



PALO PINTO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCALLY DEVELOPED INNOVATION PLAN

2017

Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed allowing Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation. This designation allows school districts to obtain exemptions from specific provisions of the Texas Education Code. Palo Pinto ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and flexibility toward improving the overall educational experience and success for the benefit of our students and community

Local Advisory Committee

Eric J. Cederstrom, Superintendent

Teresa Mahan, Principal

Iris Burkett, Teacher

Jan Hinkson, Teacher

Natalie Rogers, Teacher

Crystal Bean, Teacher

Danita Erwin, PTO President

Implementation and Duration

The Palo Pinto ISD Local District of Innovation Plan will begin with the 2017-18 school year through the 2021-22 school year. The plan may be amended at any time by the District Site-Based Decision Making Team with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

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PALO PINTO ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE

January 18, 2017	Board Resolution regarding District of Innovation
February 15, 2017	Public hearing and appointment of committee composition
February 20, 2017	Committee meets
February 24, 2017	Committee meets
March 3, 2017	Committee confirms draft
March 7, 2017	Committee reports to board on recommendations
March 9, 2017	Post plan to website for minimum of 30 days prior to Board Adoption
April 10, 2017	District of Innovation presented to District SBDM, open to public
April 18, 2017	Board final approval of District of Innovation Paperwork submitted to TEA

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PALO PINTO ISD PROPOSED INNOVATIONS

1. First Day of Instruction (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB Legal and Local)

- Current Law
 - State law prohibits school district from starting classes before the fourth Monday in August.
- Rationale for Proposed Innovation
 - The flexibility in the start date allows for local determination on an annual basis the needs of the Palo Pinto ISD community. This flexibility allows for the local needs regarding instruction time per semester and maximizes instructional options. Additionally, professional development time for teachers would be more flexible under the removal of the uniform start date.
- Innovation Strategy
 - Palo Pinto ISD will have flexibility to determine the first day of instruction on an annual basis that best meets the needs of the community no earlier than the second Monday in August.

2. Length of the School Day (TEC 25.081) (TEC 25.082) (EC Legal) (EB Legal)

- Current law
 - State law requires that all school days must be at least 420 minutes long each day in order for credit toward ADA calculations for funding purposes. Each district may request up to 6 waiver days per school year.
- Rationale for Proposed Innovation
 - Exemption from the 420 minute school day requirement would allow Palo Pinto ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule whenever it was locally determined as beneficial. While the district recognizes there is an option to utilize the

waiver process currently in law, there is a limit of only 6 days per school year.

- Innovation Strategy
 - Although there is not an intention to shorten the 420 minute school day on a regular basis, this exemption would allow for the local decision as needed in the best interest of the district. To the greatest extent possible, early release or late start days would be included in the district calendar approved by the Board of Trustees. Any changes would be shared with the Palo Pinto ISD community utilizing all resources on hand to do so.

3. Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401) (DCB Legal and Local)

- Current Law
 - Current law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.
- Rationale for Proposed Innovation
 - The Texas Education Code 25.081 changed student instruction from days to minutes thus creating opportunities of community defined flexibility on delivering instruction. Flexibility in teacher contract days allows for a mirroring of student, teacher and community needs. Additionally, the ability to adjust the length of teacher contract days allows for Palo Pinto ISD to be competitive in recruiting and retaining quality employees to best serve the students and community thus creating higher teacher morale.
- Innovation Strategy
 - This exemption would allow for a locally defined contract length for teachers that would move from 187 days to 182 days without any adverse effect on salaries in an attempt to align days with 75,600 minutes of student instruction and still allow for quality professional development.

4. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102) (DCA Legal)

- Current Law
 - Current law requires experienced teachers new to the district with five years of experience within the last eight years as a public school teacher be employed on the maximum of a one year probationary contract.
- Rationale for Proposed Innovation
 - A one year probationary period may not be sufficient time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to district receipt of state assessment and other qualifying factors.
- Innovation Strategy
 - For experienced teachers, counselors and nurses new to the district that have been employed as such in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, an eligible probationary employee may be issued a second probationary contract for a total of two possible probationary contracts. All other eligible employees new to the profession or with less than five years of experience will not be affected by this innovation strategy.

5. Recommended Appraisal Process and Performance Criteria (TEC 21.351, TEC 21.352, TEC 21.354, TEC 21.3541) (DNA Legal and Local) (DNB Legal and Local)

- Current Law
 - The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers and administrators
- Rationale for Proposed Innovation
 - Palo Pinto ISD believes it is essential to maintain flexibility in using a variety of measurements, including goal setting, observations, student growth progress toward learning objectives, and other formative assessments in determining the performance of its educators. By claiming exemption from Sec.

21.351, 23.354, and 23.3541, the district can determine locally the most appropriate appraisal instrument to evaluate its educators.

- Innovation Strategy
 - In order to promote professional development that focuses on individual growth, Palo Pinto ISD needs to maintain local flexibility to build a practice of using a variety of measurements, including goal setting, observations and student growth progress toward learning objectives that can be included in evaluations with teachers and administrators. Regardless of whether any adjustments or changes are made to the state-mandated appraisal system and laws, Palo Pinto ISD believes this issue to be a local decision as opposed to a state mandate.