EDNA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



District of Innovation Plan 2026 - 2031

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

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2017

- Board of Trustees approves resolution to hold public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation on February 20, 2017
- Public meeting to explain and discuss possibility of becoming a District of Innovation on February 20, 2017
- Board of Trustees approves a motion to pursue local District of Innovation plan on February 20, 2017
- Board of Trustees approves members of the District Advisory Committee on February 24, 2017
- Initial meeting of District Advisory Committee on February 28, 2017

MARCH 2017

- eMeeting of District Advisory Committee to review draft plan
- Principals share draft District of Innovation plan with teachers and staff
- Teachers, staff, and community members are invited to attend public DOI meeting
- Third meeting of District Advisory Committee to discuss and vote on proposed DOI Plan on March 6, 2017
- District of Innovation plan presented to Edna ISD Board of Trustees on March 20, 2017
- Proposed District of Innovation plan posted to Edna ISD website on March 21, 2017

JULY 2021

- DIT reviewed DOI plan for renewal process
- Board of Trustees approved amended DOI plan for submission to TEA for renewal
- *August 2025- ammend DOI plan to account for Legislative changes*

Approved by Edna ISD DOI Committee on 3.6.17
Adopted by Edna ISD Boord of Trustees on 3.20.17
Rotified by Edna ISD Board of Trustees on 5.15.17

Approved by Edna ISD DIT Committee on 7.15.21
Approved by Edna ISD Board of Trustees 7.19.21
Approved by Edna ISD Board of Trustees 8.18.25

DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NAME	POSITION
Bill Boyd	Interim Superintendent
Brandie Roe	Assistant Superintendent
Daniel Harper	CFO
Heather Socha	Director of Curriculum
Aaron Pohl	EHS Principal
Kenneth Osore	EHS Teacher
Savannah Depine	EHS Teacher
Renee' Mitchell	EHS Counselor
Sheila Miller	EHS Staff
Sabrina Peters	EHS Parent
Candace Whittley	EJH Principal
Jessica Smith	EJH Teacher
Catherine Reed	EJH Teacher
Karley Schilling	EJH Staff
Rachel Nessel	EJH Parent
Tracie Brown	EJH Parent
Brittany Trujillo	EJH Parent
Kelsey Glover	EIS Principal
Sarah M Bradley	EPS Principal
Lea Melton	EPS Teacher
Holly Larkin	EIS Teacher
Amanda Kahanek	EIS Teacher
Rokisha Wilkins	EES Staff
Megan Ballin	EES Parent
Mindy Curlee	EES Parent
Sonya Proper	EAS Principal
Natalie Gonzalez	JCSSC Director
Jill Sklar	Community
Monica Foster	Community

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EDNA ISD INNOVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation (DOI) 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 like 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.

MISSION

The mission of Edna ISD is to "Ensure a Quality Education for All".

VISION

The vision of Edna ISD is "Preparing Students for the Challenges of Tomorrow.".

TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning July 2021 and ending June 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board 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 reconvene the Committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will exceed the original term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

IMPLEMENTATION & POLICY

Specific implementation plans will be developed collaboratively by the appropriate district administrators, campus personnel and departments; and approved by the Superintendent.

Implementation plans will be presented to the Committee for feedback and recommendations.

Adjustments to Board Policy will be reviewed by school attorneys and TASB to be adopted where appropriate.

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AREAS OF INNOVATION

Regarding each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementation 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 of Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

1. **School Start and End Date**

   Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812

   Related Board Policies: EB (LEGAL)

   Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

   TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of the annual academic calendars to fit the needs of the community or the desires of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

   Innovation Strategies – *while meeting the overall 75,600 minutes required*

   a. Relief from the statute will allow Edna ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes' requirement, rather than days.
   b. Alignment of the district calendar with local colleges, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
   c. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar to be responsive to community needs.

2. **Instructional Minutes / Length of Instructional Day / Early Release Days**

   Exemption from: TEC §25.081; TEC §25.082

   Related Board Policies: EB (LEGAL)

   Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

   TEC 25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff

development days.

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TEC §25.081 (e) references a day of instruction as 420 minutes

Innovation Strategies

a. Edna ISD seeks relief from this section to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non—instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to all for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development.
b. The District seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar to provide for student and district needs.

3. <u>Kindergarten-Grade 4 Class Size Reporting Requirement</u>

Exemption from: TEC §25.112; TEC §25.113

Related Board Policies: EEB (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the District must complete and file a waiver with TEA.

TEC 25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases, the class has returned to smaller student-to-teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.

Innovation Strategies

a. Edna ISD believes in low student-to-teacher ratio in all classrooms. The District has a goal of 18:1 in K-4 and 24:1 in 5-12. Edna ISD will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student-to-teacher ratio goal of no more than 18:1 in each K-4 homeroom class. If any K-4 class size exceeds the ratio of 22:1 during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board. Decisions regarding appropriate student-to-teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
b. The TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
c. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continue to be notified as per TEC 25.113.

