



Grand Prairie Independent School District Local Innovation Plan 2021-2026

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, provides the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue the designation of District of Innovation. This allows local school districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code to allow more flexibility and local control for innovative programming. Grand Prairie ISD became a District of Innovation with its approved Local Innovation Plan on July 21, 2016. On July 15, 2021, the Grand Prairie ISD Board of Trustees approved the renewal of the Local Innovation Plan for another five (5) years.

On September 14, 2023, the Board of Trustees approved four amendments to the Local Innovation Plan as additions to the District of Innovation Plan.

I. Term

The term of the Local Innovation Plan is effective during the 2021-2022 school year through the 2025-2026 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will revisit the plan as needed to ensure that the recommendations are still in line with the needs of the district.

II. Continual Improvement

The Local Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities, and Strategic Plan for the District as follows:

Mission Statement

We will ensure student success through engaging learning experiences, collaborative leadership, and a focus on maximizing student achievement.

Vision Statement

We are a learning community vigorously pursuing student success.

GPISD Goals

- Maximization of Student Achievement
- Exercise Responsible Fiscal Oversight
- Develop Leadership Capacity
- Promote 21st Century Learners who are College and Career Ready



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Adopted Innovations:

The GPISD School Board and the Local Innovation Committee considered all areas available for local innovation and decided to create a plan that centers around four areas:

Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th Grade:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. 25.112. 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.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- Schools begin the school year with staff based on projections of student enrollment. Often, enrollment will exceed projections for one school while under projections for another school. As a result, teachers and/or students must be moved from class to class or school to school to meet the 22-to-1 requirement. As a result, students leave behind friends and teacher relationships that have already formed.
- Being exempt from the inflexible 22-to-1 requirement will allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates that they began the year with, fostering continuity and stability which will support increased student achievement.
- Incoming students can remain in their preferred or neighborhood school rather than have to be transported to a different campus.
- Districts will not be forced to hire new teachers not accounted for in the Local Board's adopted Budget.

Local Guidelines:

- The District will strive to keep class sizes at 22:1, with the flexibility to go above 22:1 if needed:
 - If the student/teacher ratio averaged across a grade level needs to go over 23:1, it must have both administrator and teacher approval.
- If the student/teacher ratio averaged across a grade level needs to go over 24:1, parents of all students in each affected class, and the School Board will be notified.



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First Day of Instruction:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: TEC 25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- The District Education Improvement Committee will have the flexibility to start school earlier for either the entire District or individual campuses.
- Starting school earlier will 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.
- Starting school earlier will also accommodate new and innovative educational models such as summer bridge programming.

Local Guidelines:

The District Education Improvement Committee will receive parent and staff input, then decide, subject to School Board approval, the first day of instruction for students. It is preferred that the first day of instruction be no earlier than the second week of August.



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Teacher Certification:

TEC Code 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 or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- The statutory certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and STEM Courses.
- Local Qualifications will allow the district to :
 - Recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience
 - Offer dual credit opportunities in CTE courses
 - Hire community college instructors

Local Guidelines:

The District will establish Local Criteria, such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate. Principals, along with the CTE department, 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.



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Minimum Minutes of Instruction:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: TEC Code 25.081 (HB 2610): For each school year, each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses.

Pre-Kindergarten Exemption:

Benefits for GPISD PK/PPCD Program:

- The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. For half-day programs such as PK and PPCD the required minute requirement would be 37,800 minutes. There is not enough time in the day to be able to accommodate 37,800 minutes for both a morning and afternoon group of students in our 170 day calendar. We would like to request that we be allowed to offer a 210 minute school day for half-day programs. This will allow each teacher to have a morning and an afternoon group of students along with their conference period and duty free lunch within the regular school day. This 210 minute exemption will result in the students receiving 35,700 minutes of instruction during their half day program.

Local Guidelines for PK/PPCD Program:

- GPISD will offer a PK schedule consisting of two three-hour sessions of 210 minutes, which allows each teacher to teach two groups of students while still having the required conference period and 30-minute duty free lunch.

Alternative Education Setting Exemption:

Benefits for GPISD Alternative Campuses (ie. Crosswinds)

- Campuses such as Crosswinds offer an alternative education program designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students. This program offers an opportunity for students to accelerate credit attainment, acquire credits at a faster rate, and mitigate credit deficiencies. Crosswinds High School provides an alternate route to graduation for students who have not been successful in the traditional school due to special challenges. These challenges include (but are not limited to) parent or parenting students; over-age students; family hardships created by economic situations that result in the student having to work instead of attend school; being credit deficient for various reasons; and/or having difficulty passing STAAR End-of-Course exams.



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- Being exempt from the minimum minutes requirement will permit the District to offer alternative programming with fewer minutes that focuses on quality programming and cost savings, designed to fit the needs of these at-risk students without having to apply for an annual waiver.

Local Guidelines for Alternative Campuses:

Crosswinds High School will offer three options for students choosing an alternative setting.

