

Olton Independent School District Local Innovation Plan



December 16, 2021 -
December 16, 2026

Grow: Every Student, Every Adult, Every Day,
Every way

Local Innovation Plan

Local Innovation Committee Members

Name	Term Start Date	Role
Kori LaDuke	2020-2021	Elementary Parent
April Burns	2021-2022	JH Parent
Valerie Struve	2019-2020	HS Parent
Gabby Garcia	2021-2022	Elementary Community Member
David Azam	2019-2020	JH Community Member
Pete Zamora	2021-2022	HS Community Member
April Burns	2019-2020	Elementary Business Member
Charlie Smith	2019-2020	JH Business Member
Andrew Rejino	2019-2020	HS Business Member
Deanne McGill	2019-2020	HS Teacher
Erin Marmolejo	2019-2020	HS Teacher
Clinton Gleghorn	2019-2020	HS Teacher
Michelle Johnson	2020-2021	JH Teacher
McKenize Mcfadden	2020-2021	JH Teacher
Bobby Workman	2020-2021	JH Teacher
Jenny Bett Newsom	2020-2021	Elementary Teacher
Tillie Becerra	2020-2021	Elementary Teacher
Sarahi Rodriguez	2020-2021	Elementary Teacher
Misty Lassiter	Advisory	Elem Counselor
Marisa Lopez	Advisory	JH Counselor
Angi Martin	Advisory	HS Counselor
Colby Huseman	Advisory	Jr. High Principal
Gregg Ammons	Advisory	High School Principal
Stacie Ramage	Advisory	Elementary Principal
Terri Sandoval	Advisory	Federal Programs Director
Ruben Luera	Advisory	Board Member
Connie T. Maxwell	Advisory	Board Member
Kevin McCasland	Advisory	Superintendent

Timeline

- February 16, 2021
 - The Olton Independent School District Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to Consider Designation as a District of Innovation.

- March 22, 2021
 - The Olton Independent School District Board of Trustees held a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as a district of innovation.

- March 22, 2021
 - The Olton Independent School District Board of Trustees appointed a committee to develop a local innovation plan. The committee consisted of parents, community members, business members, and teachers

- April 14, 2021
 - The committee appointed by the OISD Board of Trustees met to develop a local innovation plan in accordance with Section 12A.003.

- September 13, 2021
 - The board of trustees met to review the local innovation plan and to update the committee.

- September 23, 2021
 - The committee appointed by the OISD Board of Trustees met to review the local innovation plan.

- October 18, 2021
 - The board of trustees met to review local innovation plan updates

- November 16, 2021
 - The DOI Plan was posted on the School District Website

- November 19, 2021
 - The DAC approved the DOI Plan

- November 23, 2021
 - The Board notified the commissioner of its intent to renew its DOI Plan
- December 16, 2021
 - The Board voted in favor of renewing the DOI Plan (5-0-0)

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842 was passed during the 84th Legislative Session. This bill provides the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue becoming a District of Innovation, which allows districts to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code to allow more flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

TERM

The term of the Plan of Innovation will be in place from December 16, 2021 through December 16, 2026. The plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the DAC and the Board of Trustees in the same manner required for the initial adoption. The District may review the plan more frequently.

A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM - DISTRICT INFORMATION

Olton Independent School District is a rural school district located in West Texas. It is 25 minutes from Plainview and 50 minutes from Lubbock. Olton is strongly rooted in agriculture. With difficulties facing its primary economic system and its rural location, Olton ISD faces challenges in recruiting highly qualified teachers due to both compensation abilities as well as its location. Olton ISD is seeking the ability to recruit and grow educators to reduce turnover so that students can benefit from a quality, systematic, and stable educational platform. Olton ISD also seeks to continue to provide for its unique community flexibility on school days length as well as calendar options. Olton ISD relies on its neighboring districts to provide DAEP placement, SSA's, and Co-Ops. It is important for Olton ISD to have flexibility while it reflects the values, needs, and goals of its community as it seeks to serve its students a high-quality and robust educational experience.

