KLEIN ISD
DISTRICT OF INNOVATION
LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

INNOVATION TO MAKE PROMISE2PURPOSE A REALITY FOR EVERY STUDENT
For years, Texas school board members and administrators have complained about the ever-increasing number of state mandates and prescriptive laws and bemoaned the continual erosion of local control. Now there is a realistic process for districts to do something about this. Take advantage. Investigate the possibilities and potential of becoming a district of innovation”. James B. Crow | Executive Director, TASB

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 in the spring of 2015, providing public school districts the opportunity to become a District of Innovation. To qualify, an eligible school district (one whose most recent academic performance rating is at least acceptable) must adopt an up to five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code. Klein ISD is utilizing HB 1842 in order to obtain more local control in various areas that will make teaching and learning more impactful for every student.

**Districts of Innovation may be exempt from state statutes in order to:**

- Take greater local control in decision-making about the educational and instructional models for students;
- Access increased autonomy from state mandates that govern educational programming;
- Be empowered to innovate and plan differently to maximize student success;
- Decide on which flexibilities suit local needs and implement practices similar to charter schools including mandates such as: school start date, 90% attendance rule, class-size ratios, site-based decision making process, and teacher certification.

By taking advantage of some of the flexibility allowed through HB 1842, Klein ISD can ensure increased opportunities for student success. This includes avoiding fully and partially unfunded mandates that interfere with effective, efficient use of taxpayer dollars for educating students, as well as providing teachers and staff the environment, capabilities, and empowerment to innovate and think differently in order to meet every student’s needs.

By becoming a District of Innovation, Klein ISD can better ensure that our shared vision of every student entering our system with a promise and exiting with a purpose will become a reality for every student in our district. The purpose of the local innovation plan is to provide a framework that opens the door for increased flexibility in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all Klein ISD students. The exemptions secured through the local innovation plan will permit strategic planning to advance innovative curriculum and instructional practices to meet every student’s needs; enhance community and parental ownership of decisions impacting our students; hire and retain the absolute best teachers and leaders; and increase local governance of campuses. This plan will be in effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year; however, it is important to note that the district will establish, with stakeholder input, a local implementation criteria and timeline for each exemption based on needs aligned to the district’s strategic priorities and goals. Additionally, the local innovation plan may be amended at any time with approval of the DIDC and Klein ISD Board of Trustees.
Local Innovation Plan Team Members

Cabinet

Dr. Bret Champion  
Superintendent

Mr. Larry Whitehead  
Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Curt Drouillard  
Associate Superintendent of Human Resource Services

Dr. Jenny McGown  
Chief Learning Officer (Local Innovation Plan Team Leader)

Mr. Thomas Petrek  
Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Judy Rimato  
Associate Superintendent for Communications & Planning

Mr. Robert Robertson  
Associate Superintendent for Facility & School Services

Local Innovation Plan Team

Ms. Heather Adian  
Teacher, Kleb Intermediate & DIDC Chairperson

Mr. Bob Anderson  
Principal, Klein Intermediate

Ms. Carrie Bickford  
Teacher, Greenwood Forest Elementary

Ms. Joann Chiou  
Community Member

Ms. Sherri Davenport  
Principal, Schultz Elementary

Ms. Maria Gamboa  
Pre-K Teacher, Grace England Early Childhood Center

Ms. Beth Gilleland  
Guidance and Counseling Officer

Mr. Scott Glueck  
Community Member

Ms. Dayna Hernandez  
Executive Director for Elementary Teaching & Learning

Mr. Doug James  
Community Member

Ms. Jessica Jasper  
Teacher, Wunderlich Intermediate

Dr. Joffery Jones  
Principal, Hildebrandt Intermediate

Mr. Albert Kisangi  
Klein ISD Secondary Teacher of the Year, Klein Oak High School

