



George West ISD

District of Innovation Plan

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. Under House Bill 1842, school districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code which “inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan.”

George West ISD seeks to create flexibility and opportunities for students in order to personalize and maximize learning at all levels of the district. The selection of exemptions contained within this plan were carefully chosen based on the needs of the local school district.

The term of the George West ISD District of Innovation Plan will be the five-year span beginning with the 2017-2018 school year through the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless the Board of Trustees should desire to terminate or amend the plan.

GWISD seeks exemptions from the following provisions of the Texas Education Code:

- Uniform Start Date
- Minutes of Instruction and Length of the Instructional Day
- 90 Percent Attendance Requirement
- Teacher Certification and Field-Based Experience Requirement
- Probationary Contracts
- Student Discipline (DAEP)
- School District Depositories
- Inter-district Transfers

Uniform School Start Date

Exemption – TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812

Under current statute, students in Texas public schools may not begin school before the 4th Monday in August. The start and end date for the school year prevents school districts from

building school calendars that meet the needs of all students. In addition, with a flexible start and end date to the school year, GWISD could offer greater opportunities for professional development for teachers, increased opportunities to provide remediation and/or enrichment for students, and a way to balance instructional time within semesters.

Minutes of Instruction and Length of the Instructional Day

Exemption – TEC 25.081, TEC 25.083, and TEC 25.082

GWISD will meet or exceed the 75,600 minutes of instruction (including intermissions and recesses) as required. GWISD will be exempt from the requirement that an instructional day must be at least 420 minutes/seven hours a day in length. Additionally, the district will be exempt from the requirements regarding school day interruptions. GWISD will be able to customize student schedules as needed in order to best meet the needs of students while ensuring that the 75,600 minutes of instruction are completed.

90 Percent Attendance Requirement

Exemption – TEC 25.092

Current statute requires students to be in attendance 90% of the time in order to receive credit for the course. This 90% rule awards credit for seat time rather than mastery of content. Furthermore, students who have the ability or desire to advance more rapidly are unable to do so. With an exemption, GWISD would be able to provide innovative options so that students could earn credit for courses based on content mastery, at their own pace.

Teacher Certification and Field-Based Experience Requirement

Exemption – TEC 21.003, TEC 21.051

Under current statute, teacher certification requirements inhibit GWISD's ability to hire highly-skilled individuals to teach career and technical education courses, fine arts, course taught in languages other than English, and high-demand dual credit courses. The limited number of teachers available for these courses restricts course offerings in the district.

Probationary Contracts

Exemption – TEC 21.102

Currently, probationary contract periods for newly hired teachers who have worked in public education for at least five of the last eight years cannot exceed one year. In certain situations, this limitation prevents the school district from fully determining a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. The preferred option for probationary contracts for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the school district is up to two years.

Student Discipline

Exemption – TEC 37.007 (c), 37.010 (b)

The GWISD DAEP setting provides a structured system of discipline. A student who engages in documented serious misbehavior while in DAEP, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled. The Texas Education Code, however, makes no allowance for students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction, and is detrimental to the educational environment in DAEP, to be expelled.

With this exemption for GWISD, a student placed in a DAEP, who engages in documented persistent misbehavior, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be removed from class and expelled. All students expelled from DAEP for persistent misbehavior will be given the option of attending night school or Saturday school one day per week for the term of his/her expulsion in order to gain and/or maintain as many credits as possible during the period of expulsion. Transportation will not be provided.

School District Depositories

Exemption – TEC 45.206 and BDAE (Legal)

Districts are required to bid depository banking services at a minimum of every six years. There are a limited number of banking entities with the interest in serving and/or the ability to serve the financial needs of the District. In addition, the required bid process uses the time and efforts of district personnel that is better spent on other activities given our limited ability to change banks.

With this exemption, GWISD will no longer meet the requirement to bid every six years, but will continue to review banking services every 2 years, monitor the availability of services and

pricing that local banks may offer, and bid for services as needed to support the District's financial needs.

Inter-district Transfers

Exemption – TEC 25.036

Under Texas Education Code, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year. 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, George West ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer 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.

GW District of Innovation Timeline

February 21, 2017 – 9:00 a.m.

Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Committee

February 22, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (*TEC 12A.001 (c)(1)*)

March 8, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.

Meeting with District Advisory Council to introduce District of Innovation Process

March 22, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (*TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*) Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (*TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*)

April 12, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.
DOI Committee meeting to develop Proposed Final Plan

April 20, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.
Committee provides plan update; gets input from Board

April 21, 2017 – 3:15 p.m.
District of Innovation plan posted on the district website (30 days) *(TEC 12A.005(a)(1))*
Commissioner notified of Board's intent to vote on District of Innovation

May 17, 2017– 3:15 p.m.
Public meeting of DOI Committee to consider and approve Final Plan *(TEC 12A.005)(a)(3)*

May 24, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.
Board approval of Final Plan *(TEC 12A.005(b))*
District of Innovation plan sent to Commissioner *(TEC 12A.005(a)(2))* with required checklist

February 7, 2018 – 3:15 p.m.
Meeting with District Advisory Council to inform committee about possible new exemption related to Inter-District Student Transfers

May 2, 2018 – 3:15 p.m.
Meeting with District Advisory Council to approve changes to DOI Plan related to Inter-District Student Transfers

May 21, 2018 – 4:00 p.m.
Proposed Amended District of Innovation Plan posted on the district website (30 days) *(TEC 12A.005(a)(1))*

June 20, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.
Public Hearing to explain proposed amendment to 2017 DOI Plan
Board approval of Amended DOI Plan *(TEC 12A.005(b))*

June 21, 2018
Amended DOI Plan sent to Commissioner *(TEC 12A.005(a)(2))*