



# District of Innovation

## Frisco ISD Local Innovation Plan

DOI Admndments  
added  
June 12, 2019  
April 2, 2020  
June 22, 2021

## Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed in 2015 in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, in part amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the TEC, providing more flexibilities and control in locally meeting the needs of students and the communities served.

On October 17, 2016, the Frisco ISD Board of Trustees (Board) adopted a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation. On November 14, 2016, the Board held a public hearing and appointed a Local Innovation Plan Committee (Committee) comprised of staff members and community members named by each member of the Board and the Instructional Support Team (IST). The 15-member Committee met on November 28 and 30, 2016, to discuss the process and drafted a Local Innovation Plan (Plan). Final adjustments were agreed upon via email.

Further timeline information regarding the process will be included in this section as appropriate.

## Terms

By law, the term of the designation as a District of Innovation may not exceed five years. The term of the Frisco ISD Local Innovation Plan begins on February 13, 2017, and ends on February 13, 2022, unless rescinded or renewed by the Board in accordance with law, or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by a majority vote of the district-level committee established under the TEC 11.251 (District Improvement Team) along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An **amendment** to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an innovation district; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify the TEA within five business days of **rescission** of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During **renewal**, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the original statutory adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions and local approval dates. The Local Innovation Plan Committee will annually review the plan, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the FISD Strategic Plan efforts.

See attached exhibits A and B for processes related to the annual review and for amending the Plan.

As part of the annual review process, the membership of the Local Innovation Plan Committee will be renewed and/or modified by a majority vote of the Board. Outside of the annual review/renewal process, if a member of the Local Innovation Plan Committee is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Board may appoint

a replacement by majority vote. Recommendations for staff appointments will be made by the IST. The Board has ultimate authority in determining the membership of the Committee; the intent of the Board is to maintain balanced representation on the Committee of community members and staff.

The Local Innovation Plan is aligned with the beliefs, vision, mission and motto of the Frisco ISD and is guided by the strategies and objectives of the Strategic Plan established in 2015, which is the framework for the comprehensive educational program for the District and focuses the work and the daily operations of the District employees in meeting the needs of students.

## Beliefs

Education is a shared responsibility of students, school, home and community. With that as an essential principle, we believe the following to be true for students, staff, families and the community:

- Everyone has equal inherent worth and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Everyone needs challenge, opportunity and encouragement.
- Each person is unique.
- Meaningful relationships have profound lifelong impact.
- Integrity is essential.
- Imagination and creativity are vital.
- A safe environment is necessary for learning.
- Every person can learn.
- Each person is ultimately responsible for his/her own learning.
- Learning is lifelong and unlimited.
- There is always room for improvement.
- All students must graduate with the skills they need to pursue their aspirations.

## Vision

We look at education in a different way. . .  
through the eyes of children.

## Motto

Pride. Tradition. Excellence.

## Mission

Our mission is to know every student by name and need.

# Objectives and Strategies

DEVELOPED BY STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM – APPROVED BY BOARD JUNE 2015  
SEE FULL PLAN ON THE FISD WEBSITE

## Teaching and Learning

1. Strategic Objective - Every student will engage in relevant and meaningful learning that prepares them to pursue their college and/or career aspirations.
2. Strategic Objective - All staff will actively engage in a collaborative culture of continuous improvement.

## Human Resources

3. Strategic Objective - Design a system that exemplifies a purposeful commitment to hire and support exceptional staff.

## Budget

4. Strategic Objective - Develop and advocate for a long-range financial plan to ensure student success.

## Facilities

5. Strategic Objective - Sustain the small school model of FISD.

## Whole Child

6. Strategic Objective - Create and maintain an organization that engages, empowers, and enlightens the whole child and the family.

## Communications

7. Strategic Objective - Create an adaptable framework and resources to build knowledge and skills within all stakeholders to enhance communications and create personalized connections to our mission, through our messages and brand.

It has been determined that the following requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the pursuit of the goals of the Frisco Independent School District in meeting the needs of students at this time.

