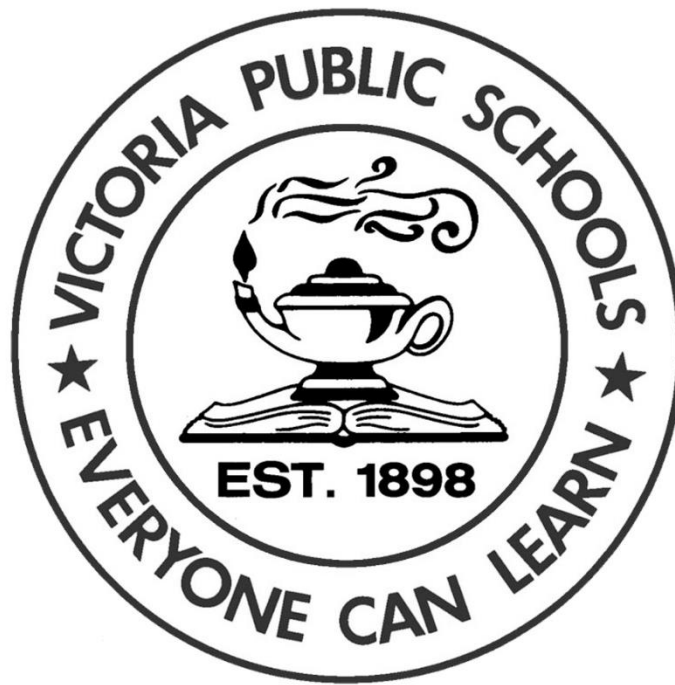


Victoria

Independent School District



Local Innovation Plan 2021-2026

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas district to qualify as a District of Innovation. Districts of Innovation can gain local control of certain operations that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

District of Innovation Overview

The Texas Legislature during the 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill (HB) 1842. HB 1842 provides the opportunity for Texas public schools to be designated as Districts of Innovation.

Victoria ISD was one of the first school districts in Texas to take advantage of a new state law and explore becoming a designated “District of Innovation,” gaining more local control over the educational process in our community. The Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution January 21, 2016, to initiate a multi-step process that would give the district flexibility and the freedom from state mandates in certain areas like school calendars, class sizes, attendance and discipline, and teacher certification. The District of Innovation was adopted on March 24, 2016 and was good for five years, March 2021 marks five years for the VISD 2016-2021 District of Innovation. Therefore, VISD will need to complete the process of creating a District of Innovation Plan for the years 2021- 2026.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will allow a local school district to consider pursuing specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, budgeting, or other local district concepts and ideas. HB 1842 allows for a local public-school district to develop a plan which may have greater local control and the ability to gain exemption from many Texas Education Code requirements.

The Districts of Innovation legislation provides for a local public-school district to develop a plan which includes exemptions from many of the state laws that are not applicable to open enrollment school districts (charter schools). Laws that may be exempted include:

- Site-based decision-making processes (to the extent required by state law)
- Uniform school start date
- Minimum minutes of instruction
- Class size ratio
- The 90 percent attendance rule (compulsory attendance still applies)
- Student discipline (code of conduct and restrictions on restraint and seclusion still apply)
- Teacher certification (federal law still applies)
- Teacher contracts
- Teacher benefits, including state minimum salary schedule, duty-free lunch, and planning periods.
- Teacher appraisal system

The District of Innovation plan may not include exemptions to the following:

- Elected boards of trustees.
- Powers and duties of school boards, superintendents, and principals

- PEIMS
- Criminal history record checks and educator misconduct reporting
- Curriculum and graduation requirements
- Bilingual education
- Special education
- Prekindergarten
- Academic accountability
- Financial accountability
- Open meetings
- Public records
- Purchasing under the Texas Local Government Code and conflicts of interest
- Nepotism

Districts of Innovation Process:

- Initiated by a resolution of the board of trustees or a petition signed by the majority of the members of the district-level advisory committee.
- After the resolution or petition the board of trustees shall hold a public hearing to receive input on the district pursuing an innovation plan.
- The Board of Trustees may vote to appoint a committee to develop a plan or decline to pursue the designation as a District of Innovation.
- If the Board of Trustees votes to pursue the development of the innovation plan, a planning committee is to be approved by the board.
- The committee develops the plan which is customized for the local needs of the district and must identify the Texas Education Code provisions from which the District of Innovation should be exempted.
- The committee's plan must be presented to the District Advisory Committee who will hold a public meeting and then will vote on the plan. The plan must receive a majority vote from the District Advisory Committee to be sent to the Board of Trustees for their review and vote.
- The final plan must be posted online for 30 days before the board may vote on the plan.
- The Commissioner of Education does not approve the plan but must be notified by the district and receive a copy of the innovation plan.
- The Board of Trustees must approve the plan with a two-thirds majority vote.
- The local District of Innovation Plan may have a term of five years and may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees in the same manner as the initial plan was approved.

VISD Timeline for District of Innovation Events:

- **Tuesday, January 5, 2021**
 - Initial meeting with Administrative leaders to identify potential District of Innovation Task Force,
 - Review the District of Innovation process and timeline.
 - Identify potential areas for inclusion in the District of Innovation request.
- **Monday, January 11, 2021 – 3:30pm-4:30pm TEAMS**
 - Meet with District Education Committee to discuss proposed DOI process and identify DEC members interested in serving on the DOI Task Force.
- **Friday, January 15, 2021 – 2:00-3:00pm TEAMS**
 - Review Work and get update on resources available from TEA
- **Thursday, January 21, 2021- Regular Board of Trustees meeting through Zoom.**
 - Board of Trustees approval of a resolution to initiate the process of exploring the option of designating Victoria Independent School District as a District of Innovation (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))
 - Public hearing to explain the process of becoming a District of Innovation and to hear from the community (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)
 - Board of Trustees approval to pursue the designation of District of Innovation, and the appointment of a Task Force to develop a plan (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)
- **Friday, January 22, 2021- Committee Discussion and Review of DOI Exemptions**
- **Friday, January 28, 2021 – 1:00pm TEAMS**
 - Task Force develops exemptions and plan for DOI (District of Innovation).
 - A Thought Exchange is conducted regarding draft DOI.
- **Thursday, February 4, 2021 – 4:00pm – 5:00pm Zoom**
 - Joint meeting of the DOI Task Force and the District of Education Committee to review and discuss draft plan and hold a public hearing on the draft Victoria DOI plan. (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))
 - Approval of final plan by District Education Committee to submit to the Board of Trustees.
- **Friday, February 5, 2021 – 10:00 am**
 - District posts District of Innovation plan for public comment (30 days minimum) (TEC 12A.005 (a)(1))
 - Commissioner notified of Board's intent to vote on the District of Innovation Plan
- **Thursday, March 11, 2021 – 6:00 pm**
 - Present District of Innovation plan to Board of Trustees for final approval.
 - Board approval of the Victoria District of Innovation plan by at least a 2/3 majority (TEC12A.005(a)(1))
 - District of Innovation Plan and Figure 19 TAC 102.12307(d) sent to Commissioner (TEC 12A.004(a)(2))



Victoria ISD Board of Trustees

102 Profit Drive, Victoria, TX 77901 | Phone: (361) 576-3131 | Fax: (361) 788-9643

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING THE OPTION OF DESIGNATING VICTORIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

Whereas, the 84th Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation; and

Whereas, Texas school districts designated as a District of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state requirements which affords traditional public schools with many of the same freedoms that apply to open-enrollment charter schools; and

Whereas, the mission of Victoria Independent School District (VISD) is to provide rigorous, relevant learning and life experiences so that all students contribute positively to society; and this legislation empowers local communities to be creative and innovative, while also providing greater local control in the decision-making process; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees believes that decisions affecting the students of Victoria Independent School District are best made at the local level by those who know our students, district, and community; and

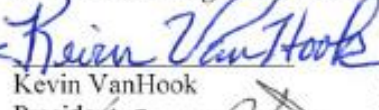
Whereas, the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees has a strategic plan that supports customization and innovation; and

