Innovation Districts
Overview

- Am I eligible?
- How do I become an Innovation District?
- Who should be involved?
- What flexibilities are available?
- What role does TEA play?
Am I eligible?
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• Yes—if district academic accountability rating is at least acceptable (“C”)
• No—if final or preliminary rating is “D” or “F”
How do I become an Innovation District?
How do I become an Innovation District?

- Process begins either with a board of trustees resolution or by signed petition from a majority of your district-level advisory committee.
- Board conducts a public hearing to consider developing an innovation plan.
- Within 30 days of public hearing Board must formally decide to pursue or decline the opportunity.
We are moving forward!

• Board appoints an Innovation Plan committee to write a plan that:
  • provides for a comprehensive educational program for the district, which program **may** include:
    • (A) innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement;
    • (B) modifications to the school day or year;
    • (C) provisions regarding the district budget and sustainable program funding;
    • (D) accountability and assessment measures that exceed the requirements of state and federal law; and
    • (E) any other innovations prescribed by the board of trustees; and
  • identifies requirements imposed by this code that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan.
We have a plan...now what?

• Post on your district website for at least 30 days
• Board notifies the Commissioner of intent to adopt plan
• Your Chapter 11 district committee holds a public meeting to consider and approve the final version with a majority vote
• Board of Trustees adopted with two-thirds majority vote
But wait! There is one more thing...

Notify the Commissioner after adoption (email or U.S. mail)

Include:

• Link to adopted plan (no longer than 15 days from the date of adoption)
• Exemptions checklist (Figure 19 TAC §102.1307(d))
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What flexibilities are available?
Prohibited exemptions include (but not limited to):

- District Governance
- Curriculum
- State Assessment System
- State Accountability System
- School Finance
- Federal Requirement
- A state or federal requirements applicable to open-enrollment charter schools
- Other requirements in state law outside of the Education Code

See: TEC §12A.004 & TAC §102.1309
Allowable exemptions include (but not limited to):

- Educator Certification
- Teacher Contracts
- First and Last Day of School
- Length of School Day*
- Class Size
- Certain Purchasing and Contract Requirements

*Length of School Day requirements under TEC §25.081(e) [420 minutes] and §25.082(a) [7 hours] were repealed in the 85th Legislative Session.
Things to consider...

- Do you need to update local policies to correspond with new exemptions?
- Articulate the problem your plan is addressing.
- Is there a program you are trying to implement?
- Is there a big area of need that can be addressed by this flexibility?
- Involve all of your stakeholders, including those who do not always agree with you.
What role does TEA play?
Does the Commissioner approve a DoI plan?

• No. The agency does not have the authority to approve or disapprove plans.

Can the DoI designation be revoked?

• The Commissioner may revoke or have the district amend the plan after two consecutive years of unacceptable academic or FIRST ratings.
• The Commissioner must revoke after three consecutive years of the unacceptable academic or FIRST ratings.
Learn from Others

• **Spring Branch ISD**—https://www.springbranchisd.com/about/our-goal/strategicplan/2017-22-plan-development-clone/district-of-innovation

• **El Paso ISD**—https://www.episd.org/Page/542


• **TEA**—https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/District_Initiatives/Districts_of_Innovation/