



NAVASOTA ISD
District of Innovation Plan
2023-2028

Adopted February 20, 2023
Amended May 15, 2023
Amended April 15, 2024
Amended May 13, 2024

I. Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools.

To obtain exemptions, the district must create a local innovation plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the district and the benefits to the district expected from the exemption.

II. Term

The term of the plan will begin with the 2023-2024 school year and terminate at the end of the 2027-2028 school year, unless amended, rescinded, or renewed by the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the district. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the district website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees.

III. Innovation Committee

The Innovation Committee sought public input and created this plan. It includes the following members:

- Dr. Stu Musick, Superintendent
- Dr. Ronnie Gonzalez, Assistant Superintendent
- Dr. Tracy Stone, Assistant Superintendent
- Mr. Derek Bowman, Director of Personnel
- Mrs. Jeane Boyett, Director of Special Education
- Mr. Frank Perez, Director of Technology
- Mrs. Julie Horn, Coordinator of Math & Science
- Mrs. Amberly Kolby, Coordinator of Assessment
- Mrs. JoAnna Moreland, Coordinator of Instructional Materials & Advanced Academics
- Mrs. Jeanie Nickle, Coordinator of Federal and Special Programs
- Mrs. Rachel Peterson, Coordinator of Reading Language Arts & Social Studies
- Mrs. Lauren Puente, Coordinator of Special Education
- Mrs. Cindy Martin, Administrative Assistant
- Mrs. Kristi Ramsey, High School Principal
- Mrs. LaToya Taylor, Bizzell Principal & DAEP Principal
- Mrs. Monica Guerrero, Junior High Principal
- Mrs. Emily Nichols, Webb Elementary Principal
- Mrs. Vanikin Leggett, Brule Elementary Principal
- Mrs. Amy Carpentier, Brule Elementary Assistant Principal
- Mr. John Bathke, High Point Elementary Principal
- Dr. Jennifer Graves, ESC 6 Leadership Liaison

Additional Members

Mrs. Stephanie Ingram, Coordinator of Special Programs and Special Populations (Amendment Spring 2024)

IV. Timeline

November 14, 2022 - 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

Board approved Resolution for district to consider designation as a District of Innovation

December 19, 2022 - 6:00 p.m. Public Hearing & 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

Public Hearing held prior to Board Meeting

Board appointed Innovation Committee

January 10, 2023 - 11:00 a.m. Committee Meeting in Boardroom

Innovation Committee meeting held to develop a proposed DOI plan

January 18, 2023 - 12:00 p.m. Public Meeting

District of Innovation Plan posted to website

Public meeting held to solicit public input

TEA notified of intent for DOI

Survey sent to all district employees for input

Survey shared on social media and district website for public input

January 19, 2023

District of Innovation Plan amended by Innovation Committee

Innovation Committee votes on updated draft of the plan to post for public input

January 20, 2023

District of Innovation Plan posted to N.I.S.D. website for 30 days (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

February 20, 2023 - 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

District of Innovation Plan presented to Board for approval

Notification sent to TEA Commissioner

Final DOI plan posted to N.I.S.D. website

March 2023

Innovation Committee meetings held to update LOCAL policies with possible adjustments to LEGAL policies

Spring 2024

March 7, 2024 - District Leadership Team/Innovation Committee reviewed current DOI plan, considered amendment, voted and approved suggested amendment.

March 18, 2024 - Discussion item on N.I.S.D. board meeting agenda: DOI plan and proposed amendment

April 15, 2024 - DOI Amendment Approved by N.I.S.D. board meeting

April 16, 2025: Notification sent to TEA Commissioner

April 16, 2025 Updated DOI plan posted to N.I.S.D. website

Spring 2025

Tentatively: Innovation Committee conducts annual review of DOI plan

Spring 2026

Tentatively: Innovation Committee conducts annual review of DOI plan

Spring 2027

Tentatively: Innovation Committee conducts annual review of DOI plan

Spring 2028

Innovation Committee meetings held to consider amendments and renewal

V. District Plan

This Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the district's vision, mission, and beliefs.

Vision: Navasota Independent School District has a vision and a purpose in what we do to include becoming life-long **LEARNERS**, being **LEADERS** in all that we do both inside and outside the classrooms, and to prepare our students to experience **SUCCESS**, both now and in the future.

Mission: Navasota Independent School District, in partnership with students, parents, and community members, dedicates its efforts to creating a passion for excellence.

At Navasota I.S.D., we believe...

