



SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

2022-2027

SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

District of Innovation was created by the 84th Legislature through Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 12A. The purpose of TEC Chapter 12A is to allow traditional independent school districts the opportunity to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the TEC. Designation as a District of Innovation allows a school district to increase local control and to support innovation as a means to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of all district stakeholders.

SPRING ISD'S TIMELINE FOR RENEWAL STATUS AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

DATE	ACTIVITY
January 6, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Board of Trustees Overview</p> <p>The Spring Independent School District (Spring ISD) Board of Trustees will receive an overview of TEC Chapter 12A District of Innovation renewal provisions.</p>
January 11, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Board of Trustees Committee Authorization</p> <p>Spring ISD Board of Trustees will authorize the Superintendent of Schools or designee to assemble a Local Innovation Committee to develop the proposed renewal plan.</p>
January 25, 2022; February 1 and 15, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Innovation Plan Renewal Development</p> <p>The Spring ISD Innovation Committee will develop the Local Innovation renewal plan.</p>
February 22, 2022 – March 23, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed District Innovation Plan Posted</p> <p>The proposed Spring ISD Innovation Plan will be posted on the district website for 30 days.</p>
February 23, 2022 – March 25, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Commissioner Notification of Intent to Renew</p> <p>The Spring ISD Superintendent of Schools or designee will notify the Commissioner of Education of the intent to renew Spring ISD's District of Innovation plan.</p>
March 30, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">District Advisory Committee Approval</p> <p>The Spring ISD Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) will be asked to approve the proposed Spring ISD Innovation Plan by a majority vote.</p>
April 12, 2022	<p style="text-align: center;">Board of Trustees Approval</p> <p>The Spring ISD Board of Trustees will adopt the proposed Spring ISD District of Innovation Plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.</p>

<p>April 13, 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Commissioner Notification of Approval</p> <p>The Spring ISD Superintendent of Schools or designee will notify the commissioner of approval of the renewal plan with the list of approved TEC exemptions, using the provided document.</p>
<p>April 13, 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Local Innovation Plan Posting</p> <p>The Spring ISD Superintendent of Schools or designee shall ensure that a copy of the local innovation plan is posted on the district's website for the term of the designation as a District of Innovation</p>
<p>April 13, 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Texas Education Agency Submission</p> <p>The Spring ISD Superintendent of Schools or designee will provide a copy of the link to the local innovation plan to the Texas Education Agency for posting on the agency website.</p>

SPRING ISD INNOVATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee Facilitators

Julie F. Hill, Chief of Human Resources and Human Capital Accountability
 Pamela Farinas, Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital Accountability
 Christian Winn, Executive Director of Performance Management

NAME	POSITION
Lupita Hinojosa	Superintendent of Schools
Justine Durant	President, Spring ISD Board of Trustees
Rhonda Newhouse	Assistant Secretary, Spring ISD Board of Trustees
Deborah Jensen	Spring ISD Board of Trustees
Miguel Perez	Chief of Schools
Lester Gretsch	Chief of Communications
Matthew Pariseau	Chief of Innovation
Kim Fonteno	Assistant Superintendent of PK-8 Feeder #3
LaQuita Carter	Assistant Superintendent of PK-8 Feeder #4
Natasha Watson	Assistant Superintendent of PK-8 Feeder #5
Kenisha Williams	Principal, Major Elementary School
Katherine Fisher	Principal, Clark Intermediate Elementary School
Paul Carampatan	Principal, Dueitt Middle School
Kristine Guidry	Principal, Spring Early College Academy
Tiffany Perry	Parent, Hirsch Elementary School and Dekaney High School
Charlotte Manning	Parent, Dekaney High School
Almendra Ramos	Community Representative, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Victor Chatman	Pastor, Harvest Time Church
Chris Dinh	Marketing Representative, Signature Care ER
Jasmine Thomas	Elementary Teacher of the Year 2021, Booker Elementary School
Ariel Keller	Secondary Teacher of the Year 2021, WFD Instructional Specialist
Rosemary Perez	Advisory Committee on Education Representative, Ponderosa ES
Antonionette Nolen	Advisory Committee on Education Representative, Booker ES
Robert Williams	Advisory Committee on Education Representative, Claughton MS
Andrew Stewart	Advisory Committee on Education Representative, Spring Early College Academy

