

Draft Proposal #2 – May 19, 2023

Gladewater

Independent School District



Local Plan of Innovation

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Gladewater ISD District of Innovation

Introduction

Gladewater ISD (the District) will continue to follow the Texas Education Code (TEC) in all other areas except for the specific exemptions outlined in this plan. If at some point it is decided that changes or additional exemptions should be considered, the District will reconvene the Innovation Planning committee to explore possible revisions per District of Innovation guidelines in the TEC.

As we look to the future, the District must be positioned to maximize opportunities and minimize the barriers that could otherwise preclude us from doing our best work on our students' behalf. House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the unique needs of their student populations in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Gladewater ISD will have greater flexibility and freedom to make important educational decisions for our students at the local level.

Term of Plan

This plan of innovation will be in effect for 5 years and may be amended or terminated at any time by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

District of Innovation Timeline

April 12, 2023	Public meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan.
April 13, 2023	Plan approved by a majority vote of the committee members.
April 15, 2023	Superintendent, on behalf of the board of trustees, notifies the commissioner of education of the boards' intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.
May 15, 2023	The proposed local innovation plan presented to the board of trustees for approval by two-thirds of the membership.
May 22, 2023	Public meeting to consider the revised final version of the proposed plan.
May 23, 2023	Plan approved by a majority vote of the committee members.
May 24, 2023	Post adopted local innovation plan to the district website and provide TEA with a link for posting on the agency website.
June 26, 2023	The proposed local innovation plan presented to the board of trustees for approval by two-thirds of the membership.
June 27, 2023	The district notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the agency form.
June 18, 2023	Post adopted local innovation plan to the district website and provide TEA with a link for posting on the agency website.

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Planning Committee

In undertaking the creation of this plan for innovation, the Gladewater ISD Board of Trustees, appointed the District-wide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) to act as the Innovation Planning Committee and to develop a local plan of innovation.

Innovation Planning Committee/DEIC

Dr. Sedric G. Clark	Superintendent – Ad Hoc, Non-voting Member
Glenda Hickey	Facilitator - Non-voting Member
Andy Reynolds	Teacher - Secondary
Betsy Thompson	Teacher - Secondary
Christy Shelley	Teacher - Secondary
Diane Clark	Teacher - Secondary
Jennifer Madding	Teacher - Elementary
Opal Smith	Teacher - Elementary
Shelby Burns	Teacher - Elementary
Dawn Easley	Teacher – Special Programs
Kristyl Hester	Teacher – Special Programs
Rubicela Dykema	Teacher – Special Programs
Beth Choice	Non-Teaching Campus Based
Debbie Henderson	Non-Teaching Campus Based
Felicia Chandarlis	Non-Teaching Campus Based
Kayli Dewoody	Non-Teaching Campus Based
Kim Dolece	Non-Teaching District
Becca Webber	Parent
Megan Jackson	Parent
Brittnay Bonilla	Business
Katie Ellis	Business
Brandy Flanagan	Community
Teddy Sorrells	Community

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District of Innovation Plan

Statute Recommended for Exemption

First Day of Instruction

(TEC 25.0811)

A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August except as provided by this section.

Proposed

Gladewater ISD, who does not qualify for any of the exceptions noted in the statute, would like the freedom to determine its own start date for school each year. This flexible start date allows the District to identify locally, each year, what best meets the needs of students, educators and the local community.

Regardless of the start date in any given year, teachers and instructional staff will not report earlier than August 1st. Furthermore, the District will not propose or adopt a calendar with less than the required number of operational and/or instructional minutes as set forth by the TEC.

Local benefits of an earlier start date include, but not limited to:

- The number of instructional days in the first and second semesters will be more balanced.
- A greater number of instructional days prior to state standardized assessments.
- The ability to end the first semester before Christmas break. It is difficult for students to return to school after a two-week break and immediately take semester exams or cumulative assessments.
- Flexibility to begin the school year with a short week, which eases the transition for students, their families, and faculty.
- The ability for students to enroll in college courses that begins in early June (Summer I), thereby increasing college readiness.

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Statute Recommended for Exemption

Teacher Certification

(TEC 21.003, 21.053)

TEC 21.003 (a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aid, 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 teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the district before their 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 the time.

Proposed

The current system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique instructional and/or financial needs of the District. These statutes make it difficult for the District to recruit, employ, and retain persons who have appropriate expertise, experience, and/or industry certifications that render them qualified to fill such positions.

Upon approval of the innovation plan, the District will maintain its current expectation and commitment to hire certified professionals and will continue to seek highly effective, certified educators for all teaching positions. However, where that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to issue a local teaching permit based on district certification criteria without requesting a permit or waiver from the TEA. The District can extend the employee a one-year local certificate approved by the superintendent.

The District will develop qualifications for persons hired for such positions and also will identify required professional development in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and more as determined by the supervising administrator.

Once a candidate has been found to fit these requirements, the principal will submit the written request to the superintendent with all of the individual's credentials for teaching in the specified field or class. If the Superintendent agrees that the individual will be an asset to students, the campus, and District, the superintendent will present the application to the Board of Trustees for board approval prior to the individual beginning employment in this new position. After thoroughly vetting candidates for hire, the District will consider the instructors hired for these positions to be appropriately qualified.

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In order to ensure high quality instruction, the District will provide the following support to candidates hired under a District of Innovation Permit:

- The campus principal and/or director will create a personal professional development plan for each teacher.
- The candidate will be supported through Professional Learning Community (PLC)/Cluster Meetings.
- When possible, lesson plans will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field.
- Additional professional development and support for classroom management will be provided.
- A designated mentor will be assigned.
- Classroom observation opportunities will be available.

This innovation will allow Gladewater ISD to consider broader applicant pools and to broaden the District's course offerings. It will also allow Gladewater ISD to fill hard-to-staff positions while maintaining a high quality of instruction.

This exemption does not apply to administrators, teachers in special education, bilingual education or CTE courses that count for high school credit. In addition, the District will not seek exemptions from requirements imposed by state or federal programs. Gladewater ISD will continue to require these professionals to hold proper certification so as to best serve our students.