Option 1: Students attend a 4 hour school window daily, three 70 minute courses.

Option 2: Students attend full day sessions to have days off throughout the week to work and/or care for their families.

Option 3: Evening School Option

M-TH: 5:30 PM-8:00 PM

Students will be enrolled in one session and will be required to attend daily and meet district attendance guidelines. Students will have the opportunity to attend an additional session to accumulate attendance time and credits.



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Campus Behavior Coordinators:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. 37.0012. A campus must have a campus behavior coordinator. Texas Education Code §37.0012 constrains campus governance by requiring one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- This collaborative approach includes the parent, student, school administrator and counselor. Exemption from Texas Education Code §37.0012 allows campus principals to divide and/or delegate campus behavior coordinator duties to assistant principals as needed and appropriate.
- Exemption from this requirement will provide campuses the opportunity to allow campus administrators to fully understand and get to know the students in their caseload rather than sourcing all discipline matters to one employee designated as a campus behavior coordinator.

Local Guidelines:

- Each campus will have the option to designate more than one campus behavior coordinator if it would help better serve the students and staff of that campus.



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Ejection of Individuals From Facilities:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. Sec. 37.105. Texas Education Code §37.105 applies to rejecting unruly guests from campuses and school events. The district's current practice of providing verbal and written notices to individuals whose behavior is deemed disruptive or threatening at school events or on district facilities is appropriate in most circumstances. However, there are limited instances when individuals' behavior is so egregious or threatening that it is in the best interest of the district to eject an individual from district property to protect the safety and well-being of students, staff, and the community. This exemption applies to those limited circumstances when it would be a danger to the individual or others on district property to follow district's practices of providing the notices required under TEC §37.105.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- An exemption from this provision would allow GPISD, in very limited circumstances, to remove (from school events and/or district facilities) guests whose behavior is extremely disruptive, severe and/or a continuing threat to the safety and security of students, staff and the community.
- This exemption would allow administration the ability to avoid potential escalation in certain situations that pose a threat to the safety and security of students, staff, and the community.

Local Guidelines:

- When administration deems certain individuals on district property as highly disruptive and/or threatening to the safety of students, staff or the community, administration has the option to eject these individuals from district property without providing the individual the required verbal warnings and written information explaining the appeal process under TEC §37.105.



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Mandatory Vape/E-Cigarette DAEP Placement:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. §37.006(a). The 2023 Texas Legislature passed House Bill 114 amending Texas Education Code §37.006(a), which now requires mandatory DAEP placement for the “possession, use, sale, giving, or delivering of an e-cigarette, or any component part of an e-cigarette.” Vaping is a serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct. However, DAEP does not have the capacity to accommodate this volume of students. Also, requiring mandatory DAEP placement for possession of a vape, including paraphernalia associated with vaping, regardless of whether this is a first or subsequent incident, ties the hands of administrators.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- The statute requires students to be moved back and forth from DAEP and the home campus ISS as space at DAEP is available, which would cause significant academic disruption to a student.
- This has the effect of requiring districts to place a student at DAEP for possessing or using any part of a vaping device, with or without the presence of any prohibited substances. Our DAEP campus already experiences periods throughout the school year where capacity is reached and this change has the potential to add several hundred placements each school year based on district data. Additionally, the district believes that a less punitive consequence, paired with a counseling intervention for a first offense will better support early intervention efforts, maintain academic consistency, and keep students engaged in school activities and experiences.

Local Guidelines:

- An exemption from this provision would provide the district with options for first-time e-cigarette/vape offenders rather than an automatic DAEP placement. In School Suspension, substance abuse prevention programs, and restorative practices would be options available to campus administration for a first vape/e-cigarette offense.
- This exemption will only apply to e-cigarette/vape offenses that did not involve THC or other controlled substances or illegal drugs. Those offenses will continue to be subject to mandatory DAEP or JJAEP as per the Texas Education Code and GPISD Student Code of Conduct.
- Additionally, subsequent e-cigarette offenses in the same school year will not be subject to this exemption and will continue to be subject to mandatory DAEP or JJAEP as per the Texas Education Code and GPISD Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, since DAEP is not available to students under grade 3, a counseling alternative will be developed on a case-by-case basis to support individual students in the lower grades if needed.



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Depository Contracts:

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: Sec. 45.205. Under the law, a depository contract shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. A district and its depository bank may agree to extend the contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms. The contract term and any extension must coincide with the district's fiscal year.

Benefit of Exemption for GPISD:

- Exemption from this requirement will allow the district to maintain satisfactory working relationships with its depository bank without the need to re-bid for the work at the exact timelines required by law.
- If the district is satisfied with the service of the depository bank and is getting good rates, requiring the district to re-bid the contract is a waste of resources that can be avoided.

Local Guidelines:

- The district could extend the term of the depository contract, avoiding the disruption of campus operations. Before the renewals take place, the bank would furnish a proposal to the district regarding its proposed services and fees.