**Innovation Plan Exemption** required to meet the needs of the Whole Child, Teaching and Learning, Budget and Human Resources:

*1 - Texas Education Code 25.0811 (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.*

*(EB Legal Policy)*

*Plan Rationale* – When the state moved from mandating the number of days of instruction to a number of minutes, Frisco ISD took the opportunity to revisit the school calendar and to look at what would be best for students and staff in achieving the goals of the District.

This resulted in a calendar that allowed for a more targeted approach to professional learning prior to the start of school and throughout the year, and provided for strategic breaks for staff and students that is believed to help with the overall well-being of both, while also providing for extended family time throughout the year. These job-embedded opportunities for growth and collaboration keep professional learning meaningful and timely and reduce the number of summer workshops and the need for substitutes, which

also reduces spending. This calendar also allowed for more dedicated teacher work-day time that helps with teacher stress and morale.

In addition, this calendar allowed FISD to balance the days in each semester which is best for students and teachers, particularly at the secondary level when participating in a one-semester course, and in all courses relative to the pacing of lessons and learning.

This all worked because the school year started on August 22, which was the fourth Monday in 2016. In 2017, the fourth Monday is August 28. A school year beginning on August 28 results in the school year ending on June 8. This late ending negatively impacts additional opportunities for students in relation to summer school at the high school and college levels and for other camps and enrichment programs. It also impacts job opportunities for students. This is beyond the concerns related to the District's inability to provide the other benefits of the calendar as outlined above.

Prior to the mandate in 2007 through TEC 25.0811 (a), school started in FISD on the second or third Monday. Since the 2000-2001 school year, the earliest school has started in FISD is August 13, which was a second Monday. This mandate does not allow for a waiver request.

*Local Innovation Plan Guideline* – The first day of instruction in FISD will not begin prior to the second Monday in August, but will be scheduled to best meet the needs of FISD, and its students, staff and community in furthering the educational program. Preference will be given to starting on the third Monday in August.

**Innovation Plan Exemption** required to meet the needs of the Whole Child, Human Resources:

*2 – TEC 37.0012 requires that a person at each campus 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.*

*(FO Legal Policy)*

*Plan Rationale* – This statute came out of the 84th Legislative Session and limits the District's ability to know the name and need of each of its students. By placing this duty on one administrator, rather than allowing assistant principals to be responsible for this duty with the students assigned to him/her as was done previously in FISD, it creates great inefficiencies and limits the effectiveness of FISD administrators. The burden of placing this on one person is not sustainable, and the additional stress it creates to staff, students and families should be avoided. The assistant principals are building relationships with the students and families assigned to them and are best equipped to handle discipline concerns and the management of behavior issues and consequences. In order for the District to promote the social and emotional learning of its students and foster the connection between actions and consequences, the District seeks relief from this Code. This will allow for more student-centered behavior management programs that have the support and buy-in of the students, staff members, parents and local community.

*Local Innovation Plan/Guideline* – The principal may delegate the duties of the Campus Behavior Coordinator to campus administrator(s) to best serve the needs of students and families, and the District will provide the training and guidance necessary for them to execute the expectations, practices and protocols of FISD that also meet all other provisions of the Code (Chapter 37, SB 107 and the Student Code of Conduct), i.e, timely notifications. This will ensure consistency and adherence to policy and legal requirements.

**Innovation Plan Exemption** required to meet the needs of the Whole Child, Human Resources, Budget:

*3– TEC 25.081 (HB 2610) for each school year, each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses.*

*(EC Legal Policy)*

*Plan Rationale* – This statute came out of the 84th Legislative Session. For the purposes of this Code, a day of instruction is 420 minutes in meeting the 75,600 minutes for the year. For a half-day program such as pre-K, this would require 37,800 minutes. In FISD, as in many districts across the state, we offer a morning and afternoon program at one facility – the Early Childhood School. In our 174-day school calendar, there is not enough time in the day to run a morning and afternoon program, allow for teachers to have a planning period and a duty-free lunch, and meet the minutes outlined in this requirement. Our pre-K students have 185 minutes of instruction, including the beginning intermission. To meet the mandate we would have to add 33 minutes to their instructional day. This is not possible, and we believe is an unintended consequence of the legislation that we hope is addressed in the 85th Legislative Session. In this first year of implementation, a waiver was allowed, but it will not be allowed for the 2017-18 school year.

