



Hays CISD District of Innovation Plan

Effective December 17, 2023 – December 17, 2028

District Goals:

1. Hays CISD believes in the achievement of every student. The District will evaluate and address the individual needs of each student. Student performance will be evaluated in academics, college readiness, and career development. Our staff believes in the education of the whole child and knows that success is based on more than the results of a single test.
2. Hays CISD is dedicated to the safety social and emotional well-being of students and staff. A safe environment must include secure facilities, staff and student training, and our adopted standard response protocol. The district will partner with local and state entities to assure preparedness. Specific areas to be addressed are campus access, detecting and reporting possible threats, and building an environment of trust between adults and all students. Our Emergency Operations Plan is updated annually and followed throughout the district.
3. Hays CISD is dedicated to treating all stakeholders with respect and dignity. Cultivating great community and staff relations requires empathy, visibility, trust, and communication. Communication through all appropriate avenues is a priority, and staff will receive training in these areas. Our district is committed to increasing client engagement both internally and externally.

Proposed Innovation:

First Day of Instruction

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

TEC §25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Innovation for Hays CISD:

District Goals 1 of 2

An exemption to this statute will provide the opportunity to develop a school calendar that positively impacts students by:

- Balancing the disparity in the number of instructional days in each semester
- Ending the first semester by Christmas break so that final exams for high school students do not extend beyond the break
- Matching Hays CISD semesters to coincide with the calendar of colleges from which students are taking dual credit courses

- Providing flexibility for students to enroll in summer school, internships, employment, and professional certification experiences
- Allowing for more instruction time prior to state-mandated testing and retesting, as well as AP and SAT testing

This exemption will also support teacher growth by:

- Supporting the adult learning model by providing ongoing professional development throughout the year
- Allowing staff to prepare for the school year by decreasing the amount of professional development in August

Implementation Considerations:

- The Hays CISD calendar committee will convene annually to collaboratively develop and recommend a district calendar that is designed to promote the effective delivery of classroom instruction and school/district operations.
- Teacher contracts will remain at 187 days.

Proposed Innovation:

CTE Teacher Certification

TEC Code Requiring Exemption:

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 State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).

Innovation for Hays CISD:

District Goal 1

Hays CISD seeks to hire certified and highly qualified individuals for every teaching position. Currently, in the event the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a CTE position, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA will then either approve or deny the request. At this time, non-certified professionals cannot be hired or paid without SBEC certification on file.

Because of the nature of Career and Technical Education courses at Hays HS, Johnson HS, and Lehman HS, the current certification requirements restrict the district's ability to hire CTE professionals with the most applicable experience and qualifications. Flexibility to establish local teacher certification requirements when hiring CTE teachers will allow the district to:

- Select from a larger and more experienced candidate pool for CTE courses
- Establish requirements for professionals transitioning to CTE education from other careers
- Hire CTE teaching staff with industry-standard professional certifications, or those not currently certified in accordance with TEA standards
- Utilize the talents and skills of those in our community who would benefit the CTE needs of our students.

Implementation Considerations:

- Exemption from TEC 21.003 is limited to provide hiring flexibility in the specific instructional area of Career and Technical Education only. All other instructional staff are required to hold valid SBEC certificates and will receive Chapter 21 contracts in accordance with policy and law.
- Hays CISD will develop minimum required qualifications for individuals hired for such positions and will outline required professional development in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and parent engagement.
- Hays CISD will utilize the standard teacher salary schedule for CTE instructors.
- Parents will be notified when students are instructed by personnel without SBEC certification. Notification will include industry certifications held by the CTE instructor.

Amendment 3 to Hays CISD District of Innovation Plan

Adopted following the process timeline: April 20, 2020

AREA OF INNOVATION

Note: Amendment 3 removed per TEA direction. This exemption is no longer applicable per SB 1444, 87th Legislative Session.

~~With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.~~

~~Preclusion from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.~~

~~Exemption from: TEC §22.004(i)~~

~~Related Board Policies: HCISD-CRD (LEGAL) and CRD (LOCAL)~~

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

~~TEC §22.004 (i) 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 Hays Consolidated ISD employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision is in direct contradiction to the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.~~

Innovation for Hays CISD:

~~Increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs.~~

~~On January 27, 2020, the Board of Trustees adopted findings declaring that Texas Education Code 22.004 is not in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to Texas Education Code 12A.004 and the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.~~

Amendment 4 to Hays CISD District of Innovation Plan

Adopted following the process timeline: March 27, 2023

Note: Amendment 4 removed per TEA direction. Exemption from this section of code is prohibited according to TAC 102.1309(b)(2).