TERM OF PLAN

The term of the Spring ISD Innovation Plan is for five years, from May 31, 2022 to May 30, 2027, covering school years 2022-2023 through 2026-2027.

SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT EVERY STUDENT-EVERY TEACHER-EVERY DAY

In accordance with state law, Spring ISD must renew its current local innovation plan that provides a comprehensive educational program for the district. Spring ISD already has a comprehensive educational plan – its five-year strategic blueprint, Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day. The Spring ISD Board of Trustees continues to lead the District under its vision, mission, guiding principles, and core values.

Vision:

Spring Independent School District will be a district of choice known for high quality academics with innovative and specialized programs that meet the needs of all students in a positive learning environment.

Mission:

Spring Independent School District prepares students to be lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and responsible citizens who display good character – ready to contribute, compete, and lead in today's global society.

Guiding Principles:

1. High-quality teaching drives student learning.
2. Literacy is the foundation of academic success.
3. The learning needs of each student must be met.
4. Students learn best in safe environments where school leaders cultivate parent and community partnerships.
5. Every district resource must center on student learning with a focus on accountability.

Core Values:

- We base our decisions on what is **best for our students**.
- We will **strive for excellence** in all we do.
- We **build trust** through integrity and lead by example.
- We communicate openly.
- We **value diversity** and treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We win as a team.

Spring ISD Graduate Profile:

A lifelong learner, critical thinker and responsible citizen who displays good character – ready to contribute, compete, and lead in today's global society.

In August 2021, Spring ISD introduced the Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day five-year strategic blueprint. Its six strategic priorities are designed to work together and ensure every graduating student is prepared for college and careers. The six strategic priorities are:

Equity

Champion **Equity** explicitly and consistently in the way we serve students, design supports, and allocate resources. It is the underlying, uniting thread woven through all the work we do in Spring ISD.

Student Outcomes

Improve **Student Outcomes** across our district through high quality curriculum, effective instruction, and focusing on a strong start and finish for every student.

Opportunities

Expand **Opportunities** to foster a sense of empowerment, belonging and purpose that prepares students for future college and career opportunities.

Leadership

Cultivate **Leadership** at all levels through aligned recruitment, career pathway opportunities, and retention.

Well-Being

Promote the **Well-Being** of students and staff by focusing on physical safety, digital citizenship, and social-emotional needs in order to build a resilient educational community.

Engagement

Strengthen **Engagement** with all community stakeholders through consistent opportunities for collaboration with families, students, and staff.

A local innovation plan that aligns to Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day will enable Spring ISD to enhance and accelerate its efforts to achieve its true potential and actualize its vision – a district of choice known for high quality academics with innovative and specialized programs that meet the needs of all students in a positive learning environment.

SPRING ISD INNOVATION PLAN

The Spring ISD Innovation Plan will be aligned to the District's Strategic Blueprint Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day.

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Quality Curriculum ▪ Effective Instruction ▪ Early Learning and High School Supports ▪ High Quality Specialty Pathways ▪ High Interest Programming ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Innovative Curriculum and Instructional Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family and Community as Partners ▪ Student and Parent Empowerment 	Parental Involvement and Community Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Physical and Digital Safety ▪ Social Emotional Safety ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Campus Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Modifications to the School Day or Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Provisions Regarding the District Budget and Sustainable Program Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce 	Accountability and Assessment Measures That Exceed State and Federal Law Requirements
	Any Other Innovations Prescribed by the Board of Trustees

In January 2017, Spring ISD initiated its first Local Innovation Plan. Over a three-month period, the inaugural Local Innovation Committee met to research, develop and draft the District's initial Local Innovation Plan. The term of the plan was from May 31, 2017 to May 30, 2022, covering school years 2017-2018 through 2021-2022. In accordance with state law, Spring ISD has the opportunity to renew its Local Innovation Plan. The plan detailed below is the work of the committee charged with researching, developing and drafting the District's renewal plan.

