

KARNES CITY

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation Plan

The KCISD Board of Trustees renewed the District of Innovation Plan on March 21, 2022 for 5 years, through March 2027.

Innovations

Karnes City ISD proposes the following flexibilities with the Texas Education Code to provide the best educational opportunities for students of KCISD.

1. First and Last Day of Instruction

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811

TEC §25.0812

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th 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 2nd Monday in August.
- TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community.

Proposal: The district will develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in KCISD by incorporating the flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June.

By ending the school year earlier, KCISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade schools. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

2. Teacher Certification Requirements

Exemption from: TEC §21.003(a)

TEC §21.053

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher or other certified position unless the person holds an appropriate certificate.
- TEC §21.053(b) states that an educator may not be paid for teaching or work done before the issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. When that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

Karnes City ISD would like the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. These areas would include, but are not limited to, CTE and languages other than English. Special Education teachers will continue to be required to hold a standard teaching certificate. Teachers with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. Additionally, Karnes City ISD will notify parents of a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class.

This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

3. Minimum Minutes of Instruction per Day

Exemption from: TEC §25.081

TEC §25.082

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §25.081 requires that each school day must be 420 minutes long in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes and to accumulate instructional minutes toward the 75,600 minutes of instruction required for students annually.
- TEC §25.082(a) provides that a school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Proposal: The district will consider altering the length of an instructional day on a limited basis when it is locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. Karnes City ISD does not have any intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis or without specific purpose (i.e. bad weather, professional development, early dismissal for events of community interest, etc).

To the greatest extent possible, shortened days would be planned ahead of time and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

4. Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC §21.102(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.102(b) 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.
- Due to the unique nature of KCISD, including our initiatives and processes, this period of time may not be 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.

Proposal: Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract certified employees subject to TEC Chapter 21, will be subject to a two-year probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance. Partial years will not count toward the full year requirement.

5. Minimum Service Required

Exemption from: TEC §21.401(a)

TEC §21.401(b)

Manner in which law inhibits Board Goals:

- TEC §21.401(a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months service.
- TEC §21.401(b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposal: KCISD seeks the freedom to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days and move to a 10-month contract for teachers from August-May, with a focus on minutes of instruction, instead of days of instruction; without an anticipated reduction in salary. The move to minutes of instruction will better align teacher contracts to the minutes of instruction requirement.

The teachers will fulfill the required 75,600 minutes of instruction and additional minutes and staff development as determined locally by the KCISD Board. This strategy will provide opportunities for teachers to seek out beneficial content area staff development during summer months and may improve teacher morale.