



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

Revised June 15, 2020

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.

Local Innovation Team

Glen Teal, Ed.D., Superintendent
Treva Gambrell, HS Principal
Richard Payne, HS Asst. Prin.
Matt Fanning, Athletic Director
Josh Howeth, HS Band Director
Scott Carlisle, MS Principal
Lea Hutt, MS teacher
Sherry Bluhm, Community/Business person
Debbie Harris, Lawn Elem. Principal
Tiffany Gibson, Elem. teacher
Brooke Johnson, Parent/Community person
Cristi Doty, Chief Academic Officer
Alana McClure, Buffalo Gap Elem. Principal
Laure Dietz, Elem. teacher
Tamara Alexander, Parent/Community
Hunter Cooley, Chief Financial Officer

Term and Implementation

The Jim Ned CISD Local District of Innovation Plan will begin with the 2019-2- 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 amended on June 15, 2020.

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.



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

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.

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



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

5 Year Plan
beginning with the 2019-2020 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 third 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.



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

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
 - 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 CATE and STEM related areas along with other required courses needed throughout the district.
- 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.
 - In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take additional CATE/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 CATE/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.



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

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

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.



JIM NED CISD

District of Innovation Plan

6. **AMENDMENT (6/15/20): 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.