



GARLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan



Vision Statement

Reaching the future by driving excellence, one student at a time.

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Donna Harbor, Dorsey, Teacher
Representative

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Representative

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Ximena Hobbs, Ethridge, Teacher
Representative

Kegan Johnson, Jackson, Teacher
Representative

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Dr. Kemp-Graham, Community
Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Hayley Knox, Lister, Teacher Representative

Lauren Linge, Shorehaven, Teacher
Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

Tammy McDonald, Luna, Teacher
Representative

Ana Mewa, Bussey, Teacher Representative

Mida Milligan, GISD, Administrative
Representative

Kiara Morgan, O'Banion, Teacher
Representative

Jeff Munoz, Bullock, Teacher Representative

Jennifer Nelson, Shugart, Teacher
Representative

Marci O'Connor, Rowlett, Teacher
Representative

Esther O'Grady, Williams, Non-Teaching
Representative

Javier Pena, Garland AEC, Teacher
Representative

Kathy Perez, Business Representative

Kathrine Piland, Weaver, Teacher
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Representative

Mark Prine, PAC, Non-Teaching
Representative

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Representative

Servando Quintanilla, Williams, Teacher
Representative

Irene Quiros, Bradfield, Teacher
Representative

Miriam Rangel, Spring Creek, Teacher
Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Representative

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Jennifer Truax, Business Representative

Sharon Turnley, Golden Meadows, Non-
Teaching Representative

Jonelle Viernes, Sellers, Non-Teaching
Representative

Larry Walker, Community Representative

Joseph Walker, GHS, Non-Teaching
Representative

Ashley Wills, SGHS, Teacher Representative

Heather Wilson, Southgate, Teacher
Representative

Kristin Wolfkill, GISD, Administrative
Representative

Bonita Woods, Austin, Teacher
Representative

Bari Woolley, Community Representative

I. Introduction

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 in 2015, providing public school districts the opportunity to become Districts of Innovation, giving public schools some of the flexibility that charter and open enrollment schools in the state currently have. To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Why would Garland ISD want to become a District of Innovation? The goal is to gain greater local control in decision-making to benefit our students and staff, to have increased autonomy from state mandates that govern educational programming, and to be empowered to innovate. Innovation does not necessarily mean ambitious new initiatives beyond the school district’s current strategic plan. Instead, this plan allows Garland ISD the privilege and the flexibility to exercise more creative local control over existing quality programs without some of the statutory constraints in place now. Districts are not exempt from statutes that address curriculum, assessment and graduation requirements nor are they exempt from academic and financial accountability.

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district will follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If at some point it is decided that changes or additional exemptions should be considered, as per the Districts of Innovation process, the district will reconvene the District Education Improvement Council to explore the request.

II. Innovation Plan Timeline

Step	Date Completed
Board resolution	Dec. 13, 2016: <u>Resolution</u> adopted by GISD School Board; available online
Public Hearing	Jan. 10, 2017: <u>Public hearing</u> held by GISD School Board
District advisory committee	Jan. 10, 2017: District Education Improvement Council (DEIC) designated as committee to create the District of Innovation plan
Committee creates plan	Jan. 25, 2017: meeting to begin work on the plan Feb. 8, 2017: meeting to continue work on the plan March 1, 2017: meeting
Plan posted online for 30 days	March 6-April 5, 2017

Commissioner notified	March 7, 2017
Public Meeting	April 5, 2017: Public meeting and unanimous vote to approve
Board vote	April 11, 2017: Unanimous vote to approve

III. Term of Plan

As outlined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the Innovation Plan is five years. The plan will commence with the adoption at the April 11, 2017, Board of Trustees Regular meeting and conclude April 11, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC), in conjunction with district leadership, will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications, as needed.

IV. A Comprehensive Educational Program

Exceptional education has long been the focus of Garland ISD—an experience that provides rigorous instruction, technological innovation, college and career preparation, and meaningful relationships between schools, families and the community. The Plan’s comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Board’s Vision, District Mission, Shared Beliefs, and Strategic Plan for the District.

A. Vision Statement

Reaching the future by driving excellence, one student at a time.

B. Mission Statement

The Garland Independent School District exists as a **DIVERSE COMMUNITY** with a **SHARED VISION** that serves to provide an **EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION** to ALL of its students.