*Local Innovation Plan/Guideline* – Consequently, in order to conduct the best program we can for FISD students, staff and the community, FISD will continue to provide our instruction in a 185-minute block in the morning and in the afternoon. The District understands that there may be funding implications to this component of the innovation plan.

*Summary and Signatures of Commitment*

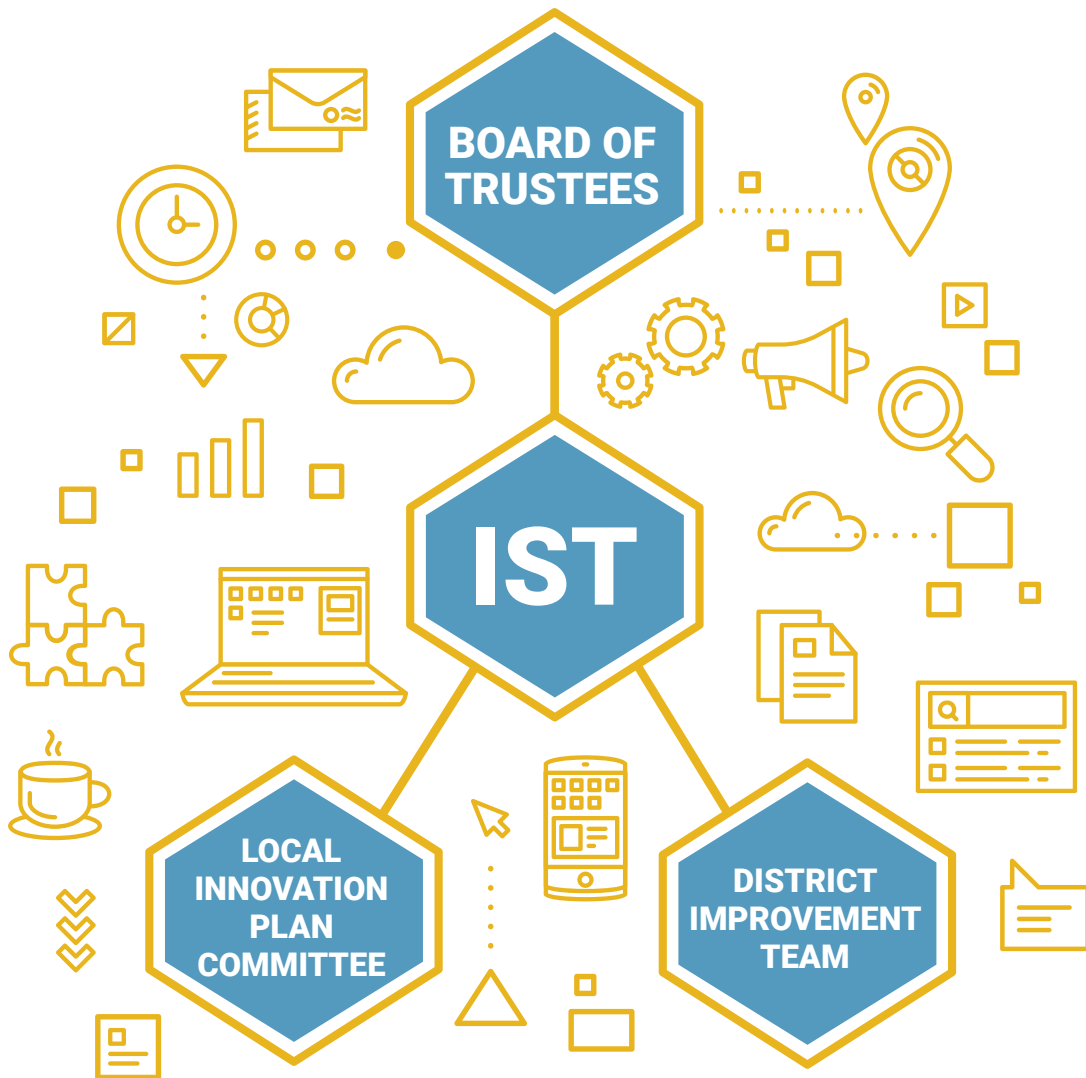
*It is noted that through the annual review process, further innovations and exemptions may be needed to advance the work of the District in meeting the needs of students, and amendments may be necessary. As other districts across the state pursue this process and implement plans through this provision for additional flexibilities and more local control, new ideas for innovation may emerge that have great applicability in FISD. We hope that through the natural course of having more autonomy and freedom to think innovatively that all students across the state will be able to take advantage of these key learnings.*

## Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

Christy Fiori	Curriculum and Instruction Area Director, appointed by Katie Kordel, IST
Jennifer Redden	Principal Memorial High School, appointed by Kenny Chandler, IST
Karen Dilworth	Ashley Elementary School Teacher, appointed by Doug Zambiasi, IST
Anna Koenig	Human Resources Director, appointed by Pamela Linton, IST
Nima Kapadia	Wakeland High Journalism Teacher, appointed by Chris Moore, IST
Melanie Schroeder	Payroll Director, appointed by Dr. Todd Fouche, IST
Stacy Cameron	Coordinator of Library/Media Services, appointed by Melissa Fouche, IST
Anjali Shirvaikar	Parent, appointed by Dr. Jeremy Lyon, IST
Robert Cox	Parent, appointed by Bryan Dodson, Board member
Sean Mahan	Parent, appointed by Steve Noskin, Board member
Josh Gable	Parent, appointed by John Hoxie, Board member
Kathryn Carter	Parent, appointed by Chad Rudy, Board member
Melanie Royer	Parent, appointed by Debbie Gillespie, Board member
Cindy Badon	Parent, appointed by Anne McCausland, Board member
Claire Nese	Parent, appointed by John Classe, Board member



# District of Innovation Frisco ISD Review Process Exhibit A



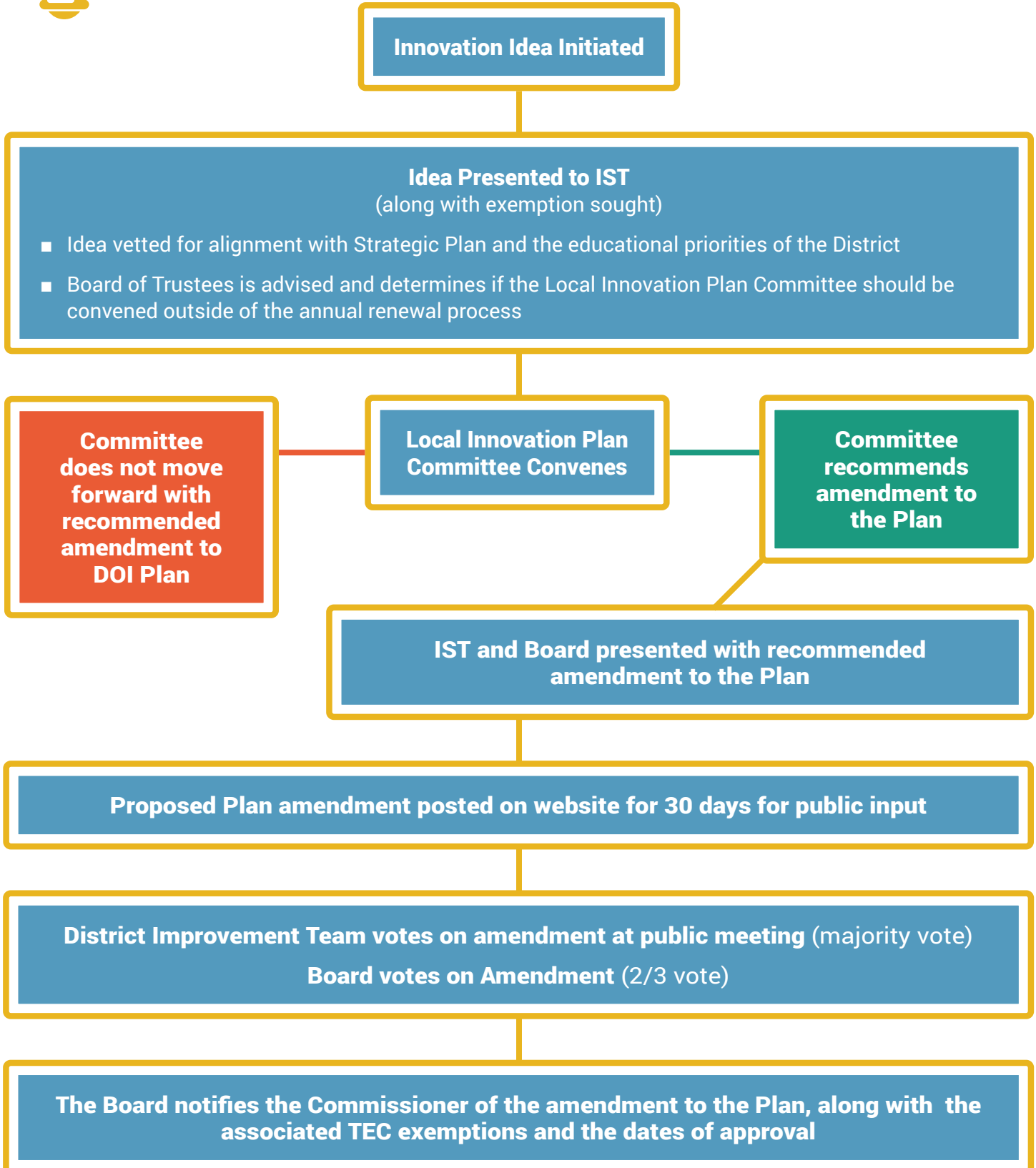
The Board of Trustees will annually convene the Local Innovation Plan Committee to review the Local Innovation Plan to ensure the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended and are in line with the FISD Strategic Plan efforts.

The IST and its designee will facilitate this meeting and bring forward any recommended changes. Any recommendation to amend, rescind, or renew the Plan will be moved forward by the IST or its designee to the District Improvement Team and the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law and the terms of the Local Innovation Plan.

The Board may convene the Local Innovation Plan Committee prior to the annual review process if deemed necessary.



# District of Innovation Frisco ISD Amendment Process Exhibit B



**Innovation Consideration #1: TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

<b>CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENT</b>
<p>All teachers must hold an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the state. In the absence of the certification districts can request emergency certification from the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). When a teacher does not have certification, the district has to provide written notification to parents within 30 days.</p>
<p>Not required for exemption.</p>
<p><b>Texas Education Code</b> : §21.003, §21.0031, §21.051, §21.053, <del>§21.055</del>, § 21.057</p>
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
<p>Traditional certification requirements are not aligned with the realities of the current educational environment and the need to hire industry experts to teach many of the “hard to fill” course offerings such as career and technology, foreign languages, and others. As a result, student interest is subject to being negatively impacted by the limited availability of these courses.</p>
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p>Continue to seek certified educators for teaching positions and maintain expectations for employee certification. When efforts have been reasonably exhausted the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and are fully equipped to perform the duties of the position. Develop minimum required qualifications. Possible qualification criteria might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional work experience</li> <li>• Formal training/education in the content area</li> <li>• Active/relevant professional industry certification</li> <li>• A combination of work experience, training, and education</li> <li>• Demonstration of successful experience working with students</li> </ul> <p>Provide teachers identified under this option with the training necessary to carry out the expectations of their positions.</p>



**Innovation Consideration #2: PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS****CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENT**

A person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28, 1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract.