Ms. Leslie Kompelien  
Principal, Ulrich Intermediate

Ms. Amy Miller  
Associate Principal, Klein Forest High School

Ms. Carole Mason  
Principal, French Elementary

Ms. Holly Mason  
Assistant Principal, Benignus Elementary

Ms. Nanette McDonald  
Parent

Ms. Maria Ovalle  
Family Engagement Coordinator

Ms. Karen Palapar  
Klein ISD Elementary Teacher of the Year, Kaiser Elementary

Ms. Nicole Patin  
Principal, Klein Cain High School

Mr. Tyson Raleigh  
Assistant Principal, Kleb Intermediate

Ms. Jennifer Rasmussen  
Parent

Ms. Dana Reaves  
CTE Teacher, Klein Collins High School

Ms. Lili Reyna  
Bilingual Teacher, Mahaffey Elementary

Ms. Della Richhart  
Special Education Teacher, Zwink Elementary & DIDC Member

Ms. Amanda Salinas  
Data, Research, and Evaluation Officer

Ms. Kelly Schumacher  
Executive Director for Secondary Teaching & Learning

Mr. Clayton Smith  
Teacher, Klenk Elementary

Dr. L.S. Spencer  
Executive Director for Human Resource Services, Secondary

Ms. Kathy Vergara  
Language Instructional Specialist

Ms. Victoria Walts  
Teacher, Greenwood Forest Elementary

Ms. Shatara White  
Teacher, Nitsch Elementary

Ms. Chris Winkler  
Instructional Officer for Advanced Academics

Ms. Christy Zorn  
Teacher, Klein High School

*The District Instructional Development Council (district-level decision making committee established under Section 11.251 of the Texas Education Code) is comprised of a staff member representative from every campus, district-level staff, and other stakeholders and is integral to the District of Innovation process as outlined in Section 12 of HB 1842.
District of Innovation Timeline

Thursday, November 17, 2016 – 2:00 p.m. (KMPC)
• Initial meeting with District Instructional Development Council (the District-Level Committee established under Section 11.251 of the Texas Education Code) to consider the possibility of Klein ISD becoming a District of Innovation and a petition to move forward

Friday, November 18, 2016
• Notify Klein ISD Board of Trustees that a petition has been signed by a majority of the members of the District Instructional Development Council (DIDC) to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation under Section 12A.001(c)(2).

Week of November 28, 2016
• Conduct a series of initial meetings with district and campus leadership to discuss preliminary thoughts and possible members of the Local Innovation Plan Committee

Monday, December 12, 2016 – Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. (CO) *
• Request a resolution be adopted by the Board of Trustees to pursue a designation of District of Innovation [Section 12A.001(c)(1)]
• Conduct a public hearing to present and consider the development of a Local Innovation Plan for designation as a District of Innovation [Section 12A.002]
• Motion to pursue the development of a Local Innovation Plan and to appoint the members of the Local Innovation Plan Committee as recommended by administration [Section 12A.002(b)(2)]

Tuesday, December 13, 2016 – Friday, December 16, 2016
• Series of meetings to write the draft Local Innovation Plan in preparation for district and community feedback

Friday, December 16, 2016
• Draft version of the Local Innovation Plan posted on the Klein ISD website for public view and comment until January 6th

Monday, January 9, 2017
• Local Innovation Plan meeting to revise draft Local Innovation Plan based on public input and feedback

Wednesday, January 11, 2017 – 3:30 p.m. (KMPC)*
• Final version of the Local Innovation Plan presented to the District Instructional Development Council at a public meeting to seek public input and feedback immediately following the report on the final version of the Local Innovation Plan [Section 12A.005(a)(3)]
• District Instructional Development Council to consider and vote on the final version of the Local Innovation Plan [Section 12A.005(a)(3)]
• With two-thirds majority vote from the District Instructional Development Council, post the final version of the proposed Local Innovation Plan on the Klein ISD website for public view and comment for at least 30 calendar days [Section 12A.005(a)(1)]
• Board of Trustees notifies the Commissioner of the Board’s intention to vote on adoption of the final version of the Local Innovation Plan [Section 12A.005(a)(2)] *

