

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 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 (TEC) . During Spring 2016, the Allen Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

Historical Timeline:

- In November of 2016, the District Improvement Plan Committee and the Board approved the first Local District of Innovation Plan in Allen ISD. The term of the initial plan ended with the completion of the 2021-2022 school year.
- In Fall 2021, Allen ISD began the process to revise and renew the District of Innovation Plan. In April of 2022, the Board approved a renewed Local District of Innovation Plan whose term would expire at the conclusion of the 2026-2027 school year.
- In the Fall of 2026, Allen ISD began the process to revise and renew the District of Innovation Plan, with the intention of presenting a plan to the District Improvement Plan Committee and the Board of Trustees that would expire on November 16, 2031.

TERM

Local Innovation Plans must be renewed every five years to maintain a District of Innovation Status. The term of this plan is for five years, beginning November 17, 2026, and ending November 16, 2031 unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Improvement Plan Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend any amendments to the Board. An amendment to the Plan does not change or extend the date of the term, and exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. In the event that amendments are recommended to and approved by the Board, Allen ISD will notify the commissioner and TEA, as well as ensure that an updated copy of the Plan is posted on the District website.

SOAR2030

DISTRICT GOALS

CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE



Allen ISD will cultivate a culture of excellence. We will maintain high expectations and leverage our collective impact to ensure achievement of outcomes on behalf of students. We will honor our history and look to the future as we strengthen our culture by telling our story and celebrating what we value.

FUTURE READY SKILLS



Allen ISD will prepare students to be future ready for success in citizenship and college, career, or the military. Students will experience challenging, creative, and collaborative learning opportunities. Technology will add value to the learning process by enhancing individualization and deepening learning.

EMPOWERED LEARNING



Allen ISD will empower students as learners and focus on individual growth. Learning in Allen ISD will be personalized and empower student ownership. We will support each student, as a whole child, in achieving personal and academic growth.

EVERY GRADUATE OF ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL ↓ WILL BE: ↓	GRADUATE PROFILE
EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS	Students will master the skills needed to design innovative solutions within independent and team settings.
RESPONSIBLE AND ENGAGED CITIZENS	Students will demonstrate ethical and moral decision-making in the context of their local, national and world community. They will also possess an awareness of community resources and understand the value of service to others.
ACADEMICALLY PREPARED FOR FUTURE PURSUITS	Students will possess necessary skills to seek educational and career options as they continually pursue and integrate knowledge.
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS	Students will be able to listen critically and speak articulately, will be able to resolve conflicts effectively and appropriately, will be able to understand and appreciate diverse individuals and cultures, will be able to exercise leadership qualities, and will be able to communicate using advancing technology.

ALLEN ISD District OF INNOVATION RENEWAL TIMELINE

August 10, 2026	Superintendent's cabinet and District leadership met to review expiring plan and initiate renewal process
September 8, 2026	Local Innovation Committee met to review proposed renewal plan
October 15, 2026	District Improvement Plan Committee met to review proposed renewal plan and consider approval in a public meeting
October 16, 2026	Proposed renewal plan posted to Allen ISD website for 30 days
November 2, 2026	Proposed Renewed District of Innovation Plan presented to the Board of Trustees during Board Workshop for information only
November 16, 2026	Allen ISD Board of Trustees will consider approval of the Renewed District of Innovation Plan
November 17, 2026	If approved, the Renewed District of Innovation Plan will be submitted to the Texas Education Agency, the Commissioner, and posted on the District website.