- Relationships are key to engagement.
- Engagement is the key to learning.
- Learning and instruction are achieved through safety and responsibility.
- Responsibility is shared by the entire team.
- That every student can be successful.
- That both our diversity and what we share in common should be celebrated.
- That collaboration supports our learning community.
- Knowledge and understanding are the beginning of wI.S.D.om

VI. Innovation Plan Items

1. District and Campus-Level Planning and Decision-Making (TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, TEC §11.253, BQA (Legal), BQA (Local))

Current Law:

Currently, the prescribed makeup of committees removes flexibility in determining who is able to serve in this capacity. Current requirements are overburdening stakeholders requiring repetitive collaboration processes through multiple programs seeking the same or similar input for district initiatives.

Rationale for Exemption

The district's partnership with employees, parents, students, and community members demonstrates a history of collaborative planning and seeking feedback for district initiatives. Stakeholders continue to provide input through various methods, including but not limited to attending public meetings, attending board meetings, attending public hearings, attending campus meetings, attending city meetings where district information is shared, attending chamber of commerce meetings where district information is shared, and responding to input surveys. The committees will no longer be restricted and overburdened by compliance-focused content, freeing them up to focus on relevant actions aimed at progress toward established goals.

Assurances:

The district will continue to seek input and partnership opportunities with stakeholders. Portions of the improvement plans required by federal obligations will not be affected by this exemption.

2. **Teacher Certification**

(TEC §21.003, §21.053, DK (Legal), DK (Local), DK (Exhibit), DBA (Legal), DBA (Local))

Current Law:

The Texas Education Code requires a public school employee to have an appropriate certificate or permit for the current teaching assignment. The credentials appropriate to each assignment are set forth in the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules Title 19 Part 7 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231. 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. With various stipulations a district can issue a district teaching certificate that is subject to approval from the commissioner. State law also requires a district to notify parents within 30 days when a non-certified teacher is assigned to a class for 30 consecutive instructional days.

Rationale for Exemption:

These requirements are restrictive and burdensome, not taking into account the unique logistical, financial, and/or instructional needs of the district. The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, as well as career and technical courses. Navasota I.S.D. is located in a rural area and the current certification rules limit the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience. Benefits of this exemption would include but are not be limited to:

- Allowing the local school board to establish qualifications and guidelines that meet the needs of Navasota I.S.D. Teachers will be thoroughly vetted at the local level and subjected to administration and local board approval.
- Allowing the district to have the flexibility to allow existing staff members the opportunity to fill vacancies with the district.
- Utilizing local professionals, for STEM and CTE related courses, to prepare students with the knowledge of industry skills and standards within these areas of study.

Assurances:

Navasota I.S.D. will continue to recruit and retain highly skilled certified educators. When the district pursues a local certification, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the applicant possesses. This request must be presented to the superintendent for approval.

Navasota I.S.D. will offer Chapter 21 contracts to employees in positions with SBEC certifications. Teachers hired on a local certification basis may be considered at-will employees and may not be entitled to a Chapter 21 contract.

3. Teacher Probationary Employment Contracts

(TEC §21.102 DCA (Legal))

Current Law:

TEC §21.102(b) States that a probationary contract 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 with the District. In this statute, “teacher” means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, nurse, or other full-time professional employee. This statute in the TEC provides a three-year probationary period for newly hired teachers and only a one-year probationary period for teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

Rationale for Exemption

This limited period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the employee’s effectiveness since contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the end of the school year. Experienced teachers new to the District that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of District employment.

Assurances:

NISD will continue to recruit and hire high quality teachers while evaluating their effectiveness to determine continued employment.

4. Teacher Appraisal System

(TEC §21.352, §21.353, §21.354, DNA (Legal))

Current Law:

The state implemented an updated teacher appraisal system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System(T-TESS). The domains within these systems were developed by the state to meet the needs of the entire state of Texas.