C. Shared Beliefs

We believe that ...

- a. quality education promotes collaboration, adaptability, goal setting, critical thinking, and innovation;
- b. successful learners need the support of not only parents, but the entire community;
- c. all students deserve equal access to quality educational resources;
- d. our students will excel through real-world, hands-on investigations helping to define individual pathways in life;
- e. as a community we will provide a safe and balanced learning environment for each child socially, mentally, physically, and academically;
- f. the needs of all students will drive every district decision because all children can excel in their learning;
- g. fostering a foundational approach builds learning skills to help students thrive in

- a global economy;
- h. uniqueness of all stakeholders' cultures, beliefs, and abilities is recognized, championed and celebrated by our district; and
- i. building and maintaining collaborative relationships is the cornerstone of our tradition-rich district.

D. Strategic Plan Goals

1. **Learning Environment:** We will provide a secure learning environment that allows active student participation and opportunities to collaborate through relevant content and instruction;
2. **Digital Tools:** We will develop processes and applications to achieve the equitable distribution of digital resources, along with adequate training and support for implementation;
3. **Learning Standards:** We will develop an aligned, standards-based system which will be delivered consistently where each child will receive the basic foundations in addition to challenging and relevant learning;
4. **Assessment:** We will develop a consistent, yet flexible, system of assessing students' progress with appropriate feedback and ensure this system is clearly communicated to students, staff, parents, and the community;
5. **Learning Organization:** We will promote and support innovative and exemplary curriculum, professional development, and instructional practices in order to continuously enhance teaching and extend learning;
6. **Accountability:** We will monitor and maintain key performance indicators to assess progress toward goals; and
7. **Partnerships:** We will create a variety of partnerships, including families, colleges, businesses, and community organizations, that establish avenues to vault student success.

V. GISD Ready Outcomes

The GISD Ready initiative transforms teaching and learning to ensure we meet the needs of 21st Century learners and that graduates are prepared for success in a globally competitive workforce. The 21st Century learner is a critical thinker with technology and literacy skills who communicates, collaborates, adapts and perseveres. In order to realize the vision of success outlined in the district Strategic Plan, the following profiles illustrate the necessary traits, characteristics and skills for each group:

- The learner
- The teacher
- The leader

GISD READY LEARNER OUTCOMES



CRITICAL THINKING

Analyze, evaluate, synthesize information and arguments, interpret information, and draw conclusions.



COMMUNICATION

Interact, collaborate and publish with peers, experts and others to produce original work and solve real world problems.



ADAPTABILITY

Construct, investigate and embrace new ideas.



TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Utilize technology to assess, interpret and understand complex information.



PERSEVERANCE

Show resilience in maintaining and meeting established goals.



LITERACY SKILLS

Use language to stimulate the imagination, enhance thinking, to communicate, and to construct meaning.



COLLABORATION

Interact productively in personal, work and community contexts.

GISD READY TEACHER OUTCOMES



COMMUNICATOR

Communicates clear, relevant class expectations, procedures and timely information regarding student growth.



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

Engages students in relevant, meaningful and rigorous learning experiences that include their interests, abilities, aptitudes and goals.



OPTIMIZER

Leads and supports students' use of digital learning assets and ethics to research, create and disseminate learning beyond the classroom walls.



COLLABORATOR

Establishes and maintains effective relationships with and between colleagues and students for the purpose of co-construction of products and sharing of ideas.



LEARNER

Goes beyond the district requirements for professional learning, exhibiting an inherent desire to be a life-long learner.



RELATER

Builds relationships with students to ensure a safe, supportive learning environment.



CULTURE DEVELOPER

Creates an environment where students actively participate and are free to take risks in learning. Cultivates and celebrates a strong awareness of and a sensitivity to cultural differences.

GISD READY LEADER OUTCOMES



 <p>VISIONARY Establishes a collective vision that garners support and commitment from all stakeholders.</p>	 <p>CULTURE DEVELOPER Creates and enhances a collaborative environment conducive to teaching and learning.</p>	 <p>CAPACITY BUILDER Assesses the organization's abilities and plans activities aimed at increasing personnel potential.</p>	 <p>INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER Assesses current instructional needs and provides professional development to support academic achievement.</p>
 <p>STUDENT ADVOCATE Uses district and community resources to ensure student, social, emotional and academic needs are met.</p>	 <p>COMMUNICATOR Communicates specific, timely feedback to all stakeholders through a variety of media.</p>	 <p>COMMUNITY LIAISON Engages stakeholders in the decision-making process of the campus and actively participates in school/community events.</p>	

In order to realize the full potential of our GISD Ready Outcomes, the Board's Vision, the District Mission, and the Strategic Plan Goals, alignment of local practices and operations require flexibility in local control.

