

Rockwall Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan



District of Innovation Committee Members

Name	Position
Dr. Amy Anderson	Chief Academic Officer-Secondary
Medina Barron	Community Member
David Blake	Principal-J. W. Williams Middle School
Todd Bradford	Principal-Rockwall-Heath High School
Christy Epstein	Teacher-Quest Academy
Jenni Knox	Parent Representative
Jean Laswell	CTE Coordinator
Allyssa Loya	Teacher-Dorris A. Jones Elementary
Dr. Tom Maglisceau	Chief Administrative Officer of Student Services
Jessica Overstreet	Teacher-Herman E. Utley Middle School
Tammi Schmitt	Principal-Celia Hays Elementary
Mark Speck	Executive Director of Human Resources

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Timeline

Action	Date
Board Meeting: Adopt District of Innovation Resolution	2.20.17
Board Meeting: Hold Public Hearing	3.20.17
Board Meeting: Board takes action to decline District of Innovation or continue process	3.20.17
District of Innovation Committee Convenes	August - September 2017
DOI committee and timeline posted to website	September-October 2017
DOI plan presented to cabinet	September-October 2017
DOI plan presented to PLEC	September
District of Innovation Plan Posted on District Website	10.6.17
Superintendent notifies TEA of Board's intent to vote on proposed plan	10.6.17
Hold Public Meeting on District of Innovation Plan at DEIC meeting	11.7.17
District of Innovation Committee votes on plan (majority vote) immediately following the DEIC meeting	11.7.17
Committee presents District of Innovation Plan to Board of Trustees for approval (2/3 majority vote required)	11.13.17
Superintendent notifies TEA of Board's vote, files Figure 19 and plan to TEA	11.14.17

Timeline updated as of 11/13/17

Rockwall ISD District of Innovation

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). On February 20, 2017 the Rockwall 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.

In September 2017, a twelve member District Innovation Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's various stakeholders, including principals, parents, community members, and administrators was assembled. The Committee met to discuss and draft this District of Innovation Plan ("Plan"). At a public joint meeting of the District of Innovation Committee and the District Education and Improvement Committee ("DEIC") on November 7th, the DEIC will vote on approval for this plan. Based on direction provided by the Board and input from various District stakeholders, the Committee proposes this Plan for RISD.

Term

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2018-19 school year and ending at the end of the 2022-23 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Education and Improvement Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and will review it annually. The advisory committee would reconvene if any any suggested modifications, including addendums, to the Plan were recommended.

A Comprehensive Educational Program

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Priorities for the District.

Vision

The Board has adopted the following Vision to guide the District:

Rockwall ISD graduates create their vision for the future and succeed in a challenging and ever-changing society.

Mission

The Board has adopted the following Mission to guide the District:

The mission of Rockwall ISD, a diverse and unified community embracing endless learning possibilities, is to inspire and develop the unique abilities of our children to become passionate learners, extraordinary citizens and authentic leaders of the 21st century by cultivating an engaging learning environment based on high standards and expectations in a culture of kindness and compassion.

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District Goals

The following are district goals identified in the District Improvement Plan:

- Provide an academically engaging environment that celebrates student voice and cultivates a passion and purpose in life;
- Develop a culture of ethics for all stakeholders that focuses on integrity, respect, kindness, compassion, and accountability.

Innovations

To achieve the District's Vision and Mission, to align the District practices and operations with the District's strategic objectives, and to meet the District's goals, the District needs the flexibility to exert local control to modify:

- School start date
- Teacher Certification Requirements

The promotion of these innovations allows the District to meet the characteristics of the graduate profile of becoming academically prepared, effective problem solvers, effective communicators, and responsible and engaged citizens.

The District needs local flexibility in the following areas to improve student outcomes. Some of these exemptions may be enacted beginning in the 2018-19 school year while others may be implemented at a future date. Additional innovations may be suggested through the District of Innovation Committee and adopted by the board as our Strategic Plans move toward completion with new learning environments, programs, schedules, and instructional delivery which may also require more specialized and focused professional learning for our educators.

Texas Education Code Chapter 21 -- Educator's Certification Required (§21.003)

Currently:

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency ("TEA") to hire without certification, with requirement to obtain certification in a specified time. The TEA then approves or denies this request.

Proposed:

The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach specialized Career and Technical Education ("CTE") courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of specialized CTE course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the certification requirements set forth in law. Before examining the employment of non-certified personnel, all efforts will be made to hire state certified teachers.

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By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for specialized CTE course offerings, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, business professionals or certified teaching professionals with real world experiences and technical skills, seeking assignments outside of their certification area. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools in specialized CTE course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

Texas Education Code Chapter 25 -- Admission, Transfer, and Attendance First Day of Instruction (§25.0811)

Currently:

The TEC states that a school district may not begin instruction before the 4th Monday in August.

Proposed:

The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students, parents, and our local 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 RISD. Because the community expects the fall semester to end with final exams before the Winter Break, the restricted start date creates a significant imbalance in the number of instructional days in each semester. This will also allow for flexible professional development scheduling for district staff.

Summary

Rockwall ISD's mission is to inspire and develop the unique abilities of our children to become passionate learners, extraordinary citizens and authentic leaders of the 21st century by cultivating an engaging learning environment based on high standards and expectations in a culture of kindness and compassion.

Many of the compliance rules and regulations that we have been required to meet have inhibited the expansion of the new culture of learning and achievement of our students. The exemptions we will be allowed by virtue of becoming designated as a "District of Innovation" will ensure further preparation of our students for their postsecondary pursuits and will enable innovation at all levels in scheduling, campus administration, and expansion of classroom instruction to include anytime-anywhere learning environments.

Board Policy Revisions

In most cases, activation of exemptions from the TEC will require the revision of Rockwall ISD local policies. RISD will implement an enhanced local policy development process that is rigorous, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholder input through the District Education and

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Improvement Committee. The district has developed and communicated a detailed implementation plan for the 2017-2018 Strategic Plan. This District of Innovation Plan will be seamlessly implemented as part of the Strategic Plan.