

# NEW HOME INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Adopted August 29, 2022

Revised April 14, 2025



## District of Innovation Overview

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The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842 gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools.

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 (ie. only high school), 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 mandates such as:
  - School start date
  - 90% attendance rule
  - Class-size ratio
  - Site-based decision-making processes
  - Certain student discipline provisions
  - Use of planning and preparation periods
  - Teacher appraisal requirements

The New Home Independent School District feels that this level of local control would add flexibility and empower our District to think and act in innovative ways.

## District of Innovation Timeline

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Monday, July 20, 2022

Meet with District of Innovation Committee to review procedures to become a District of Innovation.

Monday, July 25, 2025

Board Meeting

- Board of Trustees approve resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB1842 to become a District of Innovation.

Monday, August 8, 2022

Public Hearing

- Public hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation

Regular Meeting

- Approve a motion to pursue local District of Innovation plan
- Board of Trustees to approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee

Thursday, August 19, 2022

Meet with the District of Innovation Committee to develop and review the NHISD District of Innovation Plan

Monday, August 29, 2022

Regular Meeting

- Approve a motion to approve the New Home ISD District of Innovation Plan as Presented

Monday, April 8, 2024

Regular Board Meeting

- Approve motion to amend the New Home ISD District of Innovation Plan as presented

## **Resolution to Adopt the District of Innovation Plan**

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WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district’s most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 re-elects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of trustees of the district; and

WHEREAS the New Home Independent School District’s most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 re-elects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of New Home Independent School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12 to become a District of Innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that after the public hearing the Board of Trustees of New Home Independent School District shall appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this Monday, August 29, 2022 by the Board of Trustees.

Amended Monday, April 8, 2024 by the Board of Trustees.

Amended Monday April 14, 2025 by the Board of Trustees.

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President of the NHISD Board

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Secretary of the NHISD Board

## District of Innovation Committee Members

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Superintendent - Toby Tucker

Transportation Director - Koby Abney

Principal - Gail Smith

Principal - Kelly Baum

Junior High Coordinator - Brady Webb

High School/Junior High Teacher - Ramon Benitez

Elementary Teacher - Deena Ballard

High School/Junior High Parent - Amie Smith

Elementary Parent - Beki Burk

# District of innovation Plan - Proposed Guideline

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## First Day of Instruction

### TEC Requiring Exemption:

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

### Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- District Advisory Committee will have the flexibility to start school one week early, the third Monday in August or a mid-week start sometime that week.
- Starting one week earlier will better balance the two semesters with a natural Winter Break, set exams prior to Winter Break, and create more instructional time before STAAR/EOC/AP exams.
- The balanced semesters will align with college semesters as well, allowing more opportunities for summer school, internships, and industrial certification opportunities.

### Local Guidelines:

- The District of Innovation Committee will receive parent and staff input, then decide, subject to School Board approval, the school start date.

## Teacher Certification

### TEC 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 permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

### Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- The statutory certification requirement inhibits the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE), STEM Courses and non-core electives.
- Local Qualifications will allow the district to:
  - Allow experienced teachers to pick up an elective in an area they are qualified
  - Hire community college instructors
  - Offer dual credit opportunities in CTE courses
  - Recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience
- The District will establish Local Criteria (See Appendix A), such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (District) teaching certificate.

- Principals, along with the department supervisor, will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials. The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the District to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment.
- At the present time, NHISD would focus on elective courses including CTE courses. However, in the future, the District may choose to exercise this option in other courses. Our local Board of Trustees would be able to issue the school district teaching permit for an individual teaching these courses based on qualifications certified by the Superintendent. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as
  - Professional work experience
  - Formal training and education
  - Relevant industry license, certification or registration
  - Any combination of work experience, training and education or industry credential related to the subject matter he or she will be teaching

All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught.

Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the District would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain a set number of hours in classroom management training and work with a mentor teacher the first year of employment. The individual would be employed on an at-will basis with the District.

Special Education teachers and Bilingual teachers must continue to meet SBEC certification requirements.

## **Teacher Contract Days**

### **TEC Requiring Exemption:**

TEC 21.401 requires teachers under a 10 month contract must provide 187 days of service.

### **Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:**

- Proposal would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- Will increase the daily rate the District pays teachers
- Enhance teacher recruitment
- Improve teacher morale

Local Guidelines:

- NHISD will present a recommendation to the NHISD School Board regarding the number of contract days as a part of the total compensation and benefits program.

## **Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary**

### **TEC Requiring Exemption:**

TEC 21.402 requires districts pay a retired teacher a salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale. “Teacher” refers to a classroom teacher, full-time speech pathologist, full-time librarian, full-time school counselor, and full-time school nurse.

In addition to the teacher’s salary, districts are required to pay a TRS surcharge. Therefore, a retire/rehire employee comes with a great financial burden. New Home ISD would like the option of hiring an experienced, well versed employee without an extra strain on the budget.

Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- Allows the District to combat the nationwide teacher shortage by reaching negotiated salary agreements with experienced education professionals.

Local Guidelines:

- New Home ISD will have the flexibility to hire eligible retired teachers at the negotiated salary that may be below the TEA minimum pay scale.
- New Home ISD would continue to pay the required surcharge.

## **Bank Depository Contract**

### **TEC Requiring Exemption:**

TEC 45.205, 45.206 Requires the District to renew its depository contract every two years. The District must use uniform bid or proposal blank in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Benefit of Exemption for NHISD:

- There is no operational or financial reason to send the District’s banking services out for bid if the contract pricing remains



competitive. There is an administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal {RPF}.

#### Local Guidelines

- New Home ISD will continue to review and monitor the depository contract and will seek a new contract when and if it becomes financially beneficial to the District.

#### Term and Implementation

- The term for this plan is for five years unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event New Home ISD feels other exemptions would benefit the district, the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee and follow all procedures for amending this plan.

The District of Innovation Plan is valid for 5 years from the date it is approved by the Board of Trustees.

#### Appendix A:

##### Local Teaching Certificate Criteria

- Twelve college credit hours in the subject area or closely related being taught and 10 years of prior instruction in the assigned subject
- Two years of industry experience in the subject/field to be taught
- Two years of prior teaching experience in the specific course to be taught. Preference would be given to prior experience occurring at a public education institution, but employment at a private institution, charter school, or collegiate level will be considered.
- Other criteria that would indicate mastery of the subject/course to be taught.

Candidates must meet a least one of the aforementioned qualifications to be considered to teach under New Home ISD's District of Innovation Plan.