Rationale for Exemption:

The district is seeking to have relief for qualifying teachers from the annual appraisal system under TEC §21.352, allowing administration to provide more support to teachers who demonstrate need. Teachers who have shown to be proficient or above in all domains of the TTESS system for the previous year will have the opportunity to be evaluated every third year using a rotational system. Set criteria to meet qualifications is listed below:

The following criteria qualifies a teacher to request replacing annual appraisals for three year appraisals:

- Holds a term contract
- Is evaluated by T-TESS
- Is rated at least “proficient” in all domains on most recent appraisal
- Has been at the assigned campus for at least one year
- Has completed three consecutive years of service in the district
- Agrees in writing by signing a letter to waive the annual formal observation

The following criteria disqualifies a teacher from waiver eligibility:

- New to a grade level
- Is on a probationary contract
- Is new to the content area
- Is new to the campus
- Is assigned to a campus that does not meet state accountability rating system requirements
- Is on an improvement plan

Assurances:

Administration may remove a teacher from being waived if any of the above criteria occurs during the year. Administrators will ensure that teachers that are waived for the current year will receive:

- A T-TESS goal setting process.
- A minimum of 2 documented walkthroughs per semester

5. Contract Service Days

(TEC §21.401 DCI (Legal), DEA (Legal))

Current Law:

The Texas Education Code currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Rationale for Exemption:

With the passage of TEC §25.081 the required days of instruction were modified to minimum minutes of instruction. The law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. Benefits to this exemption include but are not limited to:

- Teacher contracts will more closely align with the 75,600 instructional minutes required for students, including staff development/workdays.
- This proposal may enhance teacher recruitment and retention.

Assurances:

Professional employees will not receive a reduction in pay for any reduction in the number of days in their contract because of this exemption.

6. Revocation of Out of District Transfer Status

(TEC §25.036 FDA (Legal), FDA (Local))

Current Law:

Under Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Rationale for Exemption:

On rare occasions, student behavior warrants in school suspension, out of school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative program, and/or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Navasota I.S.D. seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of in school suspension, out of school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative program, and/or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Assurances:

Navasota I.S.D. will follow FDA local policy requiring non-resident students to file a transfer application each school year.

In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history, records, work habits, and attendance records will be evaluated. The parent's willingness to cooperate with Navasota I.S.D. teachers, coaches, and administration in a positive manner will also be a determining factor.

7. Uniform Start Date

(TEC §25.0811 EB (Legal))

Current Law:

Students are prohibited from starting school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years, this was strictly a local decision. Districts had the option to apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier, but the legislature eliminated waivers and required that districts may not begin school until the 4th Monday, with no exception.

Rationale for Exemption:

The flexibility of the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students, the school, and the community. Benefits to this exemption include but are not limited to:

- Aligning school start date to accommodate college start dates for dual credit students
- Starting school mid-week to aid in the transition to school for students. This provides a natural break after establishing routines, procedures, and expectations before introducing rigorous academic based lessons for students transitioning to their respective campus
- Providing a better opportunity to balance the number of days in each semester.
- Providing more instructional and accelerated instruction days prior to State mandated tests
- Embed professional learning during the school year

Assurances:

Navasota I.S.D. will not start school prior to the first Monday in August.

8. Bank Depository Contract

(TEC §45.205, §45.206 BDAE (Legal))

Current Law:

Currently, the District must renew its depository contract every two years. The two-year contract term begins and ends in odd-numbered years. In accordance with the Texas Education Code, the District must use a uniform bid or proposal blank in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Rationale for Exemption

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 45.205 and 45.206 to allow the District's banking contract to be extended beyond the allowable contract term, if the District determines contract-pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. The exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the District's business.

Assurances:

This exemption will not relieve Navasota I.S.D. of our obligation to continue to monitor the depository contract.

9. Student Discipline – Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
(TEC §37.0012, FO (Legal))

Current Law:

TEC §37.0012 came out of the 84th Legislative Session and places this duty on one administrator, rather than allowing administrators to be responsible for this duty with the students assigned to him/her as has been done previously in Navasota I.S.D.

Requiring the designation of one Campus Behavior Coordinator creates inefficiencies and limits the effectiveness of our administrators. The burden of placing this on one person is not sustainable, and the additional stress it creates to staff, students, and families should be avoided. The assistant principals build relationships with the students and families assigned to them and are best equipped to handle discipline concerns and the management of behavior issues and consequences.

Rationale for Exemption

Navasota I.S.D. charges each principal with being responsible for discipline on his/her respective campus. All campuses have at least one assistant principal, and counselor. Discipline will be handled by principals as well as any assistant principal. The district believes that a collaborative approach with those responsible for a smaller group of students is more advantageous for students and provides more support for the students and their families.

Assurances:

The district will continue to work with families and students to ensure fair, equitable, and timely processing of discipline concerns.