Spring ISD seeks to renew its local innovation plan to enhance and accelerate its implementation and achievement of Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day's six priorities: Equity, Student Outcomes, Opportunities, Leadership, Well-Being, and Engagement. Exemptions from statutory provisions of the Texas Education Code will enable innovation through flexibility and local control in the way the District provides governance through the development of the district's annual budget and board policy.

Adoption and implementation of the Spring ISD Innovation Plan will require the Board of Trustees to revise and/or develop board policy. Provisions changed as a result of innovations will be noted in policy. In addition, these innovations will be executed through detailed processes and procedures that will involve the appropriate central office and campus-based stakeholders.

If during the term of the Innovation Plan, the Spring ISD Board of Trustees seeks additional exemptions, the Innovation Planning Committee will be convened to develop amendments to the plan. The process for development of the exemptions must be repeated every time the District seeks to amend the Local Innovation Plan.

RECOMMENDED EXEMPTIONS

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Quality Curriculum ▪ Effective Instruction ▪ Early Learning and High School Supports ▪ High Quality Specialty Pathways ▪ High Interest Programming ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Innovative Curriculum and Instructional Methods

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade and FEC(LEGAL) Attendance – Attendance for Credit

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(A) Innovative Curriculum and Instructional Methods

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 25.092 states that, “. . . a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.” The 90 percent standard is a traditional standard that bases a student’s grade or course credit on seat time not content mastery.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

One of the commitments from Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day is expanding and improving the quality of extra- and co-curricular offerings in Spring ISD. To achieve this, the District is committed to providing its students innovative learning opportunities outside of the classroom with a focus on athletics, the arts, career and technical education, dual credit, languages, and science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). Opportunities for internships, mentorships, blended learning, virtual instruction, and participation in academic and athletic competitions are academic experiences that yield content mastery; however, they do not conform to the 90 percent attendance restriction.

In addition, Spring ISD also offers innovative approaches to the traditional educational setting and approach with its Virtual School, which ensures meaningful learning opportunities in an online community by utilizing technology to engage students in quality instruction that is rigorous and relevant. Furthermore, the District’s Achieving Success Alternative Program (ASAP) is a program designed to help students obtain their high school diplomas by completing coursework outside of the traditional school day. The ASAP is especially helpful for students who must work part-time or full-time jobs to

support their families, while maintaining the desire and motivation to complete the course requirements for graduation. Both programs are offered to our students at no cost and yield tremendous benefits to their lives.

Spring ISD also has longstanding co-curricular and extra-curricular programs in which many of its students are participants. These programs include, but are not limited to, internships through the District’s CTE programs and central office departments to provide students with real-world work experience. Participation in these programs sometimes results in students missing part of traditional classroom attendance time. These programs provide students invaluable learning experiences that are prohibited by the seat time restriction.

Flexibility gained through this exemption will allow Spring ISD to create real-life learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom that vary in structure, location and time and are relevant and highly engaging to 21st century learners.

Relief from TEC Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules. While students may have flexibility in their start or end of school hours for all their participation in CTE and dual credit offerings, they will still be held accountable to meet attendance standards. Moreover, opting out of this statutory provision in no way limits or modifies a teacher’s right to determine the finality of a grade on accordance with TEC Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with TEC Section 28.0216. In addition, implementation of innovative methods, processes or settings will not impact the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills academic objectives that students are expected to master.

SPRING ISD’S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Family and Community as Partners▪ Student and Parent Empowerment	Parental Involvement and Community Participation

No exemption recommendations at this time.