INNOVATIONS

To achieve Allen ISD's vision and mission, to align the District's practices and operations with the District's strategic plan and goals, the District requires flexibility to have local control in the following areas:

1. Teacher Certification Requirements
2. First Day of Instruction
3. Probationary Contracts
4. Class Size (Prekindergarten through Fourth Grade)
5. Inter-District Transfers
6. Grievance Timelines
7. Reconsideration of Library Material
8. School District Depositories
9. Mentor Teachers

Local Innovation Committee Members for Renewal Plan

Convened on September 8, 2026

Kim McLaughlin - Acting Superintendent	Melissa Barker - Director of Strategic Initiatives
David Hicks - Assistant Superintendent of Communications	Becky Wiginton - Director of Counseling
Johnna Walker - Assistant Superintendent of HR	Nicole Irby - Director of Accounting
Kyle Penn - Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance	Stephanie Logan - Director of Federal Programs
Jennifer Wilhelm - Assistant Superintendent of Learner Services	Jessica Warlick - Director of Student Services
Brent Benningfield - Assistant Superintendent of Operations	Toni Crisler - Director of CCMR
Melissa Pursifull - Executive Director of School Leadership	Ashley Crowson - Director of STEAM Center
Larry Labue - Executive Director of School Leadership	Race Hinkle - Associate Principal of Allen High
Theresa Taylor - Executive Director of Special Services	Sonya Pitcock - Principal of Curtis Middle School
Lauren Cypert - Executive Director of HR	Paul Harper - Principal of Ereckson Middle School
Whitney Coppinger - Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Julie DeLeon - Principal of Boyd Elementary
Clint Cypert - Executive Director of Operations	Renee Nelson - Principal of Norton Elementary
Nelson Orta - Executive Director of Technology	

District Improvement Plan Committee Members

*Public Meeting

Convened on October 15, 2026

Alyssa Krueger - Teacher, AHS	Jennifer Remakel - Librarian, Curtis	Julie Williams - Teacher, Marion
Tina Balgemann - Teacher, AHS	Lisa Trees - Teacher, Dillard	Judith Davis - Teacher, Norton
Milagros Ulloa Rodriguez - Teacher, AHS	Tristen Rodriguez - Diagnostician	Christina Oonk - Teacher, Olson
Holly Underwood - Teacher, AHS	Jessica Clervoi - Teacher, Ereckson	Grace Silva - Teacher, Preston
Melissa Bettge - House Principal, AHS	Ann Reynolds - Teacher, Ereckson	Aisha Young - AP, Reed
Chelsey Posey - Teacher, Anderson	Paige Centeno - Counselor, Ereckson	Monica Lemons - Principal, Reed
Bryana Taylor - Teacher, Anderson	Marie Ward - Teacher, Evans	Shana Sanders - Teacher, Reed
Rebecca Goldberg - Teacher, Bolin	John Lanier - Teacher, Ford	Ashley Crowson - Director, STEAM
Angela Clark - Principal, Bolin	Stephanie Smith - Teacher, Ford	Jami Dixon - Teacher, STEAM
Jessica Blackburn - Principal, Boon	Carrie Sledge - Teacher, Green	Jasma Kirkland - Teacher, Story
Cara Lundberg - Teacher, Boon	Kristi Berry - LSS	Cathy Morgan - Technology
Erica Hayden - Teacher, Boyd	Kelsey VanBrunt - Teacher, Kerr	Casey Duckworthy - Teacher, Vaughan
Roxanne Rinaldi - Teacher, Chandler	Kathy Drury - Teacher, Kerr	Jared Angell - Parent
Yessica Schessler - CIS, Chandler	Chad Pickens - Teacher, LFC	Felicia Jackson - Business Rep
Lauren Whitehead - Teacher, Cheatham	Zachary Silvers - Campus Coordinator	Amrita Sethi - Parent
Jennifer Johnson - Teacher, Curtis	Lynne Havens - Teacher, Lindsey	Ketra Au - Parent

Cindy Napoles - Parent	Kartik Rajeshwari - Parent	Bob Acker - Non-Parent Community Member
Melissa Barker - Director, Strategic Initiatives	Steven Haynes - Parent	Carl Clemencich - Non-Parent Community Member
Sylvia Gage - Non-Parent Community Member	Stephanie Logan - Director, Federal Programs	Davina Harrell - Parent
Scott Bolton - Business Representative	Amber Preston - Coordinator, Academic Support	Jamie Hunsaker - Parent
Cathy Guidroz - Non-Parent Community Member	Carolyn Garza - Parent	Dr. Bill Parker - Board of Trustees Representative