DISTRICT BELIEFS

1. Every employee of the District is important to the success of our educational goals and objectives.
2. Education is a joint venture that requires the involvement of families, churches, and the community.
3. Open communication is essential to student success.
4. All stakeholders should demonstrate respect for self and others.
5. We must educate all students to reach their highest potential and become lifelong learners.
6. We should be innovative in the use of all our resources.
7. We must foster an environment which attracts and retains high quality personnel.
8. Discipline must be consistent and fair for all students.
9. We must inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

OISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES INNOVATION GOALS

- Search for ways to better attract and maintain a highly qualified professional staff by offering competitive wages and benefits as well as opportunities to provide local certification options.
- Ensure that all student needs are met by developing instructional leadership as well as campus and district leadership by being focused on growth of the whole student.
- Search for ways to continue to support the values and needs of the community by aligning them with the operations of the district as well as the academic growth of its students.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The Plan of Innovation is guided by and aligned with the District's Vision and Mission statement.

Vision Statement

- By 2026, Olton ISD will succeed through a foundation built on strong relationships, universal accountability, and no excuses.

District Mission Statement

- Grow: Every Student, Every Adult, Every Day, Every Way

Board Mission Statement

- The mission of the Board of Olton ISD is to ensure that the people in and affected by the institution have the opportunity to grow and become productive citizens of society. The trustees will delegate operational power, adopt policies, require accountability, evaluate patterns of operation, and ensure flexibility and competence. At all times the Board will maintain accountability to the taxpayers and residents of the District.

1. Certification Requirements

Exemption From:

- (TEC §21.003)

Related Board Policies:

- (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL) (DK LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

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

RATIONALE:

- Placing high quality staff in classrooms that will ensure both the growth of students' social and emotional growth and their academic growth is becoming increasingly more difficult; this is more prevalent in rural communities. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals that, upon reviewing their credentials and aptitude toward becoming certified under SBEC, are determined to be most effective toward serving the students and families of Olton ISD.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

- Olton ISD will continue to seek highly effective certified educators for certified positions. However, when certified individuals do not apply to the district or certified applicants that apply to the district are not determined by Olton ISD administration to be the best candidate to select for employment, by evaluating local criteria in lieu of requirements set in the education code, OISD will be able to best serve students by employing high quality educators that might not ordinarily qualify under the traditional certification pathway.
- In order to best serve students, all decisions on educator certification and assignments will be handled locally, and notification of Local Teaching Permits (local certification) or any other related reporting to TEA shall not be necessary. The principal may submit to the superintendent and/or the designee a request for Local Teaching Permit outlining the individual's credentials/qualifications. Qualification for local certification could include, but is not limited to:
 - Related work experience, training, or education in or related to the content area
 - Individuals with an out of state teaching certification
 - Active/relevant professional industry certification/registration

- Any combination of criteria demonstrating aptitude toward becoming a certified educator including related work experience, training, education whether it is related or not to the teaching field, individuals in the process of attaining college education and SBEC certification, and demonstration of successful experience working with students

The superintendent or his/her designee will then approve the request if he or she determines the applicant is qualified according to the above mentioned criteria, shows aptitude toward successfully completing the tasks required of the position, communicates to the applicant they are required to work toward obtaining certification, and feels the individual could be an asset to students by providing quality instruction. Final hiring approval will be obtained from the Board of Trustees.

An employee working under a Local Teaching Permit who does not hold a state teaching certification will not receive a contract, but will work on an at-will basis and have a separate pay scale from state certified teachers. The Local Teaching Permit will become void at the end of the school year in which it is issued. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders. An employee working under a Local Teaching Permit (local certification) will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers and will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers. Also, employees working under a Local Teaching Permit will be required to seek state certification in the area that they are teaching in content areas certification is required by the District.

*OISD will continue to require special education and bilingual teachers to be SBEC certified.

2. Probationary Contracts, Flexible Evaluation Period

Exempt from

- TEC §21.102

Related Board Policies

- (DCA LEGAL) (DCA LOCAL)

Description of Provisions:

- TEC §21.102 Current law states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

RATIONALE:

- This period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

- 1) For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Olton ISD that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period when becoming employed by Olton ISD shall be for a period of three years with probationary contracts issued for each of the three years. This will allow Olton ISD a better opportunity to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness toward Olton ISD students.