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Physical and Digital Safety ▪ Social Emotional Safety ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Campus Governance

CAMPUS GOVERNANCE:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 21.451 Staff Development Requirements and DMA(LEGAL) Professional Development – Required Staff Development

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(A) Campus Governance

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 21.451 mandates that staff development for educators must be predominantly campus-based. This restriction prohibits a local school district from providing innovative delivery modes for professional development. This section also outlines the staff development topics that the state requires educators to receive, leaving no voice for the local school district to determine the topics it believes best meet the needs of its staff.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, trend data showed that Spring ISD hired approximately 500 new teachers every year and, as a result, a third of our teaching staff has zero (0) to three (3) years of experience. Between 2017 and 2020, the percentage of new teachers continued to rise. During and following the pandemic, a mass exodus from teaching occurred across the entire country. The impact of that massive wave of resignations and retirements drove Spring ISD to hire greater numbers of substitute teachers to fill daily absences and interim teachers to fill vacancies the district could not staff. Now more than ever there is a need for the district to organize large-scale professional development training for adults new to the classroom.

Research and experience have shown us that new teachers require extensive professional development training when initially hired to work in the District. Pre-pandemic, Spring ISD established district-wide professional development days that allowed campus-based and central-office employees from across the District to attend sessions to continue their growth and expand their knowledge base. The flexibility to conduct district-wide trainings for a large number of new teachers annually and training

for all employees allowed Spring ISD to more efficiently use its financial, human and material resources to equip and develop a highly effective teacher workforce.

As a result of the pandemic, the District had to suspend its district-wide professional development days. Based on feedback it has received, the District intends to utilize this exemption once again and move professional development from the campus to large venues open to many employees at one time. From a recent survey conducted with the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) regarding designated professional development requirements, there was an overwhelming response in support of returning to district-level professional development. More specifically, the two central themes from the open-ended responses included:

- Training and development in the district curriculum to implement the available resources more effectively, in addition to district-wide training in technology applications embedded in the curriculum; and
- Opportunities to collaborate with teachers at other campuses who teach the same content area and/or grade level.

The District is also launching additional innovations in staff development that align with this initiative. One example of an innovation is a new induction program for new teachers that begins with the standard District onboarding, followed by a weeklong induction process that involves observing master teachers, visiting other neighboring campuses, and working alongside a mentor teacher for classroom preparation. Implementation of additional innovations will require staff development training that is not part of the state's required training. Through this exemption, Spring ISD will be able to identify other staff development requirements to ensure the successful launch and implementation of innovative curriculum content, instructional delivery methods, digital platforms and social emotional learning strategies needed to prepare its students for the future.

Relief from TEC Section 21.451(b) will not impact campus-based professional development decisions made by each individual school customized to their unique needs. It would not change the job-embedded workforce development teachers currently receive. Rather it allows for teachers to network intra-, inter-, and cross-campus with other colleagues throughout the District, generating more opportunities for collaboration, learning and intellectual discourse.

Nor will this exemption relieve Spring ISD of its obligation to complete required staff development. This exemption will allow the District to require additional staff development that it believes is needed for its workforce to achieve equitable and excellent outcomes for all students.

CAMPUS GOVERNANCE:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios, TEC Section 25.112 Class Size, TEC Section 25.113 Notice of Class Size, TEC Section 7.056 Waivers and Exemptions, EEB(LEGAL) Instructional Arrangements – Class Size, and BF(LEGAL) Board Policies

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(A) Campus Governance

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 25.111 states that a school district must employ a number of teachers sufficient to maintain class sizes of not less than one teacher per 20 students. TEC Section 25.112 limits class sizes in kindergarten through grade 4 to 22 students per teacher. If a district exceeds these limits, it must notify the Commissioner of Education that it is seeking an exception for each class. TEC Section 25.113 requires a district to notify parents or guardians of each student in writing of the exception granted.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

Spring ISD is a district of approximately 31,000 students with a mobility rate that ranges between 14 and 44 percent among its campuses. It is often challenging to maintain class sizes of 22 students per teacher. In addition, Spring ISD offers a range of services for students in need of special education services and students who need second language acquisition support. Classes are created based on student need and in many instances, the District is unable to maintain class sizes of not less than one teacher per 20 students.

