

LOMETA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan Jan 2018 - Dec 2022



Every Child, Every Skill, Every Day

Introduction

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in the Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- 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
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Process

On November 20, 2017, the Lometa Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On November 20, 2017 the Lometa ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing regarding the pursuit of the designation of District of Innovation. The Board of Trustees appointed the *District of Innovation Committee* to develop this *Local Innovation Plan*. The committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration, and Board of Trustees. The committee met on November 27, 2017 and November 30, 2017. The finalized plan was posted on the district website on Dec 1, 2017.

The District Site-Based Decision Making Committee, a body composed of representatives from stakeholders within the district's community, will meet on January 4, 2017. By majority vote, the SBDM will either reject the DOI plan or forward it to the Board of Trustees for consideration at the regularly scheduled January meeting.

Term

If implemented by the Lometa Board of Trustees, the District of Innovation Plan will become effective January, 2018 and will expire on the last day of December, 2022. In the interim, the plan may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. Amendments to the Innovation Plan will follow the same process as plan development. Changes will require majority approval of the District of Innovation Committee and District Site-Based Committees, 30 days posting, and a 2/3 vote by the Board of Trustees. Changes will not affect plan term unless the plan is revoked by either the Board of Trustees or the Texas Commissioner of Education.

Lometa ISD DOI Timeline

November 20, 2017

The Lometa ISD Board of Trustees held public hearing regarding the establishment of Lometa ISD as a District of Innovation (DOI)

The Lometa ISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to begin the process of establishing Lometa ISD as a District of Innovation and appointed a DOI Committee to develop a DOI Plan.

November 27, 2017

First meeting of DOI Committee to develop DOI Plan.

November 30, 2017

Second meeting of DOI Committee to finalize DOI Plan.

December 1, 2017

DOI Plan posted on Lometa ISD website for 30 day requirement for public consideration.

January 4, 2018

Meeting of Lometa ISD - District Site-Based Decision Making Committee to consider DOI Plan.

January, 2018 Board Meeting

If approved by SBDM Committee - Recommendation of Final Plan to Lometa ISD Board of Trustees for Consideration.

District of Innovation Planning Committee:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| David Fisher | Superintendent |
| Rob Moore | Assistant Superintendent |
| Jamie Smart | Principal |
| Marcus Patterson | LISD PBIS Coordinator |
| Heather Moresco | Reading and CTE |
| John Hines | LISD Board Member |
| Stacy Pauly | LISD Board Member |
| Renee Young | Secondary English Teacher |
| Kay Maddox | Elementary Teacher |
| Brenda Faubion | Special Education Teacher |
| Rhonda Molter | Parent |
| Monica Vasquez | Parent |
| Tanya Thompson | Parent |

Lometa ISD - District of Innovation Rationale and Exemptions:

The following are the provisions of the Texas Education Code identified as impediments to continuous improvements. The district seeks to exempt itself from the indicated TEC requirements through adoption of the District of Innovation Plan.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

TEC 21.003; DK (LEGAL, LOCAL)

Current Law

Under current law, a district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency when a district is unable to locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Rationale

In order to best serve Lometa ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. This will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part-time professionals to teach courses as well as allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology and other areas. It would also assist in staffing high need and demand areas such as STEM, dual-credit, and LOTE. Out-of-state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. Often experienced certified teachers are available with expertise for courses outside of their certification because of previous education, background and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and

flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

Local Procedures:

- When the campus principal determines that student needs will be best met by a person who is either not credentialed as a Texas teacher, or who is not certified in a particular area, the campus principal will submit a request to the superintendent, including credentials/experiences qualifying this individual to teach the assigned subject(s).
- The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.
- Eligible non-traditional teachers must have a bachelor's degree or higher to teach non-CTE courses and/or CTE courses that count for high school graduation credit including English language arts and reading, science, mathematics, or fine arts.

SCHOOL START DATE

TEC 25.0811; EB (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Current Law

Schools are prohibited from beginning the first day of instruction before the 4th Monday of August.

Rationale

Flexibility of start date would allow the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Greater flexibility in school start will allow completion of the Fall term prior to December holidays and create more equal semester lengths. Students who utilize dual-credit opportunities will have greater alignment with local colleges. An early start date will provide students an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments - especially for December EOC retakes.

Local Procedures

The district will determine, on a yearly basis, when each school year will begin.

LOCAL ROLE IN TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

TEC 21.352, 21.353, 21.354, 21.3541; DNA (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Current Law

The state of Texas is required to adopt a recommended appraisal process for Texas teachers and administrators. The current recommended appraisal systems teachers and principals are respectively the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS).

Rationale

District control over appraisal systems will allow a local committee to develop teacher and administrator evaluation systems that could be a combination of T-TESS, T-P ESS, and other best practices. Such locally-developed systems will provide the district opportunities to address the unique challenges of a small, rural, single-campus district in ways that a one-size-fits-all appraisal system cannot accomplish.

Local Procedures

The district will continue to implement a modified T-TESS and T-P ESS in the 2017-2018 school year and will study options to improve the appraisal process in an effort at continuous district improvement.

Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios

TEC 25.111, 25.112, and 25.114; (EEB LEGAL)

Current Law:

State law requires districts to maintain an average student-teacher ratio of at most of 20 to 1 for average daily attendance. For physical education, the student-teacher ratio cannot be greater than 45 to 1. In Kindergarten through grade fourth the class student-teacher ratio must not exceed 22 to 1.

Rationale

While small class sizes can play a positive role achievement, research by Hattie and others shows that the quality of the teacher is of even greater importance. While the district remains committed to small classroom sizes, greater control over student-teacher ratio, will allow the district to make staffing decisions for greater student outcomes, not simply for specific class sizes.

Local Procedure

While Lometa ISD will continue to strive for a class ratio of 22:1 or less in grades K-4 and small class sizes across the district, the local administration will make staffing determinations based upon classroom needs.

INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFERS

TEC 25.036; FDA (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Current Law

Currently, under Texas Education Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. TEC 25.036, uses the language “may transfer annually” and has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Rationale

Lometa ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. 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 are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Lometa ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment and the eligibility to revoke transfer for a student's return to home district.

Local Procedure

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

CONTRACT SERVICE DAYS

TEC 21.401, DCB (LEGAL)

Current Law

Currently TEC 21.401 requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Rationale

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service. With the passage of 25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision. Determination by the district to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days of service will have no effect on teacher salaries.

Local Procedure

The district will determine the required teacher contract days on a yearly basis according to district needs. A 10-month contract will not have more than 187 days and no less than 7 work/staff development days.

RETIRE/REHIRE MINIMUM SALARY

TEC 21.402; DEA (LEGAL, LOCAL)

Current Law

Currently all districts, must pay classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time school counselors (including retired educators) a defined salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale. For qualified retired educators, districts are required to pay an additional TRS surcharge.

Rationale

The current financial constraints of a combination of minimum pay scale and TRS surcharge makes hiring of certified, eligible retired educators cost prohibitive in most cases. When the TRS Surcharge is mandated for retire/rehire certified teachers and staff, Lometa ISD would like flexibility regarding the minimum pay scale. The opportunity to hire eligible retired, certified educators will increase the pool of experienced teachers and staff available to Lometa students.

Local Procedure

According to District policy, this exception will only be implemented in Retire/Rehire situations. In all other situations, requirements for TEC 21.402 will remain in effect through District Policy: DEA Legal/Local.

Probationary Contracts

TEC 21.102B; DCA (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Current Law

Under current law, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year.

Rationale

The limitation of probationary contract to one year according to TEC 21.102b may be insufficient to fully determine teacher classroom effectiveness or to provide staff with the best opportunity to succeed for students. This exemption will provide the District an option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired to Lometa ISD but employed as certified educators at least 5 of the previous 8 years.

Local Procedure

At the end of the first year of Lometa ISD employment of an experienced teacher, counselor or nurse (employed as certified educators at least 5 of the previous 8 years), the Lometa ISD administration will determine whether or not an additional probationary contract will be required for continued employment. If a second probationary contract has been extended to an experienced teacher, counselor, or nurse (as defined above), Lometa ISD administration will determine at the end of the second year of employment at Lometa ISD whether or not to offer a term contract to the employee. This exception to TEC 221.102B does not affect probationary contracts for professional staff who do not have prior experience as educators or who have not been employed as professional educators 5 of the previous 8 years as outlined by district policy (DCA LEGAL/LOCAL) and TEC 21.102.

