



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

Renewed May, 2024

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 certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Jim Ned CISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and community. This plan will be implemented with the start of the 2019-2020 school year and is a 5-year plan. The plan was amended on June 15, 2020, to include an alternative uniform group benefits coverage program. This 2024 renewal includes new exemptions for DAEP, teacher certification, school counselors, suspension limits, and SHAC.

Local Innovation Team

Glen Teal, Ed.D., Superintendent
Hunter Cooley, Chief Financial Officer
Cristi Doty, Chief Academic Officer
Dustin Todd, Athletic Director
Holly Moore, Director of Technology
Richard Payne, HS Principal
Fred Dietz, HS Asst. Prin.
Scott Carlisle, MS Principal
Che Corbin, Intermediate Principal
Debbie Harris, Lawn Elem. Principal
Alana McClure, Buffalo Gap Elem. Principal
Lea Hutt, HS teacher
Josh Howeth, HS Band Director
Tiffany Gibson, MS teacher
Laure Dietz, Intermediate teacher
Brandi Northrup, Elem. teacher
Kelli Humphries, Community/Business person
Nikki Roy, Parent/Community person
Karen Nix, Parent/Community person

Term and Implementation

The Jim Ned CISD Local District of Innovation Renewed Plan will begin with the 2024-25- school year and conclude at the end of the 2028-2029 school year upon the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Plan may be amended at any time by the Local Innovation Team with approval of the Board of Trustees. The Plan was approved by the District Site Based Committee on May 15, 2024. It was approved by the Board of Trustees on May 21, 2024.



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The implementation and specific guidelines of each innovation strategy will be determined by the JNCISD Administration. Adjustments to Jim Ned CISD Board Policy will be researched, reviewed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees.



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JNCISD District of Innovation Timeline

Tuesday, September 11, 2018: Initial meeting with leadership team to discuss preliminary thoughts of the District of Innovation Proposal/Committee.

Monday, October 15, 2018: JNCISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as an Innovation District.

Monday, November 12, 2018: Regular Meeting Approve a motion to approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee.

Thursday, November 29, 2018: First Meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.

Thursday, December 13, 2018: Public Hearing to explain and discuss possibility of becoming District of Innovation.

Thursday, December 13, 2018: Regular Board Meeting to approve the local “District of Innovation” DRAFT plan.

Thursday, January 17, 2019: Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.

Wednesday, February 27, 2019: District Site-Based Committee to approve District of Innovation Plan.

Thursday, March 7, 2019: Board of Trustees approve the Final District of Innovation Plan.

Monday, March 18, 2019: Post the District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days.

AMENDMENT TIMELINE

Monday, May 11, 2020: District Site-Based Committee meeting to consider and approve an amendment to the District of Innovation Plan. Unanimous support given to the amendment.



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Monday, May 11, 2020: Amendment submitted to & approved by the Board of Trustees.

RENEWAL TIMELINE

Wednesday, May 15, 2024: District Site Based Committee meeting to consider and approve the final version of the renewed District of Innovation Plan. Unanimous support given to the renewed plan.

Tuesday, May 21, 2024: Board of Trustees approve the Final District of Innovation Plan.

Wednesday, May 22, 2024: Post the District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days.



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5 Year Plan
renewed for the 2024-2025 school year

JNCISD Innovations

In order to increase flexibility and local control, Jim Ned CISD proposes the following exemptions from the Texas Education Code:

1. **First Day of Instruction** (TEC §25.0811) (EB LEGAL)

- CURRENT LAW
 - State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless they are year-round districts.
- RATIONALE
 - The flexibility in the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the need of the students, the school, and the community. Another benefit of exempting this restriction is it allows the school to look at starting classes as a short week which can ease the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help to better balance the amount of days in each semester.
- INNOVATION STRATEGY
 - Jim Ned CISD will have the flexibility to start class as early as the second Monday in August, depending on the needs of the district.

2. **School Day Interruptions** (TEC §25.083) (EC LEGAL) (EC LOCAL)

- CURRENT LAW
 - State law currently requires the Board of Trustees to adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements to once during the school day except in the case of an emergency.
- RATIONALE
 - While the district agrees that maximizing class time is crucial, this requirement is not practical. The district will continue to minimize classroom disruptions to the greatest extent possible.
- INNOVATION STRATEGY
 - Jim Ned CISD would like to have the freedom to make announcements as needed during class time for picture days and other days that are not routine.



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3. **Teacher Certification** (TEC §21.003a) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)

- **CURRENT LAW**
 - State law currently states that 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.
- **RATIONALE**
 - Jim Ned CISD is committed to hiring certified professionals and will continue to seek highly effective, certified educators for all teaching positions. However, when that is not possible, Jim Ned CISD will establish local qualifications and training requirements to hire teachers for positions that are difficult to fill. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CTE and STEM related areas along with other required courses needed throughout the district. This exemption would be assessed on an individual basis.
- **INNOVATION STRATEGY**
 - The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment shall also be noted.
 - Staff hired under a school district teaching permit will benefit from the same rights and responsibilities as certified teachers within the district. The District and local campus will assess the appropriate training needs for any teacher hired under this exemption. This is a local certification only and does not transfer to another school district.
 - Jim Ned CISD will have the flexibility to hire external or internal applicants that do not have traditional state certifications, but who are knowledgeable in the area and fully equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position based on local qualification requirements. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas if certified teachers aren't available to teach those courses.