Continued flexibility to structure class sizes based on the unique needs of its students would allow Spring ISD to create class sizes that meet the needs of its diverse student population. Innovative classroom configurations would allow teachers to team teach with larger class sizes, lower student class sizes when students need more support, as well as a host of other instructional delivery models to provide more personalized learning structures for maximized student achievement. These innovative instructional models align with the District's new Opportunity Culture Initiative, which extends the reach of excellent teachers to more students, for additional pay, within recurring school budget allocations.

These exemptions will allow the District to actualize two of its core values – we base our decisions on what is best for our students and we value diversity and treat everyone with dignity and respect – through the creation of classroom environments that maximize learning for every student.

Relief from these statutory provisions would enhance Spring ISD's staffing process. Class sizes will be monitored according to the local written guidelines that allow for additional innovations in class configurations. This exemption will also allow the District local control to make those decisions without the need to seek waivers from TEA.

CAMPUS GOVERNANCE:

EXEMPTION FROM:

Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator TEC Section 37.0012 and FO(LEGAL) Student Discipline

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(A) Campus Governance

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 37.0012 mandates the designation of a campus behavior coordinator at every school. This statute provides that the campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and for the implementation of TEC Chapter 37 Discipline; Law and Order. The statute further provides that the campus behavior coordinator is responsible for promptly notifying parents of any in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, DAEP placement, expulsion, JJAEP placement or custody by a law enforcement officer.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

One of the priorities of Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day is Well-Being. Spring ISD is committed to promote the well-being of both students and staff by focusing on physical safety, digital citizenship and social emotional needs to build a resilient educational community. The strategies identified to achieve this priority are 1) implement a Mental Health Response Team that serves as an alternative to traditional law enforcement and employs mental health professionals, District police officers who are specially trained in mental health crisis management, and other designated personnel to meet the social emotional needs of students; 2) provide the District with proactive crime prevention programs that enhance safety in its schools and the surrounding community; and 3) embed the Standard Response Protocol in all emergency communications and train all district staff to use these protocols to minimize confusion during times of crisis. Spring ISD recognizes that as it implements the strategic blueprint it is important to communicate that physical, digital and mental health safety is every employee's responsibility.

In addition, Spring ISD's mission is "to prepare students to be lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and responsible citizens who display good character – ready to contribute, compete, and lead in today's global society." The support needed to help students make good choices is provided through campus-based counselors. When students do not make the best choices, campus-based administrative teams are in place to follow the District's Student Code of Conduct and to contact parents as needed. Together, these groups work to provide a safe environment where students can learn and grow from the choices they make. It is a shared responsibility among the adults on each campus based on articulated standards and high expectations.

Relief from this statutory provision would enable Spring ISD to hold all campus

administrators responsible for maintaining discipline, all educators responsible for providing digital literacy instruction, all counselors responsible for providing social and emotional supports, and all campus staff responsible for developing students to be responsible citizens who display good character.

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Modifications to the School Day or Year

MODIFICATIONS TO THE SCHOOL DAY:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 21.404 Planning and Preparation Time and DL(LEGAL) Work Load

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the School Day or Year

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 21.404 has been interpreted to require that “planning and preparation time must occur during the time that students at the school where the teacher is located are receiving instruction.” *Canutillo Educators Ass’n v. Canutillo Indep. Sch. Dist., Tex. Comm’r of Educ. Decision No. 042-R10-203 (April 30, 2010)*. This statutory provision prohibits Spring ISD from utilizing schedules that maximize professional learning time for its educators.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

