



Gonzales Independent School District 2017-2022 District of Innovation Plan

INTRODUCTION

The passage of House Bill 1842 stemming from the 84th Legislative Session initiated Texas Education Code TEC Chapter 12A. This law allows public school districts some of the same opportunities as Texas open enrollment charter schools. To have those opportunities a public school district must adopt an innovation plan as specified in TEC Chapter 12A.

On February 13, 2017, the Gonzales Independent School District (ISD) Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the District of Innovation process requirements as specified in TEC Chapter 12A. On that same day, the Gonzales ISD Board of Trustees appointed a committee of district leaders to discuss the drafting of a District of Innovation plan. The committee subsequently met to discuss and submit a draft a District of Innovation Plan for proposal. The District Educational Improvement Committee public and regular meeting took place on February 23, 2017. The 2017-2022 District of Innovation Plan passed. Subsequently, two additional exemptions were approved with unanimous vote of members participating meeting and surpassing the majority requirement per statute for approvals. The Gonzales ISD Board of Trustees approved the Final Draft on April 10th, 2017 putting the 2017-2022 District of Innovation Plan in effect with that unanimous vote.

In accordance with Texas Education Code TEC, Chapter 12A, Gonzales ISD presents the Gonzales ISD Five Year Plan for Innovation.

TERM

The term of this plan pursuant to TEC, Chapter 12A is for five years. This plan begins April 10, 2017 and ends April 10, 2022. The plan may be terminated or amended at an earlier date by the GISD Board of Trustees in accordance with legal requirements.

GONZALES ISD COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The district's educational program follows all provisions of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and all mandates as required expanded upon pursuant to and as written into the GISD Educational Improvement Plan.

Vision Statement: Excellence for All



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Mission Statement:

Gonzales Independent School District is committed to a spirit of excellence in caring service and partnerships that equip students for continuous learning supporting resilience in achieving personal aspiration, and compassionate and dynamic citizenship in an ever-changing world.

GISD GOALS

- Gonzales ISD will provide a broad array of learning opportunities to meet the needs and aspirations of each student to reach exemplary status, high school completion and post graduate success.
- Gonzales ISD will provide for safety and order ensuring a climate conducive to learning.
- Gonzales ISD will work collaboratively with parents and community to maximize learning opportunities and unity of focus in education.
- Gonzales ISD will retain caring, passionate and highly qualified personnel.
- Gonzales ISD will maintain exemplary fiscal responsibility.
- Gonzales ISD will provide facilities conducive to accomplish our vision objectives.

GONZALES ISD GOAL OBJECTIVES

- Objectives support all students at mastery of the curriculum in the content foundational subjects of English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science
- Close achievement gaps
- Promote graduate ready for post-secondary
- Promote awareness relative to health and safety
- Promote parent and family involvement
- Recruit exemplary personnel
- Provide high quality training and development
- Communicate and invite collaborative input
- Seek to maintain competitive compensation efforts
- Practice efficiency and transparency
- Plan for facility maintenance as needed



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Innovation Plan Detail

Plan for Exemption from the Texas Education Code section 21.003:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBOE) rule requiring that all teachers be certified in accordance with SBOE rules. Currently, a district can apply for and receive a waiver from the commissioner as part of the statute.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption to allow innovation in hiring personnel for CTE and other innovative courses of study. This exemption ensures that the district has flexibility in hiring to provide ample opportunity for all endorsement programs.

The process would require a written request for exception submitted to the superintendent. All request will require review by the Human Resource officer, approval by the superintendent and final report and approval by the Gonzales ISD School Board of Trustees.

Plan for Exemption of Certain Provisions of Attendance Committee Requirements:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the 90% rule relative to promotion and credit attainment. According to the Texas Education Code (TEC) 25.092 referring to a grade or credit earned based on specified percentage of class attendance. According to the Code: " A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent, but less than 90 percent, of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade if the student completes a plan approved by the principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. If the student is under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding, the student may not receive credit or a final grade by completing such a plan without the consent of the presiding judge. The board of trustees is required to appoint one or more attendance committees to hear petitions from students who do not earn class credit or a final grade through a plan approved by the principal. An attendance committee may give class credit or a final grade due to extenuating circumstances. The board is also required to adopt policies establishing alternative ways for such students to make up work or regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from this ruling. Gonzales ISD would permit students with extenuating circumstances, having the responsible action to keep up with the work prescribed and already earning a passing grade to waive the 90% rule according to the



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Principal's discretion. Requests for exemption in extenuating circumstances must be made in writing and forwarded to the campus principal. The campus principal will determine the need for committee assignment after the attendance committee determines eligibility based on extenuating circumstances presented.

