



George West ISD

District of Innovation Plan

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. Under House Bill 1842, school districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code which “inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan.”

George West ISD seeks to create flexibility and opportunities for students in order to personalize and maximize learning at all levels of the district. The selection of exemptions contained within this plan were carefully chosen based on the needs of the local school district.

The term of the George West ISD District of Innovation Plan will be the five-year span beginning with the 2017-2018 school year through the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless the Board of Trustees should desire to terminate or amend the plan.

The term of the George West ISD District of Innovation Plan will be the five-year span. The current District of Innovation will expire on December 31, 2021. The newly adopted plan will be in effect on January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2026, unless the Board of Trustee should desire to terminate or amend the plan. The George West ISD Board of Trustees adopted the renewal of the District of Innovation on December 15, 2021.

GWISD seeks exemptions from the following provisions of the Texas Education Code:

- Uniform Start Date
- Minutes of Instruction and Length of the Instructional Day
- 90 Percent Attendance Requirement
- Teacher Certification and Field-Based Experience Requirement
- Teacher Contracts
- Probationary Contracts
- Student Discipline (DAEP)
- School District Depositories
- Inter-district Transfers

Uniform School Start Date

Exemption – TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812

Under current statute, students in Texas public schools may not begin school before the 4th Monday in August. The start and end date for the school year prevents school districts from building school calendars that meet the needs of all students. In addition, with a flexible start and end date to the school year, GWISD could offer greater opportunities for professional development for teachers, increased opportunities to provide remediation and/or enrichment for students, and a way to balance instructional time within semesters.

Minutes of Instruction and Length of the Instructional Day

Exemption – TEC 25.081, TEC 25.083, and TEC 25.082

GWISD will meet or exceed the 75,600 minutes of instruction (including intermissions and recesses) as required. GWISD will be exempt from the requirement that an instructional day must be at least 420 minutes/seven hours a day in length. Additionally, the district will be exempt from the requirements regarding school day interruptions. GWISD will be able to customize student schedules as needed in order to best meet the needs of students while ensuring that the 75,600 minutes of instruction are completed.

90 Percent Attendance Requirement

Exemption – TEC 25.092

Current statute requires students to be in attendance 90% of the time in order to receive credit for the course. This 90% rule awards credit for seat time rather than mastery of content. Furthermore, students who have the ability or desire to advance more rapidly are unable to do so. With an exemption, GWISD would be able to provide innovative options so that students could earn credit for courses based on content mastery, at their own pace.

Teacher Certification, Presentation of Certificates, Field-Based Experience Requirement and Parent Notification

Exemption – TEC 21.003, TEC 21.051, TEC 21.053, TEC 21.057

Under current statute, teacher certification requirements inhibit GWISD's ability to hire highly-skilled individuals to teach in certain content areas. GWISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to Career and Technical Education, Languages other than English, Science, Technology and Mathematics. Special Education and Bilingual education teachers would continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate (SBEC). GWISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question, however, when that is not reasonable possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire

individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Once hired, where applicable, the district will encourage teachers to obtain their appropriate certification. This flexibility will allow the District to hire individuals who best meet the needs of the students and provide the content knowledge that our students need to enter an increasingly innovative world.

Probationary Contracts

Exemption – TEC 21.102

Currently, probationary contract periods for newly hired teachers who have worked in public education for at least five of the last eight years cannot exceed one year. In certain situations, this limitation prevents the school district from fully determining a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. The preferred option for probationary contracts for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the school district is up to two years.

Teacher Contracts

Exemption- TEC.21.401 and DCB (Legal) DCB (Local)

Currently, Texas Education Code 21.401 requires a contract between the district and an educator to be a minimum of 10 months. Additionally, an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. With the recent change to a minimum of 75,600 instructional minutes, there is an impact to the number of days a student must attend school. This inhibits a district from adjusting the number of teacher workdays if needed.

Proposed

The proposal reduces a teacher contract days from 187 to a reduced length with no effect on teacher salaries. This will provide flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days and impact teacher recruitment.

Student Discipline

Exemption – TEC 37.007 (c), 37.010 (b)

The GWISD DAEP setting provides a structured system of discipline. A student who engages in documented serious misbehavior while in DAEP, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled. The Texas Education Code, however, makes no allowance for students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction, and is detrimental to the educational environment in DAEP, to be expelled.

