

RULE ISD

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN 2017-2022

Texas Education Code Exemptions

I. **UNIFORM START DATE (TEC 25.0811)**

State law currently prohibits a school district from starting before the fourth Monday in August, unless you are a Year-Round District.

RATIONALE FOR EXEMPTION

If the district has the flexibility in the start of school date, we can determine locally what best fits the needs of our students and school. This will allow the flexibility of coordinating dates for those students taking dual credit courses through a college. This will allow the District to build a calendar that is more balanced on the number of days in both semesters.

II. **TEACHER CERTIFICATION (TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.057)**

State law maintains that a person may not be employed as a teacher 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 the 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 of Education Certification.

RATIONALE FOR EXEMPTION

The current State requirements do not allow a District to hire teachers unless they have a specific certification for a specific assignment. This would allow for a certified teacher to teach out of their specified teaching field or content. Rule ISD would have their own local requirements that would specify the best cross curriculum that would enable the students to gain the best possible instruction to meet the desired level of achievement. Additional instructional development days would be required for those teachers teaching out of their certified areas. The principal would have to approve the teacher and take that recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent would then consult with the School Board before final approval would be granted.

III. LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY (TEC 25.081)

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations, funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

RATIONALE FOR EXEMPTION

This exemption would allow our district to alter the days needed for additional staff development or other educational needs as determined by the District where the students would benefit educationally.

This would allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to allow for our teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, relevant professional development.

Rule ISD does not have any intentions of shortening the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, "early release" days would be planned ahead of time, approved by the board and distributed to the stakeholders in ample amount of time. Rule ISD will use this time to maximize instruction and prepare the instructors.

IV. CONTRACT SERVICE DAYS (TEC 21.401)

State law requires educators that are employed on a 10 month contract to work a minimum of 187 days.

RATIONALE FOR EXEMPTION

With the passage of HB 2610 and TEC 25.081 which changed the required instructional days to minutes, the law did not address the contract days for 10 month employees. The number of days required for teachers should be a local decision. Our District will know what areas of staff development are needed for our educational institution and how many days it will take for that training. Determination by the district to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days of service will have no effect on teacher salaries.

AMENDMENTS – Added May 11, 2021

V. GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (TEC §22.004)

T.E.C. § 22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to T.E.C. § 12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309.

Rationale for Exemption: Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district hereby amends the District of Innovation Plan to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in T.E.C. § 22.004(i)

VI. TRANSFER STUDENTS (TEC §25.036)

State law allows a student to transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in the state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history, academic performance, and attendance records are also evaluated. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Rationale for Exemption: The administration will review disciplinary records, academic performance, attendance records, and other data of transfer students on an ongoing basis to determine if the transfer agreement is being upheld. Rule ISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment to transfer students when they violate district expectations of attendance, discipline, academic achievement, and/or falsify documentation. This flexibility would allow the district to have the option of revoking a student's transfer status, including immediate revocation, by the Superintendent or designee at any time during the school year.