

Moody

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Local Innovation Plan 2017-2022

HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session,
allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation.
Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations
that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

Every Child! Every Day!

The Moody Way!

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER DESIGNATION AS DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

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 reflects 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 Moody School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Moody School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A 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 within 30 days to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that within 30 days of the public hearing the Board of Trustees of Moody School District shall appoint an innovation plan committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 8th day of February, 2017, by the Board of Trustees.

Staci Stone
President

Justin Foster
Secretary

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Monday, February 1, 2017 – 12:00 pm, Moody ISD High School

Superintendent met with District committee members to discuss preliminary thoughts and ideas concerning a District of Innovation Plan. Consensus was to move forward after each campus committee met and discussed the DOI designation.

Tuesday, February 8, 2017 – 7:00 pm, Moody Administration Building

Board of Trustees approval of a resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to be designated a District of Innovation (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1)).

Thursday, February 10, 2017 – 9:30 am, Moody Administration Building

Commissioner notified by email of Resolution approved by the Moody ISD Board of Trustees to pursue a District of Innovation Plan and designation.

Thursday, February 17, 2017 – 4:15 pm, Moody Administration Building

Meeting with Campus/District Leadership Team to discuss District of Innovation idea

February 21, 2017 – 4:15 pm, Moody Administration Building

Initial meeting of Campus Leadership and proposed District of Innovation Committee

March 1, 2017 – 4:15 pm, Moody Administration Building

Meeting of the proposed District of Innovation Committee to review Draft Plan

Wednesday March 8, 2017 – 6:00 pm, Moody Administration Building

Public hearing for review of Draft District of Innovation plan and to hear from the community (TEC 12A.002 (b) (2), 12A.003)
Board of Trustee approval to pursue the designation of District of Innovation, and the appointment of a committee to develop a plan (TEC 12A.002 (b) (2), 12A.003)

Thursday March 9, 2017 – Moody Administration Building

Draft District of Innovation Plan posted to the Moody website for 30 days (TEC 12A.005 (a) (1))

Monday April 10, 2017 – 4:30 pm, Moody Administration Building

District of Innovation Committee holds Public Meeting (TEC 12A.005 (a) (3))
to vote for Final Plan by District of Innovation by at least a 2/3 majority

Wednesday April 12, 2017 – 6:30 pm, Moody Administration Building

Board meeting to recommend the approval of the District of Innovation Plan
Vote for Final Plan and must pass by at least a 2/3 majority

Thursday April 13, 2017 – 9:00 am, Moody Administration Building

TEA Accreditation notified of Board's Unanimous vote to approve District of Innovation Plan

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE

NAME	COMMITTEE POSITION
Gary Martel	Superintendent
Belinda Brand	Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Nancy Molina	Director of Technology
Andrew Miller	Principal, Moody High School (9-12)
Eric Cox	Principal, Moody Middle School (5-8)
Tina Eaton	Principal, Moody Elementary (PK-4)
Sarah Troyer	Counselor, Moody High School
Adrianna Bowen	Counselor, Moody Middle School
Judy Slentz,	District PEIMS Coordinator
Jarrold Thomas	Girls Athletic Coordinator
Stacey Hubbard	District Support Staff
Page Foster	Librarian/Parent, Moody High School
Tina Reynolds	Parent, Moody
Christy Martin	Teacher, Moody Elementary
Laurie Ward	Parent / Community Member
Rose Davis	ACE Coordinator

Moody ISD INNOVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 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.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On February 8, 2017, the Moody Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On 2017, the Administration appointed a District of Innovation Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on February 21, 2017, and March 1, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The Committee met again on April 9, 2017, to conduct a public forum and accept input on the proposed District of Innovation Plan. Based on the input received from the community, the Committee made adjustments to the plan, and then approved the plan by a unanimous vote. The Moody Board of Trustees Approved the Plan at its meeting on April 12, 2017.

TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning August 1, 2017 and ending July 31, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

AREAS OF INNOVATION

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.

1. School Start and End Date

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Innovation Strategies

- a. Relief from the statute will allow Moody ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minute's requirement, rather than days.
- b. Alignment of the district calendar with local universities, Community Colleges, TSTC, ACT/SAT exams, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
- c. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

2. Instructional Minutes / Length of Instructional Day / Early Release Days

Exemption from: TEC §25.081

Relevant Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days.

TEC §25.081(e) references a day of instruction as 420 minutes

Innovation Strategies

a. The district seeks relief from this section in order to provide staff development before the start of instruction, as well as additional days throughout the school year. These non-instructional days have been purposefully placed throughout the calendar to allow for teachers to plan instruction based on student instructional data in addition to engaging in relevant, targeted professional development.

b. The district seeks additional flexibility to schedule early release days in the calendar in order to provide for student and district needs.

3. Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size Reporting Requirement

Exemption from: TEC §25.112; TEC §25.113

Related Board Policies: EEB LEGAL/LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.

TEC §25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.

