



Jim Ned CISD
District of Innovation Plan
2025-2026

DRAFT

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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.

Term and Implementation

The Jim Ned CISD District of Innovation Plan was implemented at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year and is a 5-year plan. The Jim Ned CISD District of Innovation Plan (renewed) was implemented at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year and will conclude at the end of the 2029-2030 school year, upon approval of the Jim Ned CISD Board of Trustees. The plan may be amended at any time by the District of Innovation Committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

District of Innovation Committee

- Ross, Laura Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Couch, Kristi Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Chase, Mandi Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Shaner, Melissa Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- O'Dell, Ashley Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Allen, Blake Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Pryor, Heather Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Blair, Allison Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Gotcher, Fawn Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Gibson, Tiffany Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Morgan, Liz Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Northrup, Brandi Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Briscoe, Amy Professional Staff - Classroom Teacher
- Brewer, Will Professional Staff - District
- Hogan, David Professional Staff - District
- Todd, Dustin Professional Staff - District
- Payne, Richard Professional Staff - Campus, Non-teacher
- Carlisle, Scott Professional Staff - Campus, Non-teacher
- Corbin, Che' Professional Staff - Campus, Non-teacher
- McClure, Alana Professional Staff - Campus, Non-teacher
- Harris, Debbie Professional Staff - Campus, Non-teacher
- Stovall, Kaedy Parent
- Wahlert, Dani Parent
- Winter, Kami Community Member
- Mayfield, Ginny Community Member
- Awalt, Maggie Business Representative
- Vesey, Jackie Business Representative

Timeline of Development, Amendments and Renewals

<u>Date and Action</u>	<u>Description</u>
09/11/2018, Development	Initial meeting with leadership team to discuss preliminary thoughts of the District of Innovation proposal and committee.
10/15/2018, Development	Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to develop a District of Innovation Plan for the designation of the district as an Innovation District.
11/12/2018, Development	In regular meeting, Board of Trustees approved a motion to approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee.
11/29/2018, Development	First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.
12/13/2018, Development	Public hearing to explain and discuss possibility of becoming District of Innovation.
01/17/2019, Development	Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.
02/27/2019, Development	District Site-based Decision-making Committee approved District of Innovation Plan.
03/07/2019, Development	Board of Trustees approved the District of Innovation Plan.
03/18/2019, Development	Posted the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days.
05/11/2020, Amendment	District Site-based Decision-making Committee approved an amendment to the District of Innovation Plan. Amendment submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees. Amendment included an alternative uniform group benefits coverage program.
05/15/2024, Renewal	District Site-based Decision-making Committee approved the final version of the renewed District of Innovation Plan.
05/21/2024, Renewal	Board of Trustees approved the final version of the renewed District of Innovation Plan.
05/22/2024, Renewal	Posted the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days.

03/02/2026, Renewal	District Site-based Decision-making Committee approved the final version of the renewed District of Innovation Plan.
03/11/2026, Renewal	Posted the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days.
04/##/2026, Renewal	<u>Anticipated</u> approval of the final version of the renewed District of Innovation Plan by the Board of Trustees

Exemptions

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

First Day of Instruction

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. A school district may:

(1) begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August if the district operates a year-round system under Section 25.084; or

(2) begin instruction for students for a school year on or after the first Monday in August at a campus or at not more than 20 percent of the campuses in the district if:

(A) the district has a student enrollment of 190,000 or more;

(B) the district at the beginning of the school year provides, financed with local funds, days of instruction for students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses, in addition to the minimum number of days of instruction required under Section 25.081;

(C) the campus or each of the multiple campuses are undergoing comprehensive reform, as determined by the board of trustees of the district; and

(D) a majority of the students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses are educationally disadvantaged.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a school district that does not offer each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend school in another state for the grade levels the district does not offer may start school on any date permitted under Subsection (a) or the law of the other state.

Proposed Innovation: The District exempts out of section 25.0811. The District shall determine its first date of instruction based upon what is in the best interest of its students, taking into consideration staffing, budget, and the local needs of the District.

Reason: The District will consider the budgetary implications, staffing, and the best interest of the District and its students to determine its policies regarding first date of instruction.

School Day Interruptions

TEC §25.083 SCHOOL DAY INTERRUPTIONS.

(a) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements and sales promotions. At a minimum, the policy must limit announcements other than emergency announcements to once during the school day.

(b) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring or test preparation. A district may not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent or another person standing in parental relation to the student provides to the district written consent for removal from class for such purpose.

Proposed Innovation: The District exempts out of section 25.083. The District shall determine when disruptions are appropriate and/or necessary based upon local needs. Removals will be addressed locally through policy.

Reason: The District will “disrupt” instruction as needed and warranted and not based upon a state standard. Students needing remediation will be addressed by local policy.

Teacher Certification

TEC §21.003(a) 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.

Proposed Innovation: District may hire non-certified, but qualified educators for hard-to-fill positions in the area of Career and Technical Education, as well as in non-foundation curriculum courses. Foundation curriculum courses refer to core academic subjects including math, science, English language arts, and social studies. Special education teachers must be appropriately certified by the Texas SBEC.

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow certified teachers to teach one subject outside of their certified field, given the subject is not a foundation curriculum course. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document which credentials this certified teacher possesses that qualify this individual to teach this subject. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.

With the proposed exemptions, the district will be able to utilize non-certified teachers without seeking a waiver from the Commissioner, until such time as the law prohibits using uncertified teachers.

