



TYLER ISD
SUCCESSFUL STUDENT OUTCOMES

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Adopted June 19, 2017

Revised September 2020

Renewed March 2022

Revised August 1, 2024

Renewed October 19, 2026

Vision Statement:

We focus on successful student outcomes.

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.

Term

The term of the plan will begin with Board approval, October 2026, and terminate at the end of the 2030-2031 school year, unless otherwise rescinded or renewed by the District of Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees. The District of Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District. [[Refer to Tyler ISD Board Policy AF](#)].

**First Day of Instruction
(TEC 25.0811)**

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

- A. Insufficient professional learning time.
- B. Texas Education Agency will require innovation plans instead of waivers for adjustments to the first and last day of school.
- C. Insufficient planning and preparation time before the first day of instruction and throughout the school year.
- D. Unequal instructional time in the fall and spring semesters.
- E. Unable to begin the year before the 4th Monday in August (especially when it falls late in the year, i.e. 8/28/17).
- F. Unable to end the year before Memorial Day, if reasonable and/or possible.
- G. Traditional calendars result in lost instructional time.
- H. District and college calendars are not aligned for dual credit/dual enrollment courses.
- I. Unnatural breaks throughout the school year.

II. Innovation Plan:

To allow for a school calendar that fits the local needs of our community, emphasizes active learning, college & career readiness, and social and emotional needs of students, Tyler ISD will:

- A. Provide Tyler ISD Board of Trustees the flexibility to consider beginning instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August and develop a school calendar that meets the needs of the district.
 - 1. This will enable Tyler ISD to improve active learning by balancing the amount of instructional time in each semester.
 - 2. This will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction before and after the winter break.
 - 3. Creates balanced instructional time before STAAR, EOC, AP exams, etc.
 - 4. Allows additional time for internships and industrial certification opportunities.
 - 5. Provides flexibility for specific campuses (based on innovative, choice accountability status, or other factors) to start earlier/end later.
- B. Tyler ISD will continue to involve stakeholders such as community members/groups, teaching staff, administrators, and parents to make recommendations to the Tyler ISD Board regarding the calendar.
 - 1. The start date will be no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August of each year.
 - 2. The committee will recommend a calendar that addresses student instruction paired with a focused professional development plan, meets/exceeds the statutorily required instructional minutes (75,600), along with traditions and expectations of the community.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction (TEC §25.081)

TEC §25.081 (HB 2610): For each school year, each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses.

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

- A. Pre-Kindergarten students have an easier time transitioning into school if they are not arriving and dismissing at the same time as older students.
- B. Pre-Kindergarten teachers are able to more closely monitor their students with inflexible arrival and dismissal time.
- C. Pre-Kindergarten teachers are unable to access their full 45-minute planning time and duty-free lunch for half-day programs.
- D. High school students who attend alternative education setting often need a flexible schedule to manage their life circumstances.
- E. Flexibility for innovative adjustments and offerings are restricted.
- F. The Texas Education Agency is no longer offering a waiver to accommodate special programs such as Dropout Recovery programs.

II. Innovation Plan

- A. Pre-Kindergarten

The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. For half-day programs such as Prekindergarten and the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) the required minute requirement would be 37,800 minutes.

 - 1. Tyler ISD will offer a 210-minute school day for half-day programs.

This will allow each teacher to have a morning and an afternoon group of students along with their conference period and duty-free lunch within the regular school day. This 210-minute exemption will result in the students receiving 35,700 minutes of instruction during their half-day program.
 - 2. Tyler ISD will offer a 420-minute school day for full day programs.

This will allow the campus or district to create flexible schedules for Prekindergarten students' arrival and dismissal times to provide the greatest degree of supervision. A 420-minute day would provide 71,400 minutes.
- B. Dropout Prevention Program
 - 1. Dropout Prevention programs (for example RISE or innovative school structures) offer an alternative education program designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students. These programs offer opportunities for students to experience personalized or non-traditional educational environments, accelerate credit attainment, acquire credits at a faster rate, and mitigate credit deficiencies. RISE prevents students from dropping out of school by providing an alternate route to graduation for students who have not been successful in the traditional school due to special challenges. These challenges include (but are not limited to) parent or parenting students; over-age students; family hardships created by economic situations that result in the student having to work instead of attend school; being credit deficient for various reasons; and/or having difficulty passing STAAR End-of-Course exams.

2. Community members without high school diplomas have a lower earning power and require more community assistance than citizens who earn high school diplomas.
3. This exemption will allow Tyler ISD to offer dropout prevention programs, with fewer instructional minutes, designed to fit the needs of at-risk students or students who need an educational experience different from what is available in a comprehensive setting. The student's family and personal situation will determine the minutes per day of instruction and the type of instruction needed to accomplish student's academic goals.