All teachers that have been teaching in public education at least five of the last eight years prior to being employed by the district must be offered a term contract following one year on a probationary contract.

*Note: A "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under TEC§21. Subchapter B.*

[Texas Education Code: §21.102](#)

**CHALLENGE(S)**

Current requirements do not always allow for sufficient time to effectively evaluate the full range of skills and abilities of a teacher. Teachers may be limited in the time provided for them demonstrate improvement in their teaching and instructional delivery.

**DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION**

Provide all new teachers, in good standing, with a second year of probationary status (probationary contract) to allow sufficient time to effectively evaluate the full range of their skills and abilities.

**Innovation Consideration #3: NINETY PERCENT RULE**

<b>CURRENT DISTRICT REQUIREMENT</b>
<p>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.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>This innovation would not apply to standard credit bearing courses offered in the traditional classroom setting, but would be appropriate to apply to nonstandard, non-traditional courses offered outside of the campus classroom, such as an off-site internship or a dual credit course taken on a college campus.</i></p>
<b>Texas Education Code : §25.092</b>
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
<p>Current reality reflects that some students are unable to attend class in the traditional brick and mortar building for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, illness, family concerns, disabilities, efforts to pursue an accelerated programming, etc.</p>
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p>Continue to provide students who are unable to attend in traditional settings the opportunity to benefit from virtual and online classes in addition to or in place of the traditional instructional offerings AND provide them with the associated credits and final grades for their work when recommended by district designated staff.</p> <p>Consider other innovative methods, locations and times for instruction to further accommodate students with legitimate scheduling conflicts which in turn could reduce dropouts and increase the number of qualifying graduates.</p>

**Innovation Consideration #4: LIMITATIONS ON STUDENT SUSPENSIONS**

<b>CURRENT DISTRICT REQUIREMENT</b>
Students below grade three may not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless the student engages in behaviors that include weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence.
<small>Code Correction</small>
<a href="#">Texas Education Code</a> : <del>§25.092,</del> §37.005
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
There are times when students engage in behaviors that do not necessarily fit into the categories of weapons, violent offenses or being under the influence, but warrant removal from the instructional setting. An example might include students who engage in “persistent misbehaviors” that are deemed to be harmful to the student or others. Currently students in these situations sometimes fail to understand the seriousness of their behaviors due to administrative limitations in responding to their behaviors.
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
Establish a district protocol to facilitate appropriate disciplinary steps to address the behaviors of students in grades three and below. The protocol might include consideration of such student behaviors by campus administration in collaboration with district support staff.

**Innovative Consideration #1: ADDITIONAL HEALTH CARE OPTIONS**

<b>CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENT</b>
TEC§22.004(i) states that 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.
Texas Education Code : §22.004
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
This provision allows for no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits and prohibits Frisco ISD from designing and making available better and more cost-effective coverage to staff, their families and prospective employees.
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
Frisco ISD is proposing an amendment to its DOI which would permit the district to maintain local control of the group health benefits allowing the district to be flexible and responsive to the needs of current and future staff.

**Innovation Consideration #2: DISCIPLINE PLACEMENT FOR STUDENTS UNDER AGE 6**

<b>CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENT</b>
A student younger than age 6 may not be placed in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (“DAEP”) unless the student brings a firearm to school.
Texas Education Code: §37.006(1); §37.007(e)(2)
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
There are times when a student under age 6 engages in serious behavior that does not fit into the category of bringing a firearm to school but nonetheless poses a risk to other students and/or staff.
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
If a student under the age of 6 has engaged in persistent misbehavior that is deemed by the Threat Assessment Team to put other students and/or staff in danger of bodily harm, the student may be placed temporarily in a non-traditional classroom setting at the Student Opportunity Center pending a placement conference. For a student receiving special education or 504 services, a manifest determination ARD would also be required for a change of placement. While at the Student Opportunity Center, staff will implement restorative practices and social skills in a structured environment with the goal to transition the student successfully back to the home campus.