Exemption 1: Teacher Certification Requirements

Chapter 21 – Educators

Corresponding Board Policies: DK(Legal), DBA(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school District unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued. Texas Education Code §21.0032 states that a school District may not employ as a teacher of record for a course in the foundation curriculum under Section §28.002 a person who does not hold an appropriate certificate or permit required by the State Board for Educator Certification under Subchapter B.	Allen ISD 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 reasonably possible, Allen ISD will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Allen ISD will have the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand in order to better meet the educational needs of our students. This exemption adheres to eligible educators only in accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.0032.	This flexibility will allow Allen ISD to provide more course offerings to students while relying less on substitute teachers in high-need assignments where there is a scarcity of traditionally credentialed teacher applicants. Due to the current teacher shortage crisis in education across Texas, the TEA has given AISD the option to apply for a waiver for hiring uncertified teachers in core content areas. This waiver was approved through the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year. Allen ISD will continue to work with TEA on waivers and/or certification plans after the waiver expires.

Exemption 2: First Day of Instruction

Texas Education Code §25.0811

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Corresponding Board Policies: EB(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that a District may not begin instructional days for students prior to the fourth Monday in August.	The District will locally determine the first day of instruction for students on an annual basis. The District will consider a start date that best meets the needs of the students, parents, and our local community.	This exemption gives the District local control to develop an academic calendar that meets the specific needs of our population. An earlier start in August allows for balanced instructional days between semesters, provides time for professional learning, increases alignment with college and dual credit schedules, completes the first semester before winter break, and provides more instructional days prior to required state testing. This flexibility supports instructional continuity and student learning.

Exemption 3: Probationary Contracts

Texas Education Code §21.102

Chapter 21 – Educators

Corresponding Board Policies: DCA(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §21.102 states that a probationary contract for educators may not exceed one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except 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.	The District will locally determine the appropriate probationary period for newly hired educators, including experienced educators who are new to the District.	This exemption allows Allen ISD additional time to effectively evaluate educators before issuing a term contract. The flexibility supports informed employment decisions, maintains high expectations, and helps ensure students are served by educators who demonstrate strong skills and abilities. This exemption may also prevent us from having to terminate experienced teachers.

Exemption 4: Class Size (Prekindergarten through Fourth Grade)

Texas Education Code §25.112, §25.113

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Corresponding Board Policies: EEB(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §25.112 states that a District must maintain a class size of 22 students per teacher in kindergarten through fourth grade. Texas Education Code §25.113 states that a District must provide written notice to parents when a class size exceeds 22 students.	The District will locally monitor and maintain appropriate class sizes without the necessity of state waivers or additional notifications. Additional teacher allocations for Prekindergarten through Fourth Grade will be considered once a grade level reaches a student to teacher ratio of 24:1.	This would allow Allen ISD to appropriately respond to enrollment changes and campus staffing needs without making decisions solely to meet a standard class size requirement. The District will take into consideration the academic and social impact on students, the value of attending a neighborhood school, timing in the school year, available classroom space and/or the need for another teacher or teacher aide. This exemption will provide relief from the administrative processes of filing for state waivers and reporting currently required by state law.

Exemption 5: Inter-District Transfers

Texas Education Code §25.036

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Corresponding Board Policies: FDA(Legal), FDA(Local)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §25.036 provides that an eligible student may transfer annually from the student's school District of residence to another school District in Texas, subject to the requirements of the statute.	The District will have flexibility to revoke or discontinue approved inter-District transfers during the school year when conditions of the transfer are not met, or when continued enrollment is not in the best interest of the District or its students.	This flexibility enables the District to effectively manage transfer enrollment while supporting the District's mission, vision, operational needs, and educational environment. The District will consider circumstances involving student discipline, attendance, academic performance, parent or guardian conduct, failure to comply with District policies or transfer expectations, falsification of information, or changes in enrollment, staffing, space availability, or program capacity.

