



DISTRICT OF
INNOVATION PLAN
2017-2022

Aspermont ISD District of Innovation Committee

Tim Bartram Superintendent

Aspermont Board of Trustees

Nikki Gholson Community Member

L’Rae Watson Elementary Principal

Teddy Myers Elementary Teacher

Niki Eddison Elementary Parent

Zach Morris High School Principal

Allison Martin High School Teacher

Charla Leonard High School Parent

Aspermont ISD District of Innovation Timeline

February 13	Overview presentation of District of Innovation to District Staff.
February 15	District Staff Votes to pursue District of Innovation in the areas of Start Date, Certification, and Contracts.
February 20	Board adopts Resolution ; public hearing; votes to develop Local Innovation Plan (LIP)/delegates authority to Superintendent to appoint Committee
March 20	Superintendent reports names of Local Innovation Committee Members / Public Hearing on District of Innovation
April 13	Local Innovation Committee meeting develop Local Innovation Plan
April 17	Board Meeting – DOI Committee presents plan to Board; Board votes to notify Commissioner of Board intention to vote on adopting Approved Innovation Plan
April 15 – May 22	AIP Posted on District Website for 30 days
May 22	Board meeting - Board votes on AIP (2/3 vote required)

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 in the summer of 2015, allowing public school districts to obtain the designation of District of Innovation and gain exemption from certain Texas Education Code provisions. This designation allows independent school districts to have flexibilities currently available to open enrollment charter schools. During Spring 2017, Aspermont ISD, having met the state's eligibility requirements, began consideration of developing an innovation plan that reflects the unique needs of the district and allows the district to assume greater local control.

Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

Current Statute: Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. In the past, districts could apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier to meet the needs of the local community. This waiver opportunity was met with resistance from the Texas tourism groups who lobbied to have the practice ended, because they believed it was detrimental to the Texas tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed flexibility: This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. Flexibility to start earlier in August would help our district plan for balanced instructional time in the semesters that would support semester course curriculum.

Teacher Certification

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.057)

Current Statute: In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. Texas Education Code 21.057 states that districts must provide written notification to parents if an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to the classroom for more than 30 days.

Proposed Flexibility: The flexibility in allowing Aspermont ISD to make local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer innovation in course selections for CTE courses as well as hard to fill, high-demand dual credit courses. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing. Teachers certified in other states could be considered for positions upon a local

review of experience, education and credentials. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. After thoroughly vetting candidates for hire, Aspermont ISD will consider the instructors hired for these positions to be appropriately qualified and will not provide additional special notification to parents of students in their classes that the instructor does not hold a traditional teaching certificate.

Probationary Contracts

(DCA LEGAL) (Ed. Code 21.102)

Current Statute: Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Proposed Flexibility: Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired in Aspermont ISD. This will allow AISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.