Gonzales ISD will continue to adhere to the code accordingly as specified in Texas Administrative Code (TEC) Chapter 25.085 and Chapter 25.086 relative to compulsory attendance.

Plan for Exemption from the School Start First Day of Instruction Requirement:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the TEC 25.0811 wherein a school district may not according to the code begin school before the fourth Monday in August.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from this ruling. Beginning school prior to the fourth Monday enables our district more flexibility in beginning and meeting needs of young learners and ending the first semester prior to the mid-term. Having the flexibility to start school mid-week on years when this option supports first semester completion is an important consideration as young learners adjust to full weeks in class after the Summer. Ending the semester is a priority due to best practice in student services culminating finals and mid-term benchmarks prior to a major holiday. Additionally, students new to the district or in need of relocation to another district are able to start a fresh semester after Winter break. Further a priority is to create the time by adjusting scheduling to end the second semester by the end of May. Senior students attending higher education require time to settle in and begin their classes prior to Summer course work in community college or the university. Finally, beginning at a point prior to the fourth Monday in August allows the district greater ability to plan for the required minutes of instruction to fall within a time frame effective for professional development. Gonzales ISD would plan to begin school to meet needs as described above by allowing school start dates prior to the fourth Monday in August but not before the third Monday in August.

Plan for Exemption from the Class Size Ratio Requirement:

Gonzales ISD requests an exemption to the requirement of Texas Education Code section 25.112 prohibiting a district from enrolling more than 22 students in a K-4th grade class unless the district claims an exemption through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Waiver procedure. The GISD District of Innovation Plan would require adherence to effective class size ratios meeting the 22 to 1 ratio in Grades K-4 beginning every school year in most situations. In the event all classes are at 22 to 1 in any grade level K-4 and one or more classes enter a 23rd student the decision to hire would be based on



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whether or not the hire would drop class sizes below 20 to 1 as classes are leveled. If class sizes drop below 20 to 1 with the additional hire the district would not hire the additional teacher. Additionally, the exemption allows for flexible grouping options according to scheduling needs for small group interventions or extensions. This ratio equates to if half of the classes in any one (K-4) grade level enroll the 23rd student a new teacher will be hired for that grade level as exemplified in the attached chart. Additionally, the Gonzales ISD plans to ensure that instructional support is priority in the event the 23rd student enrolls in the (K-4) classroom.

Plan for Exemption from the Behavior Coordinator Requirement:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the TEC 37.0012 wherein each public school district must specify a behavior coordinator to maintain student discipline.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from this ruling. The Gonzales ISD follows an approved Code of Conduct and all requirements as specified. The Assistant Principal and Principal manage discipline on campus and make all notifications as required by Code.

Plan for Exemption from the Experienced Teachers New to the District Probationary Contract Requirement:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from section TEC 21.102 (b) specifically regarding probationary teacher contracts length of term. Currently, the code requires experienced teachers with at least five years of the previous eight years experience be given only one year of a probationary contract.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from this ruling. The Gonzales ISD plan requires that experienced teachers new to the district with at least five years of the experience in the previous eight years be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the most recent date of district employment.

Plan for Exemption from the District and Campus Level-Planning Requirement:

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the TEC Chapter 11, Section 11.1511(b) (5); 11.251-253 of the district and campus level planning requirements.

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from this ruling. The Gonzales ISD plan requires that at the district and campus levels committees offer input on district and campus



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improvement planning. Participants will serve two-year terms. The majority of the committees will be classroom teachers including general education, special populations and elective course representatives. Remaining membership will consist of a parent and a community/business representative. All members will be assigned on a volunteer basis or as requested for equitable representation of all student populations and programs. The focus of the campus and district committees will be to annually review and plan for district improvement and plan development. Committees will meet at least twice annually.

Plan for Exemption of the Minimum Service Required

Gonzales ISD seeks exemption from the TEC Chapter 21, Section 21.401 minimum service required mandate.

The TEC, Chapter 21, Section 401 (b) currently requires a teacher employed on a 10-month contract provide at least 187 days of service.

Gonzales ISD plans to have the option to reduce the required number of days for teachers employed on a 10-month contract to a lesser day requirement with no impact on the current salary. Affected personnel receive more incentive for recruitment and retention, more days to access self initiated staff development for professional growth during the summer months and experience an increase in the daily rate.