Reason: In order to engage an adequate number of educators and educational support, the District desires to exempt from TEC § 21.103 until such time as the Legislature prohibits the Commissioner from granting waivers. By exempting out of this statute the District will be able to secure quality noncertified applicants faster and ensure adequate staffing for its campuses.

Probationary Contracts

TEC §21.102 (b) PROBATIONARY CONTRACT.

(b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

Proposed Innovation: Currently, teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year on a probationary contract. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine a teacher's success in the classroom. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for certified educators. This gives the employee greater opportunity to prove they should receive a term contract. The District reserves the right to offer a term contract for the second year, after the teacher works under a probationary contract for the first year.

Reason: By giving the District up to two years to determine if an employee should receive a term contract, it gives the District more flexibility to retain successful educators and avoids a rush to judgment that could result in the educator losing the opportunity to continue with the District.

School Counselor Responsibilities

TEC §33.006(d-h) SCHOOL COUNSELORS; GENERAL DUTIES.

(d) Except as provided by Subsection (e), the board of trustees of each school district shall adopt a policy that requires a school counselor to spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005. For purposes of this subsection, time spent in administering assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments, except time spent in interpreting data from assessment instruments, is not considered time spent on counseling. Each school in the district shall implement the policy. A copy of the policy shall be maintained in the office of each school in the district and made available on request during regular school hours to district employees, parents of district students, and the public.

(e) If the board of trustees of a school district determines that, because of staffing needs in the district or at a school in the district, a school counselor must spend less than 80 percent of the school counselor's total work time on duties that are

components of a counseling program developed under Section 33.005, the policy adopted under Subsection (d) shall:

- (1) include the reasons why the counselor needs to spend less than 80 percent of the counselor's work time on duties that are components of the counseling program;
- (2) list the duties the counselor is expected to perform that are not components of the counseling program; and
- (3) set the percentage of work time that the counselor is required to spend on components of the counseling program.

(f) A school district may not include a provision in an employment contract with a school counselor under Chapter 21 that conflicts with the policy required by Subsection (d) or, except as provided by Subsection (g), has the effect of authorizing a school principal or school district superintendent to require a school counselor to generally perform duties that are not primarily related to a counseling function.

(g) A school district to which Subsection (e) applies may not include a provision in an employment contract under Chapter 21 with an affected school counselor that has the effect of requiring the counselor to generally perform a duty that is not primarily related to a counseling function unless the duty is specified in the district's policy under Subsection (e)(2).

(h) Each school district shall annually assess the district's compliance with the policy adopted under Subsection (d) and, on request by the Commissioner, provide a written copy of the assessment to the agency on or before the date specified by the Commissioner. The Commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this subsection.

Proposed Innovation: The District exempts itself from section 31.006 and shall determine the duties of its counselors and what percentage, if any, will be required from the counselor to complete their duties.

Reason: The District shall determine the duties of its employees.

Timelines for Filing and Appeal

TEC §26A.002 TIMELINE FOR FILING AND APPEAL.

The policy adopted under Section 26A.001 must:

- (1) provide at least:
 - (A) for a grievance filed by a parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student enrolled in the school district:

(i) 60 days to file a grievance from the date on which the parent or person knew or had reason to know of the facts giving rise to the grievance; or

(ii) if the parent or person engaged in informal attempts to resolve the grievance, the later of 90 days to file a grievance from the date described by Subparagraph (i) or 30 days to file a grievance from the date on which the district provided information to the parent or person regarding how to file the grievance; and

(B) 20 days to file an appeal after the date on which a decision on the grievance was made;

(2) for a hearing that is not before the board of trustees of the school district, require:

(A) the district to hold a hearing not later than the 10th day after the date on which the grievance or appeal was filed; and

(B) a written decision to be made not later than the 20th day after the date on which the hearing was held that includes:

(i) any relief or redress to be provided; and

(ii) information regarding filing an appeal, including the timeline to appeal under this section and Section 7.057, if applicable; and

(3) for a hearing before the board of trustees of the school district, require the board of trustees to:

(A) hold a meeting to discuss the grievance not later than the 60th day after the date on which the previous decision on the grievance was made; and

(B) make a decision on the grievance not later than the 30th day after the date on which the meeting is held under Paragraph (A).

Proposed Innovation: The District exempts out of section 26A.002 and will utilize its local grievance policies and the procedures therein to address complaints and the right of remonstrance.

Reason: The District believes the state has created unnecessary and excessive procedures that are not conducive to resolving complaints. The District believes local procedures adequately meet the requirements of the Texas Supreme Court's right of remonstrance.

Posting of Procedures and Forms

TEC §26A.003 POSTING OF PROCEDURES AND FORMS.

(a) The board of trustees of a school district shall develop, make publicly available in a prominent location on the district's Internet website, and include in the district's student handbook:

(1) procedures for resolving grievances;

(2) standardized forms for filing a grievance, a notice of appeal, or a request for a hearing under this chapter; and

(3) the method by which a grievance may be filed electronically.

(b) A school district shall ensure that a grievance may be submitted electronically at the location on the district's Internet website at which the information described by Subsection (a) is available.

(c) A school district shall submit and make accessible to the agency the location on the district's Internet website at which the information described by Subsection (a) is available.

Proposed Innovation: The District exempts out of section 26A.003 and will maintain information about grievances through its posting access to its local policies.

Reason: The District believes there are too many requirements for its web page, making it difficult for persons to navigate. The District will post what it believes is the most useful information.