3. FLEXIBLE CALENDAR, FIRST/LAST DAY OF INSTRUCTION

Exemption From:

- TEC §25.0811
- TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies:

- (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- TEC §25.0811 states a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August.
- TEC §25.0812 states a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15.

RATIONALE:

Since school districts must ensure that they attain 75,600 minutes of instruction in their calendar, the district seeks flexibility with school beginning and end dates in its efforts to reach the required minutes of instruction. The flexibility in the start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students, the school, and the community. One specific benefit of exempting this restriction is it allows the school to look at starting classes as a short week so that it can ease the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. Weather events and public health crises, as we have seen, can affect the school's ability to reach the required 75,600 minutes of instruction. A more flexible end date will also enable school districts to extend their school year, as necessary, to reach the required number of minutes. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help to better balance the amount of days in each semester.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

Olton ISD will have the flexibility to start class as early as the second Monday in August, depending on the needs of the district.

4. Student discipline

Exemption From:

- (TEC §37.007)
- (TEC §37.010)

Related Board Policies:

- (FOD LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- Current law states that a student placed in a District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) who engages in documented serious misbehavior while on the DAEP campus despite documented behavioral interventions may be removed from class and expelled. Serious misbehavior includes:
 - Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; a Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
 - Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or
 - Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
 - Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
 - Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08; • Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03; Personal hazing under Penal Code 37.152; or
 - Harassment, under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), of a student or district employee.

RATIONALE:

- The Plainview ISD DAEP, where Olton ISD students who have been placed in a DAEP are enrolled, has a structured system of discipline. The Texas Education Code makes no allowance for students whose persistent misbehavior disrupts instruction and is detrimental to the educational environment.

INNOVATION STRATEGIES:

- In accordance with state law, a student placed in a District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) who engages in documented serious misbehavior (as defined above) while on the DAEP campus, despite documented behavioral interventions, may be

removed from class and expelled. Additionally, through this innovation plan, a student placed in a DAEP who engages in documented persistent misbehavior while on the DAEP campus, despite documented behavioral interventions, may also be removed from class and expelled.

5. Class size

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.111
- TEC §25.112
- TEC §25.113

Related Board Policies:

- (BF LEGAL) (EEB LEGAL) (EEB LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- Texas Education Code section 25.111 requires districts to employ a sufficient number of certified teachers to maintain an average ratio of not less than 1 teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. Texas Education Code section 25.112 generally prohibits 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's (TEA) waiver procedure. Texas Education Code section 25.113 requires a campus or district that is granted a class size waiver to provide parental notice. (Board Policy Ref: BF Campus Class Size Waivers; EEB Instructional Arrangements—Class Size)

RATIONALE:

- While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom and it continues to be a priority in our school district, this must be balanced with the logistics of the timing of adding staff, and the best teacher to student ratio that can be achieved given the total number of students. We do not believe it is guaranteed to have a negative effect on a classroom when a district adds only one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment. The absolute class size also does not take into account that there may be additional staff in the classroom for some or most of the instructional time (such as special education teachers or paraprofessionals). Most importantly, research clearly shows it is the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on student learning, not absolute class size. In the event the class size exceeds the 22:1 ratio for Kindergarten — 4th grade classes, a TEA waiver will not be necessary, but the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees for approval. This exemption allows for local control over class size ratios, and it is not a disregard for the intent of the ratio requirements. OISD seeks exemption from 22:1 class size ratio because of the difficulty in finding a qualified teacher when ratios above 24:1 require hiring additional staff. OISD is a rural community with limited qualified teacher applicants. OISD will continue to provide information to parents regarding class size but will include explanation of the exemption under the district of innovation plan.

INNOVATION STRATEGIES:

- An exemption in meeting Texas Education Code (TEC), 525.112 and TEC 525.111 will allow the ability to group students based upon their academic, social, and emotional needs as well as the District's ability to provide staff.
- The Superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees and request their approval to exceed the class size limit that is in place and reporting to TEA will not be required.