Monday, February 13, 2017 – Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. (CO)
• Presentation of the final version of the Local Innovation Plan
• Motion to vote on the Local Innovation Plan [Section 12A.005(b)]

Ongoing for duration of the Local Innovation Plan
• District leadership will continue to provide the Klein ISD Board of Trustees, staff, and community with regular updates regarding the Local Innovation Plan for the term of five years [Section 12A.006]

*Required by House Bill 1842
The Klein ISD School Board and the District of Innovation Local Innovation Plan Committee considered all areas available for local innovation and created a plan that centers around six key areas: First Day of Instruction and Last Day of Instruction; Minimum Attendance for Class Credit; Kindergarten Start Age; Minimum Minutes of Instruction; Class Size and Notice of Class Size; and Teacher Certification and Field-Based Experience.

First Day of Instruction and Last Day of Instruction
Exemption: TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812

Current Challenge
Currently, students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. For many years prior to this rule, however, districts had the option of starting earlier. Many districts began school the third Monday in August, and some began even earlier. Several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the fourth Monday, with no exceptions. This creates a challenge in balancing semesters each year and limits the number of days of instruction prior to state-mandated exams in the spring.

Proposed
Allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community by considering the following innovations:

• Students will begin no earlier than mid-August.
• Teachers will begin no earlier than the first week of August to allow for quality professional development and protected purposeful planning of instruction at the start of the scheduled duty calendar. The calendar would then be adjusted accordingly.
• For employees, this exemption would not affect the current number of contract days currently set by the district.
• This flexibility will allow for an improved instructional calendar that is more balanced, with the first and second semesters being closer in the number of days of instruction.
• Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters that better align with our local colleges.
• An early start date permits high school students an additional week of instruction for the December End of Course (EOC) assessments and all students who take required state assessments more instructional time prior to the spring assessments.
• High school students will complete semester final exams prior to Winter Break and start new classes upon their return in January.
• Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in spring and summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts.
• The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for establishing the first and last days of instruction to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.
Innovation Goal
The goal is to improve student success through increased flexibility in the calendar and increase the number of instructional days prior to state testing, which could result in an increased student attendance rate. Increased local control of our calendar will ensure equitable pathways are offered to every student through the balanced provision of a dynamic, guaranteed, and viable curriculum. The District will continue to seek student, staff, and community input prior to submitting the calendar for Board approval.

Teacher Certification and Field-Based Experience Required
Exemption: TEC 21.003 and TEC 21.005

Current Challenge
Currently, TEC 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of his/her certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). TEA then approves or denies this request. The statutory certification requirements inhibit the district’s ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach various courses, particularly Career and Technical Education (CTE) and STEM courses.

Proposed
Allow local decision-making regarding teacher certification by considering the following innovations:

• After considering stakeholder input, the district will establish and transparently communicate to all stakeholders the local criteria to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate, such as but not limited to years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications.
• If the candidate meets local teaching certificate criteria, the principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or experience the teacher possesses which qualify this individual to obtain the local (district) teaching certificate. The campus principal may then submit to the Superintendent or designee a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject outside of his/her
certified field.

• The district will continue to seek Texas certified teachers; however, an individual with experience in various fields (e.g. CTE, STEAM, world languages) or with teaching certification from outside of Texas could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the Superintendent or designee with all of the individual's credentials. The Superintendent or designee will then approve the request if he/she deems that the individual meets the criteria for the local certification and deems that the individual could be an asset to students prior to the individual being employed by the district. The Superintendent or designee will keep the Board of Trustees informed of employees who have been issued a local teaching certificate.

• In order to ensure appropriate support for individuals issued a local teaching certificate, the district will establish and transparently communicate to all stakeholders local teaching certification requirements for professional development and mentorship.

• The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for local certification to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

Innovation Goal
The goal is to utilize local qualifications that allow the district to recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience or community college instructors. Establishing this local criteria will allow the district to offer more opportunities (e.g. dual credit, CTE courses) with increased flexibility in scheduling and options regarding course offerings. By recruiting and retaining excellent teachers and leaders throughout our system, every student in Klein ISD will learn in a quality environment with clear pathways to success.

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit | Exemption TEC 25.092

Current Challenge
Currently, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through twelfth grade shall not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under this statute, students who can advance more rapidly may not currently do so. Additionally,
students who have mastered the course content but do not meet the 90 percent rule may not be given credit for the course unless they make-up “seat time” regardless of mastery of the content.

Proposed
Allow Klein ISD to develop credit opportunities that are based on mastering content and completing coursework rather than required attendance or seat time rules by considering the following innovations:

• With a growing number of active learning opportunities (e.g. blended learning, project-based learning, service learning, internships) for students, the attendance requirements should be broadened to allow award of credit that is based on course completion rather than merely daily attendance.
• Klein ISD should be allowed to set its own rules for awarding such credits when students have demonstrated mastery of course learning objectives.
• Klein ISD will also explore other innovative ways to demonstrate mastery and further personalize learning given this exemption in order to further support opportunities to be college, career, and life ready.
• Klein ISD will support this innovation through targeted professional development specific to personalized learning options and modalities of delivering instruction for students to promote greater innovation, foster active learning, and improve student outcomes.
• The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for minimum attendance to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

Innovation Goal
The goal is to allow innovation in the methods, locations, and times that instruction may be delivered in order to: (1) provide every student the opportunity to “level up” academically, emotionally, and socially and accelerate more rapidly through courses when he/she meets mastery, thereby ensuring every student gains additional credits and remains academically challenged, and (2) accommodate students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, family issues or other extenuating circumstances thereby reducing the number of dropouts and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. Note that relief from Sec. 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules.
Kindergarten Start Age | Exemption: TEC 29.151

Current Challenge
Currently, to be eligible for public Kindergarten and receive state funding, a child must be 5 years old by September 1st, which does not allow the flexibility needed by the district to serve students who are ready for or who could benefit from attending school slightly earlier than the established date. Many children miss the cut-off date to enter school during critical years of social and emotional development and are delayed in entering our district’s quality academic environment due to the age requirements for Kindergarten set by the state.

Proposed
Allow Klein ISD to have flexibility in enrolling students for Kindergarten by considering the following innovations:

- Develop a local criteria to determine eligibility of students who are not yet 5 years old by September 1st and allow those students meeting the locally determined eligibility requirements to optionally enroll with all the same district financial benefits of those students who are 5 years old by September 1st.
- This exemption will provide the flexibility to enroll sooner and immerse students in an academic and social/emotional learning environment that provides a strong foundation in early literacy and growth development.
- Students who are ready for school can develop a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy to prevent potential gaps in achievement and accelerate their learning.
- The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for Kindergarten readiness to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

Innovation Goal
The goal is to improve the early readiness and enrichment of our young learners and prepare more students at a young age through developmentally appropriate and academically rich learning environments. This will provide increased equity for every student by building a strong foundation and the provision of a quality learning environment.
Minimum Minutes of Instruction
Exemption: TEC 25.081 and TEC 25.082

Current Challenge
House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Codes (TEC) 25.081 and 25.082 by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and instead requiring districts to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction delivered through an instructional day of at least “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.” HB 2610 also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, etc.

Proposed
Allow Klein ISD the flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction to pave the way for the following innovations without compromising the quality of instruction:

- Utilize personalized learning to better meet individual student needs by offering opportunities for students to accelerate credit attainment, acquire credits at a faster rate, and mitigate credit deficiencies.
- Vistas and Second Chance programs provide alternate pathways to graduation for students who have not been successful in the traditional school setting due to special challenges such as family hardships, financial hardships requiring students to work during the school day, or students who may be credit deficient for various other reasons. The district could increase these opportunities at all high schools with the exemption from minimum minutes of instruction.
- Having a flexible school day would allow the district to provide a late arrival, early release, or non-instructional day on a regular basis in order for Professional Learning Communities to deepen their content knowledge, analyze student data, and perfect their craft.
- A flexible day could allow teachers more time to conference with families about student progress.
The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for minimum minutes of instruction to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

**Innovation Goal**

Being exempt from the minimum minutes requirement will permit the district to offer alternative programming options to meet the needs of all students while focusing on quality instruction and cost-savings. It will also provide teachers valuable time to learn from one another, make instructional decisions based on student data, and build in regular time for parent conferences without having to apply for an annual waiver. Furthermore, this innovation will enhance the district’s ability to personalize learning by knowing every student by name, strength, and need and to provide every student with a rich, relevant, and clear pathway to success.

**Class Size and Notice of Class Size | Exemption: TEC 25.112 and 25.113**

**Current Challenge**

Currently, the statute requires the District to disrupt elementary classrooms based on fluctuating enrollment numbers to meet the 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio for grades K-4. In some instances, students would benefit from exceeding the ratio to minimize disruption.

Districts can currently submit a waiver to TEA in order to exceed the 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio. These waivers are not rejected by TEA. However, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent/guardian in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio that informs them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move, and the class then meets the 22:1 ratio.

**Proposed**

While we certainly believe that class size can play a positive role in the classroom, researchers indicate that it does not have a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. *Allow Klein ISD the flexibility to adjust class size by considering the following innovations:* 

- Klein ISD will attempt to keep all K-4th core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class
size exceeds this ratio, the Superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.

- In the event a K-4th core classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio, the campus will notify the parents/guardians of the students in the classroom that the 22:1 ratio has been exceeded. Teacher input will be gathered prior to determining if an additional teacher should be hired. Local criteria will be developed to inform decision-making. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio which gives Klein ISD the flexibility to adjust class sizes without filing all of the paperwork.

- The district will establish a local committee comprised of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers, community members, district staff) to develop and recommend a local criteria for class size exemptions to the Superintendent/Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

**Innovation Goal**

The goal is to minimize disruptions to students when a classroom exceeds the state-mandated ratio of 22:1 in order to keep students in their current classroom environment where they have formed relationships with their peers and teachers. This consistency will allow for students' learning processes to remain intact.

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I really feel that being a district of innovation will open more opportunity for our students to become successful academically and socially, and as a teacher, I want the opportunity to continue to explore these potential innovations for students.

Heather Adian, Kleb Intermediate teacher and DIDC chairperson
**Glossary of Terms**

**Blended Learning:** Blended learning or hybrid learning is learning that combines the best of online learning and face-to-face instruction for the purpose of enhancing learning. Flipping the classroom or inverted teaching are also forms of blended learning, as course content is moved out of the classroom to an online format allowing for class time to be more interactive.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE):** Courses that complement and enhance academic preparation by enabling students to apply academic principles and technical skills essential to career success. CTE allows students to see the relevance of their academic preparation to their future career goals.

**District of Innovation:** The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts flexibilities available to open-enrollment charter schools by providing more local control.

**Dual Enrollment (Credit):** Dual credit is a process through which a student may earn high school credit for successfully completing a college course that provides advanced academic instruction beyond, or in greater depth than, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for a corresponding high school course. The “dual credit” earned is college credit and high school credit for one course.

**House Bill 1842:** Relating to public school accountability, including the intervention in and sanction of a public school that has received an academically unsuccessful performance rating for at least two consecutive school years and the designation of a school district as a district of innovation

**House Bill 2610:** Relating to the minimum number of minutes of instruction for students to be provided by public school districts and the scheduling of the last day of school for students by public school districts

**Professional Learning Community (PLC):** An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.

**Seat Time:** A reference to the perception that the amount of time students physically sit in a classroom is more important than what students have actually learned or failed to learn

**Stakeholders:** A group that is invested in the success of a district/school and its students, including teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, elected officials, etc.

**STEM:** Courses with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math