



Amherst ISD District of Innovation Plan

2025-2030

**First Adopted by the Amherst ISD Board of Trustees
on July 13th , 2020**

Timeline for Updating DOI Plan 2025-30

May 1st , 2025– Proposed revisions to the plan and posted on school website as proposed revised plan

May 16th , 2025– Presented for input and Approval by the District Education Improvement Council (DEIC).

June 13th , 2025–The Board of Trustees approved the revised plan.

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](#) and obtain more local control. The designation as a District of Innovation provides the district an opportunity to be exempt from certain sections of the Texas Education Code (TEC) that inhibit the goals of the district as outlined in the locally adopted Innovation Plan. Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Local Control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Customization:** Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g., only high schools), grade level, or a single campus.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a District of Innovation Plan to the Commissioner of Education, but approval is not required.
- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates.

EXEMPTIONS

1. Teacher Certification

(DK Legal) (DK Local) (DK Exhibit) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local) (TEC 21.002, §21.003, §21.053, §21.057)

Current Law

In the event a District cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

TEC 21.002 states that “a school district shall employ each classroom teacher, principal, librarian, nurse, or school counselor under either a probationary, continuing, or term contract.

Innovation Strategy

In order to best serve the students of Amherst ISD, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual’s credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be at-will.

- c. This plan will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

2. School Start Date/Last Day of School ***(EB Legal) (EB Local) (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812)***

Current Law

Texas Education code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Innovation Strategy

To meet local and community need, this plan will allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and more instructional days prior to the state assessments given in early May

- a. This will allow the first and second semesters to be somewhat equal in the number of days of instruction.
- b. This would allow an option to start school with a shorter week, easing the transition back to school for all students.

3. Teacher Contract Days ***(DC Legal) (DEA Legal) (TEC 21.401)***

Current Law

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Innovation Strategy

This plan reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make our salaries more competitive.

- a. This plan will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- b. This plan should enhance teacher recruitment.
- c. This plan will provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.
- d. Improve teacher morale

4. Inter-District Transfers **(FDA Legal) (FDA Local) (TEC 25.036)**

Current Law

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Innovation Strategy

This would follow FDA Local policy requiring nonresident students to file a transfer application each school year. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications

- a. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records will be evaluated.
- b. Transfer students are required to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the district.
- c. In rare cases, transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent or his or her designee at any time during the school year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences such as suspension (in school or out of school), placement at the DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the student's transfer status.

5. SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL **(BFD LEGAL) (TEC 28.004)**

Current Law

Current law requires that the SHAC committee must meet four times per year to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

Innovation Strategy

The SHAC shall meet one time per year and may be in conjunction with the Site Base Decision Making Committee as needed.

- a. As a small district, committee members are intimately aware of the needs of the District's students, as well as the values that are to be promoted within the community.

- b. With the limited number of stakeholders and the likelihood that community members that are actively involved serve the school in many ways and often serve on more than one committee or group, it is recommended that the committees may meet at the same time, location or date to complete duties and business of the committee.

Amended Portion beginning school year 2025-26

6. SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPOSITORY CONTRACTS

(BDAE (LEGAL), BDAE (LOCAL)) (TEC §45.205, TEC §45.206)

Current Law

The depository for the District shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for two additional two-year terms. Per S.B. 754, passed by the 85th Texas Legislature, effective September 1, 2017, TEC Section 45.205 will allow the District to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year. An extension is not subject to the requirements of Education Code 45.206, Education Code 45.205 and Education Code 45.204.

Innovation Strategy

In a small district and a small town, the District's choices for its depository bank are limited. AISD uses services provided by the bank on a daily basis. AISD will continue to use the local depository for the District without rebidding. At the end of each two-year term, the District and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for multiple two additional year periods. The District must review the contract to ensure the best value and support for the District and obtain Board approval for each of the two-year periods.

- a. Nothing in this process would hinder the District's ability to undertake bidding the District Depository Bank at the end of any of the two-year periods.
- b. The time saved by the superintendent, business manager and the board of trustees by not having to deal with this ministerial duty every two years will allow the superintendent, business manager and the board more time for studying and planning for student progress, instructional strategies, and innovative options for the district educational goals.
- c. The District believes it can operate most optimally if it is not limited to two or even three additional two year extensions of its depository contract.