Whereas, HB 1842 requires districts seeking to be designated as a District of Innovation to develop a local innovation plan that allows for increased freedom from certain state mandates; and


Whereas, the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing and receive feedback from stakeholders to consider the development of a local innovation plan; following the public hearing, the Board of Trustees may decline to pursue the designation or may appoint a committee to develop a plan in accordance with chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code;

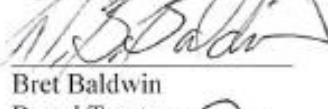
Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Victoria Independent School District Board of Trustees initiates the process of exploring and considering the option of designating VISD as a District of Innovation under HB 1842.

Witness these signatures on the 21st day of January, 2021.

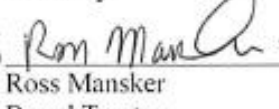

Kevin VanHook
President


Tami Keeling
Vice President



Mike Mercer
Secretary


Bret Baldwin
Board Trustee


Dr. Estella De Los Santos
Board Trustee


Ross Mansker
Board Trustee


Margaret Pruett
Board Trustee


Dr. Quintin Shepherd
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Quintin Shepherd	Kevin VanHook	Tami Keeling	Mike Mercer	Bret Baldwin	Dr. Estella De Los Santos	Ross Mansker	Margaret Pruett
Superintendent	President	Vice President	Secretary	Trustee	Trustee	Trustee	Trustee

The Victoria Independent School District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or any other basis prohibited by law for admission, treatment, or participation in its educational programs, services and activities, or employment.

District of Innovation Task Force

Name	Task Force Member Position
Dr. Quintin Shepherd	Superintendent
Dr. Greg Bonewald	Deputy Superintendent of Operations
Dr. Susanne Carroll	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Melissa Correll	Director of Innovation
Larry Davis	Executive Director of Secondary Instruction and Talent Development
Dr. Stanton Lawrence	Assistant Superintendent of Administration
Dawn Maroney	Director of Student Services
Tammy Nobles	Executive Director of Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention
Tammy Sestak	Executive Director of Elementary Instruction and Talent Development
Ashley Scott	Executive Director of Communications
Frances Koch	Assistant Superintendent of Budget and Finance
Carla Schaefer	Director of Assessment and Accountability
Selina Perez	District Education Committee Patti Welder Teacher

District Education Committee Member

Name	Campus/ Position
Jennifer Young	Aloe
Stephanie Baumann	Chandler
Sandra Pruitt	Crain
Kimberly Allen	Deleon
Blake Jacobusse	Dudley
Trisha Forester	Hopkins
Joycelyn Drozd	Mission Valley
Sarah Wauson	O'Connor
Melissa Stolle	Rowland
Patricia Rowland	Torres
Cory Bena	Schorlemmer
Jo Ann Winston	Shields
Nachieli Rendon	Smith
Kirsty Hagan-Padoven	Cade

Karen Matak	Howell
Sonia Mejia	Patti Welder
Kenny Smith	Stroman
John Wright	CTI
Katy Polk	JJC
Katherine Munoz	Liberty Academy
Kim Valdez	Liberty DAEP
Amanda Heinold	Victoria East
Deena Sartor	Victoria West
Susanne Carroll	Asst. Superintendent, CIA
Carla Schaefer	Director of Assessment & Accountability
Melissa Correll	Director of Innovation
Regina Bryan	Health Services Coordinator
Michelle Yates	Director State and Federal Programs
Alejandro Mojica	Director of Bilingual/ESL
Rachel Nessel	Parent - Torres

Victoria Independent School District

INNOVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On January 21, 2021, the Victoria Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On January 21, 2021, the Board appointed a 12-member District of Innovation Task Force ("Committee") and the District Education Committee comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators to develop and proposed a plan. The Task Force met on January 5, 2021 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The Task Force met again on January 28, 2021, to finalize the draft plan to present to the twenty-nine-member District Education Committee. The Draft Victoria ISD Local Innovation Plan was then shared in a public forum composed of District Education Committee members February 4, 2021 to accept input on the proposed District of Innovation Plan. Based on the input received from the District Education Committee, the Committee adjusted the plan, and then approved the plan by a unanimous vote. The VISD Board of Trustees will consider the Plan at its meeting on March 11, 2021.

TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning March 11, 2021 and ending March 12, 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

AREAS OF INNOVATION

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

VISD requested areas of Innovation are connected the district Strategic Initiatives that align to the following fifteen findings. These findings were developed through a committee made of over seventy staff, students, community, parents, and teachers and are the key drivers of all work in VISD.

Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning

1.1 A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

Digital Ecosystem

2.1 We believe teaching and learning is enhanced by equitable access to a technology-rich environment.

Effective Communication

3.1 We believe effective two-way communication is the life blood that builds trust and ownership with our community.

Finding Their "And"

4.1 All VISD students will find their "And": they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

Community-based Accountability

5.1 We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

Talent Development

6.1 We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible.

6.2 We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

Equity

7.1 We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.

Social Emotional Learning

8.1 We believe a socially and emotionally healthy community is essential.

8.2 We believe students and teachers must be seen first as people before they are seen as learners and professionals.

Facilities

9.1 We believe facilities play an integral role to inspire teaching and empower learning.

9.2 We believe safe and secure facilities and process are vital to creating a healthy, productive environment for our students and staff.

9.3 We believe having well-maintained facilities creates pride in our district and honors our commitment to our community.

Community Partnerships

10.1 Community partnerships and shared resources are foundational to creating a premier district.

10.2 As primary partners, we will support families to instill the value of education and foundational life skills for students.

Innovation Title: Certification Requirements
Texas Education Code Chapters: TEC 21.003-Certification Requirements: (a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. TEC 21.057 Parental Notification: (a) states that a school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. (d) For purposes of this section, "inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher" includes: (A) an individual serving on an emergency certificate or (B) an individual who does not hold any certificate or permit.
Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision: DBA (Legal) (Local) DF (Legal) (Local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 21.003(a):

1. The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) courses. In order to provide more students with the opportunity to take such courses and obtain industry certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such individuals in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. This arrangement also provides realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching. This problem will exacerbate as Innovation Campuses come online within our District.
2. In the event the District cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit exemption requests from certification requirements by applying for either a: Temporary Classroom Assignment Permit (TCAP), Emergency Permit, Teacher Certification Waiver or School District Teaching Permit. No exceptions will be made toward the required certifications for Bilingual or Special Education Certifications. Teachers required for those positions will continue to be fully certified with both a teaching certificate as well as the Bilingual or Special Education Certification. This allows for District flexibility as the current requirements and submission process is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.057(a):

This process requires an extensive notification process be undertaken even when the teacher chosen for the position has been vetted and selected based on the vast amount of knowledge or content experience, he/she possesses. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed correction's officer teaching a criminal justice course, or a retired CPA teaching an entry-level accounting course.

Innovation:

First and foremost, the District will maintain its current high expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification. However, when that is not reasonably 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. When this exception to certification requirements must be made for hard-to-fill assignments or to allow certified educators to teach courses outside of the original area of certification, the District will not submit exemption requests (waivers, permits, etc.) to the Commissioner of Education. Instead, we will use a locally developed plan for vetting an individual's qualifications for an assignment and for placement decisions. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

Candidate qualifications may include a combination of professional work experience, formal training and education which demonstrate subject-matter competency, relevant industry licensure, certificate or registration, or any combination of work experience, training, education, or industry-credential related to the subject matter he/she will be teaching. Campuses will submit a written request to the Superintendent or Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention Office designee for approval prior to employing a person in a teaching position if:

--the individual has professional or vocational experience but does not possess a traditional teaching certificate yet is highly credentialed to teach certain courses or

--the individual will be teaching a course outside of his/her certified field for one year in grades K-12.

This written request will outline the reason for the request, and it will document the credentials possessed by the recommended teacher which qualify him/her to teach the course.

Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

Because the District's internal vetting process will consider the persons hired in these positions to be appropriately qualified, a special notification to the parents of students in these classes stating the teacher does not hold a traditional teaching certificate will not be provided.

Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:

Talent Development - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

Finding Their "And" - All VISD students will find their "And" and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

Innovation Title: Probationary Contracts
<p>Texas Education Code Chapters:</p> <p>TEC 21.102 Probationary Contract: (b) states that the probationary period 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 by the district.</p>
<p>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:</p> <p>DCA (Legal)</p>
<p>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</p> <p>TEC 21.102 Probationary Contract:</p> <p>Having worked in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with VISD does not in and of itself justify a term contract at the conclusion of year one. A one-year probationary period is not always sufficient to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of a classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse or school counselor (as defined by TEC 21.002) and to formulate contract decisions to meet employment timelines. In addition, the TTESS and TPESS are growth models and may require more than one year to implement.</p>
<p>Innovation:</p> <p>Since Texas Education Code 21.002 defines “teacher” to be defined as “classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor,” then this exemption would apply to all these job categories and could extend the probationary period for an additional year (up to two years total) even if the employee has previously worked in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district. This would be addressed on a case-by-case basis per employee impacted.</p>
<p>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</p> <p>Talent Development - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students’ success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.</p> <p>Finding Their “And” - All VISD students will find their “And” and they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.</p>

Innovation Title: Teacher Planning and Preparation Time
<p>Texas Education Code Chapters:</p> <p>TEC 21.404-Planning and Preparation Time: states that each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.</p>
<p>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:</p> <p>DL (Legal)</p>
<p>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</p> <p>TEC 21.404-Planning and Preparation Time: <i>The rigid 45-minute daily minimum makes flexible scheduling a challenge and limits opportunities for increased planning and collaboration time.</i></p>
<p>Innovation:</p> <p>All teachers would be guaranteed 450 total minutes within each two-week period (minimum of 30 consecutive minutes daily) for instructional preparation, conferences, and evaluating students' work and planning. Scheduling is a critical component in allowing for vertical, horizontal, and cross-campus collaboration. Flexibility in planning and preparation time daily allotments would allow for opportunities for increased collaboration between educators. The District would create procedures to provide the adequate time educators need to plan, but it would allow for innovative scheduling for things such as Professional Learning Communities.</p>
<p>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</p> <p>Talent Development - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.</p> <p>Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.</p>

Innovation Title: Alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program
<p>Texas Education Code Chapters:</p> <p>TEC 22.004(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a district participating in the uniform group coverage program established under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, may not make group health coverage available to its employees under this section after the date on which the program of coverages</p> <p>Corresponding Board Policies:</p> <p>CRD(LEGAL) and CRD(LOCAL)</p>
<p>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</p> <p>TEC 22.004(i) states a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all Victoria ISD employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for employees and at a lower cost. This provision is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter and seek to attract, recruit and retain a highly effective workforce.</p>
<p>Innovation:</p> <p>Increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs.</p>
<p>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</p> <p>Talent Development</p> <p>6.1 We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. Therefore, we will be a destination work culture by focusing on current and future talent. We further believe giving a sense of pride in our school district and schools should be a focus to invest the community in our district and draw staff to our district.</p> <p>Equity</p> <p>7.1 We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch. Therefore, we will identify and remove barriers to access for staff and students.</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning</p> <p>8.1 We believe a socially and emotionally healthy community is essential. Therefore, we will improve the quality of life by leveraging partnerships in healthcare, transportation, housing, welfare, safety, and civic responsibility. Further, we will create a culture of wellness where individuals can recognize, regulate, and respond to challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>8.2 We believe students and teachers must be seen first as people before they are seen as learners and Professionals. Therefore, we will have systems and resources in place to ensure that teachers feel valued, supported, trusted, and cared for so they can meet the needs of their students.</p>

Innovation Title: Operation of Schools**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

Sec. 25.081. OPERATION OF SCHOOLS. (a) Except as authorized under Subsection (b) of this section, Section [25.0815](#), Section [25.084](#), or Section [29.0821](#), for each school year each school district must operate for at least 75,600 minutes, including time allocated for instruction, intermissions, and recesses for students.

