

Loraine ISD

District of Innovation Provisions

Background

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which allows public school districts to declare exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code by becoming a designated District of Innovation. On September 18, 2017, during the regularly scheduled board meeting, a public hearing was conducted to consider whether Loraine ISD should develop a plan for designation as a District of Innovation. The Loraine Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution to consider developing a local innovation plan. The board of trustees requested the campus to discuss and develop the Local Innovation Plan. The plan that was developed will expire in September and it is the desire to renew the plan.

The committee met on March 9, 2022 to review and discuss the innovation plan and to make any modifications, if needed. The DRAFT was presented to the Loraine Board of Trustees at the scheduled March 28th Board Meeting for review. The DRAFT plan was placed online on April 4, 2022 and will remain online until May 5th for public feedback.

Committee Members

Dustin Anders, Superintendent
Martin Tucker, Principal
Parker Brooks, Business Manager
Tabatha Delgado, Parent

Jacob Popham, Teacher
Kit Womble, Teacher
Leo Whiteley, Business Member
Susan Sanchez, Community Member

Loraine Board of Trustees

Frank Garcia, Jr. , President
John Chaney, Vice President
Dwayne Smith, Secretary
Joe Lujan, Member

Duane Linam, Member
Daphne Fowler, Member
Brian Butler, Member

Texas Education Code Exemptions

District staff in conjunction with the Local Innovation Committee reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determine which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the education opportunities of the students who attend Loraine ISD.

Uniform Start Date – *TEC §25.0811*

State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless they are designated as year-round districts.

Rationale for Exemption

The flexibility of the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the need of the students, the school and the community. In addition, this flexibility allows the district to better align its starting date to accommodate the start date of the colleges in which the district uses for dual credit courses. Another benefit of exempting this restriction is it allows the school to look at starting classes as a short week which can ease the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and/or high school. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help better balance the amount of days in each semester.

Teacher Certification – TEC §21.003, §21.053, and §21.057

State law directs that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person hold 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 exemption will not be applicable to special education and/or bilingual/ESL teachers, as they must continue to be SBEC certified.

Rationale for Exemption

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to recruit and hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, as well as career and technical teachers. Loraine ISD is located in a rural area which limits course offerings and utilize district wide. Allowing the local district control in order to better enable students to obtain the educational benefits of such course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

Contract Service Days – TEC §21.401

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a maximum of 187 days of service to the district.

Rationale for Exemption

Loraine ISD believes the determination of the number of days required to fulfill professional staff contract days should be a local decision. By utilizing the districts goals and needs of the students and community, the district would locally decide on the number of staff required days. The minimum number of days for a 10-month contract employee will not exceed the 187 days nor will be less than 165. This flexibility provides the opportunity for Loraine ISD to explore other calendar options to better fit the needs of the students and community, such as a 4 day school week.

Professional Development – TEC §11.253, §21.404, §21.451, and §21.458

State law currently requires a specified number of minutes for teacher's planning and preparation time, oversight by the campus-level committee established under §11.253, as well as only allows districts to assign mentors to teachers with less than 2 years of teaching experience.

Rationale for Exemption

It is necessary that local districts have the flexibility to schedule weekly, and/or bi weekly instructional meetings during the workday without compromising instructional time. In addition, eliminating the oversight provisions in §11.253 will allow for flexible, responsive staff development activities without having to first be approved by a committee which reduces the time teachers much take from their time to attend such meetings.

Providing mentors to teachers in need should be a local decision and should be available for any teacher, regardless of their years of service in teaching.

Term and Implementation

The term for this plan is five (5) years unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event Loraine ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee and follow all procedures for amending this plan.

This innovation plan and specific implementation of the plan will be developed by the appropriate campus and principal. Adjustments to Loraine ISD Board Policy and other district policies will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees.