
*De Leon Independent School
District*
District of Innovation Plan



**Adopted April 17, 2017
DISD Board Of Trustees
Amended 2/23/2021**

De Leon Independent School District

Background

The 84th Legislative Session passed House bill 1842 allowing school districts to have greater local control while becoming a District of Innovation. This opportunity will allow for flexibility regarding certain state level rules and regulations in order to transform and make improvements to better serve the students of De Leon ISD.

The Innovation Plan for De Leon ISD will remain in effect for five years beginning in August 2017 through July 2022.

Mission Statement

The staff of De Leon ISD believes that all students are capable of learning. To foster student achievement, it is our responsibility to provide a well-balanced curriculum within an environment that is conducive to learning. Our goal is to help all students reach their greatest level of academic achievement. We can attain this goal by instilling in our students a love of learning and by providing a curriculum that includes basic liberal arts courses, fine arts, technology, and vocation training.

District Goals

- De Leon ISD will attract qualified staff who will engage in ongoing professional development in order to promote student performance, which exceeds state averages and prepares students for success in life.
- De Leon ISD will develop a partnership with parents and community to build a community of leaders.
- De Leon ISD will provide resources and facilities that enhance learning in a safe environment.

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District Of Innovation Committee

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Lori Womack, Elementary Principal
Chuck Miller, Secondary Assistant Principal
Amber Bates, Counselor/parent
Nancy Brown, Community Member
Rae Jean Hasty, Community Member
Jana Cullers, Business Member
Joe Burnett, Business Member
Jill Hill, Parent
Michelle McIlvain, Teacher/Parent
Deanna Downs, Teacher/Parent
Lori Campbell, Teacher
Tara Kellam, Teacher
Roxanna Thiebaud, Teacher
Molly Smith, Teacher
Shelia Johnson, Teacher
Josh Sepeda, Teacher
David White, Paraprofessional

District Of Innovation Plan Timeline

- September 7, 2016 District administrators reviewed innovation plans from other Texas school districts, and made the decision to pursue a district plan of innovation for De Leon ISD.
- February 15, 2017 District of Innovation Committee met to review and develop the local innovation plan. This meeting was open to the public for review.
- March 8, 2017 District of Innovation Committee met to review and finalize the local innovation plan for presentation to the DISD School Board. This meeting was open to the public for review.
- March 9, 2017 The local innovation plan was posted the De Leon ISD website.
- March 20, 2017 The local innovation plan, as posted online, was presented to the School Board for consideration and approval for the district to present to the faculty and staff. This meeting was open to the public for review.
- March 21, 2017 The local innovation plan was submitted to the Commissioner's office to notify them of our intent to pursue becoming a district of innovation.
- April 5, 2017 District of Innovation Committee met to review and finalize the local innovation plan, including clarification of items as suggested by the Commissioner's office. This meeting was open to the public for review.
- April 17, 2017 Public Forum – Review final plan for District of Innovation.
- April 17, 2017 The local innovation plan was presented to the DISD School Board for consideration and final approval. This meeting was open to the public for review.
- April 17, 2017 Local innovation plan adopted for De Leon ISD by the DISD School Board and approved for submission to the Commissioner's office.

STATUTES UNDER CONSIDERATION

I. Uniform Start Date: Education Code 25.0811

First Day of Instruction. (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.

Rationale for Exemption:

De Leon ISD would like to have the flexibility to develop a calendar that would meet the needs of the students and community. This allows a similar start date with colleges that provide our dual credit courses. It also helps us balance the first and second semester by providing more instructional days prior to state testing and better balance our semesters as well as scheduling more timely and meaningful staff development throughout the school year.

II. Teacher Employment Contracts: Education Code 21.102 (B)

(b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one year, The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

Rationale for Exemption:

De Leon ISD's request addresses experienced teachers or counselors new to the district who have been employed as a teacher/counselor in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years from the last date of district employment. The same rules will apply for any teacher/counselor returning to the District. This allows more time for evaluation of the teacher/counselor's effectiveness.

III. Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios Education Code 25.111, 25.112, 25.113, and 25.114

State law requires districts to maintain an average student-teacher ratio 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 four, the class student-teacher ratio must not exceed 22 to 1.

Rationale for Exemption:

While class size does influence the effectiveness of instruction, other considerations should be taken into account. DISD would also like to consider the needs of both teachers and students when making the decisions that affect class size. We believe every K-4 classroom should begin

the school year under the 22 to 1 rule but after the teacher and students have formed a relationship (two weeks into the school year), then the 23rd student should not require consideration of forming a new class. This is detrimental to the learning environment for the entire class. Research clearly shows that it is the teacher in the classroom and his/her relationship with students that has the greatest impact on student learning. The same rationale should be used when considering physical education classes. When the district does surpass the 22 to 1 class size, or the 45 to 1 physical education class size, the district will provide written notice of this exception to parents/guardians of all students in the affected class(es) as required in TEC Sec. 25.113. The district does plan to maintain an overall average student to teacher ratio of 20 to 1 as stated in TEC Sec. 25.111.

IV. Teacher Certification

Education Code 21.003, 21.053, 21.057

Presently §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor 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 person, the district must request emergency certification from TEA and the State Board of Educator Certification.

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

§21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if any inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive days.

Rationale for Exemption:

State certification will not be required for teachers of Career and Technology (CTE Courses) and Fine Arts courses (Art, Music, Drama). DISD asks for the flexibility to consider entering into at-will employment agreements with noncertified individuals who have field/professional experience in these areas. This would provide more options for students in our small, rural area.

De Leon ISD District Of Innovation Plan
Amendment A
2/23/2021



De Leon Independent School District

Dana Marable ♦ Superintendent

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February 23, 2021

VIA E-mail
Texas Education Agency
Commissioner Mike Morath
William B. Travis Building
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX. 78701

Email: commissioner@tea.texas.gov

Re: Notice to the Commissioner of Education of De Leon Board of Trustee's Approval of Amendment to Local District of Innovation Plan

Dear Commissioner Morath,

Please be advised that the De Leon ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved at their February 22, 2021, board meeting the below-described amendment, pursuant to Texas Administrative Code ("T.A.C.") § 102.1313, Amendment, Rescission, or Renewal, which reads, in relevant part:

- A district innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a majority voted of the district-level committee established under the Texas Education Code ("T.E.C."), § 11.251, or a comparable committee if the district is exempt from that section, and a two-thirds majority vote of the board of trustees.

The amendment was approved by the required majority vote of the De Leon ISD Board on February 22, 2021, and posted for the required 30 days.

This amendment is being submitted to amend the District of Innovation Plan previously approved by the De Leon ISD Board, with notice of intention to adopt said Original Plan sent to the Commissioner on March 21, 2017, and the final submission of the Plan sent to the Commissioner on April 17, 2017, with notice of intention to adopt said Plan Amendment.

Through the amendment, we seek to obtain broader exemption from T.E.C §22.004(i), which precludes a school district from providing an alternative uniform group health coverage program after the school district implements coverages under Chapter 1579.

The amendment, as approved by the required majority vote of the District Committee and the De Leon ISD Board, reads as follows:

T.E.C. § 22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to T.E.C. § 12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer

additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, **the district hereby amends the District of Innovation Plan to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in T.E.C. § 22.004(i)**

Should you require any additional information, please contact Dana S. Marable, Superintendent, at 254-893-8210 or dmorable@deleonisd.net.

Sincerely,



Dana S. Marable, Ph.D.

Superintendent

dmorable@deleonisd.net