(b) The commissioner may approve the operation of schools for fewer than the number of minutes required under Subsection (a) if disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity causes the closing of schools.

(c) If the commissioner does not approve reduced operation time under Subsection (b), a school district may add additional minutes to the end of the district's normal school hours as necessary to compensate for minutes lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

(d) The commissioner may adopt rules to implement this section, including rules:

(1) for the application, on the basis of the minimum minutes of operation required by Subsection (a), of any provision of this title that refers to a minimum number of days of instruction under this section;

(2) to determine the minutes of operation that are equivalent to a day;

(3) defining minutes of operation and instructional time; and

(4) establishing the minimum number of minutes of instructional time required for a full-day and a half-day program to meet the time requirements under Subsection (a).

(e) A school district or education program is exempt from the minimum minutes of operation requirement if the district's or program's average daily attendance is calculated under Section [48.005\(j\)](#).

(f) The commissioner may proportionally reduce the amount of funding a district receives under Chapter [46](#), [48](#), or [49](#) and the average daily attendance calculation for the district if the district operates on a calendar that provides fewer minutes of operation than required under Subsection (a).

(g) A school district may not provide student instruction on Memorial Day. If a school district would be required to provide student instruction on Memorial Day to compensate for minutes of instruction lost

Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:

EB (Legal) School Year

EC (Legal) School Day

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Although Texas and the Texas Education Agency Commissioner encourage innovation in the classroom, school districts receive funding on an antiquated model confined to a designated accounting period for calculating Average Daily Attendance. Districts are dissuaded from pursuing non-traditional models due to loss of funding. Victoria ISD is requesting alternative attendance accounting practices for students participating in non-traditional programs and flexibility in the design of meeting the 75,600 minutes of instruction. The goals are to

1. Create opportunities for unpaid work-based learning outside of school hours, and
2. Create opportunities for academic learning outside of traditional school hours using a blended learning model or other non-traditional methods of instruction.
3. Support the professional development and growth of teachers as well as students.

Innovation:

This exemption will provide the District flexibility to select alternative accounting times and the ability to earn full average daily attendance for students participating in non-traditional programs. VISD will continue at a minimum to offer 75,600 minutes, but this exemption offers flexibility in design of the school day minutes.

Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:

Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

Community-based Accountability - We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

Equity - We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.

Finding Their "And" - All VISD students will find their "And": they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.

Talent Development - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. We believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

Innovation Title: First Day of Instruction**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

§25.0811 First Day of Instruction,

(a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:

EB (LOCAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

V I S D values and supports the contributions of staff and community partnerships in strengthening the learning experience. The State designation of the fourth Monday in August as the first instructional day restricts the District's ability to provide.

1. balanced semesters
2. restricts time before state testing dates and
3. limits coordination with university partners for students taking dual credit courses.

By obtaining an exemption from TEC §25.0811, the District will be better able to create balanced grading periods while still ending the first semester prior to the mid-year break. Additionally, the District can align with the local college semester dates. The District will be able to start school mid-week, allowing for a smoother transition at the beginning of school.

Innovation:

This action affords local control using a collaborative committee comprised of community partners and District staff members to develop an instructional calendar that provides balanced semesters, aligns with local colleges, begins mid-week, and begins instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August.

Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:

Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.

Community-based Accountability - We believe a robust community-based accountability system is essential to our success.

Talent Development - We believe exceptional staff are what makes students' success possible. And we believe we will become an everyone culture where everyone feels they belong.