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- In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take additional CTE/STEM courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a). This exemption will allow the district to:
 - Consider part-time professionals to teach courses;
 - Give an opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession;
 - Increase the number of CTE/STEM courses available; &
 - Offer trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses.
- The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments.
- A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

Special Education and Bilingual teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.



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4. DAEP Teacher Certification Requirement Exemption (TEC §37.008)

- **CURRENT LAW**
 - Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.
- **RATIONALE**
 - Innovation Strategies Jim Ned CISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model, it is not necessary to have certified teachers on site.
- **INNOVATION STRATEGY**
 - Jim Ned CISD is a rural district and often does not have certified teachers available when DAEP is needed. The Campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.

5. Probationary Contracts (TEC §21.102)

- **CURRENT LAW**
 - Current law states that a probationary contract 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 with the district.
- **RATIONALE**
 - This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data.
- **INNOVATION STRATEGY**
 - For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Jim Ned CISD that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Jim Ned CISD shall be for a period of two years with probationary contracts issued for each of the two years.



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6. Uniform Group Health Benefits for School Employees (TEC § 22.004)

- **CURRENT LAW**
 - Current law states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.
- **RATIONALE**
 - TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §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 proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).
- **INNOVATION STRATEGY**
 - In addition to providing Chapter 1579 TRS-Active Care group medical coverage, also provide alternative group health care benefit options to district employees.

7. DAEP Program Exemption (TEC §37.008)

- **CURRENT LAW**
 - Each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (3) provides for the students who are assigned to the disciplinary alternative education program to be separated from students who are not assigned to the program.
- **RATIONALE**
 - Allow Jim Ned CISD to better utilize staff to effectively run the



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DAEP program. This exemption would allow us flexibility in staffing DAEP.

- INNOVATION STRATEGY

- Students placed in DAEP can be housed and educated in the same area as students placed in In-School Suspension (ISS) on grade levels K-12.

8. School Counselor Responsibilities (TEC §33.006 d-h)

- CURRENT LAW

- TEC §33.006 (d-h) passed during the 87th legislative session, requires a school counselor to spend at least 80% of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of the school counseling program, requires the Board to adopt a related policy, and requires the district to provide documentation relating to compliance to the Commissioner of Education. To comply, counselors must track/log time spent on duties daily.

- RATIONALE

- The statute impedes the district's ability to meet the ever changing needs of its students and school operations by restricting the ability of Jim Ned CISD counselors to fulfill other important roles throughout the district, including but not limited to, special education and 504 monitoring, scheduling, student assessment, etc. While it is still the intent and goal of Jim Ned CISD that its certified counselors focus on the school counseling program, temporal restrictions and time logging/tracking requirements, which would be necessary to confirm strict adherence to and 80/20 allocation, are an ineffective use of employee time and impedes the district's ability to use its counseling staff in a variety of roles to best serve the needs of Jim Ned CISD students.

- INNOVATION STRATEGY

- To best serve Jim Ned CISD students, decisions on counselor duties and allocation of work time will be locally determined. This exemption will grant Jim Ned CISD greater flexibility in appropriately allocating limited resources to accomplish necessary district goals and to better meet student needs.



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9. Three-Day Limit on Suspensions (TEC §37.005)

- CURRENT LAW
 - TEC§37.005 requires a suspension may not exceed three school days. The law has been interpreted to apply to both in and out of school suspensions.
- RATIONALE
 - This limitation minimizes the options a campus has for discipline without sending a student to DAEP. Additional days on campus in suspension could provide a way for a campus to avoid excessive discretionary DAEP placements and benefit students by allowing them to stay on campus closer to their normal educators and services. There are circumstances where a 3-day suspension is not sufficient, but a 45-day DAEP placement is too severe.
- INNOVATION STRATEGY
 - This exemption is desired to be able to change the maximum number of days of suspension allowed. Because of the law's three-day limit for suspensions, campus staff is limited in the choices of discipline that can be applied to students for moderately serious offenses. Exemption from this requirement will allow more options for providing appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct in situations where a 3-day suspension is not sufficient, but a 45-day DAEP placement is too severe. Relief will provide campuses with the option of keeping students on campus and closer to their regular teachers during a disciplinary placement rather than always opting to send students to the disciplinary alternative educational placement. Providing a range of options for the campus is an innovative way of thinking about discipline and more fully meeting a student's needs while they are being disciplined.

10. School Health Advisory Council (TEC §28.004)

- CURRENT LAW
 - TEC§28.004 requires a local school board to establish a local school health advisory council (SHAC) to assist a district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction and are required to meet 4 times per year.
- RATIONALE
 - As a medium size district, council members are intimately aware of the needs of Jim Ned CISD and its students. SHAC currently must post agendas in advance, record meetings, and post meeting minutes and recordings within 10 days of the meetings. We believe that 2 meetings per year will be sufficient to review and revise the District's Wellness Plan, review health education materials and develop the annual report for the Board of Trustees.



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- INNOVATION STRATEGY
 - Jim Ned CISD seeks an exemption from the 4 times per year meeting requirement. The Jim Ned CISD SHAC will meet at least 2 times per year. If needed, they will meet more often. The district will not record the meetings and the agendas and meeting minutes will be made available upon request.