

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

2022-2027



Designed in accordance with Texas HB 1842

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, effective

immediately, that gives traditional school districts the following:

- ☐ Greater Local Control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students
- ☐ Increased Freedom and Flexibility with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming, and
- ☐ It will empower districts to be Innovative and Think Differently.

Meadow ISD District of Innovation Plan

2022-2027

FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION

Student's Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 25.0811, EB(LEGAL), EB(LOCAL) A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. A district may not receive a waiver of this requirement.

PROPOSAL:

The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This flexibility of the start date also offers the following opportunities:

- a. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- b. Students participating in dual enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges.
- c. An early start date permits students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments in December.
- d. This will allow the district time to provide proper remediation to students in summer school.
- e. Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well.
- f. This would allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition back to school for all students.

CHAPTER 21 PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS

Student's Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 21.102(b), DCA(Legal), TEC 21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher/administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Proposal:

Meadow ISD is seeking a two-year probationary period for all experienced teacher new to the district to:

- a. better evaluate the teacher/administrator's effectiveness in their role
- b. provide opportunities for professional growth as needed.

TEACHER CONTRACT DAYS

Student's Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 21.401 Minimum Service Required (teachers on 10-month contracts must provide a minimum of 187 days if service) (DCB Legal and Local)

Proposal:

- a. Provide teacher more flexibility during summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field
- b. Daily rate will be consistent with a 187-day calendar
- c. Improve teacher morale
- d. Enhance teacher recruitment

It will be part of the calendar planning process to reduce the number of teacher contract days. Contract days will not exceed 187 days but may be reduced based upon the needs of the district.

INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFERS

Student's Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 25.036 District transfers are for an entire school year. (FDA Local)

Proposal:

Meadow ISD would allow FDA Local policy requiring non-resident students to file a transfer application each school year.

- a. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records will be evaluated.
- b. Transfer students are required to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district.
- c. Transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent at any time during the school year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences such as suspension (in or out of school), placement in DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the state's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the student's transfer status.

Benefit:

- a. Allows Meadow ISD the flexibility to revoke transfer students who on rare occasions violate the transfer policy
- b. Allows Meadow ISD to better utilize school resources for the benefit of the district.

CLASS SIZE WAIVER (KINDERGARTEN-4TH GRADE)

Student's Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 25.112 Kindergarten-4th grade classes are to be kept at a 22:1 student-teacher ratio according to state law.

Proposal:

While we certainly believe that small class sizes play a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when only a few students are added. It is not the number of students, but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. Meadow ISD will attempt to keep all K-4 core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. Should class size exceed this ratio the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. If a K-4 classroom reaches a 24:1 ratio, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. Meadow ISD will have flexibility without filing the waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

ISD Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 21.055, 21.003, 21.053, 21.051, and 21.057 Teacher Certification

Proposal:

Due to learners having the opportunity to personalize their graduation plans and earn endorsements in areas of study such as STEM, business and industry, public services, and health sciences there is a need for educators to have multiple certifications. It is particularly difficult to find educators who meet the certification specification to teacher classes in the health sciences area. Flexibility in this area will assist the district in finding quality candidates to teacher certain courses. Additionally, Meadow ISD is seeking flexibility in hiring professionals in certain vocations to teach career and technical courses. The exemption will enable Meadow ISD to establish local criteria for such courses when hiring quality personnel. With the exemption, the district will not have to cancel lasses that learners are dependent upon to fulfill their certification and graduation requirements.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPOSITORY CONTRACTS

ISD Instructional Needs Exemption From:

TEC 45.205, 45.206 The depository for the district shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its deposit bank may agree to extend the contract for two additional two-year terms. The district may extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year.

Proposal:

- a. In a small district and a small town, the district's choices for its deposit bank are limited. Meadow ISD will continue to use the chosen depository for the district without re-bidding. At the end of each two-year term the district and its deposit bank may agree to extend the contract for multiple additional two-year periods. The district must review the contract to ensure the best value and support for the district and obtain Board approval for each of the two-year periods.
- b. Nothing in this process would hinder the district's ability to undertake bidding at the district depository bank at the end of any of the two-year periods. The district believes it can operate most optimally if it is not limited to two or even three additional two-year extensions of its depository contract and allow the Superintendent and Board of Trustees more time for planning for student progress, instructional strategies, and innovative options for the district's educational goals.

