



LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

Prosper Independent School District

Drafted December 12, 2016

Updated March 17, 2021

Local Innovation Committee Members

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO PROSPER ISD
Jennifer Wattenbarger	Baker Elementary - Teacher
Sharla Davenport	Rucker Elementary – Former Teacher
Tiffany Frezza	Stuber Elementary – Social/Emotional Coach
Rachel Bainbridge	Folsom Elementary - Teacher
Natalie Stevens	Cockrell Elementary -Teacher
Jennifer Larriviere	Spradley Elementary – Assistant Principal
Jamey Briscoe	Former Hays Middle School – Assistant Principal
Jennifer Marthiljohni	Rogers Middle School – Assistant Principal
Cindy Zukowski	Furr Elementary School – Principal
Alan Rice	Prosper High School – CTE Teacher
Brett Hankey	Director of CTE
Patrick O’Neil	Director of Instructional Technology
Michael Pflug	STEAM Coordinator
Bernadette Gerace	Director of Recruiting & Retention
Christal Hankey	Director of Communications
Mandy Goddard	Former Dual Language Parent
Alisha Brown	Former Prosper High School Parent
Becka Long	Former Baker, Rogers, and Prosper High School Parent
Bill Beavers	PISD Board Member
Holly Ferguson	Superintendent

I. Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On June 20, 2016, Prosper Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation (DOI). The purpose of passing the Resolution was to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve the educational opportunities for the benefit of students, staff, and the community. The District has no intent to be exempt from any existing laws relating to teacher benefits or curriculum. The following dates outline the steps that have been taken to develop the plan for Prosper ISD:

- Background of the District of Innovation presented to Prosper ISD Board of Trustees on May 16, 2016
- Resolution signed for District of Innovation by the Prosper ISD Board of Trustees on May 16, 2016
- District of Innovation Public Hearing held on June 20, 2016
- District of Innovation Committee created by the Prosper ISD Board of Trustees on September 28, 2016
- District of Innovation Committee members were contacted and made aware of their selection on October 12, 2016

The Committee met on the following dates to develop the proposed plan:

- November 7, 2016
- November 28, 2016
- December 12, 2016
- January 24, 2017
- March 17, 2021 (to discuss renewal/additions)

II. Communication

Communication with all stakeholders is of utmost importance in Prosper ISD. The Committee has devised a communication plan, so that accurate and factual information regarding the District of Innovation plan and expectations are clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Each campus in Prosper ISD has received a campus level presentation from DOI Committee Members. The Prosper ISD District Site Based Team received a formal presentation on December 6, 2016. An informational video has been provided to all stakeholders that explained the impact that the District of Innovation Plan has on various operations in the school setting. The various community groups that reside in Prosper ISD have been presented with the background and information surrounding the District of Innovation Plan for Prosper ISD. District administration will make sure that any additions to the plan added in 2021 are clearly communicated with all relevant stakeholders.

III. Term

The term of the Plan is for five (5) years, beginning on April 19, 2021, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

IV. Requirements of the Education Code that the Local Innovation Plan Exempts the District (Upon Adoption of the Plan by the Prosper ISD Board of Trustees).

A. First Day of Instruction (TEC 25.0811)

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 prohibits the District from beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the District to be more responsive to students by balancing the amount of instructional time in the semesters and each nine weeks. This adjustment will allow teachers to better pace and deliver instruction during the first semester of school. The flexibility will allow students, who are in need of retest opportunities on state testing, additional instructional days prior to the retest opportunity in December. In addition, greater flexibility regarding the calendar will allow for the District to conclude school in May. This will provide summer school teachers and students the opportunity to plan and prepare a more targeted and focused academic setting for students during the month of June. Furthermore, this area will also allow for our learners to pursue college courses, enrichment programs, and summer employment. The adjustment of the calendar will also allow the flexibility in the school calendar to focus on professional learning days that can occur more frequently for teachers and staff that will provide a higher level of targeted professional development without impacting teacher contract days.

B. Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.051, and 21.057)

Due to learners having the opportunity to personalize their graduation plans and earn endorsements in areas of study such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), business and industry, public services, arts and humanities, there is a need for educators to have multiple certifications. It is particularly difficult to find educators who meet the certification specifications in order to teach classes in the endorsement areas. Texas Education Code, sections 21.003, 21.053, 21.051, and 21.057 limit the District's ability to hire educators to teach hard to fill positions. Flexibility in this area will assist in finding quality candidates to teach certain courses in order to avoid cancelling classes in the future.

The District is seeking flexibility in hiring professionals in certain vocations such as career

and technical courses. The exemption from Texas Education Code 21.055(d.1) will enable the district to establish local criteria for such courses when hiring quality personnel. With the exemption, the District will not have to cancel classes that students are dependent upon in order to fulfill their certifications and graduation requirements.

C. Recommended Appraisal Process and Performance Criteria (TEC 21.351, 21.352)

The District is seeking flexibility within the recommended appraisal process and performance criteria for teachers and staff evaluated using the appraisal system Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The District Plan is to continue to utilize T-TESS as the teacher appraisal instrument. The District is seeking exemption from the Student Growth Measure.

The belief is that through the professional learning community process our teachers are allowed to grow, develop, and prescribe specific academic plans for students based on data, observation, and analysis looking at what is in the best interest of the student. The District has invested a great amount of time, training, and resources in the professional learning communities' process. The District is in its 8th year of implementation of professional learning communities and would like to stay on this trajectory to improve student and teacher growth and performance.

D. District-Level Planning and Decision Making (TEC 11.252)

The District would like flexibility in TEC 11.252 as the committee make up limits the degree of parent involvement in the District Site Based Decision making process. We would like flexibility in the make-up of the committee for the campus and district decision-making teams to provide greater opportunity for parental involvement.

E. Certified Employee Contract Rights (TEC §21.102(b), §21.211(b))

Under current law, any teachers hired by the District who have worked in public education for five of the previous eight years are entitled to a term contract after only one year of probation. By exempting the District from that law, the District will have the flexibility of hiring a probationary teacher for a second year to provide for more growth and coaching when the teacher is hired under the 5 of 8 rule. Exemption from this requirement will provide campus administrators and hiring officials with the time needed to fully assess and support a teacher before making decisions regarding moving the employee from a probationary contract when that employee has only been with the District one year.

This would also allow the District to have the flexibility to suspend a teacher without pay when under an allegation that is covered in Educator Code of Ethics. Any decisions made regarding suspension without pay would be open to appeal through the grievance process.

This exemption will allow the district to make employment and financial decisions that are in the best interest of the district when an employee is alleged to have violated serious provisions of the Educator Code of Ethics or law, including crimes against children. This flexibility from some of the provisions of Chapter 21 of the Education Code will allow the District to approach some employment issues in ways that best meet the needs of the district and take quick action to protect students when necessary.