

District of Innovation Plan

(DOI)

Agua Dulce Independent School District

Term 2022/2023 through 2026/2027

During of the 84th Texas Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed in order to provide more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to utilize the exemptions in the Texas Education Code (TEC) that charter schools currently are entitled to. Since the initial plan will expire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, this document will serve as the renewal of the District of Innovation (DOI) Plan for the term of 2022-2023 through 2026-2027. This plan can also be amended during its term in order to accommodate other areas of innovation if a need presents itself. Amendment of this plan must follow the same process as the original development and adoption, and will not extend the term of the renewal.

District of Innovation Committee Members

Richard Wright-Superintendent	Diana Sheeran- Librarian
Nora Lopez- Elem. Principal	Norma Jean Rodriguez- HS
Mark Saenz- Parent	Amy Luna- Nurse
Renee Benavides- Parent	Ann Martin- Elem
Christine Cruz- Parent	Jana Leo-Garcia- Elem
Eugena Valles- Counselor	Melissa Ortiz- Elem
Monica Garza- HS	Elizabeth Gonzalez- Elem
Melissa Hidalgo- HS	
Diana Scott- HS	

Timeline

February 15, 2022 -The Agua Dulce Board of Trustees approved a resolution to begin the process to renew the District of Innovation (DOI).

March 21, 2022 - The DOI Committee held a public meeting at 1:00 pm in the Agua Dulce High School Library. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the current DOI plan for renewal.

March 22, 2022 – The Agua Dulce Board of trustees met during a regularly scheduled Board meeting regarding the District of Innovation Plan for ADISD. The board voted unanimously (6 of 7 members present) to accept the District of Innovation plan has submitted by the DOI committee.

March 23, 2022 – The District will notify the Commissioner of Education that the plan has been approved and will provide notice of the approved exemptions.

Exemptions Sought

The District seeks exemption from the following statutory provisions, requirements or limitations, and intends to adopt or modify its policies, rules and procedures in order to implement and achieve the innovations resulting from these exemptions.

Uniform School Start Date and End Date

Proposed Exemptions:

TEC § 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.

TEC § 25.0812. LAST DAY OF SCHOOL. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

These provisions restrict the District's ability to structure the school calendar based on the unique needs of our district and community.

Resulting Innovation: The flexibility to determine school start and end dates allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. The district calendar is created and approved by a district committee consisting of parents, community representatives, teachers, and administrators. The district approved calendar is then approved by the school board and distributed to the staff via email and put on the district's website. This empowers ADISD to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. Exemption from the uniform start date allows for the flexibility of starting classes as a short week, easing the transition for students entering elementary school, middle school, and high school. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. This will also allow for more embedded professional/ staff development opportunities throughout the year. It is not the intent of the District to start the school year before the first week of August. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

Teacher Certifications

Proposed Exemptions:

TEC § 21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. {referring to Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Texas Education Code}

TEC § 21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES. (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

TEC § 21.057. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION. (a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30

consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom.

Resulting Innovation:

ADISD is committed to placing a life changer in every classroom. In order to best serve ADISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally based on the needs of the campus and students. All candidates will be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education, experience and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught. All candidates selected for employment will go through established hiring practices. The qualifications and/or certifications of applicants will be given equal consideration. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students opportunities.

The district recognizes the importance of state certification requirements, and intends to utilize this flexibility only where necessary to obtain the most qualified candidate. Only those non-certified candidates who fit into one of the following categories will be considered for SBEC certified positions:

A - Industry Experts - ADISD is committed to expanding college and career opportunities for students. This commitment presents a challenge to school districts as they seek to find individuals with the education or work-related experience needed to adequately educate students in specialized areas of instruction. The individual qualifications considered would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, and a combination of work experience, training and education or industry credentials related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching.

B - College Professors - By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors and university professors. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses.

C - Out of Content or Grade Level Certification - By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to recognize certified out of content or out of grade level certifications. This may allow a certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/ she is not certified, considering the teachers existing credentials and only with the teacher's voluntary consent.