VI. Innovations

Certain requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the District’s ability to fully meet our local needs. Therefore, GISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) as allowed in the statute:

- o Instructional Calendar/School Start Date
- o Minimum Minutes of Instruction/Length of School Day
- o Teacher Certification
- o Teacher Appraisal System
- o Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions

School Start Date (TEC §25.0811) (EB LEGAL)

Current Statute:

The Texas Education Code states a school district may not begin student instruction before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin earlier, even as early as the second Monday in August. The start-date waiver was eventually removed when the legislature determined school districts should begin the first semester no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. The current process allows no flexibility in the design and balancing of instructional semesters to meet the needs of students or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees, who represent community interests.

Proposed Local Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD will determine the local starting date of the first semester in its annual calendar creation process. The annual calendar will be submitted to the Board of Trustees – in accordance with district policy, procedure and practice.

Instructional Minutes and School Day Length (TEC §25.081) (TEC §25.082) (EB and EC LEGAL)

Current Statute:

These Texas Education Codes define the length of the instructional day as “420 minutes of instruction” or “seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.” The intent of this code is to standardize across all districts the amount of time students are in classrooms. The code also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures for weather or other unanticipated events that could result in school closings. Garland ISD will meet the required 75,600 minutes; however, the district wants the flexibility to have early release days as needed without having to apply for a waiver. The district will support teachers and staff who participate in professional learning communities, perfecting their craft, deepening their content knowledge and analyzing student data.

Proposed Local Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD will maintain the total of 75,600 minutes of instruction per year but seeks an exemption from these statutes as necessary to reach the 75,600-minute goal in a manner that

meets local needs, without being confined to either 420 minutes or seven hours of instruction every day. This exemption allows the district to alter the length of a school day or a school year, which would include additional professional development, collaboration opportunities for educators, and structured breaks throughout the year for students, providing for social and emotional benefits.

Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003) (TEC §21.0031) (TEC §21.051) (TEC §21.053) (DBA and DK LEGAL)

Current Statute:

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request.

Proposed Local Innovation/Flexibility:

With a new Career and Technical Center and innovative courses, local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer innovation in course selections for CTE courses, high-demand and dual credit courses. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the district will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, industry experts with a minimum three years of experience or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take courses that align with their career paths. Parents will continue to be notified in writing whenever a teacher does not have required certification.

Teacher and Administrator Appraisals (TEC §21.352) (TEC §21.3541) (DNA LEGAL)

Current Statute:

New state-wide teacher appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are being introduced for the first time since 1997. While these systems are designed to meet the needs of the entire state, these systems also require state standardized test scores be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators. This will prove challenging and possibly inequitable when determining what measure will be used for teachers who do not teach core content, state-tested subjects.

Proposed Local Innovation/Flexibility:

The district has invested time and training into using the new state appraisal system. We propose that we continue to utilize T-TESS and T-PESS, without the value-added measure, as it is currently being used. This change would improve equity and team building, in addition to teacher retention.

Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions (TEC §37.0012) (FO LEGAL)

Current Statute:

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed Local Innovation/Flexibility:

Our approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple administrators providing emotional and social support to students. Exemption from this requirement increases the opportunity for campus collaboration in regards to student discipline, as outlined in the GISD Student Code of Conduct and campus discipline plans.

Adoption of Plan

Garland ISD has met all of the process requirements outlined by the TEA and the Commissioner of Education to receive the designation as a District of Innovation. The local Innovation Plan was developed and approved by the Committee.

In addition, a public hearing was conducted on April 5, 2017.

The plan was then posted on the District's website for the required 30 days followed by approval by the Board of Trustees, commencing on March 6, 2017 and concluding on April 5, 2017.

Approved by the Committee on the 5th day of April, 2017. Approved by the Garland ISD Board of Trustees on the 11th day of April, 2017.