Option A - Students will attend as few as 240 minutes per day; resulting in 40,800 instructional minutes per year.

Option B - Students will participate in a hybrid version where they will attend 240 minutes of instruction on campus and 34,800 minutes of instruction through virtual/online instruction.

Option C - Students will participate in 75,600 minutes of face-to-face instruction during the school day.

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (the 90% rule)
(TEC §25.092)

TEC §25.092 a): Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 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. (Board Policy Ref: FEC Attendance for Credit).

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

- A. Limited student access to internships
- B. Limited student access to non-traditional extracurricular experiences
- C. Limited student access to field-based experiences and enrichment opportunities
- D. Lack of individualized learning plans and student schedule flexibility
- E. Limited blended learning and distance learning opportunities
- F. Limited opportunity to complete online coursework away from the campus

II. Innovation Plan

Tyler ISD will utilize local graduation plan procedures to establish off site internships, courses, and/or other organized learning opportunities that are of academic value that could be considered “in kind” seat time. In which case, the credit and or grade could be granted.

- A. The campus will convene an Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) to pre-approve the “in kind” hours. The principal has the final approval authority of each individualized plan.
- B. The Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) will be the final determining factor in granting credit or final grade.
- C. The student must demonstrate mastery of the content before he/she is granted credit or the final grade.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION: General Education
(TEC 21.003) (TEC 21.0032) (TEC 21.057)

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.

TEC § 21.0032 prevents Districts from indefinitely utilizing DOI plans to hire uncertified teachers for core subjects. Restrictions are as follows:

- K–5 Math & Reading Bans: Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, districts can no longer use DOI exemptions to hire uncertified teachers for kindergarten through 5th-grade math and reading.
- Foundational Exemption Sunset: By the 2027–2028 school year, all DOI exemptions for core foundational subjects (including science and social studies) are completely banned.
- Any existing uncertified foundational teacher hired under previous DOI rules must achieve full state certification by the 2029–2030 school year. The Board approved compliance extension plan will be followed during this multi-year transition.

TEC § 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

- A. A lack of highly qualified staff for innovative or hard to staff courses.
- B. Archaic, antiquated, and overregulated certification rules determined by traditional grade groupings.
- C. Regional and School Finance barriers such as location, salary ceilings, and other cost of living adjustments.
- D. Perception and support from state elected officials, regulatory statute, and bureaucratic rules as they influence overall impact on recruitment of quality staff.
- E. A lack of teachers with specialized certifications.
- F. Inability to hire subject-matter experts for specialized courses.
- G. Limited flexibility in scheduling and staff assignments.

II. Innovation Plan

Tyler ISD will continue its quest for highly effective educators.

- A. All decisions regarding teacher certification and assignments will be decided locally, to serve the needs of students, the district, and community.
- B. A campus principal may submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee a request to allow a SBEC certified teacher to teach a *grade level* that is outside his/her state (SBEC) certification.
 - 1. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the SBEC certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach a grade level outside of his/her certification; along with the support that will be provided for the teacher.
 - 2. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment

should also be noted.

- C. The campus principal may submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee a request to allow a SBEC certified teacher to teach *one subject* in a related field for which he/she is not certified.
 - 1. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the SBEC certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach a grade level outside of his/her certification; along with the support that will be provided for the teacher.
 - 2. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

- D. Tyler ISD will allow District Teaching Certifications based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway.
 - 1. An individual with certain qualifications who is not state certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in areas not limited in House Bill 2 of the 89th Texas Legislative session under restriction TEC § 21.0032.
 - 2. A person seeking District Teaching Certifications should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position.
 - 3. The principal must submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee, a request for District Teaching Certifications outlining all the individual's credentials/qualifications.
 - 4. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - a. Professional work experience.
 - b. Formal training and education, including an associate's degree (CTE) and Bachelors/Masters/Doctoral Degrees.
 - c. Active professional relevant industry certification or registration.
 - d. Combination of work experience, training, and education.
 - e. Demonstration of successful experience working with students.
 - f. Bachelor's Degree may be waived in certain CTE courses
 - 5. The Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Designee will then approve the request if he/she believes the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required for the position and feels the individual could be an asset to students.
 - 6. An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will not receive a term contract but will work on a probationary contract.
 - 7. Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - 8. The Tyler ISD Board of Trustees will be notified no less than one (1) time per semester of the number of teachers who have District Teaching Certifications. Teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency, as the district will be exempt from notification regulations.
 - 9. An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
 - 10. An employee working under a District Teaching Certification will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS **(TEC 21.102(b))**

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.