~~Exemption from the due process including the notice and hearing to suspend a teacher without pay pending discharge of the teacher's employment. The timeline associated with suspending a teacher's pay pending a recommendation for termination can be unreasonable.~~

~~**Related Statute:** The board of trustees may suspend a teacher without pay for a period not to extend beyond the end of the school year pending discharge of the teacher. TEC §21.104(b) — In lieu of discharge or pending discharge, a school district may suspend a teacher without pay for good cause as specified by Subsection (a) for a period not to extend beyond the end of the current school year.~~

~~**Related Board Policies:** DFAA, DFBA~~

~~**Innovation for Hays CISD:** Increased control to suspend pay of an employee pending discharge that has already admitted or been convicted of a crime.~~

Amendments 3–6 to Hays CISD District of Innovation Plan

Adopted following the process timeline: March 27, 2023

Amendment 3 *(formerly Amendment 5)*

Exempt the District from state law regarding the maximum length of time an experienced teacher may be employed on a probationary contract. At the recommendation of the Superintendent, a probationary contract may be renewed for up to two additional one-year periods 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.

Related Statute: TEC §21.102(b) - 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.

Related Board Policy: DCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: This innovation provides an extended period of time for an employee to remain employed on a probationary contract not to exceed two additional one-year periods as campus administration and district support personnel have an extended opportunity to evaluate academic performance in accordance with district adopted assessments and evaluation tools.

Amendment 4 *(formerly Amendment 6)*

Exemption from the requirement to have Kinder – 3rd grade teachers and elementary principals attend a reading academy by the end of their first year. The district will ensure that teachers will complete the academies within 2 years of being hired or within 3 years in extenuating circumstances. This statute creates overwhelming requirements in the employee's first year.

Related Statute: TEC §28.0062(2)(A) - School districts and open enrollment charter schools must ensure that not later than the 2022-2023 school year, each classroom teacher in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade and each principal at a campus with kindergarten or first, second, or third grade has attended a reading academy.

Related Board Policy: DMA

Innovation for Hays CISD: The innovation provides the district Kinder-3rd grade employees an extended period of time to complete required reading academy.

Amendment 5 *(formerly Amendment 7)*

Expand the current certification exemption to include highly qualified out-of-state applicants for non-foundational courses. This option would be exercised by the Superintendent or designee when a highly qualified individual is coming from out of state and has yet to be certified by the State of Texas.

Related Statute: 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 State Board of Educator Certification.

Related Board Policies: DBA, DK

Innovation for Hays CISD: This innovation allows flexibility in hiring qualified out of state teachers to teach in their certified area while working on earning their Texas State Board of Education Certification.

Amendment 6 *(formerly Amendment 8)*

Exempt the district from TEC § 21.404 to enable teachers who wish to volunteer to cover classes during conference or planning periods in exchange for monetary compensation to be able to do so as part of the district's strategic efforts to provide class coverage when a substitute cannot be secured. The district would ask teachers who are

interested in volunteering to do this to register their interest on a form prior to the school year. This list would be provided to principals as a list of volunteers. At any time, a teacher can decline an opportunity if they would rather plan. The intent is to provide the teacher an option and choice at any time.

Related Statute: TEC § 21.404 prohibits a district from assigning teaching duties during a teacher's planning period, even if the teacher agrees to the duties. The commissioner reasoned that a district can't contract for teaching duties in exchange for monetary compensation outside of a Chapter 21 contract (Bledsoe v. Huntington Indep. Sch. Distr., Tex. Comm'r of Educ. Decision No. 033-R10-1103 (Sept. 18, 2014)).

Related Board Policies: DL

Innovation for Hays CISD: This innovation allows flexibility in coverage for classes during planning periods by certified teachers on a voluntary basis when the district has made a good effort to secure a guest teacher and was unsuccessful in doing so.

Added following the process timeline: December 8, 2025

Amendment 7

Exemption from the requirement to maintain 22:1 student to teacher ratio in Pre-K – 4th grade. This provides the district flexibility for staffing during a time of financial constraints.