Innovation Title: Post-Secondary & Military Excused Absences
<p>Texas Education Code Chapters: §25.087 (b-2, 5, 6) Sec. 25.087. EXCUSED ABSENCES. (a) A person required to attend school, including a person required to</p>
<p>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision: FEA (LEGAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance FEA (LOCAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance</p>
<p>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</p> <p>Currently only students classified as junior and senior years are allowed two excused absences per year to visit colleges or universities for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education. In some cases, where students are visiting colleges out of state, students need more than the allowed two days to safely visit a college they are interested in attending. Students may also want to complete comparative visits to multiple colleges throughout their high school career.</p> <p>Students who are 17 years of age or older are allowed a maximum of four excused absences while enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. Current limitations on number of days excused or age restrictions are preventing students from gaining insight to multiple opportunities.</p>
<p>Innovation:</p> <p>Victoria ISD is requesting to expand age requirements and increase the excused absence threshold for post-secondary visits. This will allow students to gain a greater understanding of the steps needed to achieve college/career goals at an earlier age. In addition, the flexibility of additional days would provide students more opportunities or additional travel time for long-distance/out of state visits.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Victoria ISD will broaden its college and career readiness emphasis by allowing students in grades 9-12 to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations. 2. Victoria ISD will waive the two-day excused absences limit per year and adopt a policy allowing seniors to miss 4 days per year, juniors to miss 3 days per year, sophomores to miss 2 days per year and freshman to miss 1 day per year to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest. 3. Victoria ISD will waive the four-day total limit on students seeking to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. A newly adopted policy will allow classified juniors and seniors meeting the 17-year-old age requirement, four excused absences per year to pursue interest in the military. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations.
<p>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</p> <p>Equity - We believe there are no lesser paths, but there are different paths to a successful launch.</p> <p>Finding Their “And” - All VISD students will find their “And”: they will leave us prepared for the successful launch into career, military, college, and life in order to be contributing members of society.</p> <p>Inspire Teaching and Empower Learning - A culture of voice, choice, and advocacy will inspire teaching and empower learning.</p>

Innovation Title: 90 Percent Rule for Credit/Mastery**Texas Education Code Chapters:**

§25.092(a)(1)

Sec. 25.092. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (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.

(a-1) A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case.

(a-2) Subsection (a) does not apply to a student who receives credit by examination for a class as provided by Section [28.023](#).

§25.092(b) Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (b) The board of trustees of each school district shall appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions for class credit or a final grade by students who are in attendance fewer than the number of days required under Subsection (a) and have not earned class credit or a final grade under Subsection (a-1). Classroom teachers shall comprise a majority of the membership of the committee. A committee may give class credit or a final grade to a student because of extenuating circumstances. Each board of trustees shall establish guidelines to determine what constitutes extenuating circumstances and shall adopt policies establishing alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. The alternative ways must include at least one option that does not require a student to pay a fee authorized under Section [11.158](#)(a)(15). A certified public school employee may not be assigned additional instructional duties as a result of this section outside of the regular workday unless the employee is compensated for the duties at a reasonable rate of pay.

Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:

FEC (LEGAL) Attendance for Credit

FEC (LOCAL) Attendance for Credit

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 25.092 provides conditions for credit or a final grade for a class based on student attendance for at least 90 percent of the days a class is offered. The law also provides provisions for students who

are in attendance at least 75 percent of the days a class is offered, in that he/she may be given credit or a final grade if the student completes a plan approved by the principal that meets the instructional requirements of the class. The 90 percent minimum and the 75 percent floor are arbitrary percentages that are based on "days in class" and not mastery of content matter. Exemption from §25.092 will provide educational advantages by promoting active learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered, and accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts or absences. Victoria ISD will implement a blended learning technology initiative that provides students with greater flexibility in making up assignments or completing classwork. This exemption will empower students and parents by providing them with a voice for individual student education plans to determine how educational needs can be met. Students in grades 6-12 will use a variety of technology that allows them to communicate electronically with their teacher and complete assignments outside of the

traditional classroom setting. It will also allow students additional opportunities to obtain and/or recover credits in an innovative format.