One of the commitments from Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day is Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce. Spring ISD is located approximately 24 miles from Houston ISD, the largest school district in the State of Texas. It shares contiguous borders with Aldine, Cypress-Fairbanks, Conroe, and Klein ISDs. Consequently, the District is nestled in a highly competitive job market for teachers where they can switch school districts without having to move from their residences. Spring ISD continues to attract new teachers who are new to the profession or have less than three years of experience. Additionally, the implementation of new initiatives requires extensive professional development and instructional support. Moreover, all teachers need ongoing professional growth opportunities in order to remain abreast of research-based best practices. An important component of their professional growth and development involves the need to collaborate and review curriculum, planning instructional delivery, analyzing assessment data and developing strategies for intervention and acceleration.

Learning together with colleagues is an invaluable part of an individual teacher’s professional growth and development regardless of years of teaching experience. The current restriction of planning and preparation time during the instructional day forces the District to hire substitute teachers during the school day – a practice that is cost-prohibitive. Flexibility in the time of professional learning for teachers would allow Spring

ISD to redirect those funds directly back to students; enabling the District to hold fast to its core value: We base our decisions on what is best for our students.

From a recent survey of the District's campus principals, four key themes regarding the benefits of this exemption were evident from the open-ended feedback, including:

- Quality instructional planning to explore the depth and complexity of content areas;
- Flexibility to engage in planning before the instructional day begins coupled with the assigned planning period during the school day;
- Focused, uninterrupted, collaborative discussions with colleagues; and
- Opportunities for instructional coaching with instructional support staff.

Additionally, campus teachers and central office representatives who serve on the District's ACE also provided feedback on this exemption via an anonymous survey. When asked to describe the benefits of this exemption, similar themes emerged, including:

- Flexible planning time for observations such as peer and mentor/mentee observations;
- Alignment with other planning that occurs in professional learning communities; and
- Productive planning for grade levels with accountability-testing requirements such as end-of-course examinations.

This exemption would not reduce the amount of planning and preparation time for teachers. In fact, it would increase professional learning opportunities by allowing Spring ISD to build daily schedules that provide development time from the beginning to the end of the school day, ensuring the necessary flexibility for job-embedded learning such as peer observation, mentor/mentee observations, vertical team planning, videotaping of instructional delivery and grade level/department lesson planning.

Moreover, our students need the maximum amount of learning time the District can design during the instructional day. The flexibility to structure professional development time before, during, or after the instructional day for students would allow Spring ISD to provide collaborative planning from bell-to-bell of the school day while leveraging maximum learning time for students.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE SCHOOL YEAR:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 25.0811 First Day of Instruction, TEC Section 25.0812 Last Day of School and EB(LEGAL) School Year

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(B) Modifications to the School Day or Year

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 25.0811 prohibits a school district in good academic standing from beginning instruction for students before the fourth Monday in August. In addition, TEC Section 25.0812 prohibits a district from ending the school year for students before May 15.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

Four of the commitments from Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day are a) High Quality Curriculum, b) Early Learning and High School Supports, c) High Quality Specialty Pathways, and d) High Interest Programming. Spring ISD needs innovation in instructional programming and settings to meet these commitments. The flexibility to begin and end the school year at a point in time that would best meet the needs of students will allow the District to both balance the number of days in each semester and finish the first semester before the winter break. Many students are taking classes at local colleges and universities and follow the calendars at the local institutions of higher education. During the summer and upon graduation, those same students would be able to register and attend the first summer school sessions at the institutions of higher education that they are attending. The students will be able to take additional classes and accelerate their matriculation to two- and four-year institutions. As career pathways and dual credit offerings are increased across our remaining high school campuses, more students will need relief from these inhibiting statutory provisions.

This exemption will allow the District flexibility in coordinating course schedules with the local institutions of higher education where our high school students take dual credit courses and/or earn associate's degrees. This exemption will provide relief at all of the District's high schools.

