

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENT RECOMMENDATION

APRIL 1, 2026



DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENTS

- Administration is planning to recommend two amendments to our District of Innovation plan.
 - Recommendation #1: FDA LOCAL (interdistrict transfer exemptions).
 - Recommendation #2: FNG, DGBA, GF LOCAL (grievance policy).

**DOI-District of Innovation*

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENTS

- Revision of District of Innovation Plan to include:
 - In accordance with the District's innovation plan and this policy, ***the District is exempt from the requirement for transfers to be for a one-year period.***
- Revision about transfer approval or denial:
 - The Superintendent or designee shall consider availability of space and instructional staff, financial costs, safety issues, academic performance, disciplinary/behavioral history, and attendance/tardy records.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation (“DOI”) to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.
- As a DOI, a school district’s Board of Trustees gains greater local control in its decision-making.

**DOI-District of Innovation*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- DOI districts are positioned to be innovative and forward-thinking while continuing to comply with the state's fiscal, instructional, and academic accountability requirements.

**DOI-District of Innovation*



GRIEVANCE POLICY RECOMMENDATION

- TEC §§26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, and 26A.003 require each school district's board of trustees to adopt a grievance process that complies with Chapter 26A.
- The most recent legislative session introduced several new requirements that may be restrictive or raise concerns for school districts.
- Administration recommends that the District revert to the grievance policy in place prior to the most recent legislative changes.

**TEC-Texas Education Code*

FILING DEADLINES

- The new grievance policy states parents have **90 calendar days** to file a complaint, or 30 calendar days from when they received paperwork (the later of). If they did not engage in informal process, then parent has 60 calendar days.
- Administration recommends reverting back to the previous policy of **15 business days** to file a grievance for several reasons:
 - Shorter deadlines encourage concerns to be addressed while facts are fresh and easier to investigate.
 - Delays increase the likelihood of staff turnover or fading recollection, impacting the accuracy of findings.
 - Longer timelines may allow complaints to be filed after outcomes, which could complicate intent and fairness.

COMPLAINT/APPEAL FORMS

- The new policy states that the complainant may **supplement the record with additional documents or include additional claims** after the Level I hearing.
- Administration recommends that the District revert back to not allowing additional documents be added after the Level I hearing:
 - Limiting new claims ensures the issue being investigated remains consistent throughout the process.
 - Constantly adding documents or claims can restart or prolong investigations unnecessarily.
 - This allows the hearing officer to address the primary concern that was not resolved during the informal process.

“DECISION” CHANGES

- The new policy requires that decisions be issued on the merits of the complaint, even when procedural errors occur.
- Administration recommends that the District not disregard procedural errors during the grievance process.
 - This approach avoids ambiguity between the requirement to decide grievances on their merits and other provisions that allow for dismissal based on procedural issues, including established timelines.

RESPONSE AND FILING TIMES

- The new policy states that the hearing officer has **20 calendar days** to respond in writing to Level 1 and 2; the appeal timeline is also extended to **20 calendar days**.
- Administration recommends that the District revert back to **10 business days** to respond and **10 business days** to appeal Level 1 and 2 hearings:
 - Shorter timelines help resolve concerns quicker.
 - Shorter deadlines reinforce the importance of prioritizing grievance resolution.
 - Longer timelines often lead to more potential conflict, frustration, and process fatigue.
 - Extended timelines can leave campuses in limbo, especially in personnel or student-related disputes.

LEVEL 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Board can determine that a **Board Committee** will hear the Level 3 grievance instead of the entire Board.
- Administration recommends that Level 3 grievances be heard by the entire Board of Trustees.
 - Hearing cases before the full Board ensures uniform decision-making.
 - Each board member will most likely want to participate in the decision-making process.

LEVEL 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The new policy allows the complainant to request that the complaint be heard in **open or closed session**.
- Administration recommends that the District has the final decision on Level 3 grievances in open or closed session:
 - Districts must safeguard student and personnel information (FERPA, privacy laws).
 - Open hearings can inadvertently disclose sensitive or protected information.
 - Closed sessions allow for more candid, thorough discussions.

LEVEL 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The new policy states that Level 3 grievances must be discussed by the board within 60 calendar days.
- Administration recommends that this policy revert back to the Board of Trustees determining when Level 3 grievances are heard.

LEVEL 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The new policy requires the Board of Trustees to issue a decision within 30 calendar days following the meeting at which the complaint is presented.
- The previous process allowed the Board additional flexibility to issue a decision.

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENT TIMELINE

- The Instructional Leadership Council approves the recommendations for District of Innovation. If this committee votes to approve the recommendation, then the amendment will be presented to the Board of Trustees as an action item.
- The District will post the amendment on the District Website during this period.
- The Board must vote and approve the amendment with a 2/3 approval.

QUESTIONS?