With this exemption for GWISD, a student placed in a DAEP, who engages in documented persistent misbehavior, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled. All students expelled from DAEP for persistent misbehavior will be given the option of attending night school or Saturday school one day per week for the term of his/her expulsion in order to gain and/or maintain as many credits as possible during the period of expulsion. Transportation will not be provided.

School District Depositories

Exemption – TEC 45.206 and BDAE (Legal)

Districts are required to bid depository banking services at a minimum of every six years. There are a limited number of banking entities with the interest in serving and/or the ability to serve the financial needs of the District. In addition, the required bid process uses the time and efforts of district personnel that is better spent on other activities given our limited ability to change banks.

With this exemption, GWISD will no longer meet the requirement to bid every six years, but will continue to review banking services every 2 years, monitor the availability of services and pricing that local banks may offer, and bid for services as needed to support the District's financial needs.

Inter-district Transfers

Exemption – TEC 25.036

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. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants.

On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, George West ISD 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 suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

Uniform Group Coverage Program

Texas Education Code: §22.004(i)

Under Texas Education Code, Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverage under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.

GW District of Innovation Timeline

February 21, 2017 – 9:00 a.m.

Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Committee

February 22, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (*TEC 12A.001 (c)(1)*)

March 8, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.

Meeting with District Advisory Council to introduce District of Innovation Process

March 22, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (*TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*) Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (*TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*)

April 12, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.

DOI Committee meeting to develop Proposed Final Plan

April 20, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Committee provides plan update; gets input from Board

April 21, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.

District of Innovation plan posted on the district website (30 days) (*TEC 12A.005(a)(1)*)

Commissioner notified of Board's intent to vote on District of Innovation

May 17, 2017– 3:15 p.m.

Public meeting of DOI Committee to consider and approve Final Plan (*TEC 12A.005(a)(3)*)

May 24, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Board approval of Final Plan (*TEC 12A.005(b)*)

District of Innovation plan sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*) with required checklist

February 7, 2018 – 3:15 p.m.

Meeting with District Advisory Council to inform committee about possible new exemption related to Inter-District Student Transfers

May 2, 2018 – 3:15 p.m.

Meeting with District Advisory Council to approve changes to DOI Plan related to Inter-District Student Transfers

May 21, 2018 – 4:00 p.m.

Proposed Amended District of Innovation Plan posted on the district website (30 days) (*TEC 12A.005(a)(1)*)

June 20, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing to explain proposed amendment to 2017 DOI Plan

Board approval of Amended DOI Plan (*TEC 12A.005(b)*)

June 21, 2018

Amended DOI Plan sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*)

December 11, 2019 – 3:15 p.m.

Meeting with District Community Council to approve changes to DOI Plan related to providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverage under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.

December 18, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.

Proposed Amended District of Innovation Plan posted on the district website (30 days) (*TEC 12A.005(a)(1)*)

January 22, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing to explain proposed amendment to 2018 DOI Plan
Board approval of Amended DOI Plan (*TEC 12A.005(b)*)

January 23, 2020

Amended DOI Plan sent to Commissioner (*TEC 12A.005(a)(2)*)

September 29, 2021 – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting with the District Community Council to review and approve the proposed DOI timeline for the renewal and Amend presented to the District

October 11, 2021 – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting with District Advisory Council to approve renewal and changes to DOI Plan related to Teacher Certification, Presentation of Certificates, Field-Based Experience Requirement, and Parental Notification

October 15, 2021

Post the renewal and revised District of Innovation on the website for at least 30 days

November 16, 2021

Board of Trustees met to consider and approve the intent to renew the District of Innovation Plan

November 17, 2021

GWISD and Board of Trustees notifies the Commissioner of Education of the Board's intention to vote on the adoption for the renewal of the proposed DOI plan

December 8, 2021

District Advisory Committee (DAC) held a Public Hearing on the District of Innovation Plan.

December 13, 2021

District Advisory Committee (DAC) held a Public Hearing on the District of Innovation Plan and motioned to consider, approve and move forward in presenting the District of Innovation Plan (DOI) to the George West ISD Board of Trustees on December 15, 2021.

December 15, 2021

Board of Trustees adopted the renewal of the District of Innovation for another five (5) years. The current plan will expire on December 31, 2021 and the newly adopted plan will take effect on January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026.

March 30, 2023

Meeting with District Advisory Council to approve amendment to DIO Plan related to Teacher Contracts. (TEC § 11.251)

June 13, 2023

Board Approval of Amended DOI Plan (TEC § 12A.007)

June 19, 2023

District of Innovation plan sent to Commissioner (TEC 12A.005(a)(2))