Innovation:

1. VISD believes that a student's learning outcomes and mastery of the content should be the determining factor in earning credit and a grade rather than rules governing attendance based on "days in class" percentages.
2. The District is seeking an exemption to §25.092 to provide greater flexibility in awarding credit or a final grade to students who:
 - o Earn a passing grade in order to receive credit.
 - o Demonstrate mastery of the content.
 - o Are present for less than 75% of days in class due to District-approved extenuating circumstances.
 - o Provide District-approved documentation supporting the extenuating circumstances; and,
 - o Meet all requirements in the principal's plan and/or the requirements of the attendance committee for receiving credit or a final grade.

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Innovation Title: Maximum Class Size
Texas Education Code Chapters: TEC 25.112 Class Size TEC 25.113 Parent Notification
Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision: EEB (LEGAL)- TEC 25.112 (d)-(e) Exception to Class Size Limits TEC 25.113 Parent Notification
Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan: <p>State law requires that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a Kindergarten-4th grade classroom. If classes are going to exceed this cap, a waiver is required from the Texas Education Agency. If approved, the district must notify the parents by specifying the class for which an exception from the limit was granted.</p> <p>Victoria ISD begins the school year with staff based on student enrollment projections. Often, enrollment will exceed projections. As a result, teachers and/or students must be moved from one campus to another to meet the 22 to 1 student to teacher ratio limit for grades K-4 or request the required waiver from the Texas Education Agency to exceed 22 students in a class. With enrollment changing daily, parents could be notified that a class has exceeded the student limit and the next day the same class could become compliant within the maximum class size limit.</p> <p>Being exempt from the 22 to 1 ratio requirement will also allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates with whom they have already established relationships, thus fostering continuity and stability which will support increased student achievement.</p>
Innovation: The class size exception innovation is described as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria ISD will attempt to keep all K-4 core classrooms to a 22 to 1 ratio. • In the event a K-4 classroom exceeds this ratio, the District will allow class sizes to go to 24 to 1 in order to keep students on a campus where they have already formed relationships. • The district would be exempt from requesting a TEA waiver when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. <p>While the class size exemption will allow K-4 classrooms to exceed the 22 to 1 ratio, Victoria ISD will implement the following action steps to help maintain the recommended maximum class size:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Survey campus enrollment, staffing ratios and class sizes at the beginning of each school year and monitor throughout.</i> 2. <i>Use attrition to return class size to 22 to 1 as soon as possible.</i> 3. <i>Apply District staffing ratios to support students and teachers in classes where the class size ratios exceed 22 to 1</i>

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Innovation Title: Designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator (CBC)
<p>Texas Education Code Chapters:</p> <p><u>Texas Education Code, Chapter 37.0012</u> A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator/ the person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.</p>
<p>Corresponding Board Policies Requiring Revision:</p> <p><u>VISD Policy FO(LEGAL)</u> stipulates the designation of a campus behavior coordinator (CBC) at each campus. The CBC may be the principal, or any other administrator selected by the principal.</p>
<p>Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:</p> <p>By specifying a specific campus administrator to serve as the campus behavior coordinator, the campus is limited from achieving greater efficiency which is gained through allowing multiple administrators to jointly share in the responsibilities of the campus behavior coordinator function. By providing greater flexibility regarding the designation of the campus behavior coordinator, campuses can collaborate and share in managing these responsibilities in a manner which ultimately provides better coverage in the area of student behavior and discipline management. It will also allow the investment of more effort into development of a positive campus culture as campuses transition away from traditionally punitive practices to Restorative Disciplinary Practices (RDP). Lastly, it will address the challenge related to data disproportionality brought about with historically overdisciplined student sub-populations (Latino, African American, at-risk, and students with disabilities).</p>
<p>Innovation:</p> <p>Through engagement in a collaborative arrangement, the campus will have greater latitude to serve the student behavior and discipline management needs of their entire student population without the limitations brought about by having a solitary administrator serving this function. VISD is a participating in the System of Great Schools (SGS) which keeps our campuses extremely focused on innovations to elevate student outcomes.</p>
<p>Strategic Plan Finding/Direction Alignment:</p> <p><u>Social Emotional Learning</u> 8.1 We believe a socially and emotionally healthy community is essential.</p>