D - Out of State Certifications - Due to the geographic location of ADISD and our connection with a military installation, exemption from existing teacher certification requirements by recognizing out of state certifications will enrich the applicant pool and provide additional opportunities for our students. The District will ensure that the individual successfully passes the criminal background check in compliance with state law. This would require the superintendent to certify to the Board of Trustees that the individual has undergone a criminal history

background check and is capable of proper classroom management. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain classroom management training. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility.

Process for Issuing Local Teaching Permits: An exemption from these statutes would allow the Board of Trustees the ability to issue a local teaching permit and employ an individual to teach one or more courses on a full or part-time basis. The principal will submit a request for issuance of a local permit to the superintendent with the individual's credentials and other relevant information. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Teachers employed under local teaching permits will be subject to the same appraisal process as SBEC certified teachers. Local teaching permits will be issued for a term of one year, and will require re-evaluation prior to renewal. An employee who is granted a local teaching permit will not be issued an employment contract, but will be employed at-will.

Teacher Contract Days

Proposed Exemption:

TEC § 21.401. MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIRED. (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Resulting Innovation:

The district will have the flexibility to decrease contract days from 187 to 184 days, and will maintain the flexibility to further decrease or increase teacher contract days prior to each school year dependent upon school calendar and district needs. Any decrease in teacher contract days is not intended to have any effect on teacher annual compensation, though may result in an increase to a teacher's daily rate of pay.

With this added flexibility, the district hopes to better align the teacher contract days to the 75,600 minutes of required instruction, enhance teacher recruitment and improve teacher morale. The Superintendent will present a recommendation to the School Board each year regarding the number of teacher contract days for the next school year, as a part of the total compensation and benefits program.

Transfer Student Policy

Proposed Exemption:

TEC § 25.036. TRANSFER OF STUDENT.

A district may choose to accept students as transfers, even if they are not entitled to admission in the district. The District wishes to continue accepting transfer students under this law. This provision, however, has been interpreted to require a student transfer to be for a period of one school year, and to restrict a district's ability to revoke a transfer approval mid-year.

Resulting Innovation:

ADISD maintains a student transfer policy under Board Policy FDA (Local), which requires that all nonresident students who wish to transfer must file a transfer application each school year. In making decisions regarding applications for transfer, the policy currently permits for the consideration of the availability of space and instructional staff, the student's disciplinary history, and the student's attendance records. The District intends to amend FDA (Local) to also allow the consideration of a transfer applicant's most recent report card and scores on state mandated assessments. In addition to considering all of these factors in approving or denying a transfer request, the District also seeks the flexibility to revoke a student's transfer status during the school year based on the student's failure to meet expectations for behavior, attendance, and academic efforts while in ADISD.

TEC § 25.036 has been interpreted by TEA to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. ADISD is seeking to be exempt from any one-year commitment that might be interpreted or implied by the provisions of TEC § 25.036 when accepting transfer applicants. Students who do not meet the District's expectations for behavior, attendance, and academic efforts interfere with our school district's ability to educate resident students as well as transfer students who come to ADISD to receive quality instruction in a small group setting. ADISD needs to be able to focus time and attention on developing creative and innovative instruction to prepare students for eventual success in the workplace and to prepare them for achievement on state assessments in the present. When students are disruptive, excessively absent, or do not make adequate efforts towards academic success, our teachers and administrators must take time correcting the behavior, catching those students up, and cannot adequately prepare the students who are present and ready to learn. For these cases, ADISD seeks exemption from the interpretation of TEC § 25.036 which prohibits a district from revoking a transfer during the school year. This mid-year revocation option will be reserved only for those students who consistently fail to meet District expectations for behavior, attendance or academic effort; students that are placed in DAEP, are expelled or who engage in criminal behavior; and students who are truant or do not meet the state's 90% attendance standard.

Summary:

District of Innovation Proposal

The staff of ADISD and the community of Agua Dulce have a common goal to provide the best quality education we can for our students. The renewal of the DOI Plan will allow our staff students, parents and community members to build on the successes that have been achieved in the first five years of this plan.



WE ARE A THUNDERING HERD CHARGING IN THE DIRECTION OF EXCELLENCE