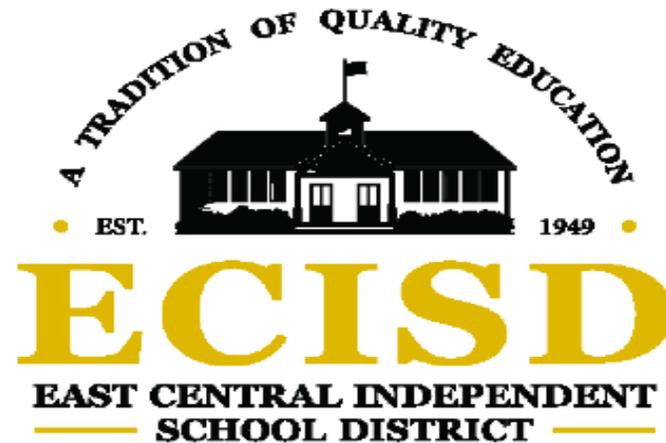


# East Central ISD

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## Local Innovation Plan

## **Introduction**

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature created Texas Education Code Chapter 12A, District of Innovation. The law allows traditional independent school districts to access most of the flexibilities available to Texas' open enrollment charter schools. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan. A local school district may pursue specific innovations in curriculum, instruction, governance, parent or community involvement, school calendar, human resources, budgeting, or other regulated areas. The innovation plan allows a school district to gain exemption from related Texas Education Code requirements. Innovation plans are about local control, flexibility, and autonomy. Upon approval of the Board to pursue the designation, a committee is formed to develop the local innovation plan to be presented to the public, the District Education Improvement Council, and the Commissioner of Education. The Board of Trustees must give the final approval of the plan before implementation.

## **District Vision**

We envision an exceptional school system that teaches all children to read critically, write compellingly, think logically, and solve problems creatively. We prepare students for life, equipping them with the ability to earn credentials they find appealing and have value in today's economy.

## **District Mission**

Together, we will customize learning experiences so that every student is continuously challenged to advance their knowledge and ability in every classroom in every school, every day.

## District of Innovation Planning Committee

Roland Toscano	Superintendent
Taffi Hertz	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Judy Burns	Chief Financial Officer
Shannon Fuller	Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Stevie Gonzales	Executive Director of Staff and Student Support Services
Jonathan Hulbert	Director of Accountability and School Transformation
Matt Morgan	Director of Purchasing and Facilities
Yvette Sanders	Director of Personnel
Mary Alice Gomez	Heritage Middle School Principal
Nicole Lewis	Legacy Middle School Principal
Kristin Wurzbach	Pecan Valley Elementary School Principal
Brittany Ervin	Oak Crest Elementary School Assistant Principal
Teresa Rodriguez	East Central High School Assistant Principal
Leslie Harrison	Harmony Elementary School Academic Facilitator
Vincent Briseno	East Central High School Teacher
Joy Cansino	Highland Forest Elementary School Dyslexia Specialist
Kandi Householder	Sinclair Elementary School Librarian
Malia Stanush	Tradition Elementary School Library Teacher
Cassandra Coleman	Heritage Middle School Parent
Robin Traugott	Heritage Middle School Parent

## Timeline of Events

December 18, 2018	Board of Trustees approves a Resolution to Consider Designation as a District of Innovation Board of Trustees conducts a Public Hearing to Consider Development of a Local Innovation Plan for Designation as a District of Innovation Board of Trustees approves to Pursue Designation as a District of Innovation and Appointment of a Committee to Develop a Local Innovation Plan
January 18, 2019 – January 30, 2019	Development of Local Innovation Plan
January 31, 2019 – March 4, 2019	Online Posting of Local Innovation Plan
January 31, 2019	Notification of Commissioner of Intent to Apply
March 5, 2019	DEIC Meeting to Approve Local Innovation Plan
March 21, 2019	Board of Trustees Approved Local Innovation Plan
March 22, 2019	Notify Commissioner of Approval

## Areas of Innovation

The East Central Independent School District provides a comprehensive educational program, setting improvement goals in alignment with the district vision and mission. In order to more effectively meet the needs of the district, certain areas of innovation requiring flexibility in statutory requirements have been identified. 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.