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Recruitment and Development ▪ Retention of a Diverse and Effective Workforce ▪ Equitable Practices ▪ Equitable Resources 	Provisions Regarding the District Budget and Sustainable Program Funding AND Accountability and Assessment Measures That Exceed State and Federal Law Requirements

PROVISIONS REGARDING THE DISTRICT BUDGET AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM FUNDING and ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT MEASURES THAT EXCEED STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS:

EXEMPTION FROM:

TEC Section 21.003 Certification Required, TEC Section 21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void, TEC Section 21.053(a) Presentation and Recording of Certificates, and DBA(LEGAL) Employment Requirements and Restrictions – Credentials and Records

INNOVATION TO:

TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(C) Provisions Regarding the District Budget and Sustainable Program Funding and TEC Section 12A.003(b)(1)(D) Accountability and Assessment Measures That Exceed State and Federal Requirements

CURRENT STATE OF THE LAW:

TEC Section 21.003(a) mandates that an individual holds the appropriate certificate or permit to be employed by a school district in any of the following positions: teacher, teacher intern, teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician and school counselor. TEC Section 21.0031 states that any contract entered into with a person who lacks the appropriate certificate or permit is void. TEC Section 21.053(a) states that a local school board is not obligated to honor a contract or pay for teaching duties performed until a person holds and presents a valid certificate to the district.

BENEFIT OF THE EXEMPTION:

One of the commitments from Every Student – Every Teacher – Every Day is Leadership Recruitment and Development. One strategy Spring ISD has identified to achieve this commitment is targeted recruitment to ensure the early hiring of teachers. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a national teacher shortage and further exacerbated the previously identified teacher shortage here in the State of Texas. Additionally, the hiring shortage is not limited to teachers; the pandemic has impacted the workforce of the entire country, including TEA and SBEC. Staffing shortages and absences from illness have slowed the process for providing teacher certification testing opportunities as well as certifying and posting teacher certificates. This has resulted in a lag in hiring teachers. An exemption from the completion of every test before hiring a teacher candidate would allow

Spring ISD to hire early and give teachers that have passed some of the tests the chance to start their professional careers and have an opportunity later in their first year of teaching to complete the final certification examination they need. An exemption from the presentation and recording of certificates would allow Spring ISD to hire a teacher candidate that is waiting on the posting of a certificate. Both of these strategies would give the District a hiring edge it needs to fill job vacancies by being able to offer opportunities more quickly than other districts.

Another strategy identified to achieve this commitment is to expand the choice program and associate degree opportunities in every high school in addition to increasing the offerings and enrollment in academic and workforce dual credit courses. Expansion of these courses and offerings requires that the District recruit and retain teachers to provide the learning experiences. Finding individuals with the real-life experiences is not difficult, but finding individuals with the needed experiences who have teacher certification or permits is extremely challenging. These individuals may not hold a baccalaureate degree, but do hold the degrees and certifications in their areas of expertise that are necessary for them to provide quality learning experiences to students. Examples of industry experts in demand are criminal justice, automotive engineering, multimedia design, culinary arts, and medical technicians.

Exemption from these code sections would allow Spring ISD to be more competitive in its recruitment, selection and hiring processes. The ability to hire staff without the handicap of waiting on untimely authorizations from TEA and SBEC would give Spring ISD a competitive edge to lock in applicants for job vacancies in the District, all to the goal of securing a diverse and effective workforce.

In addition, exemption from these statutory provisions would enable Spring ISD to hire highly qualified industry professionals to teach its CTE courses and expand career pathway offerings in each of its high schools. It would also afford the District the opportunity to hire college and university professors directly to teach dual credit courses at our high school campuses. This could greatly expand the dual credit offerings Spring ISD could provide its students.

SPRING ISD'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT	TEC CHAPTER 12A
	Any Other Innovations Prescribed by the Board of Trustees

No exemption recommendations at this time.