

Lufkin ISD



District of Innovation Plan 2022-2027

Amended January 2023



Introduction

The 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, passed HB 1842, allowing eligible Texas school districts to be designated Districts of Innovation. In accordance with 19 TAC §102.1303, Lufkin ISD is eligible to be designated a District of Innovation as the District's most recent performance rating under TEC §39.054 is "Met Standard" therefore representing acceptable performance. Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control and obtain exemption from certain operations of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Lufkin ISD believes that this Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan will allow our local Board of Trustees and district staff to make decisions based on the unique needs of our students and community.

Calendar

First Day of Instruction

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811

Manner in which law inhibits district goals:

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community, students or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Proposal: Relief from this statute will enable district flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable the district to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in Lufkin ISD. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June. By ending earlier, Lufkin ISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time. This proposal will enable the district to align the school calendar with the county Early College High School and the local college and university.

No Amendments

Certification

Teacher Certification Mandates

Exemption from: (TEC §21.003)

Manner in which law inhibits district goals:

TEC 21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate 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 their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of



Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Rural, high poverty districts have difficulty filling positions with quality instructors, especially in subjects where state-wide shortages exist. Since the pandemic, the shortage of high-quality certified teachers has increased. Institutes of higher education have fewer people pursuing an education degree. Rural districts are now faced with higher needs and less certified teachers to fill vacancies.

Proposal: Lufkin ISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Lufkin ISD would like the ability to issue District Teaching Permits (local certification) in areas of high demand to better meet the educational needs of our students.

In order to best serve Lufkin ISD students, all decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be handled locally. The campus principal may submit to the Superintendent Designee a request to 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 subject/field of study and the emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.

Lufkin ISD will allow District Teaching Permits (local certification) based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway. An individual with certain qualifications who is not certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions including, but not limited to, TEA approved shortage areas such as mathematics, science, Languages Other than English (LOTE), Career & Technical Education (CTE), other core academic areas and electives, etc.

A person seeking District Teaching Permit (local certification) should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position. The principal may submit to the Superintendent's Designee, a request for District Teaching Permit (local certification) outlining all the individual's credentials/qualifications. Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to: professional work experience; formal training and education; active industry certification, licensure, or registration; combination of work experience, training, and education; and/or demonstration of successful experience working with students. The Superintendent's Designee will then approve the request if the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students.

An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will not receive a contract but will work on an at-will basis. Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local



certification) will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers. An employee working under a District Teaching Permit (local certification) will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

With authority to locally certify teachers, the required parental notification for “inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers” under Sec. 21.057 would no longer be necessary with exception of Title I campuses, regardless of any adjustments or changes made to the certification laws.

This exemption does not apply to special education and bilingual/ESL teachers. These teachers must be SBEC certified.

Amended January 2023

Probationary Contracts

Probationary Contracts for Teachers

Exemption from: (TEC §21.102)

Manner in which law inhibits district goals:

TEC §21.102 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. This period of time may not be 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.

Proposal: Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit Lufkin ISD the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to three years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses newly hired in Lufkin ISD. This exemption will allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee’s performance.

Amended January 2023

Exemptions from Future TEC Mandates

To best serve our local Lufkin ISD community, staff, and students, Lufkin ISD includes this provision in our District Innovation Plan for the district to maintain control over any future or eligible Texas Education Code mandates. Amendments may be adopted by a majority vote of the DEIC at a public meeting and a 2/3 majority vote by the Lufkin ISD board of Trustees.



DEIC Members 2022-2023

District Educational Improvement Committee
Superintendent, Lynn Torres

Primary / Elementary Campuses

Anderson	Sheila Whitaker	2021-2024
Brandon	Phyllis Belcher	2021-2024
Brookhollow	Ima Adams	2022-2025
Burley	Angela Pool	2021-2024
Coston	Brenda Ehrlich	2021-2024
Dunbar	Christen Baize	2022-2025
Garrett	Shellie Davis	2022-2025
Hackney	Misty Deggs	2021-2024
Herty	Kirby Bryce	2021-2024
Kurth	Lauren Luce	2022-2025
Slack	Megan Morgan	2021-2024
Trout	Terah Knowles	2022-2025

Secondary Campuses

ACE	Cedric Grady	2022-2025
LHS	Travis Garcia	2021-2024
LHS	Elizabeth Perkins	2021-2024
LHS	Johnnie Shepherd	2021-2024
LHS	Nathan Urban	2022-2025
LMS	Ragan Haygood	2022-2025
LMS	Rebecca Flowers	2021-2024
LMS	Patrick Yarbrough	2021-2024

Campus-Based Professional Employees

Brookhollow	Angela Holt	2022-2025
Burley	Caroline Leslie	2021-2024
Dunbar	Denetra Slaughter	2022-2025
LMS	Maria Figueroa	2022-2025
LHS	Kristy Bush	2022-2025
Slack	Laura Cowan	2022-2025
Trout	Cara Pegram	2022-2025

District-Level Professional Non-Teaching

DEC	Angela Dean	2022-2025
DEC	Melanie Garrett	2021-2024
DEC	Betsy Mijares	2021-2024
DEC	Amanda Venegas	2021-2024
Technology	Misty Spencer	2021-2024

Community

Nancy Hicks

Parents

Daija Anthony, Stefanie Beams, Robin Futch

Business

Todd Kassaw

District

Kurt Stephens, Sheila Adams, Cindy Tierney