Related Statute: TEC §25.112: Districts may not enroll more than 22 students in a prekindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Related Board Policies: EEA

Innovation for Hays CISD: Due to financial constraints, the district seeks flexibility to allow up to 24 students per PreK–4th grade class without requiring individual class size exemptions from TEA. By providing this exemption, it allows the district to enroll up to 24 students without requiring class size exemptions from TEA. Should the district need to enroll a 25th student in a PreK–4th grade class, the district will seek a class size exemption from TEA.

Amendment 8

Exemption from paying any professional dues from an employee's paycheck unless it relates to the district's educational mission.

Proposed Innovation: Salary Deductions for Professional Dues

Related Statute: TEC §22.001: Allows any employee to request the district to pay for any professional dues from their paycheck.

Related Board Policies: CFAA

Innovation for Hays CISD: Any employee could request the district to pay for any professional dues from their paycheck, regardless of whether the dues relate to the district's educational mission. District will work with employees to continue to pay professional dues which are related to educational organizations. District flexibility to restrict professional dues to only those related to school district operations and educational purposes.

Amendment 9

Exemption from allowing employees to request the district to pay any expense from their paycheck, regardless of whether the expense relates to educational purposes.

Related Statute: TEC §22.002: Allows any employee to request the district to pay any expense from their paycheck.

Related Board Policies: CFAA

Innovation for Hays CISD: Any employee could request the district to pay any expense they have from their paycheck, which may not be related to educational purposes. District will continue to work with employees to utilize payroll deductions for educational related costs. District flexibility to restrict expenses to only those related to school district operations.

Amendment 10

Exemption clarifies that district-sponsored donation drives and voluntary contribution opportunities are permitted.

Related Statute: TEC §22.011: Prohibits requiring or coercing employees to make charitable contributions.

Related Board Policies: DG

Innovation for Hays CISD: There is frequent misinterpretation regarding presenting an opportunity to donate to charitable organizations versus coercing employees, which creates operational uncertainty. District will have the flexibility to continue to provide opportunities for employees to voluntarily make donations without risk of being deemed coercive. Exemption clarifies that district-sponsored donation drives and voluntary contribution opportunities are permitted.

Amendment 11

Exemption reduces administrative burden on the district to report on management fees under certain cooperative purchasing contracts without negatively impacting integrity of district's purchasing processes.

Related Statute: TEC §44.0331: Requires reporting on management fees under certain cooperative purchasing contracts.

Related Board Policies: CH

Innovation for Hays CISD: Significant staff time is invested in tracking, preparing, presenting, and posting required reports related to cooperative purchasing management fees. This exemption provides the district flexibility to invest time and effort in other higher-priority purchasing activities. It reduces administrative burden without negatively impacting the integrity of the district's purchasing processes.

Amendment 12

Exemption allows the district to apply consistent purchasing standards across all vendor evaluations.

Related Statute: TEC §44.043: Addresses vendor relationships with various organizations in the purchasing process.

Related Board Policies: CH

Innovation for Hays CISD: Current statute creates conflict with other purchasing legal policies that require the district to consider certain organizational ties when evaluating vendors. This exemption provides the district flexibility to follow the existing laws governing purchasing without conflicting statutory directives. This also allows the district to apply consistent purchasing standards across all vendor evaluations.

Amendment 13

Exemption allows the district flexibility to follow safety standards regarding AEDs as required by the FDA without being restricted by conflicting state purchasing mandates.

Related Statute: TEC §44.047: Governs the purchase or lease of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Related Board Policies: CH, FFAF

Innovation for Hays CISD: Current requirements may not align with FDA safety standards for AEDs, creating potential compliance conflicts. This exemption provides the district flexibility to follow safety standards as necessary and as required by the FDA. It also ensures the district can procure AEDs that meet current federal safety requirements without being restricted by conflicting state purchasing mandates.

Amendment 14

Exemption allows the district flexibility to conserve energy without specific prescriptive legal requirements that may not be attainable, given district circumstances.

Related Statute: TEC §44.901: Governs energy savings performance contracts and conservation measures.

Related Board Policies: CL

Innovation for Hays CISD: Current statute imposes restrictive energy conservation measures that may not be practical or financially feasible for the district. This exemption still ensures the district will work to follow all legal requirements for attaining energy savings performance contracts. It further provides district flexibility to conserve energy without specific prescriptive legal requirements that may not be attainable given district circumstances.