Chapter 21 - Educators	Rationale	District Decision
<p>TEC 21.003 Certification Required                      (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.</p>	<p>The district will always seek to hire a certified and highly effective teacher; however, greater flexibility is needed for hard to fill positions for Pre-K - 12.</p>	<p>The district will establish its own local qualification requirements for high demand and hard to fill positions, with the exception of bilingual or special education.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Industry based experts will not be required to obtain a teaching certificate in order to be an instructor in Career and Technology Education courses..</li> <li>2. Other high demand or hard to fill positions must hold a bachelor’s degree and will be required to obtain a teaching certificate within 3 years of their employment. The 3 year period for those hired after January 1 would not start until August 1 of that year.</li> <li>3. For grades 6-12, in all subjects, the campus principal may submit to the Superintendent a request for a local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach limited sections of subjects in a related field of their current certification for which he/she is not certified.</li> </ol>
<p>TEC 21.102 Probationary Contracts                      (b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except</p>	<p>This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the effectiveness of personnel in their professional roles. This will allow more time for training, support, observations, and gathering of performance data for teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, and</p>	<p>The district will have the option to extend the probationary contract for 1 additional year for all Professional Educators, including but not limited to teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, or administrators that have more than 5 years experience.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>administrators before considering non-renewal of the probationary contract or offering a term contract.</p>	
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Chapter 25 - Admission, Transfer, and Attendance	Rationale	District Decision
<p>TEC 25.036 Transfers            (a) Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.             (b) A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.</p>	<p>East Central ISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in and out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, and following reasonable corrective measures, East Central ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.</p>	<p>Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.</p>

<p>TEC 25.0811 First Day of Instruction (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.</p> <p>TEC 25.0812 Last Day of School (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.</p>	<p>Currently, state law requires that students may not start school before the 4th Monday in August and not end school before May 15. More flexibility is needed in order to more effectively reach desired student and staff outcomes</p>	<p>The district will gain local control to develop a calendar with a flexible start and end date that best meets the needs of students, staff, and community. Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow the district to balance out the number of instructional days between the first and second semester</li> <li>● Allow the first semester to end before Christmas Break and the second semester to finish before Memorial Day, or soon thereafter.</li> <li>● Allow an increase of instructional days before standardized testing</li> <li>● Allow to strategically embed professional learning days</li> <li>● Align with college schedules so that students and staff can take advantage of summer offerings at institutions of higher learning</li> <li>● Allow flexibility to align with other area school districts</li> </ul> <p>The length of the adopted school calendar will remain 187 days, with additional days for new teachers.</p>
<p>TEC 25.112 Class Size (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.</p>	<p>When any class exceeds the statutory limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA, create time consuming paperwork, and is an unnecessary step.</p>	<p>ECISD believes in an appropriate student to teacher ratio in all classrooms. Each elementary campus will continue the practice of maintaining a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 or less in each K-4 class. In the event that any class size exceeds a 24:1 ratio during the school year, at the Superintendent's discretion steps will be taken to address the class size to assure an appropriate ratio. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level. These decisions will be</p>

		made based on the age/grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
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Chapter 28 - Courses of Study; Advancement	Rationale	District Decision
TEC 28.004 School Health Advisory Council (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.	The requirements and duties outlined for the School Health Advisory Council may be met through other committees and structures within the district.	The district takes exemption from the requirement to establish a School Health Advisory Council and the subsequent duties of that council. The district will appoint an appropriate representative to collaborate with the district and campus improvement committees to seek feedback regarding health related curriculum, food service, budget, and other related items as needed. In addition the representative will communicate with all necessary personnel to meet other state and federal requirements for those programs.

Chapter 37 - Discipline; Law and Order	Rationale	District Decision
TEC 37.0012 Campus Behavior Coordinator (a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.	The law requires one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A. Designation of a sole individual for this responsibility is not in alignment with district goals and practices.	The district's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional, behavioral and social support to students, rather than just one person. The district will also continue to utilize PBSI, restorative discipline and implement the ECISD Student Code of Conduct.