Innovation Strategies:

a. Moody ISD believes in a low student to teacher ratio in all of its classrooms. The District has a goal of 18/1 in K-4 and 20/1 in 5-12. Moody ISD will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of at least 22:1 or less in each K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and 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.

b. A TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

c. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continued to be notified as per TEC §25.113.

4. Teacher Certification

Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.053; TEC §21.057

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL/LOCAL; DK LEGAL/LOCAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC §21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

Innovation Strategies

a. Moody ISD is a small rural district that continually has problems finding certified teachers in some content areas. Moody ISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

b. For grades 5-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.

c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed welder teaching a welding course, or a District RN teaching health science course.

d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be

created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.

f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

5. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b)

Relevant Board Policies: DCA LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Innovation Strategies

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC §21.102(c).

6. Professional Development / Mentor Teachers

Exemption from: TEC §21.451; TEC §21.458

Relevant Board Policies: DEAA LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §21.451 prescribes staff development requirements for educators. These requirements impede the District's ability to provide timely professional development to employees based on newly emerging issues, data, and student needs.

TEC §21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the district may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, despite the fact that a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The District needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experienced teachers in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teachers, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff.

b. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.

7. Site-based decision making

Exemption from: TEC §11.251, TEC §11.252, and TEC §28.004 (d)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

The MISD seeks exemption from the site-based decision making process and the convening of the school health advisory committee and the many accompanying requirements falling under the governance of those two bodies. The statutory requirements as set forth by Texas Education Code in Chapter 11 and 28 are burdensome, time consuming, and ultimately cause a misdirection of resources from the primary focus of schools: the education of students. Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process, but a District Advisory Council will be used that meets the needs of this district, schools and community as opposed to the one based on a broad brush and "one size fits all" model of statutory requirements detailed in TEC §11.251 and TEC §28.004. This will consolidate the number of meetings and the number of committees required by law and will better serve this community.

Innovation Strategies

In place of a Site-based Decision Making Committee and the School Health Advisory Council, a District Advisory Council (DAC) will be established to meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the District's success and most importantly, students' success. This Council will convene at least two times per year to guide the general direction of district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will yield an opportunity for one council to address multiple needs of the students served by the District as opposed to having multiple committees addressing a more narrow focus of needs. MISD views this Council as a more efficient and effective way to serve our students, parents, and community.

8. Teacher Contract Days (amended 3/21/2018)

Exemption from: TEC, §21.401 (Minimum Service required) requires that teachers employed under a 10 month contract provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Relevant Board Policies: (DCB Legal and Local)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan

TEC §21.401 (Minimum Service Required) These requirements impede the District's flexibility

to employ teachers for less days than 187 days even though the state now uses minutes to record instructional time instead of days. House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recess. The bill also allows school districts to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity. HB 2610 gives districts local flexibility with student instructional time but does not allow districts flexibility in staff work days.

Innovation Strategies

- a. Exemption will provide the district with flexibility to reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This exemption allows the district the flexibility to align staff work days with an approved school calendar. It does not affect instructional time in the classroom. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff.
- b. Provides teachers and other district staff members more flexibility during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field. Allows Moody ISD flexibility in implementing its current Jump Start summer school program while still paying teachers for actual teaching time.
- c. Exemption is expected to improve teacher morale and enhance teacher recruitment in our small rural district. It will be part of the district calendar planning process each year.
- d. Teacher contract days will not exceed the 187 days but may be lessened based upon the needs of the district. Contracts will continue to include, Position and Term, which will be according to the hours and dates set by the District as they exist or may hereafter be amended.

R E S O L U T I O N

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A PLAN DESIGNATING MOODY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

Whereas, the 84th Legislature passed House Bill 1842 which provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as Districts of Innovation; and

Whereas, Texas school districts designated as a District of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state requirements which affords traditional public schools with many of the same freedoms that apply to open-enrollment charter schools; and

Whereas, the Vision of the Moody Independent School District is to demonstrate a firm commitment and dedication to the relentless pursuit of excellence in every level and area of education. We will recognize and value the potential for every student to become the absolute best that they can be; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees believes that decisions affecting the students of Moody Independent School District are best made at the local level by those who know our students, district, and community; and

Whereas, the Moody Independent School District Board of Trustees has appointed a committee to develop a local innovation plan; and

Whereas, the Moody Independent School District Board of Trustees has posted the local innovation plan on the District's website for 30 day while accepting public input; and

Whereas, the Moody ISD District Leadership Team has solicited public input and approved the District of Innovation plan by a majority vote; now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Moody Independent School District Board of Trustees adopts and approved the local innovation plan designating MOODY ISD as a District of Innovation under HB 1842.

Witness these signatures on the 12th day of April, 2017.

Staci Stone
President, Board Trustee

Eddie Newman
Vice President, Board Trustee

Justin Foster
Secretary, Board Trustee

Carol Ann Haas
Board Trustee

Jeff Dean
Board Trustee

Matt Hargrove
Board Trustee

Waylon Goodwin
Board Trustee

Gary Martel
Superintendent