jessie Harvey, Parent
Marci Beard, Bus. Manager	Shelby McClure, Parent
Tammy Berry, Admin Assistant	Rode Merryman Principal
Misty Brown, Teacher	Joan Ramirez, Bus./Community
Danni Eaton, Teacher	Kaycee Schafer, Counselor
Jessie Ellerbe, Superintendent	Samuel Winters, AD/Teacher
Christina Espinoza, Teacher	

Hermleigh ISD Board of Trustees

Larry Don Nachlinger, President
Alan Culp, Vice President
John Pence, Secretary
David Digby, Trustee

Kasey Nachlinger, Trustee
Gerald P. Rodriguez, Trustee
Joe Roemisch, Trustee

This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

1. School Start Date and End Date

Current Code:

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Furthermore, TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15th.

Proposed:

It is the intent of Hermleigh ISD to build and follow a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and community. The current code is restrictive in nature and allows no flexibility in the design of the annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the Hermleigh ISD Board of Trustees who represent the community interests in this matter. Relief from this statute will allow Hermleigh ISD to develop a calendar that addresses instructional and professional development goals that align with the new minute requirement instead of days. Hermleigh ISD proposes to align the district calendar with local schools, universities, dual credit exams and STAAR/EOC timelines. This will provide more local control to include the start date, ending date, days in each semester, 6 weeks reporting periods and professional development days.

2. Teacher Contract Days

Current Code:

TEC §21.401 states that teachers employed on a ten-month contract are required to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed:

TEC §25.081 changed the instructional days for students from 180 days to 75,600 minutes. The number of contract days required for teachers was not addressed in the new code. Hermleigh ISD will consider reducing the number of contract days for teachers on a yearly basis with no effect on teacher salaries. The district will consider training needs based on new legislative updates and initiative and goals when determining the amount of days for teacher and staff training. This will allow flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days and identified needs. The number of contract days will thus be dependent on need, and Hermleigh ISD will reserve the right to lessen contract days for teachers with no effect on teacher salaries. The district believes this will allow it to be more competitive with other districts contract days, enhance teacher recruitment/retention, increased daily rates for teachers and improve teacher morale.

3. Teacher Certification

Current Code:

TEC §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification. If a district cannot hire 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 the State Board of Educator Certification.

Proposed:

TEC §21.003 makes it difficult for the district to hire teachers in difficult to fill positions as well as CTE positions that would give our students different paths to graduation. TEC §21.003 does not take into account the instructional, geographical or financial needs of the Hermleigh ISD. With a nationwide shortage of teachers and Hermleigh ISD paying the state base to teachers, the district needs the flexibility to fill its faculty needs to best fit our students' needs. Hermleigh ISD will make every effort to fill positions with certified personnel for each position. When that is not reasonably possible, Hermleigh ISD will have the flexibility to hire individuals, when necessary or when in the best interest of the district, whose experience and knowledge will allow them to serve our students and perform the duties of the position. The district will ensure that professional development plans are in place to train non-certified personnel in pedagogy and to provide needed support.

In certain situations, an individual with a college degree, trade certification or experience in a Career and Technology Education field could be able to teach courses related to that experience through local certification. The campus principal will be responsible for documenting the individual's qualifications and reason for the request. The campus principal and superintendent will consider and approve the qualifications before notifying the Board of Trustees of the intent to hire the individual prior to being employed. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency (not to include special education or bilingual teachers).

- Employment under this rule will be considered AT-WILL employment for one year that will adhere to the same professional standards and ethics as all other district employees.
- Employment in this scenario will still be appraised with T-TESS or another district approved appraisal method.
- Final hiring authority remains with the Board of Trustees unless otherwise stated.

4. Probationary Contracts

Current Code:

TEC §21.102(b) states that a person that has been employed in public education for five of the previous eight years may not be placed on a probationary contract for more than one year.

Proposed:

Hermleigh ISD feels that a one-year probationary period may not be sufficient in some cases to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness since employment decisions are made prior to the district's receipt of end of year data and state assessment results. Hermleigh ISD may issue a probationary contract up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years. All other teachers hired into the district may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probationary status in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

5. DAEP Teacher Certification

Current Code:

TEC 37.008 states “a DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom that employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21. It may be located on or off a regular school campus.

Proposed:

Hermleigh ISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model. It is not necessary to have certified teachers in the DAEP setting. Current certified teachers on staff will be available to students as needed.

6. 90 Percent Attendance Rule

Current Code:

TEC §25.092 State law mandates a student may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. In addition, if a student is in attendance greater than 75 percent and less than 90 percent, they may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the campus administrator and meets the instructional requirements for the class.

Proposed:

The 90% attendance rule is an arbitrary standard that awards credit based on seat time rather than on content mastery. Local districts need the flexibility to set attendance requirements which reflect their specific situations and expectations. Abstaining from the requirement means the district will not have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, accident, illness, or other extenuating circumstances. The flexibility can allow for local boards to set higher expectations for attendance while promoting student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in extracurricular activities. Relief from Section §25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League rules. Opting out of Section §25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section §28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section §28.0216. Hermleigh ISD will form committees at each campus to evaluate students who do not meet the 90 percent rule, and will make decisions to grant or deny exemption based on all circumstances.

7. Inter-district Transfers

Current Code:

TEC Code: Sec. 25.036. Currently, under Texas Education Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. However, TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed:

Hermleigh ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer into HISD to file a transfer application that is reviewable each year. In approving the transfer, the Superintendent or designee reviews availability of space, academics, attendance, and behavior of the student. If accepted, those students are expected to follow the HISD Code of Conduct, attendance policies, and academic standards. Under TEC 25.036, the district is required to keep those transfer students for the academic school year regardless of their attendance, behavior, or academic performance. HISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment by the district. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program (DAEP), expulsion, or attendance falls below the TEA truancy standards. In these rare cases, HISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment and the ability to revoke a transfer, at any time during the year, if needed.

8. Site-Based Decision Making and Local School Health Advisory Council

Current Code:

Relevant Board Policies: BQ (Legal) Section(s) 11.251, 11.252, 11.253 and BDF (Legal) Section 28.004 of this code requires that the Board of Trustees of each school district shall establish a district/campus planning committee and local School Health Advisory Council to assist the District in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's planning, decision-making and instruction

Proposed:

Hermleigh ISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision-making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth in the Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but one that meets the needs of the district, school, and community as opposed to the broad brush of statutory requirements leveled down from a one size fits all approach as detailed in the code. In place of the SBDM and the SHAC, a District Advisory Team (DAT) will be established, meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the district's success and most importantly, student's success. This council will convene at least two times per year and generate the general direction of district resources and efforts