Instructional Plan (Ed. Code 26.0062)

Current law: Under current law, each school district must post on the district's website at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the district for that semester. The policy would require each teacher to provide to district administration and to the parent of each student enrolled in the class such an instructional plan or syllabus before the beginning of each semester for each class for which the teacher provides instruction.

Plan: Meadow ISD is committed to supporting all efforts of each campus to involve parents and community members as active participants in the education of Meadow ISD students. The District strives to support the actions of our teachers and other instructional staff as they develop curriculum and effective instructional strategies.

Because teachers use data-driven instruction aligned with student mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), instructional plans are regularly adjusted to support student learning. Teacher autonomy to modify instruction based on real-time data and effective strategies does not align with publishing a fixed, comprehensive semester-long plan. Meadow ISD will not adopt a policy or create a requirement for its teachers to post at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the District. However, Meadow ISD will ensure that course overviews are available at the request of parents or guardians.

Grievance Policy (Ed. Code 26A.001, 26.011, and 26A.002)

Current Law: The Texas Education Code and the Texas Constitution requires school boards to establish procedures for parents to file complaints if they believe their student's rights have been denied.

Under current law, each board of trustees must develop grievance procedures in accordance with Section 26A.001 of the Texas Education Code. Section 26A.001(g) requires each school district to adopt a standardized complaint policy and to annually submit a report to the Texas Education Agency on grievances filed in the district. The report must include the resolution and corrective action of each grievance filed.

Current law further requires a policy allowing 60 calendar days for a parent to file a grievance from the date on which the parent or person knew or had reason to know of the facts giving rise to the grievance. If the parent engaged in informal attempts to resolve the grievance, the parent could have 90 calendar days to file a grievance. State law further requires that such complaints be heard within ten calendar days of the complaint being filed.

Moreover, in contradiction of existing law in the Texas Government Code, the recently adopted provisions in the Education Code would allow the person bringing the complaint to decide if it is heard in open or closed session, rather than the person against whom the complaint is brought.

Plan: Meadow ISD has always and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines outlined in Board policy. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provide adequate time for complaints to be filed and for complaints to be heard. All records related to grievances—including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions—are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. The District is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all parent complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Meadow ISD's long-standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Meadow ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26.002 and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within 15 school business days from the date the student or parent either knew, or with reasonable diligence, should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance ensures prompt attention and resolution of parent concerns. In cases where the student or parent does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district-provided form, within ten school business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response.

Parental Access to Student Library Records (Ed. Code 33.024)

Current Law: Under current law, each school district using a learning management system or an online learning portal shall, through the system portal, provide to each parent of a child enrolled in the district or school a record of each time the parent's child checks out or otherwise uses a library book or other reference material. The record must include, as applicable, the title, author, genre, and return date of the library material.

Plan: Meadow ISD will support all campuses by involving the parents and community members as active participants in the education of District students. Meadow ISD does not currently use a learning management system or online portal with the capability to automatically track and share records of student library checkouts.

However, parents or guardians who wish to receive this information may request it from the campus principal, who will provide an electronic copy of their child's library checkout history via email. Because the District does not have systems in place capable of tracking and generating such reports for each student enrolled in the District, for each book a child checks out, for every visit to the school library, Meadow ISD will not provide each parent a record of each time the parent's child checks out or otherwise uses a library book or other library material.

Local School Library Advisory Council (Ed. Code 33.025)

Current Law: Current law requires the school district to establish a School Library Advisory Council at any campus where either 10% of parents or 50 parents (whichever is fewer) submit a written request for such a council. The council must include at least five members, with a majority being parents of currently enrolled students who are not employed by the district. The council is tasked with reviewing library materials, providing input on the selection and removal of resources, making recommendations to ensure materials are age-appropriate and aligned with community values, reviewing all books and other material objected to by any District parent, and advising on such objections. The law also requires districts to notify parents of their right to request council formation and to maintain transparency through open meetings, public records, and timely reporting of council activities and decisions.