6. Appraisal system

Exemption from:

- TEC §21.353
TEC §21.352

Related Board Policies:

- (DNA LEGAL) (DNA LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- Currently, the state is evaluating teachers and principals utilizing Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). The domains within these systems are developed by the State to meet the needs of the entire State of Texas.

RATIONALE:

- Statewide teacher appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) may not reflect all values when determining the effectiveness of teachers. These systems also require state standardized test scores be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators.

INNOVATION STRATEGIES:

- A committee of district and campus administrators and teachers will convene to determine a best fit instrument to support the work of our Olton ISD Profile of a Learner. As we move forward with the implementation of the growth indicators for students, our professional staff will also set goals in coordination with these efforts.

7. Student attendance/credit

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.092

Related Board Policies:

- (FEC LEGAL) (FEC LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- Texas Education Code restricts a student from receiving credit or a final grade in a course of study in which the student was not in attendance for at least 90% of the days the course was offered. If the student attends the course at least 75% of the time, the student may be awarded credit if he/she successfully completes a plan of action determined by the principal. An established attendance committee must hear petitions for credit from students that failed to meet the plan of action. The committee may approve the award of credit based on extenuating circumstances.

RATIONALE:

- The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Flexibility in abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class due to enriching activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances that supports OISD's goal to educate the whole child. Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

- To meet the needs of 21st century learners, OISD would like to investigate the option to provide students credit for courses based on content mastery, not the amount of time the student spends in the classroom. This exemption would allow the district to provide innovative options to promote student engagement in course material in flexible ways, ultimately allowing learning to happen anytime, anyplace apart from the traditional way of delivering instruction.

Additionally, flexibility in this area directly supports OISD's goal of educating the whole child. Our students attain valuable and meaningful learning from extra/co-curricular activities and experiences that currently count against the student's 90% attendance availability if a student has to miss part of the traditional school day.

8. Revoke transfers

Exemption from:

- TEC §25.036

Related Board Policies:

- (FDA LOCAL)

Description of current provisions:

- TEC §25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District.

RATIONALE:

- Olton ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. In order to continue granting to students the opportunity to transfer into the district, the district must also ensure that students transferring into the district exhibit adherence to the district's requirements, rules, and regulations so as to maintain a high quality learning environment for all students in the district. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants so that it can hold accountable students who wish to transfer into the district.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

- The district will reserve the right to revoke the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on behavior, adherence to district rules and/or attendance, or not remaining in good academic standing. Revocation of transfers for the above reasons is final and may not be appealed.

9. Counselor Duties

Exemption from:

- TEC Section 33.006

Related Board Policies:

- (DP LEGAL) (DP LOCAL)

FFEA (Legal) and (Local) – *Note, this local policy does not exist yet*

Description of current provisions:

Currently, state law provides that Trustees must “adopt a policy that requires a school counselor to spend at least 80 percent of the school counselor’s total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program” required by the Education Code. Olton ISD is seeking to be exempt from this provision of the Texas Education Code.

RATIONALE:

While the District realizes the need for the school counselor to spend work time on duties that are components of a counseling program as outlined by the Education Code, the counselor is sometimes the best resource for the District to use for duties outside of those stated components. Our District has utilized our counselor for duties necessary for the welfare and education of our students that are necessary but might not be listed in the Education Code. Additionally, due to staffing shortages experienced by Olton ISD, it is not feasible to appoint additional personnel to undertake some of the important and necessary duties that have been assumed by and/or assigned to counselors.

INNOVATION STRATEGY:

Olton ISD will determine the best and necessary allocation of the duties and time that District counselors undertake during the school day, in order to implement comprehensive and innovative programs for the whole education of our students. Olton ISD uses, and will continue to use, additional resources, including contracted employees, grants and agreements with other organizations and school districts, and partnerships with mental health and behavioral institutions to supplement the counseling program for the District. Olton ISD will not report the counselors time spent on other duties nor will it track this data. Olton ISD will make the determination regarding how this time is spent in order to serve the best interests of and provide the best education to our students, and the District will use outside resources as needed to provide additional help to accomplish this.