

Garner ISD as a District of Innovation

Adopted July 16, 2018

House Bill 1842, TEC 12A, AF (LOCAL), AF (LEGAL)

This District of Innovation plan relates only to the specific exemptions outlined below. The district will adhere strictly to the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If it becomes apparent that changes to this plan are necessary, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Planning Committee to discuss and potentially enact those changes.

House Bill (HB) 1842 was passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session. This law gives Texas public school districts an opportunity to modify state requirements to meet the needs of their students and community. In 2015, Garner ISD embarked on a bold process of creating a Strategic Plan to set goals for the district for the next 3-5 years. Numerous stakeholders from across the community were involved in the process and encouraged to think beyond the limits of the existing organization nor allow government restraints to compromise learning opportunities. In so doing, a plan came forth which the community felt would allow for a Garner ISD student to be empowered with the tools to be successful in the 21st Century.

TEC 12A allows districts to exempt themselves from a limited subset of requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) “that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . .” The purpose of TEC12A is to spur innovation in school districts, and it is the desire of Garner ISD to continue to enhance district innovations while striving to be better tomorrow than we are today.

Believing that certain statutes limit Garner ISD’s potential, we seek exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL) (TEC 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday in August.

Proposed

Having flexibility for the first day of instruction will allow Garner ISD local stakeholders to annually determine what start date best meets the instructional needs of students and family

needs of the community. This enables us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, balance the amount of instructional time per semester, and provide more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff. Removing the uniform start date would also allow GISD to start classes on a Wednesday or Thursday, as a short week, easing the transition to the beginning of the school from the summer months.

Teacher Contract Days

(DC LEGAL, DC LOCAL) (TEC 21.401)

Currently

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

TEC 25.081 changed student instructional days to minutes. However, TEC 21.401 has not been adjusted to change teacher contracts from days to minutes. As a result, teachers are required to be on contract for several days beyond those with students. Quality professional development is a high priority in Garner ISD. However, the district and community feel the number of resulting professional days is actually counterproductive for teachers. This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 180 with no effect on teacher salaries. This stems from an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

- This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.
- This proposal will significantly improve teacher morale.
- This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Transfer of Students

(FDA LEGAL, FDA LOCAL) (TEC 25.036)

Currently

Garner ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA LOCAL requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file an application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff and the student's disciplinary history, academic records, and attendance records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District.

Proposed

The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applications. The District will reserve the right to revoke the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on behavior, excessive tardies, attendance, or not remaining in good academic standing.