4. **Teacher Certification for Dual Credit, Career and Technical Education Instructors, and Hard-to-Fill Areas**

Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.053; TAC Chapter 231 Related Board

Policies: DBA (LEGAL/LOCAL); DK (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aid, 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.

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not consider the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his/her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. Edna ISD will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where 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.
b. For grades 5-12 the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experiences the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.
c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course may be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. *Examples*: an

experienced homebuilder teaching a building trade's course, a licensed corrections officer teaching a criminal justice course, or a retired CPA teaching an entry level accounting course.

d. 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 additional supports such as teaching mentoring, increased observations and feedback, additional professional development or instructional resources, and other supports.
e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board at the first board meeting following the teaching assignment, and will ensure parental notifications are provided as required by TEC §21.057.
f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the TEA. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.
g. Any candidate for employment that requires local certification will need Board approval before issuing a contract. This would include summer hiring when the authority to hire is granted to the Superintendent.
h. Regardless of any other provisions of this plan, starting with the 2026-2027 school year, in compliance with applicable law Edna ISD will not employ a teacher lacking the appropriate certification as the teacher of record for any "foundation curriculum" course, which includes all English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. For the 2026-2027 school year only, the District may continue to employ teachers lacking appropriate certification except for reading language arts and math courses above the fifth grade level.

5. **Probationary Contracts**

Exemption from: TEC §21.102 (b)

Relevant Board Policies: DCA (LEGAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

For experienced teachers, new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to the District's receipt of state assessment results.

Innovation Strategies

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have

been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, Edna ISD would like the option to extend a second year probationary contract if needed. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102 (c).

6. **Professional Development / Mentor Teachers**

Exemption from: TEC §21.451; TEC §21.458

Relevant Board Policies: DEAA (LEGAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 21.451 prescribes staff development requirements for educators. These requirements impede the District's ability to provide timely professional development to employees based on newly emerging issues, data, and student needs.

TEC 21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the District may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, even though a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The district needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experiences teacher in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teacher, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff.
b. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.
c. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to be mentored despite their level of experience.

7. **Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade**

Exemption from: TEC §25.092

Relevant Board Policies: FEC (LOCAL & LEGAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 25.092 restricts the District from issuing class credit or a final grade if a student is not in attendance the required "seat time", referred to as the 90% rule.

This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of learning.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility. Edna ISD will pursue blended learning opportunities where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online.
b. This exemption will also allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities. Relief granted from TEC 25.092 does not constitute any substantive exemption from compulsory attendance or UIL rules, nor does it limit or modify a teacher's ability to assign or determine grades in accordance with TEC §28.0214 and 28.0216.

8. **Local Grievance Policy**

Exemption from TEC §26.011; §26A.001; §26A.002; §26A.003

Relevant Board Policies: FNG (LOCAL & LEGAL), DGBA (LOCAL & LEGAL), GF (LOCAL & LEGAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 26.001 requires school district grievance procedures to match the structure provided by TEC 26A.001-26A.003 . This grievance procedure restricts the District's ability to conduct grievances in a manner in line with the needs of the Edna ISD community and limits the District's ability to respond to complaints in a timely and efficient manner using the procedures that employees, students, and community members have experience and a familiarity with.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will maintain its current grievance procedures. The process for filing, hearing, and appealing a grievance shall remain the same as is currently in place.
b. The District shall continue to assess the effectiveness of its current grievance procedures for potential improvements in efficiency and satisfaction with outcomes.

9. **Library Acquisition and Challenge Policy and School Library Advisory Council**

Exemption from TEC §33.025; §33.026; §33.027

Relevant Board Policies: EFB (LOCAL & LEGAL)

Way statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC 33.025 establishes a means by which a school district can be compelled to establish a School Library Advisory Council. TEC 33.026 requires school districts to adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials that meets specific requirements in statute, including requiring the Board of Trustees to approve all library materials. TEC 33.027 provides procedures by which any employee, parent, or community member can challenge a library material and compel the Board of Trustees to make a final decision on whether to remove the challenged material from a school library. These provisions restrict the District's ability to efficiently fill and manage its school libraries, and interfere with Edna ISD's ability to craft a unified curriculum and provide a well-rounded educational experience for every child.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will maintain its current collection acquisition and development policy .
b. Librarians, professional library staff, and other designated processional staff who are trained on the proper collection standards shall select and acquire library materials in accordance with applicable state law and rules, the District's existing policies, and administrative procedures.
c. The District's policy shall be aligned with the standards as promulgated by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).
d. The District shall continue to recognize parents as the primary decision makers regarding their student's access to library materials and will provide parents and employees with an opportunity to request the reconsideration of any library material maintained in the District's library program.

Renewal Approved:

Edna ISD Board President

3/11/2026
Date

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