**Innovation Consideration #2: PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS**

<b>CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENT</b>
<p>A person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28, 1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract.</p> <p>All teachers that have been teaching in public education at least five of the last eight years prior to being employed by the district must be offered a term contract following one year on a probationary contract.</p> <p><i>Note: A "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under TEC§21. Subchapter B.</i></p>
Texas Education Code: §21.102
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
<p>Current requirements do not always allow for sufficient time to effectively evaluate the full range of skills and abilities of a teacher. Teachers may be limited in the time provided for them demonstrate improvement in their teaching and instructional delivery.</p>
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p>Provide all new teachers, in good standing, with a second year of probationary status (probationary contract) to allow sufficient time to effectively evaluate the full range of their skills and abilities.</p>

**Current wording:**

Provide all new teachers, in good standing, with a second year of probationary status (probationary contract) to allow sufficient time to effectively evaluate the full range of their skills and abilities.

**PROPOSITION:****Amend the DOI for probationary contracts to the following:**

“Provide all returning and new employees eligible for a contract with a one-year probationary contract of employment. If the aforementioned employees become eligible for a second consecutive year of employment, they would receive a second-year probationary contract. This contract expectation would be implemented following any break in employment.”

**Innovation Consideration #1: LESS-THAN-ANNUAL APPRAISALS OF CERTAIN ADMINISTRATORS**

<b>CURRENT DISTRICT REQUIREMENT</b>
School administrators, other than principals, must be appraised annually using either the TEA Commissioner’s recommended appraisal process and performance criteria, or a locally developed appraisal process.
<u>Texas Education Code:</u> §21.354
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
In a district the size of Frisco ISD, the formal appraisal process of employees consumes a significant amount of resources, including time, and can divert those resources from areas of greater need. Additionally, supervisors are expected to work collaboratively with their teams throughout the year to ensure that employees are meeting expectations, performing at an acceptable level, and exhibiting growth. As a result, annual appraisals can become perfunctory for employees who have consistently met performance expectations throughout the year over multiple years. Frisco ISD recognizes the importance of continuing to annually, formally appraise new employees and employees who need a higher level of support. Allowing for less-than-annual appraisals will provide flexibility for supervisors to devote resources, including time, to more formally support employees based on need while continuing to monitor all staff for satisfactory performance and growth.
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
Establish district procedures and criteria to allow for less-than-annual appraisals for all non-principal, professional staff under contract. The criteria will include specific procedures for appraisals, including the conditions under which a non-principal, professional employee must be appraised annually.

**Innovation Consideration #2: LESS-THAN-ANNUAL APPRAISALS OF PRINCIPALS**

<b>CURRENT DISTRICT REQUIREMENT</b>
Principals must be appraised annually using either the appraisal process developed or established by the TEA Commissioner or a locally developed appraisal process.
<u>Texas Education Code:</u> §21.3541
<b>CHALLENGE(S)</b>
In a district the size of Frisco ISD, the formal appraisal process of employees consumes a significant amount of resources, including time, and can divert those resources from areas of greater need. Additionally, supervisors are expected to work collaboratively with their teams throughout the year to ensure that employees are meeting expectations, performing at an acceptable level, and exhibiting growth. As a result, annual appraisals can become perfunctory for employees who have consistently met performance expectations throughout the year over multiple years. Frisco ISD recognizes the importance of continuing to annually, formally appraise new employees and employees who need a higher level of support. Allowing for less-than-annual appraisals will provide flexibility for supervisors to devote resources, including time, to more formally support employees based on need while continuing to monitor all staff for satisfactory performance and growth.
<b>DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION</b>
Establish district procedures and criteria to allow for less-than-annual appraisals for principals. The criteria will include specific procedures for appraisals, including the conditions under which a principal must be appraised annually.