Exemption 6: Grievance Timelines

Texas Education Code §26A.002

Chapter 26A - Grievance Policy

Corresponding Board Policies: DGBA(Legal), DGBA(Local), FNG(Legal), FNG(Local), GF(Legal), GF(Local)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §26A.002 states the required timelines for filing, hearing, appealing and decision-making through the District's formal grievance process.	The District will account for "days" listed within the grievance process as business days rather than calendar days. The District will comply with filing, hearing, appeal, and decision timelines as written in law, however, those timelines will be calculated using District business days.	The use of calendar day timelines imposes operational constraints during periods when District offices are closed or operating with limited staffing, including holidays and scheduled breaks such as Thanksgiving, Winter Break, and Spring Break. Redefining "days" as District business days, rather than calendar days, provides clarity for all stakeholders on timelines and ensures all parties have a common understanding of the period of time. This will decrease confusion surrounding deadlines for both parents and District staff by clearly accounting for weekends, holidays, and days that the District is closed. The exemption permits the District and stakeholders to account for operational realities including stakeholder and staff availability during scheduled District closures and allow sufficient time for investigation, witness coordination, documentation review, and preparation of written decisions. Additionally, the exemption maintains appropriate due process protections. This exemption will not restrict or reduce access to the grievance process or eliminate any level of review.

Exemption 7: Reconsideration of Library Material

Texas Education Code §33.027

Chapter 33 - Service Programs and Extra Curricular Activities

Corresponding Board Policies: EFB(Legal), EFB(Local)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §33.027 states that a District must provide a library material challenge to its Local School Library Advisory Council (LSLAC) within 5 days of receipt from an eligible stakeholder, and the council must make a recommendation within 90 days of receiving the request for a reconsideration/challenge to a library material.	The District will account for all “days” listed within the reconsideration/challenge of library material timeline as District business days rather than calendar days. The District will comply with timelines as written in law, however, those timelines will be calculated using District business days.	The use of calendar day timelines imposes operational constraints during periods when District offices are closed or operating with limited staffing, including holidays and scheduled breaks such as Thanksgiving, Winter Break, and Spring Break. Redefining “days” as District business days, rather than calendar days, ensures the availability of the Local School Library Advisory Council and appropriately qualified committees sufficient time for review of the challenged material and relevant information, to complete the reconsideration process thoroughly and thoughtfully and to make recommendations. This exemption does not change who can challenge a book, the grounds for a challenge, the required review process, or the right to appeal. This exemption also does not remove the requirement for a challenged library material to remain inaccessible to students while the challenge is pending.

Exemption 8: School District Depositories

Texas Education Code §45.205, §45.206

Chapter 45- School District Funds

Corresponding Board Policies: BDAE(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §45.205 outlines the two year term and allowable extensions (three additional two year terms) for a school District's depository bank contract. Texas Education Code §45.206 outlines the competitive bidding or request for proposal process and timelines that Districts must use when selecting a depository bank.	The District will have local authority to extend the District's existing depository bank contract beyond the allowable eight-year term if it is determined that pricing remains competitive and that rebidding banking services would provide no operational or financial benefit.	This will reduce the administrative time and financial investment associated with preparing, issuing, and evaluating a Request for Proposal (RFP). At the end of each two-year term, Allen ISD and the depository bank may mutually agree to extend the contract for an additional two-year period. Allen ISD will review the contract, ensure competitive pricing, and seek board approval for each extension. This exemption does not remove Allen ISD's ability to release a formal procurement for depository contract services in the future.

Exemption 9: Mentor Teachers

Texas Education Code §21.458

Chapter 21 - Educators

Corresponding Board Policies: DEAA(Legal)

TEC Requirement(s)	Innovation Strategy	Rationale
Texas Education Code §21.458 outlines the requirements of mentor teachers who support first year teachers, including a minimum of three completed years of teaching experience.	The District will allow exceptional teachers with less than three years of teaching experience to serve as mentors for new teachers.	This will allow Allen ISD with flexibility to implement a mentor program that meets the needs of teachers while also utilizing the unique strengths of our staff members. This will also support teacher growth and retention in our District, ultimately strengthening instructional quality and mastery of student learning outcomes.