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

Five (5) months is not enough time to determine effectiveness for newly hired staff (who qualify for Chapter 21 contracts) before contract renewals are due in the Spring.

II. Innovation Plan

- A. For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Tyler ISD; that have been employed in a capacity that qualifies for a Chapter 21 contract (refer to qualifying positions per TEC 21.102) in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Tyler ISD shall be for a period of two (2) years with probationary contracts issued for each of the two (2) years.
 - 1. Allowing sufficient time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.
 - 2. Allowing for professional development to enhance professional growth.
- B. After the first (1) year of the probationary period in Tyler ISD, a teacher could have an opportunity to move into a term contract if he/she meets the following 5 criteria:
 - 1. A score of "Proficient" in 12 of the 16 Domains on the T-TESS.
 - 2. Student outcomes that indicate either
 - a. 60% of students met growth projections as indicated by the District's chosen assessment. (K-8th grade).
 - b. 60% of students met Level II or above standard for STAAR (3rd – EOC).
 - c. Locally developed student outcomes for non-core teachers.
 - 3. Attended all district and campus required Professional Development.
 - 4. Positive recommendation from the current campus principal.
 - 5. Concurrence from the office of the Chief of Staff and Deputy Superintendent of Administration.

**CLASS SIZE –Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – 4th Grade
(TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)**

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes.

TEC §25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.

I. Challenges Prior to District of Innovation

- A. Newcomers may be forced to attend schools that are not in their neighborhood.
- B. Classes are split several weeks after school starts; severing bonds between teachers and students.
- C. Highly effective and qualified teachers are difficult to find after school starts.
- D. The financial impact of hiring one teacher for one or two students over the ratio insignificant.
- E. Continued State control over the policies and procedures related to class-size rather than local control.

II. Innovation Strategies

It is the philosophy of Tyler ISD that lower class sizes have a positive impact on Kindergarten - 4th grade students and the district does not seek to unilaterally create larger class sizes. We believe, however, that appropriate class sizes can be monitored and maintained at the local level without the necessity of waivers from the Texas Education Agency.

- A. Class size ratios will be reported to the Tyler ISD Board of Trustees at a minimum of once per semester.
- B. Hiring decisions will be based on projected 22:1 ratios.
- C. Tyler ISD will make every effort to start each school year with enough teachers to establish a homeroom student/teacher ratio of 22:1 per Kindergarten - 4th grade homeroom class.
- D. Classrooms that reach a 23:1 ratio will be provided support through a paraprofessional position. This will allow incoming students to stay in their preferred or neighborhood schools rather than being transported to different campuses.
- E. If the student/teacher ratio averaged across a grade level needs to go over 24:1, parents of all students affected in each affected class will be notified.
- F. In the event that the class average across any given grade level (Kindergarten - 4) reaches 24:1 during the first grading period of the year or spring semester, Tyler ISD will actively seek an additional qualified teacher. Campus administration can make hiring decisions based on expertise and qualifications, rather than ratios.
- G. A teacher may be hired at any time during the school year, in accordance with district guidelines.
- H. A TEA waiver request and related notifications shall not be necessary when a Kindergarten- 4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio, allowing the local school board to make the ultimate determination.

Grievance Policy
(Exemptions from Texas Education Code §§ 26A.001–26A.004 and § 26.011(a))

Benefit of the Exemption

Local practices and policies will allow the District to efficiently and effectively manage and respond to formal complaints or grievances from employees, parents, or community members.

Submitted to the board for approval is flexibility from Texas Education Code §§ 26A.001–26A.004 and from the language in Texas Education Code § 26.011(a) requiring a grievance procedure “that complies with Chapter 26A,” to allow Tyler ISD to maintain local control over its grievance policies, procedures, and timelines.

Chapter 26A establishes statewide grievance requirements, including extended timelines for filing complaints and appeals, opportunities to amend complaints and supplement the record during the grievance process, and other procedural requirements that may delay prompt resolution and make it more difficult to address concerns at the lowest appropriate administrative level.

Tyler ISD will follow its locally adopted grievance policies, including FNG(LOCAL), DGBA(LOCAL), and GF(LOCAL), which provide orderly procedures for parent, student, employee, and community complaints; require timely submission of grievances; support thorough documentation, investigation, review, and response; and allow the District to allocate administrative resources efficiently while resolving concerns as promptly and effectively as possible.

This exemption supports local control, timely problem-solving, transparent recordkeeping, accountability, and the Board’s ability to address grievance outcomes with the Superintendent as appropriate. This exemption does not exempt the District from requirements or authority of the Texas Commissioner of Education or the Texas Education Agency that are not subject to local exemption, including those referenced in Texas Education Code §§ 26A.001(f), 26A.001(h), and 26A.001(i).