10. School Health Advisory Council [SHAC] (Approved Amendment Spring 2024)
(TEC §28.004 , BDF(LEGAL), FFA(LOCAL), EHAA(LEGAL), EHAA(LOCAL))

Current Law:

The Texas Education Code §28.004(d-1) specifies that local SHACs must meet at least four times during the school year. The law also requires the SHAC to provide notice, audio or video recordings of meetings, and posting of meetings and minutes on the District's website. The District's Board of Trustees establishes a local school health advisory council ("SHAC") to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's health education instruction. The law outlines a variety of requirements of SHAC regarding health instruction and curriculum, student health concerns, counseling program, safe and healthy school environment and employee wellness.

Rationale for Exemption

The amendment aims to alleviate the burden and constraints faced by committee members, particularly due to the challenges of scheduling meetings for the SHAC, which comprises of district employed individuals and other employed members of the public. Granting exemptions from meeting requirements will enhance flexibility in scheduling and communication methods, thereby improving the efficiency of the SHAC process. Additionally, these exemptions will afford the District and stakeholders more flexibility in decision-making regarding school health matters with utilization of more modern communication options with stakeholders.

Assurances:

The district nurses and district administration will continue to make recommendations to the Board concerning issues identified in TEC 28.004. Navasota I.S.D. will continue to emphasize transparency in the student health process and will ensure that parents have the necessary access to curriculum and instructional materials.

DELETE THESE NOTES After PRESENTING - *Dr. Stone needs to keep the amendment on track:*

DOI Amendment Approval Timeline

Start Date: June 11, 2025

Target Board Adoption: July 21, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

(This timeline ensures the 30-day public posting is completed before board approval.)

June 11–14, 2025: Draft Final Amendments

Finalize wording for:

- Teacher Certification amendment (HB 2 alignment)

- Contract Service Days amendment (HB 2 alignment)

Prepare:

- Redlined and final version of the DOI plan

- TEA DOI Exemption Checklist (in draft form)

June 13–14, 2025: Convene DOI Committee

Hold an official DOI Committee meeting (in person or virtual)

Review and vote to approve the proposed amendments

Document:

- Agenda

- Sign-in sheet

- Committee vote outcomes (majority vote required)

June 14–15, 2025: Post for Public Comment

Post the amended DOI plan publicly on the NISD website for 30 full calendar days

Include:

- Updated plan with specific exemption language

- Clear start and end dates for public posting

Public Posting Window:

June 15 – July 15, 2025

June 16, 2025: Board Meeting (Info Only)

Optional: Present the draft amendments to the board as an information item to build transparency and prepare for July approval. Also for 2 review board meeting models.

July 15, 2025: End of 30-Day Posting Window

Finalize board packet for July 21, including:

- Clean and redlined copies of the amended plan

- Documentation of public posting period

Summary of committee actions

Completed DOI Exemption Checklist

UPDATE: Legislative update guidance continues to come regarding DOI. Keep amendment status to allow committee amendment as this document is posted.

July 21, 2025

Continue amendment process waiting for feedback from legal on best practice for the DOI update.

July 23 & 24, 2025

DOI Committee/Administration Team of District and Campus Administrators:

Legal updates have been received and reviewed. The DOI Committee reviews the recently revised amendment draft in accordance with the latest guidance. The updated amendment remains posted for public review.

August Board Meeting

~~Present the DOI amendments to the Board of Trustees~~

~~Board must approve by a 2/3 majority vote~~

UPDATE: Legislative update guidance continues to come regarding DOI. Keep amendment status to allow committee amendment as this document is posted.

September Board Meeting

UPDATE: Legislative update guidance continues to come regarding DOI. Keep amendment status to allow committee amendment as this document is posted.

Put on agenda as a discussion item to keep the team updated.

October Board Meeting

Place on agenda for Action Item

After October Board Meeting: Notify TEA

Within 15 business days of board approval:

Email accred@tea.texas.gov

Include:

List of amended exemptions

Web link to the updated DOI plan

Completed DOI Exemption Checklist

Summary Timeline Chart

Date	Step
June 11–14	Finalize amendments, prepare documents
June 13–14	DOI Committee meeting and approval
June 15–July 15	30-day public posting window begins
June 16	Optional: Informational item at board meeting
July 15	Public comment window closes



July 21	Continue amendment process - awaiting feedback from legal and organizational teams working to give guidance on new legislative changes.
August	Continue amendment process - awaiting feedback from legal and organizational teams working to give guidance on new legislative changes.
Sept	Board of Trustees votes on amendments (2/3 majority)
After SeptMtg	Submit notification and checklist to TEA