Plan: Meadow ISD encourages and supports all campus efforts to involve District parents and community members as active participants in the education of Meadow students. Meadow ISD will be exempted from Texas Education Code §33.025, which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. The District believes this requirement is redundant and unnecessary, as Meadow ISD already has strong, board-approved procedures in place for selecting, reviewing, and reconsidering library materials—led by certified administrators and educators and aligned with state-mandated requirements and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. Creating such advisory councils risks undermining the professional judgment of educators and librarians, introduces the judgment of non-certified individuals, introduces potential for politicization of instructional resources, and could very easily lead to inconsistency across campuses. Furthermore, the statute presents an administrative burden, requiring staff time and resources that would be better directed toward student learning and support. Meadow ISD's existing processes already allow for meaningful parental review and involvement, including access to their child's library checkout records if requested, formal challenge procedures, and transparency in material selection. In addition, concerned individuals may also speak with teachers, administration, and/or the school board through District complaint processes and/or during the open forum of any regularly scheduled board meeting.

The District remains committed to ensuring age-appropriate and educationally sound resources while maintaining an efficient and effective oversight structure that includes educator expertise and parent input, without the disruption and/or duplication caused by the statutory requirements in §33.025.

Acquisition of Library Materials (Ed. Code 33.026)

Current Law: Current law outlines specific procedures school districts must follow before acquiring library materials. The law requires that materials be reviewed and approved in advance by a certified school librarian and be verified for compliance with age-appropriateness, educational suitability, and community standards. Additionally, it mandates a multi-step vetting process, documentation of acquisition decisions, and the public posting of selected materials before they are made available to students.

Plan: Meadow ISD will be exempt from this statutory provision because the District already has robust, board-approved policies, implemented by certified administrators in place that govern the acquisition of library materials in a manner that ensures transparency, appropriateness, and educational value. These policies and procedures are fully compliant with the standards required by Texas law and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. The statutory process under §33.026 introduces redundant and restrictive requirements that may delay access to timely instructional and enrichment resources. It also places bureaucratic barriers in front of trained library professionals who are certified to select age-appropriate, curriculum-aligned materials, that are consistent with standards set by Texas law. Additionally, the public pre-approval requirement undermines the expertise of certified school educators and creates delays and roadblocks in getting library materials to students who benefit from them. Furthermore, the mandated documentation process creates an administrative burden that consumes time and resources better allocated to instructional support. While Meadow ISD fully supports transparency and parental engagement in the school library process, the rigid requirements of TEC §33.026 are unnecessary and duplicative of local safeguards already in place. This exemption allows Meadow ISD to preserve instructional flexibility, uphold librarian professionalism, and provide students with timely access to enriching and appropriate materials—without compromising accountability or community trust.

Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary

TEC Requiring Exemption:

TEC 21.402 requires districts pay a retired teacher a salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale. "Teacher" refers to a classroom teacher, full-time speech pathologist, full-time librarian, full-time school counselor, and full-time school nurse.

In addition to the teacher's salary, districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge. Therefore, a retire/rehire employee comes with a great financial burden. Meadow ISD would like the option of hiring an experienced, well-versed employee without an extra strain on the budget.

Benefit of Exemption for MISD:

Allows the District to combat the nationwide teacher shortage by reaching negotiated salary agreements with experienced education professionals.

Local Guidelines:

Meadow ISD will have the flexibility to hire eligible retired teachers at the negotiated salary that may be below the TEA minimum pay scale.

Meadow ISD would continue to pay the required surcharge.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Bric Turner, Superintendent	Jason Atcheson, Sec. Principal
Veronica Gonzalez, PEIMS	Dee Anne Bentencourt, Elem. Principal
Amy Bayer, Elem.	Jonathan Alaniz, Sec.
Jody Woodard, School Board	Sandy Cruz, Support Staff
Maria Fraire, Community	Amy Fabila, Support Staff
Kara Estes, Counselor	

Board of Trustees

Rusty Day, President	Ruben Villalpando, Member
Jody Woodard, Vice-President	Joshua Ruiz, Member
Daniel Harrington, Secretary	Christopher Castilleja, Member
Anthony Furgeson, Member	