Amendment 15

Exemption allows the district flexibility in developing a meaningful long-range energy plan without specific and likely unattainable annual reduction requirements.

Related Statute: TEC §44.902: Requires districts to reduce energy consumption by 5% annually as part of a long-range energy plan.

Related Board Policies: CL

Innovation for Hays CISD: The restrictive requirement of reducing energy by 5% annually may not be attainable given infrastructure limitations and other operational factors. The district will work to follow all legal requirements within our district long-range energy plans. This provides the district flexibility to develop a meaningful long-range energy plan without specific, likely unattainable annual reduction requirements.

Amendment 16

Exemption provides the district flexibility of revenue sources to ensure that Campus Activity Fund discretionary expenditures are related to the district's educational purpose and provide a benefit to the district or its students.

Related Statute: TEC §44.908: Governs the expenditure of local funds, including campus activity funds.

Related Board Policies: CFD

Innovation for Hays CISD: The types of revenues listed in the statute are confusing and not all-inclusive examples, creating ambiguity in how campus activity funds may be used. The district follows requirements for activity funds except in cases where the law interferes with using discretionary funds for educational purposes to support students. This exemption allows the district flexibility of revenue sources to ensure that Campus Activity Fund discretionary expenditures are related to the district's educational purpose and provide a benefit to the district or its students.

Amendment 17

Exemption provides the district flexibility in retaining the district depository bank for a longer time-period than current statute allows.

Related Statute: TEC §45.205: Requires the district to renew bank depository contracts every two years.

Related Board Policies: CCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: The statute requires the district to renew bank contracts every two years, creating significant administrative burden and potential for unnecessary disruption to banking relationships. The exemption allows the district flexibility in retaining the District depository bank for a longer time-period. Completing forms to retain a bank every two years and/or changing banks every eight years (2 years plus three 2-year renewals) is time-consuming and costly.

Amendment 18

Exemption provides the district flexibility to select a bank depository or continue with a chosen bank without being required to initiate a formal bid process, reducing administrative overhead while maintaining sound fiscal management practices.

Related Statute: TEC §45.206: Requires the district to issue a competitive bid or request for proposal for bank depository services.

Related Board Policies: CCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: The statute requires the district to go out for a competitive bid for bank depository services, regardless of satisfaction with the current banking relationship. This exemption provides the district flexibility to select a bank depository or continue with the chosen bank without being required to initiate a formal bid process. It also reduces administrative overhead while maintaining sound fiscal management practices.

Amendment 19

Exemption provides the district flexibility to choose the best depository banking service and/or continue with the current chosen bank rather than being required to award the bid to the highest ranked proposal.

Related Statute: TEC §45.207: Requires the district to choose the highest ranked bid or proposal for depository banking services.

Related Board Policies: CCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: The requirement to award the contract to the highest ranked bid may not always result in the selection of the best overall banking partner for the district. This exemption provides the district flexibility to choose the best depository banking service and/or continue with the current chosen bank rather than being required to award the bid to the highest ranked proposal. It ensures the district can prioritize service quality, relationship, and overall value when selecting banking partners.

Amendment 20

Exemption provides the district flexibility in allowing for various forms of collateral as allowed by law to protect deposits.

Related Statute: TEC §45.208: Requires a bank depository to provide a bond, cashier's check, or pledge of securities for collateral purposes to protect deposits on hand.

Related Board Policies: CCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: The current requirement for a specific type of collateral instrument may limit the district's flexibility in structuring deposit protection arrangements. This exemption provides the district flexibility in allowing for various forms of collateral as allowed by law to protect deposits. It also ensures the district can work with depository banks to establish appropriate and legally permissible collateral arrangements without being

restricted to a single instrument type.

Amendment 21

Exemption allows the district to pursue a diversified investment strategy that balances safety, liquidity, and yield within the bounds of applicable law.

Related Statute: TEC §45.209: Restricts the placement of district funds to only fully insured FDIC instruments.

Related Board Policies: CDA, CCA

Innovation for Hays CISD: Restrictions on placing funds only in fully insured FDIC instruments limit the district's ability to optimize its investment portfolio. This exemption allows flexibility in choosing investments that best fit into the district's portfolio in accordance with other applicable requirements and the Public Funds Investment Act. It allows the district to pursue a diversified investment strategy that balances safety, liquidity, and yield within the bounds of applicable law.