



FORNEY ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Forney ISD is driven by Six Board Goals developed in conjunction with our parents, community, and stakeholders. These goals drive all decisions regarding teaching and learning in Fisd.

1. Learning Organization: We will have a sound and efficient learning organization that supports learning and prepares for transition.
2. Learning Standards: We will implement research-based curriculum through relevant, engaging, and innovative instruction that meets the needs of all learners.
3. Learning Environment: We will create a diverse learning environment tailored to the needs of our students.
4. Assessment: We will continuously use formative and summative assessments for the students, educators, campuses, and district to encourage learning, mastery, and growth.
5. Digital Literacy: We will integrate technology that develops students to live, learn, earn, and play responsibly in a digital world.
6. Community Partnerships: We will develop parent and community partnerships that promote relationships that expand opportunities for students.

In order to best serve our students and align our learning to the Fisd board goals, we have developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan to provide opportunities that allow the Fisd Board of Trustees the ability to use their best judgement to make decisions regarding the students of Fisd. Fisd is a community with diverse students and unique challenges. Giving the board local control of these decisions will provide lasting effects on our students, parents and community. This DOI Plan is in effect as of 06/01/2021 and was amended on 06/01/2021.

I. First Day of Instruction - Board Goal 1 Learning Organization

Exemption From: TEC §25.0811, TEC §25.0812

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August.

TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Innovative Plan: These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable the district to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in Fisd. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June. By ending earlier, Fisd can support students who need

remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

II. **Teacher Certification Requirements - Board Goal 2 Learning Standards**

Exemption From: TEC §21.003(a) TEC §21.053, TEC §21.055, TEC §21.057

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching 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 take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

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

TEC §21.055 states that if a teacher is not certified, the district may issue a teaching permit to employ the individual. This process requires notice to the Commissioner and its usefulness is extremely limited. Additionally, the language of this section could be construed to prohibit the employment of a teacher without a teaching certificate or a school district teaching permit obtained under this section.

TEC §21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Innovative Plan: The district 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, 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. Forney ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to CTE, bilingual education, and languages other than English. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Additionally, Forney ISD will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

III. Behavior Coordinator - Board Goal 6 Community Partnerships

Exemption From: TEC§37.0012

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

TEC§37.0012 requires that a person be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator (CBC), who is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and implementation of Chapter 37. This provision also allows duties imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator to be performed by the campus behavior coordinator.

Innovative Plan: By eliminating the behavior coordinator designation, FISD can focus on building a Culture of Excellence that fosters the development of social-emotional learning. In addition to exempting the district from the application of TEC§37.0012, any authority, responsibility, or duty granted to a CBC by law or FISD Board Policy shall be exercised by other appropriate school officials.

IV. Probationary Contracts - Board Goal 1 Learning Organization

Exemption From: TEC §21.102(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

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

Innovative Plan: Due to the unique nature of FISD, including our initiatives and processes, this period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data. Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract employees will be subject to the probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

V. Duty Free Lunch - Board Goal 1 Learning Organization

Exemption From:

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

TEC 21.405 states that Except as provided by Subsection (c), each classroom teacher or full-time librarian is entitled to at least a 30-minute lunch period free from all duties and responsibilities connected with the instruction and supervision of students. Each school district may set flexible or rotating schedules for each classroom teacher or full-time librarian in the district for the implementation of the duty-free lunch period. The implementation of this section may not result in a lengthened school day. c) If necessary because of a personnel shortage, extreme economic conditions, or an unavoidable or unforeseen circumstance, a school district may require a classroom teacher or

librarian entitled to a duty-free lunch to supervise students during lunch. A classroom teacher or librarian may not be required to supervise students under this subsection more than one day in any school week. The commissioner by rule shall prescribe guidelines for determining what constitutes a personnel shortage, extreme economic conditions, or an unavoidable or unforeseen circumstance for purposes of this subsection.

Innovative Plan: Teachers will eat lunch with their students to keep students socially distanced during lunch. This exemption is an emergency exemption that we will only use until the pandemic ends.

VI. Class size Waiver

Exemption From: TEC §25.112, TEC §25.112(d)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

Each school district in Texas is required to review its class size enrollment to determine whether its class sizes for grades Kindergarten through 4th grade meet the requirements of TEC §25.112. If the review indicates that any class for grades K-4 exceeds the allowable class size limit of 22 students per class (22:1), the District must submit a request for exception under TEC §25.112(d). The District must also submit requests as additional classes exceed the 22:1 state ratio

Innovative Plan: In order to provide flexibility during covid 19 we will utilize online learning in addition to face to face learning. In order to keep the in person learning environments small and safe, the face-to-face numbers will exceed the 22:1 state class sizes in grades K-4. This exemption is not intended to create large face-to-face classrooms, and all efforts will be made to create a standard 22:1 ratio.

VII. Group Health Care Coverage

Exemption From: TEC §22.004(i)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

Forney ISD currently participates in TRS ActiveCare Health Insurance and is prohibited from offering additional or alternative group health coverage to employees that may provide better coverages at lower costs. The high cost of TRS ActiveCare Health plan premiums has created financial hardships for employees with some staff opting not to have health care coverage offered by the district due to the high percentage of their income that the monthly premiums would consume.

Innovative Plan: Increased local control of the group health benefits plan would allow Forney ISD to be responsive to employee and community needs by offering alternative group health coverage in tandem with TRS ActiveCare.

